From Cahokia to Larson to Moundville

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Death, World Renewal, and the Sacred in the
Mississippian Social World of the Late Prehistoric
Eastern Woodlands

A. Martin Byers

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PART I.

Understanding the Mississippian Period: Theoretical and Methodological Fundamentals

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Mississippian Settlement Patterns

This book is about the Mississippian social system and how it emerged and developed. To speak about this social system requires speaking about many community systems of the Southeast and Midwest of the Eastern Woodlands of North America during the “closing period” of North American prehistory, usually referred to as the *Late Prehistoric period*, between ca. AD 1000 to the earliest historic appearance of the Europeans in this part of the continent, in particular, the Spaniards. Of course, what is treated by prehistoric archaeologists as the beginning as well as the end of the Late Prehistoric period will vary with the particular region being studied. However, the periods of the different subregions of the Eastern Woodlands where these Late Prehistoric Mississippian community systems flourished are now commonly spoken of as regional Mississippian periods (treated in cultural terms; e.g., the Lower, Middle, and Upper Mississippian systems), and these cultural historical units are often further subdivided into named phases of more local regions correlating with early, middle, and late chronology. For example, the American Bottom is treated as a component of the Middle Mississippian period (cultural historical unit); and it is chronologically ordered into the Lohmann phase, early and late; Sterling phase, and so on. Also, in Alabama this Mississippian cultural historical unit is referred to as the *Moundville period* and is chronologically subdivided into different phases

(Moundville I phase, early and late; Moundville II phase, early and later, and so on).

The further sectoring of the Eastern Woodlands of the Late Prehistoric period into two contrasting cultural historical units or sectors, those labeled as *Late Prehistoric Mississippian* and those that are simply “Late Prehistoric,” arises from archaeologists noting what they take to be fundamental social differences that demarcated the two systems of communities in each sector of the Eastern Woodland. The communities recognized as constituting Late Prehistoric Mississippian systems tend to be coalesced in a widespread dual Midwestern/Southeastern core of the Eastern Woodlands; while the non-Mississippian Late Prehistoric communities are geographically distributed as a huge peripheral “outer-land” embracing most of the rest of the Eastern Woodlands to the west, north, northeast, and east of this dual core. The Midwestern sector of the dual Mississippian core incorporates the Central Mississippian Valley, including portions of its major tributaries, such as the lower and middle Missouri, parts of the Illinois, and the lower sector of the Ohio Valley and its tributaries, notably excluding the central and more northeastern reaches of the Ohio Valley. There are even outlying, somewhat geographically isolated expressions of the Midwestern sector of the Mississippian social system in southeast Wisconsin and a few other more northwesterly outposts in the Upper Missouri region, often termed the *Upper Mississippian*. The complementary Southeastern sector constituting this dual Mississippian core is distributed across much of the midsouth and lower southern sectors of the Eastern Woodlands from the Gulf Coast and the southern Atlantic Coast and to the west and north to include much of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi, as well as much of the Trans-Mississippian region of Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma, Louisiana, and northeastern Texas.

What are the characteristics that link the many regional and subregional social systems of this dual core into something that is reasonably called the Mississippian system of the Late Prehistoric period; and how do these differ from the characteristics of the “peripheral” non-Mississippian Late Prehistoric period community social systems making up the rest of the Eastern Woodlands? For many archaeologists, the core factor hinges on the nonegalitarian/egalitarian distinction. Mississippian communities are recognized as hierarchical or nonegalitarian communities, and although not all approve of this terminology, most concede to referring to them generically as *chiefdoms* (Pauketat 2007). In comparison, the rest of the Eastern Woodlands Late Prehistoric period social systems are understood to be broadly egalitarian, nonhierarchical communities generically termed *tribes* and *bands*. The communities making up the egalitarian tribal- and band-like social systems occupy the regions of the Eastern Woodlands around the Great Lakes and down the St. Lawrence River and up its northern tributaries, as well as the upper tier of the region south of the Great Lakes, particularly in the Central and Upper Ohio River drainage (as noted, only the Lower Ohio Valley, not the Middle or Upper sectors, is recognized as being occupied primarily by Mississippian communities during the Late Prehistoric period) and across the Alleghenies and north of the Carolinas to the Atlantic Coast. These “nonhierarchical” Late Prehistoric period communities are seen by archaeologists, for the most part, as multiple ethnically distinct “egalitarian” social systems based on autonomous but inter-related nucleated villages, or, for the Eastern Woodlands north of the Great Lakes, as seasonally mobile foraging “bands”; and these in the aggregate are generally contrasted with the different ethnic chiefdom-based communities making up the dual Midwest/Southeast Mississippian core of the Eastern Woodlands, as outlined above.

In general, each more-or-less autonomous chiefdom is treated as consisting of an interrelated network of hierarchically ranked towns, villages, dispersed hamlets and individual family farmsteads based on a sedentary maize-based agriculture. Overall, the sedentary nature of these systems has been unproblematically accepted by Mississippian archaeologists. The sedentary central town-village-hamlet-farm settlement pattern is usually taken as the hallmark of Mississippian social systems, meaning that each chiefdom was divided into rather permanently sedentary sectors—"urban" and "rural"—but allowing centralized aggregation for participation in chiefdom-wide events when, it is assumed, the main town or towns of the chiefdom would become packed by "rural" folk attending such events, usually treated as ceremonial in nature. Also, typically, it is argued that specialized task groups of commoners practiced seasonally organized wild food foraging to supplement the sedentary maize and the cultivation of indigenous domesticated seed crops, thereby making up a mixed sedentary farming-logistically mobile foraging regime. Typically, the largest and most impressive settlement of the network of settlements constituting the autonomous chiefdom is termed the *central town* by archaeologists, and they interpret it as having been the political seat of the ranking chief, who had dominance over the subchiefs in their lesser (and lesser-sized) towns and villages dispersed across the land constituting the chiefdom's exclusive territory. Also, it is taken as unproblematic that the ranking chief controlled all the lands contained within relatively well-delineated territorial boundaries. Typically, it is assumed that, given its mixed maize field agricultural and mobile foraging subsistence systems, each chiefdom needed, and therefore, "must" have incorporated a defined sector of the flood plain or bottom land region, along with the contiguous or nearby uplands on the particular flood-prone river of the Southeast that it permanently occupied. Of course, all these rivers drained into the Gulf of Mexico or

southern sector of the Appalachian-Atlantic coastal region, and the largest of these rivers, of course, was the Mississippi with its multiple and often large tributaries draining a huge proportion of the land surface on the North American continent south of the Great Lakes, east of the Rockies, and north of Mexico.

The central seat of the chiefdom was typically demarcated by displaying an impressive architectural complex that included at least one and possibly several monumental, usually rectangular platform mounds along with one or more plazas. As such, not only is it interpreted by archaeologists to be the seat of the ranking chief but also to be the demographic, economic, religious, and most importantly, political center of the chiefdom. The platform mound or mounds (in the case of larger chiefdoms) have been usually interpreted as the foundations for the “palaces” where the ruling chief and his supporting chiefly elite lived. Some of these also have been interpreted as platforms for the temples of the leading cults. It is often assumed that at least one platform mound had a charnel house for the deceased members of the chiefly family and its supporting elite, along with a smaller neighboring mound used as the cemetery of the ranking families. Council houses and lesser temples may also have been located on the grounds around the periphery of the plaza or, in some of the larger settlements, within a set of peripheral plazas with separate mounds, etc. Framing the central plaza were groups of houses, in some cases organized into “streets,” where the lesser elite and subordinate commoner resident families lived.

Spatially distributed up to 5-10 km units along the river bottom from the central town were smaller centers, each with its plaza and platform mound (in a few rare cases, more than one mound), the latter indicating its lower rank in the chiefdom. These lesser centers are usually interpreted as the administrative towns or villages where the families of the lesser or lower-ranked ruling elite resided,

often referred to in the archaeological literature as the *subchiefs*. It is assumed that they owed kinship-based and, in some cases, political-military-based allegiance to the ranking chief in the central town, sometimes referred to in the literature as the *paramount chief*. Dispersed in the countryside around the central town and lesser administrative towns and villages were the multiple hamlets (two to four “homesteads”), and spaced several hundred meters apart and around these were the usually single-family farmsteads of the “rural” population, each subordinate to the subchief of the lesser administrative center in whose subterritory they resided. In sum, the “model” or minimalist Mississippian community is characterized as having been a complex of at least one single mound-and-plaza town, several villages (usually without mounds), and dispersed maize-based agricultural hamlets and farmsteads, also practicing wild food foraging, organized into a kinship-based community of ranked lineages/clans having a defined territory and standing as autonomous to other neighboring communities of the same social order. Sometimes several of these chiefdom communities might be integrated into what is usually termed a *complex chiefdom*, and several of these can also be claimed to be integrated into a “paramount chiefdom.” These higher-order chiefdoms are differentiated along the dimension of overall size and number of platform mounds of the largest local regional center. This distribution of differentially sized locales in the same general region is usually treated as the historical result of competition among the chiefdoms of a region, a competition in which one of these chiefs was able to exercise such consummate political, military, and economic skills, often mediated by clever interelite marriages and astute accumulating of wealth, so as to gain dominance over his less-skilled chiefly peers and their respective (now lesser and subordinated) simple chiefdoms.

According to this widely recognized characterization of the Mississippian community, one of the most successful of these communities must have been Cahokia in the American Bottom since it emerged rapidly between AD 1050-1100 to become the earliest “superpower” among all the subsequent Mississippian community locales. In fact, at its maximum, consisting of at least twelve individual multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes with associated temples, palaces, and both elite and commoner residences, its size alone far surpassed any other known Mississippian town, either then or later. In terms of mounds with associated plazas, there were over 100 (See figure 2.1). The permanent population during its heyday has been estimated to be at least 15,000, and some estimates have pushed this to 25,000. Furthermore, it is not alone since a short distance to the west of Cahokia in the same American Bottom region and bracketing the Mississippi River were two larger Mississippian communities, although distinctly smaller than Cahokia. The East St. Louis site, the larger of these two, was on the east bank of the Mississippi overlooking the lower extent of the Cahokia Creek where it flows into the Mississippi (See figure 2.2). Of course, it is named this by archaeologists because it was located where the modern American city of East St. Louis, Illinois, is now located. The St. Louis site, the smaller of these two Mississippian neighbors of Cahokia, is across the Mississippi River on the west bank, and it is also named after the city where its remains—much degraded—are located. The East St. Louis site probably consisted of 40 or more mounds while the St. Louis site consisted of at least 25 or more mounds. A simple counting of the number of mounds and plazas would mean that this rather small zone of about 25 km east-west and 5-10 km north-south came to incorporate about 200 mounds with associated plazas. This complex constellation of mounds has led to calling these three complexes a sprawling superpower, a city, even possibly the core of a

“civilization” that had extensive political power and economic control in the region, even influencing communities hundreds of kilometers north and south of it (Emerson 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Pauketat 2007, 2004, 1997, 1994; Pauketat 2005a).

However, this book is not about Cahokia and its environs, as such, but about the nature of the wider Mississippian social system in which Cahokia was such an important player, as manifested by this widespread distribution of mound-and-plaza complexes coming in single, dual, and multiple sets. The book, therefore, addresses the Mississippianization process, which I take to be the process by which the Mississippian system of the Late Prehistoric period emerged and developed. I characterize and develop this social process from the perspective of Cahokia and the American Bottom, which, as I noted above, incorporated the single largest aggregation of mounds and plazas in North America north of Mexico. I take this Cahokia-centric perspective because, along with many other archaeologists, I assume that the source of the ideological aspect of the cultural tradition that promoted the formation of these Mississippian-type communities was likely derived from this particular region—although this claim is not without dispute.

This book sets out to pursue the goal of characterizing and explaining the Mississippianization process by taking a very different perspective on the nature of the Mississippian system from the one briefly outlined above. Indeed, it quite radically contrasts with the above chiefdom view. I have already argued that rather than treating Cahokia as a complex mound-and-plaza chiefdom polity (or “primitive” state or “civilization” [Pauketat 2007]), it can be more coherently understood as a complex monumental locale constructed and used by a multiple set of religiously based social organizations (Byers 2006a). Therefore, rather than political and economic powers being the dynamic forces of development, it was religious organizations

and their associated beliefs and ritual practices that drove its development and expansion. This book expands this theme, treating the Mississippian social system as a complex network of multiple regional interacting religious organizations that were strongly motivated to perform ongoing sacrificial practices that drove architectural construction, long-distance interaction, and artifactual elaboration. Of course, the typical religiously based organization embodied and recruited economic and social power as part of its system of governance; but it primarily succeeded in developing, growing, and spreading its influence through religiously inspired rather than politically and economically motivated pursuits and mobilizations. In brief, in the terms I have used, these great earthwork complexes were the work and organizational contexts of what I have called *autonomous cult sodalities*; and typically one of these locales was constituted by the affiliation of the autonomous cult sodalities of the surrounding region into a higher order complex I have referred to as a *cult heterarchy*, or as I will now call it a *cult sodality heterarchy* (Byers 2006a, 230-31). The cult sodalities that were affiliated into a given cult sodality heterarchy collectively built and used a given platform mound-and-plaza complex locale to serve as a critically important symbolic context and medium by which to constitute and perform an evolving and complex repertoire of world renewal rituals and ceremonies that they strongly experienced as beneficially intervening into the immanently sacred natural order of what they took to be a multiple-layered and horizontally sectorized sacred world—the cosmos. Since I have already characterized Cahokia in these terms, the purpose of this book is to develop the premises of this view and extend my earlier modeling of Cahokia so as to characterize the Mississippian system in general as the outcome of the diffusion of the same type of social order as that manifested in the American Bottom and its complex multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes across the multiple

regions of the Southeast and Midwest, constituting a multiplicity of *autonomous cult sodality heterarchies* of different orders of size and complexity. By noting that these were autonomous social systems, I claim that, while these likely emulated Cahokia, they were neither beholden to nor subordinated by or to Cahokia. At the same, however, I postulate that Cahokia was itself an important leading source of stimulation of the Mississippianization process. Hence, any site that embraced the Mississippian material cultural assemblage would be the manifestation of a similar type of social order of affiliated cult sodalities as I claim was manifested at Cahokia and the American Bottom; and the latter was the likely source and origin of the influence that generated and expanded the Mississippianization process.

As a short overview, I have argued that the collective religious beliefs shared by these cult sodalities took the sacred to be immanent in the natural order of the cosmos. Because the gods were taken to be immanent in the natural order of the world-cosmos, their sacred powers animated all living and growing things, and, through consuming the sacred powers of the plants and animals as their nutrients, these powers systematically were embodied by and animated humans. Therefore, in taking the land to be feeding them, the people of this social world experienced the land as transferring its sacred powers of life to them, and, as a result, humans took themselves to be morally obliged to return these sacred powers after their individual deaths so that the cosmos could continue to be sustained and recreated and, of course, could continue to ensure that the human communities were reborn and sustained. In the view that I have developed and which I will further develop in this book, the size of Cahokia mirrored the size and complexity of the cosmos as experienced by the multiple cult sodalities that were responsible for building and using Cahokia. To them, this magnificent site would have been the monumental medium for pursuing a mission by which

they ensured the continuity and sustainability of the immanently sacred world/cosmos; and, for a long period, this mission apparently was successfully pursued through the sacrifice of spiritual powers immanent in the flesh and bones of deceased humans. This was not a simple but a complex and unfolding process of sacrificial rituals I have termed *postmortem human sacrifice*. However, I have also argued that lethal human sacrifice was part of this world renewal ritual repertoire, although, in quantitative terms, it was likely practiced to a much lesser extent than was postmortem sacrifice (Byers 2006a). By the latter phrase, *postmortem sacrifice*, I mean that normally, only after a person died (i.e., postmortem) was his/her body systematically disarticulated—flesh, hair, bones, blood—so as to mediate a series of sacrificial rituals through releasing the sacred energies immanently embodied in these organic parts, thereby returning the sacred to the different components of the natural order.

In an important sense, I treat the Mississippian social system as a historical “replay” of an earlier social system formation incorporating a significant portion of the Eastern Woodlands that, while displaying its own uniquely styled material cultural assemblage, nevertheless, was generated by a core of cultural and social structures that were the equivalent of those that I am going to articulate in detail in this book as being the core cultural and social structures of the Mississippian systems. Archaeologists refer to this as the Hopewellian system and it largely defined the Middle Woodland period of the Eastern Woodlands region, between ca. 100 BC and ca. AD 500. Along with equivalent and neighboring social system formations (e.g., the Swift Creek, the Weeden Island, and several others), its ascendancy flourished, and it was also dispersed throughout much of the same region in which the Mississippian system was to emerge about 500 years later after the Middle Woodland period ended. The single most unusual exception, interestingly, was the Hopewellian

expression in the Central Ohio Valley. This Hopewellian expression was particularly focused in the central, southern, southwestern and southeastern sectors of Ohio, and in terms of material make-up it was the most complex of all the multiple regional Hopewellian ceremonial spheres of the Middle Woodland period Eastern Woodlands. Interestingly, the much later Mississippian formations did not emerge in this same region. In any case, however, in terms of monumental earthworks, complex artifactual assemblage, and associated mortuary features, facilities, and practices, the major locales in which Hopewellian episodes occurred are, in general, easily comparable to, and possibly surpassed, some of the major centers and locales of the later Mississippian social system, possibly including Cahokia (Byers 2011). Hence, despite the differences and variation in the forms and makeup of the Hopewellian assemblage compared to the later Mississippian assemblage, I maintain that these two complex formations manifested the equivalent social structural order. I intend to develop this hypothesis in a separate volume.

However, I will set this view aside and reemphasize that the purpose of this book is to account for the Mississippianization process itself. Therefore, the substantive content of this book consists of detailed case studies of three specific Mississippian social system formations; or possibly, I should say two and a half detailed case studies, since the first case study is not detailed but simply a summary of my earlier study of the Mississippianization of the American Bottom itself. Because I have already written a fairly extensive characterization and interpretation of the Mississippianism of this region as manifested in Cahokia, I treat it in summary form. Despite this first case study being a summary, however, I also take this as an opportunity, in the next two chapters, to elaborate the major themes of that earlier study. The second case study (Part II) is the emergence and development of the Mississippian system in the

Central Illinois River Valley, and the third case study (Part III) is the Mississippianization of primarily the Black Warrior River Valley of Alabama. Hence, these three studies constitute the main title of this book, *From Cahokia to Larson to Moundville*. These latter two serve to represent the influence of Cahokia on the emergence of Mississippianism, first as it occurred in the sector to the north of the American Bottom and then as it occurred in the sector to the south.

As this book unfolds, it will also become clear to the reader that while I am certainly not opposed to incorporating an evolutionary-ecological approach to understanding the cultural history of the Holocene era of the Eastern Woodlands, indeed, I insist on treating the Mississippianization process as at base a deontic ecological process. It should become clear that I take a historical perspective since, in my view, we cannot understand the development of the archaeological record independently of what the material culture that makes up its primary content meant to the peoples who were responsible for its production, use, and disposition. And this means taking a historically and spatially situated perspective in which human social practices and their development are the primary explanatory mechanisms.

Hence, the historical approach that I take to understanding the material cultural record of the Eastern Woodlands incorporates the fundamental assumption that the cultural traditions of the Native North American peoples were unique while, simultaneously, these traditions enabled the people to engage rationally with the objective constraints which, in virtue of their organic and intentional nature, they must necessarily act upon and with—settlement and subsistence. I also argue that these cultural traditions were differentiated and stratified into deep and surface structures. By *deep structures* I mean the intangible but real collective beliefs and values of a people (cosmology and ethos) that enabled them to engage in a rational manner with the material world. However, complementing these deep

structural traditions are the surface structural traditions consisting of the collective protocols and rules (ideology and worldview) that specify for them how their ongoing material engagement with their natural and social world is most appropriately carried out. This view of cultural traditions argues that while the surface cultural tradition structures (ideology and worldview) were subject to deliberate and intentional change, the former, the deep cultural tradition structures (cosmology and ethos) were normally not, and therefore, they have historically and spatially remained largely constant over this extensive Woodland period. I go on to argue that material culture is the tangible set of material features, facilities, and artifacts constructed and used by a human cultural population and by which they constitute their collective behaviors as the activities they intended, and these activities range from ritual and ceremonial to practical settlement and subsistence practices. Since these practices are governed by surface structures (i.e., rules and protocols), they can quite rapidly be formally modified through innovation and/or emulation of rules, while the deep structural traditions of cosmology and ethos remain largely intact and stable since it is only in virtue of the latter that it was possible to generate and distribute new rules.

Along these same lines, while I am fully amenable to the view that much of the Late Prehistoric period Eastern Woodlands was characterized by the relatively new innovated sedentary forms of kinship-based domestic habitation, my firm opinion is that this domestic sedentarism did not extend to the great Mississippian mound-and-plaza complexes themselves. My interpretation of Cahokia, for example, argues that those who built and used it did not actually occupy it in a permanent or sedentary manner (Byers 2006a). That is, those who used Cahokia did not treat it as their “home,” in the sense of being the context of everyday family-based life. It was where specific groups went to practice critically important and time-dependent religious

rituals. Therefore, I claim that the ongoing and systematic cycling of transient residents prevailed in Cahokia—and this claim generally applies to the many other mound-and-plaza complex locales. I suspect that this claim will be taken by many readers familiar with the Mississippian literature to be not only radical but even outrageously so and/or simply wrong. Should this reaction occur, I would say that it arises from what is the largely take-for-granted commitment by most if not all the proponents of the orthodox chiefdom perspective, no matter which version, that sedentary occupation by permanent and ranked kin-based residential groups was the norm in Late Prehistoric social systems, both with respect to these great Mississippian “town”-based chiefdoms and the multiple egalitarian tribal nucleated villages. I will not directly address the latter, which I generally would interpret as sedentary. Rather, my claim of cyclic transient residency specifically applies to the Mississippian centers. This does not mean, however, that I treat Cahokia or other such centers as “vacant” ceremonial centers that were only sporadically and thinly occupied during most of the year. In fact, I believe that these were probably continuously occupied, and quite intensively so, although this intensity no doubt waxed and waned seasonally according to multiple seasonally scheduled ritual demands made on and by the groups that were responsible for these great centers. Therefore, I claim that the continuous manner in which it was occupied would have left a very similar imprint *as if* the populations had been sedentary and permanent. And because the level of transient residency was fairly constant, it would also encourage the construction of permanent hostel-like structures that were maintained and repaired. Hence, size and permanency of structures would be similar, even accumulation of midden, although careful comparative analysis might demonstrate systematic differences to that of fully sedentary and nucleated villages and towns. I will address this possibility when I

address the archeological record of Moundville. In general, however, continuous occupation of these Mississippian locales would have been generated by a largely unbroken, but quantitatively variable, sequence of groups coming, staying for a particular duration while they performed their sacrificial rituals, and leaving. The permanent structures they built and used would be quickly reoccupied by other groups who would pick up and continue the type of rituals that the previous groups had performed, and so on.

As noted above, I have characterized these monumental locales as built and used by affiliations of autonomous cult sodalities, and I have termed these affiliations *cult sodality heterarchies*. Importantly, I distinguish quite strongly between the cult sodalities themselves and the communities to which they belonged by emphasizing that it was the cult sodalities—not the communities to which they belonged—that constituted the affiliations or, as I call them, the *cult sodality heterarchies*. In many cases, these heterarchies would incorporate most of the active adult populations of the communities to which the affiliation of cult sodalities belonged, and this incorporation would have endured for these individuals from at least early adulthood on. But, to reiterate, the communities and the cult sodality heterarchy formation(s) of any given region were relatively autonomous. The Mississippian social system, therefore, consists of two relatively autonomous organizations: the multiple dispersed communities of the region and the great “nucleated” cult sodality heterarchies. The former consisted of dispersed, largely sedentary hamlets and farmsteads and were based on kinship structures; the latter consisted of the “nucleated” mound-and-plaza complexes that were transiently and sequentially occupied by sodalities, organizations based on the principle of same-gender/same-age companionship. Hence, it is these latter complexly organized cult sodality groups working in cooperative affiliation with each other that constituted the great cult sodality

heterarchies that are the hallmark of the Mississippian system—at least, that is my core claim in this book.

As I noted above, I expect that this transient residency claim will be greeted with strong skepticism by proponents of the orthodox view. However, Warren DeBoer (1997) has commented on the surprising amount of midden that long-term transient residency of the type I am postulating for Mississippian cult sodality heterarchies is known to generate. DeBoer has noted that the Chachi of Ecuador have ritual centers where they periodically convene several times annually to perform multiple ceremonies. Therefore, for most of the year, these locales are pretty well empty of any occupation. However, over the generations, the permanently constructed hostel-like structures that frame the central riverside ceremonial plaza have accumulated deep middens that could easily be mistaken as resulting from sedentary, year-round occupancy. “For instance, test pits excavated at Punta Venado exposed 80 cm of midden chock-full of artefactual and culinary refuse. This deep midden . . . had been accumulating for two centuries. In contrast, single house residential sites (where the Chachi actually live) are typically occupied for only a decade or so and are associated with relatively shallow, even superficial middens The *longevity* of generally vacant ceremonial centers, therefore, can create the archaeological appearance of large, sedentary settlements” (DeBoer 1997, 227). However, there is a difference between the Chachi transient occupancy of their ceremonial locales and the transient occupancy I am postulating for the Mississippian mound-and-plaza complexes. The Chachi locales can be adequately characterized as “vacant centers” since for much of the year they actually were unoccupied, while being intensely occupied for only several short periods annually. I claim that locales such as Cahokia, East St. Louis, St. Louis, and, of course, Moundville in Alabama were not vacant in this sense. Instead, as noted above, they

were largely continually occupied by transient groups that cycled, and the numbers involved effectively led to the sites being largely continually and, in general, quite heavily occupied year round. This difference probably results from social structural contrasts between communities such as the Chachi and those responsible for Cahokia and the other Mississippian locales. This difference is particularly manifested in that the Mississippian-type locales had major earth-work constructions, as well as plazas, great timber structures in the form of both palisades and “temples,” and so on, while the Chachi did not. Why this was the case would require my making a digression that is not necessary since the role of these monumental constructions will be discussed in detail later. The important point that the Chachi case illustrates, however, is that the indicators of continuous or near-continuous residency, such as timber structures, heavy midden, even storage pits and earth ovens, need not be indicators of sedentary occupation and, in fact, can be reasonably interpreted as marking the type of sequential cyclic transient residency I am postulating for the Mississippian mound-and-plaza locales.

In short, in this book I present a very different picture of Cahokia and other Mississippian locales from the one that is dominant in the current Mississippian literature. However, it can be used to explain the empirical patterning equally and, in my view, more coherently than does the orthodox perspective that attributes these mound centers to being administrative seats of chiefs politically and socially controlling differently sized and ranked territories occupied by sedentary populations, both dispersed over the landscape (the rural commoners) and concentrated in the centers (the urban elite).

As noted, this book is not about Cahokia, as such, but instead it is about the Mississippianization process; that is, it is about the rest of the Mississippian system, both north and south of Cahokia and how Cahokia’s influence worked its way across these neighboring

regions. The primary argument will be that the Mississippianization process was the outcome of a traditional type of social mechanism by which both intraorganizational and interorganizational interactions were effected. This social mechanism enabled a set of world renewal ritual prerogatives under the custodianship of a given cult sodality to be transferred by the latter across to and among equivalent sodalities of communities, both within a given region and across different regions. These transfers of world renewal ritual copyrights or prerogatives enabled the recipient sodalities to perform the same rituals. Therefore, the Mississippianization process expanded outside of the American Bottom by means of the Cahokian-based cult sodalities successfully transferring their ritual copyrights; and these included the particular beliefs, stories, modes of production of ritual regalia, and so on, that were required background knowledge and know-how, as well as authorization for the performance of the rituals.¹ By making these transfers to the sodalities of these more distant communities, not only could the recipient sodalities now perform these new forms of world renewal ritual, they also quickly discovered that they had to meet unexpectedly heavy material demands in order to fulfill their voluntarily accepted new ritual obligations. These generated an impetus to mobilize labor at a greater scale than traditionally carried out in the recipient region and, therefore, motivated strategies for reorganizing their own community clan and sodality system. This reorganization generated what I have termed the *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality organizational type*, which in turn became the social platform that promoted further transfer of the copyrights of these new rituals to neighboring communities.² Successful intraregional transferring of the ritual prerogatives and the obligations they entailed instigated a similar pressure on these neighbors to transform their own sodalities into a replication of the new ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality type. This also had the

largely unintended effect of encouraging these new sodality organizations to establish spatially autonomous locales where they could centralize the labor capacity of the wider region and refine and perfect the ritual that required this labor. At the same time, the families constituting the clans dispersed in the countryside.

Since both younger and older adult members of these dispersed families were also the participants in this new type of sodality organization, I am not speaking of two separate communities but of two complementary social organizational components constituting a given community type. One component of the community, the clans and their families, dispersed in the countryside tending to their everyday subsistence affairs and, when appropriate, cooperating in clan ceremonies; and the other component, the sodalities (same-age/same-gender peers), integrated into one or two (e.g., male-based and female-based) ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities that focused their activities in ceremonial sites in the region—sites that they specially built for this purpose. Some of these sites in any given region came to replicate the monumental architecture and complex features and facilities that were the core material component types of Cahokia.

I have called the above type of transfer of rituals the *custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyright* and the enactment of custodial franchising I have called the *custodial franchising event*. This event was conducted by the host sodality of a community and its guest sodality, the latter being the sodality from which the host sodality would receive the ritual usufruct copyright franchise. These custodial franchising events included endowing the recipient sodalities with the right to transfer the same custodial ritual usufruct copyright to the sodalities of more distant communities. In any given region, therefore, a type of dual internal and external chain reaction would be set in motion. Internal to a community, the different

age-set sodalities, organized by seniority, would be encouraged by the growing organizational demands of the new ritual to integrate and form what I termed above the *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality organizational type*. These cult sodalities would also be encouraged to franchise their custodial ritual usufruct copyrights to their neighbors, instigating a similar integrative process among them. These two processes would also promote a settlement “dismantling” process, what I call the *bifurcation of the communities*, and this would generate a countryside dispersal of clan/kinship-based farmsteads and the formation of specialized cult sodality ceremonial nodal locales. As autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, these would quickly initiate alliances with each other. I referred to these alliances above as *cult sodality heterarchies*, and, at a certain point, these would collectively build a new and larger sacred locale, a process I discuss in more detail in the next chapter. Within a generation or less, the social organization of the region could transform from being a nonhierarchical settlement of “nucleated” village/hamlets into an apparent “hierarchical” settlement pattern of communities in the above bifurcated clan-sodality pattern, thereby becoming very much like the bifurcated clan-sodality communities from the region that was the initial source of this custodial ritual usufruct franchising (i.e., the American Bottom). As a necessary part of this bifurcation process, a monumental platform-and-plaza locale would likely emerge, a sort of “miniature” of the much larger and more complex Cahokia (Byers 2006a).

From this it follows, of course, that my claim is that Cahokia was not a community in the standard anthropological sense of being an everyday sedentary face-to-face set of interacting persons related by kinship structures. Instead, a very different social structure mediated Cahokia as a face-to-face system of interaction. This is the principle of companionship. This is why I have used the term *sodality*

in my above outline. In standard anthropological usage, sodalities are nonkinship-based groups, sometimes referred to as *voluntary* or *peer* groups, and contrast with the ascriptive nature of kin groups. These sodality group types are fully recognized in anthropology to be characteristic of most traditional Native North American societies. However, this recognition certainly does not deny that kinship was a central principle in these same communities. In fact, my concern is that kinship has been treated in the ethnography of traditional Native North American societies as so central to them that sodalities are treated as being of secondary importance, so much so that, in the general anthropological characterizing of the social structure of these communities, the sodalities have been largely ignored or treated as merely superficial and largely informal “get-together” groupings. This underprivileging of companionship and its realization in sodalities has also overprivileged kinship and its realization in the clans and their subkinship groupings. The anthropological tradition has been to treat clan structures as the central core and framework of the community. The clans are treated as consisting of extended kinship groups, often referred to as *lineages*. Under this view, a community’s kinship organization is understood to be structured into complementary dual exogamous moieties constituted by clans. The rule of exogamy means the members of all the clans of one moiety sector must seek spouses from clans of the complementary moiety sector. The clans are themselves internally differentiated as autonomous kinship groups, such as lineages or extended families, and they, in turn, are characterized as nuclear or compound families in which everyday face-to-face interaction is carried out.³

Hence, the focus on kinship structures—moieties, clans, “lineages,” and families—has led to giving rather short shrift to the sodalities and their core structural nature of companionship—that is, friendship, boon companionship, and various grades thereof. This

is not to claim that the sodalities and their principle of companionship have been ignored, because they have not. It does say, however, that kinship has monopolized the attention of archaeologists, effectively leading them largely to identify the prehistoric community with kinship and its permutations. Certainly while it cannot be denied that kinship would have been then, and still is, a major context and medium for everyday face-to-face interaction, the same and possibly even emotively closer forms of interaction are equally characteristic of companionship. Indeed, it would be a sad community where kinship without companionship prevailed since interaction mediated by the former tends to become very formal and restrictive of everyday give-and-take. The companionate context is often where individuals turn in order to cushion the stresses and strains of realizing and living up to kinship duties and obligations. By meeting and interacting with companions, friends, persons of similar age and gender, individuals can sustain life-balance and coherence. Indeed, an argument can be made that friendship or companionship fulfills as universal and primary a set of human needs and requirements as does kinship. However, because of the view that friendship is personal and, for our social world, usually informal and between individuals who share age and gender identities, and because it has little or no legal contractual standing (unless deliberately constituted through legal procedure, a “quasi companionship” termed *collegiality*, primarily possible only in societies having formal judicial institutions), archaeologists as anthropologists have tended to ignore its pervasive presence in everyday and not-so-everyday social life—while privileging kinship and its structural relations, as if these are the only “real” prehistoric social structures. This is a serious mistake that should be rectified, and I actively attempt to do it in this book (also see Byers 2011).

Critical to this book, in fact, is the notion that traditional Native North American communities were anchored on both principles—kinship and companionship—and that these served as complementary structural principles. Typically in traditional Native North American communities, possibly more so than many communities in other parts of the preindustrial social world, these two principles and their associated rules of conduct were effectively equally important and interactive in the structuring of the community. Therefore, they must be treated theoretically as complementary structural principles that were realized through a deeply entrenched set of intersubjective (cultural) constitutive rules. They are interdependent in that the principles and rules constituting one concept (e.g., kinship) presupposed those of the other (companionship). That is, to understand what it means to be related as kin entails understanding what it means to stand in a companionate relation to someone, and vice versa; and just as there are different types of kin, so there are different types of companions. This means, of course, that kinship and companionship ground relatively autonomous groupings in the sense that the kinship and companionship spheres cannot be collapsed into one another. Indeed, for traditional Native North American communities, typically persons occupied positions in both social spheres in the course of their normal social life cycle, but actively pursued strategies of scheduling that ensured or attempted to ensure minimal conflict of interests. A person attempted to keep the sodality and kinship spheres separate, what I call the *arm's-length posture*.

These concepts of kinship and companionship (Old English, *kin* and *kith*) are realized in real kinship and companionship groupings and, for this purpose, I have used the terms *clan* and *sodality* generically to refer to these two contrasting complementary and relatively autonomous types of groupings. They are autonomous not in the sense that they are groups that are independent of their communities—which

they are not, since they are components of a whole emergent group, the community—but in the sense that each group recognizes that the other group is responsible for its own sphere of activities. Therefore, clans and component organizations of clans typically avoid interfering into the activities of the sodalities and component organizations of sodalities, and vice versa. I wish to stress here that, importantly, this is *not* to say that clans and sodalities constitute separate communities. Rather, as I noted above, a given community is constituted by the *dual clan-sodality structural relation*; and this translates into a community constituted by dual emergent social spheres, and typically, as also noted above, most community members participate in both during their active social lifetimes. Hence, a child is born into the clan of his/her father or mother, depending on whether this is a patrilineal or matrilineal community, and each child, in time, normally joins an age-mate set. This set of age-mates often come from different clans (although some may be from the same clans), and its members mature together as a same-age/same-gender peer sodality. That is, this group is autonomous of the kin groups from which the same companions come (i.e., their clans and families). Since the clans and sodalities are relatively autonomous and are complementary in terms of activity spheres, as well as being recognized as having responsibility for their own traditional sphere of activities, then a person is continually “transient,” literally moving between the kinship and companionship contexts. Under special conditions that I noted above and discuss in more detail later, this relative autonomy of clan and sodality enables the sodalities of a community to enter into alliances with similar sodalities in other communities. These alliances are themselves autonomous of the communities and their clans from which each of the constituent sodalities come. Hence, the members of these alliances of sodalities systematically organize their schedules so as to enable their effective participation in both cult sodality and clan spheres.

As noted earlier, I do not intend to detail my characterization of the nature and emergence of Cahokia since this has been thoroughly presented in my earlier book. However, there are several important claims I made there that require reiterating. Therefore, the next chapter is initiated by presenting a comparative and critical overview of the orthodox chiefdom treatment of Cahokia alongside my own and contrasting characterization of Cahokia. I treat this as the first case study (i.e., the “half” case study). I also take the opportunity to develop my initial model by refining the conceptualization of the nature of the sodality heterarchies, and I go on to more fully define the dual clan-sodality structure of a community. Because of this dual structural nature of the community, I have chosen to call it the *complementary heterarchical community*. This is a renaming of what I consider to be the typical Eastern Woodland community, which I originally called the *heterarchical polyistic locale-centric community*. Different terms but same sense.

Having used Chapter 2 to complete the initial task of Part I of summarizing and refining my earlier study of Cahokia, I then use the subsequent chapters of Part I—Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6—to further theorize the Mississippianization process, particularly concerning the nature of the ceremonial practices and the purposes these realized, as well as the nature of the sodality system involved in this process. I undertake these latter tasks first by examining the notion of the type of cosmology I claim that traditional Native North American peoples had and have, which I characterize as an immanentist cosmology in that—as expressed in the traditional Native North American creation myths—the world order or cosmos in its multiple components and levels is characterized as being the embodiment of the immanent sacredness of the creator gods who actively engage with each other in order to sustain and continually recreate the natural, tangible order of this world. I then give a full conceptual

elucidation and analogical grounding to the notion of the cult sodality and to the postulated process of custodial ritual usufruct franchising that I noted above and that I claim served as the social mechanism for the Mississippianization process. The analogical approach serves to entrench the notion that traditional Native North American communities were constituted of a dual structure of clans and sodalities; and, for this purpose, I examine a well-known traditional community—the Hidatsa Plains Indians, with some collateral discussion of their neighbors. It is from analyzing, in particular, the Hidatsa and Mandan that I construct the notion of the custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights and its complement, custodial conveyancing of ritual usufruct copyrights. I articulate this complex process in what I term the *Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model* (Byers 2011). While the custodial conveyancing of ritual usufruct copyright was certainly an important event entailing the transfer of these copyrights from senior to junior age-sets, particularly critically important for reproducing ritual practices and sustaining the rights of the sodalities to perform these rituals, this book is about the Mississippianization process, and, as I noted above, this is the spread of Cahokian influence as mapped and constituted by the distribution of the Mississippian assemblage. This process particularly hinged on the custodial franchising process. Therefore, my focus will be on this aspect of the model. In this regard, I postulate that custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights was the primary social mechanism by which the Mississippianization process unfolded.

With the completion of the initial elucidation of the theoretical perspective that I require to demonstrate this claim, I then proceed to the full case studies of Part II and Part III. Part II is titled “From Cahokia to Larson,” and it focuses on the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley. Part III, titled “From Cahokia to

Moundville,” is used to account for the same process in the Black Warrior Valley of central-west Alabama. However, before plunging into the description and interpretation of the archaeological record of this region, it is necessary to raise and address an important issue in some depth—namely, the validity of the chiefdom concept when applied to the Southeast. While I raise the question to some degree in the next chapter, it is really the shift of focus from the Midwest to the Southeast that particularly acutely raises the relevance of the concept of chiefdom for understanding the Mississippian system. This is because while the *historically known* Native North American communities of the Midwest were largely characterized by the absence of dominance hierarchies—and I argue that this was also the state of affairs in prehistory—it was also the case in the Southeast, thereby making it highly unlikely that “chiefdoms,” as typically conceived by most Mississippian archaeologists, ever emerged there. In fact, as the reader might expect, I am going to argue that prehistoric southeastern Mississippian locales such as Moundville were not *chiefdoms* at all, as this term is currently defined, but, instead, were much like Cahokia, under my view; that is, they were complex cult sodality organizations. However, I recognize that many Mississippian archaeologists would immediately disagree with me and, therefore, quite expectedly challenge this claim. Since my denial of the validity of the chiefdom concept as currently defined is so basic to the theme of this book, I recognize the necessity of critically addressing the claim that many of the traditional communities in “Florida,” as the Spaniards called it, were dominance-based hierarchical chiefdoms. Much of the evidence archaeologists use is derived from the descriptions given in the records of these cultural outsiders—first the Spanish interlopers and then the French and English interlopers—all of whom originated from communities that were, in fact, strongly dominance-based and hierarchical in nature.

Therefore, my approach to interpreting Moundville *as a world renewal cult sodality center* akin to Cahokia rather than as a “chiefdom” requires further critical elucidation of the chiefdom concept. In this case, I argue that while some (and only some) of the historically known communities of the Southeast were structurally different from those encountered in the Midwest by the Europeans, the differences between the Southeastern and Midwestern communities are not adequately characterized in terms of the egalitarian–nonegalitarian continuum that currently prevails in Native North American ethnology. Nor can the social structural differences that I recognize as having actually existed be projected very far back into prehistory. That is, the emergence of these differences occurred only in the century (or less) prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the Southeast. This means that they would not apply to Moundville, as such. Instead, as I have already noted, I will argue that Moundville and its other contemporary mound-and-plaza complexes were central locales generated and used by various regional world renewal cult sodality heterarchies. However, I will supplement this claim by arguing that the very existence of these cult sodality heterarchy centers was the primary social condition that promoted the emergence of some of the historically known communities that the Spaniards encountered that, *on surface appearances*, mimicked what we think of as dominance-based hierarchical chiefdoms.

The importance of this critical examination arises from the fact that these Eurocentric descriptions have become the major evidential armature for interpreting the prehistoric Mississippian mound-and-plaza complexes of the Southeast as being simply the earlier predecessors of the very same system of dominance-based chiefdoms that it is claimed the European interlopers encountered. To counter this view, I will argue that, indeed, while these communities did manifest a hierarchical structure, it was not one that can be adequately

or correctly characterized in dominance terms. For these reasons, Chapter 12, the introductory chapter of Part III, initiates an in-depth critique of the current view of the chiefdom concept. I then fully elucidate a model of a form of ranked social system that I speak of as the *complementary heterarchical chiefdom*. This type of “chiefdom” would have definitely manifested a form of transition of leadership from one to another kinship-related person. However, I will argue that it was not an inheritance-based form of transfer nor was the hierarchy of leadership based on dominance power, a type of social power that is generally assumed to be endemic to the Southeastern Mississippian social system. To clarify, I then present a developmental model that argues how such nondominance-based hierarchical types of communities, or, as I dubbed them above, *complementary heterarchical chiefdoms*, could emerge out of the operation of the cult sodality centers such as Moundville. The rest of Part III is used to demonstrate this model using primarily the Moundville archaeological record.

NOTES

1. This complex one-on-one transfer of copyrights, which I call custodial franchising, among equivalent cult sodality units stands in considerable contrast to Timothy Pauketat's (2007, 107, 172, 197) view that Mississippianization was largely a matter of massive migration of multiple ethnic groups aggregating in the American Bottom where the X factor was able to operate (i.e., the synthesis of many different traditions into a new and unique cultural amalgam). I cannot discuss this X factor characterization of Mississippianization in this book, since it would require significant reorientation, but I plan to write a critical examination Pauketat's Mississippianization process and its methodology that he refers to as *historical processualism*. For this book, however, I will simply develop my own thesis and firmly ground it in the relevant empirical data.

2. I more fully elucidate the structural nature of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality in Chapter 7.

3. In fact, in my earlier work (Byers 2006a, 133) I referred to this community as a *dual clan/cult community* and referred to the theoretical framework as the *heterarchical polyistic locale-centric model*. I also specified that the organization of the community would qualify treating it as a complementary heterarchy. I simply did not refer to it in these terms. In this book, I will be referring to the typical dual clan/sodality or polyistic community as a *complementary heterarchical community*, and it will contrast with alliances of cult sodalities, which I referred to above as *mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies* of different scales of orders.

CHAPTER 2

Alternative Views of the Mississippian World

As noted in Chapter 1, Cahokia is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River in a floodplain region of southwest Illinois referred to as the *American Bottom* (figure 2.1). Not including its neighboring sites of East St. Louis, St. Louis, and others, Cahokia “proper” consists of a multiple number of multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes incorporating an estimated area about 15 km². Indeed, in the aggregate, Cahokia proper is the largest known prehistoric site north of Mexico, and over its history of use it also included a sequential series of large circular freestanding timber-post “woodhenges” up to 125 m in diameter, most of these located west of the Central Precinct. These multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes, at least twelve, form a dual concentric encirclement of the largest of these complexes, what is called in the literature as the *Central Precinct*. The Central Precinct was itself delineated by a monumental three-walled palisade-and-bastion complex, open at the northern end overlooking the flood bottom of Cahokia Creek, clearly acting as the perimeter of a set of very large platform mounds surrounding a very broad central space termed the *Grand Plaza*.¹ Flanking and almost filling the open northern end of the Grand Plaza and overlooking the bottom land of Cahokia Creek is Monks Mound, the largest single earthen platform construction north of Mexico.

Cahokia proper was initiated ca. cal. AD 1050. Timothy Pauketat (1997, 30-31; 2004a, 168; 2007) has suggested that its rather abrupt and rapid construction warrants characterizing at least the initial stages of the construction episode as the “Big Bang” on the American Bottom; and following its initial construction stage, it continued to be occupied and expanded for several centuries until about AD 1350-AD 1400. Its multiple mounds bracket the north and south sides of Cahokia Creek, which drains much of the eastern upland region immediately northeast of the American Bottom and flows southwest across the American Bottom to empty into the Mississippi River about 7 km southwest of Monks Mound (shown in figure 2.2). The American Bottom is also one of the largest lowland terrace and flood plain zones of the Mississippi Valley. The zone starts just above

Figure 2.1. The Third-Order/Fourth-Order Cult Sodality Hierarchy of Cahokia and its many Individual Multiple-Mounded Mound-and-Plaza Complexes. (From Fowler 1997, p. 194, figure 10.1. Courtesy of the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, University of Illinois.)

Alton, Illinois, the northernmost modern town on this flood plain, and extends about 125 km south to Chester, which is at the mouth of the Kaskaskia River. The upper third is termed the *northern expanse*, and it is the broadest sector of the American Bottom flood plain, about 19 km between the base of the eastern bluffs to the eastern bank of the Mississippi River; and it extends about 40 km from north

Figure 2.2. The American Bottom Mississippian Period Mound-and-Plaza Site Complexes of the Northern Expanse. (Reproduced from *Cahokia: Domination and Ideology in the Mississippian World*, edited by Timothy R. Pauketat and Thomas E. Emerson, by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1997 by the University of Nebraska Press.)

to south with its southern apex near Dupo, Illinois. Here the flood plain narrows and continues south from Dupo about 85 km to Chester. This extensive stretch of the flood plain is quite narrow and varies between 4 to 8 km (Milner 1998, 14, 35).

The Chiefdom Polity View

As I noted in the introductory chapter, the prevailing archaeological view treats Cahokia as a dominance-based hierarchical polity. In fact, it is most commonly spoken of as the earliest of the “paramount chiefdoms,” or even as a “primitive state,” and it has become the standard by which many archaeologists measure other mound-and-plaza locale complexes that apparently emulated Cahokia, although none surpassed it quantitatively during its history (Anderson 1997; Emerson 1997b; Fowler 1997; Hall 1991; Knight 1997; Milner 1998; Muller 1997; Pauketat 2010, 2007, 2004a, 2001, 1997, 1994). Hence, the Mississippian period social system has become interpreted as a system of dominance-based hierarchical polities or, “chiefdoms,” ranging from simple to complex to paramount types, and even “cities” or “metropolises” or “primitive states,” as some have claimed that Cahokia itself best exemplifies (Pauketat 2007, 146-55; 2004a, 151, 165-66). Indeed, it has become so common to use the term *chiefdom* with various modifiers to speak about the different social systems responsible for these single, dual, and even multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza site complexes that some question whether the term is meaningful at all. Many qualifications have been suggested in order to embrace the finer points of the great variety of patternings among the formal plans of the sites identified as Mississippian, while most have retained the fundamental premise that these are polities of one sort or another.² The basic constituent component is the single platform mound-and-plaza complex itself. This defines the site as minimally a “chiefdom,” often qualified as a “simple chiefdom.” Then,

since the number and arrangement of these complexes—single, dual, triple, or higher—is variable across this large region, elaborate modifiers have been proposed to encompass the proliferation of the possible types of “chiefdoms” that may have existed: simple, complex, or paramount chiefdoms; federations of simple chiefdoms; heterarchical-like confederations of simple or complex chiefdoms, and so on. Also, the processes that brought about these mound sites have been variously postulated as bottom-up building or top-down aggregation; as “fusion” of simple chiefdoms into federated chiefdoms, coalescence of simple chiefdoms into dominance-based complex chiefdoms, or “fission” of the latter into simple chiefdoms, and even the fission of heterarchical-like federations into disparate simple or complex chiefdoms, and so on (Blitz and Lorenz 2006, 14-17; Knight 2010, for Moundville; Pauketat 2004a, 2007 for Cahokia itself). Importantly, it is this process of emergence, complexification and elaboration, breakdown, and reformulation that is typically spoken of as Mississippianization.

I suspect that most Mississippian archaeologists would find John Blitz and Karl Lorenz’s minimalist definition of the “chiefdom” polity to be unproblematic. “To minimally conform to the chiefdom concept, we expect a Mississippian population to be composed of ranked kin-groups in multiple communities of dispersed households, united into a permanent political organization, and headed by a formal or permanent political official—the ‘chief’” (2006, 4). The only attribute that is absent from this definition, and that many would add, is *ascription*; that is, the “chief” inherits his/her position through being the senior ranking unilineal descendent of his/her predecessor. However, since the definition includes the notion that the community consisted of “ranked kin-groups,” some might say that to stress the ascriptive-via-inheritance factor might be redundant. Another attribute that is often not explicitly noted but which I think is another

key property that most archaeologists implicitly add is the cultural notion of exclusive territory. In fact, this characteristic is so basic that it is largely taken for granted, as illustrated in the above definition in which exclusive territorialism is not noted but clearly implied, given that it is also characterized as a political organization or “polity.” I shall have more to say about this assumed attribute shortly. For now, however, it is sufficient to note that it is generally accepted that the community is a “chiefdom” type polity (i.e., a dominance-based hierarchically structured and unilineal kinship-based community) that rightfully claims and can and must forcefully sustain control over an exclusive territory or territorial module in order to remain viable.

While there is general consensus among many Mississippianist archaeologists on this basic structural nature of communities making up the Mississippian world, there is discussion over precisely the type of “chiefdom” any given site or complex of sites was or what process of growth and change it experienced. This is exemplified in the current debate over the nature of Cahokia as a sedentary dominance-based hierarchical polity. Was it simply a part of a loose organization of semiautonomous “chiefdom” polities, or was it the supreme political seat of a firmly centralized paramountcy dominant over its local neighboring polity sites and, possibly, over others that were located in both near and more distant regions? Or was it actually beyond being a mere “chiefdom,” and instead, had it achieved the status of being a “civilization” and being the capital city or *metroplex* of a burgeoning primitive state (Pauketat 2007, 142)? Whatever the case, the Cahokian-derived material cultural assemblages in the regions surrounding the American Bottom, both near and far, are treated in this hierarchical modular polity perspective as primarily a result of dominance-based interventions of a political and/or economic nature flowing from Cahokia, largely assisted through the mediation of religious beliefs and practices and strategically exercised military might (Pauketat 2007, 154).

An Alternative View

A basic assumption informing this book is that the types of relations that groups have with each other and the types of influences they promote with others are a function of their social nature. Therefore, the way that archaeologists assess the material indicators of the relations that Cahokia had with its neighboring regions ought to, and indeed usually do, hinge on their characterization of the social nature of Cahokia itself. In this regard, and as I noted above and in Chapter 1, I have taken strong issue with the school that treats Cahokia as a dominance-based hierarchically-ordered corporate kinship-based polity, of whatever sort. And this means that I disagree with the above set of assumptions presupposing and supporting the view that Cahokia was just this sort of dominance-based power center. Since most other Mississippian mound-and-plaza sites are treated as being one or another type of such a “chiefdom”-like community, then I extend my disagreement to these also. Instead, I construe Cahokia and other Mississippian-type centers in religious institutional and mutualistic (i.e., nondominance-based) heterarchical social structural terms.

The notion expressed in the term *heterarchy* has come to be widely used in archaeology. I believe that it is an important concept because it delineates a real type of social structure. I will detail my definition of the term and characterization it makes of a heterarchy in the next chapter. However, for my immediate purposes, I use the term to refer to an *affiliation of autonomous social organizations*, whether these are full communities or are components of such communities. If the way Cahokia’s interregional relations are to be construed hinges on characterizing its fundamental social nature, in this case, as a heterarchy whose component groups are not community polities, as such, but have a fundamental religious nature, then rather than interpreting the Mississippian material record of the Cahokian “hinterlands” in the dominance-based political-economic terms as entailed by the

hierarchical polity or “chiefdom” perspective—in any of its current versions—it ought to be interpreted in these religious-heterarchical terms. This interpretation can be tested by showing that it generates a more coherent, consistent, and rational explanation of these monumental sites than do any explanations that are given under the orthodox perspective of communities as “chiefdoms.”

However, the notion of a heterarchy also strongly contrasts with the notion of a polity. Both notions define a social field of interaction, and as social fields, they necessarily entail the distribution of social powers across the landscape. The limits of the social field of a polity are typically materially circumscribed by socially constructed boundaries, these defining its field of jurisdiction. The social powers within this field are spatially and temporally distributed in specific places (e.g., settlement sites, villages, and so on) that constitute the total polity field. However, these places participate in and are structured into dominance relations emanating from a core locale, the “capital.” Therefore, the social power of the latter is not only greater than all the other locales, it is treated as the source of the social powers of these other locales. Hence, the social power of a polity field is dominance-based and centralized. Typically, this dominance power structure is materially manifested by the core locale, the “capital” displaying its centralization of dominance powers by being the largest of all the locales of social power as well as displaying the greatest variety of institutional structures—for example, palaces, temples, plazas, great palisades, and so on.

A heterarchy as a social organization also constitutes a complex field of distributed social powers. It also consists of locales where the social powers are situated, and these locales can display differential material complexity and size, even to the point that one of them is materially larger and more complex than all the others. But the structuring of these powers, the linking of these locales, is not

effected by a process of dominance-based subsuming of social powers because these locales are autonomous social powers, and therefore, they cannot be linked by dominance-subordinate relations. Each locale maintains responsibility for its own existence and the practices that are performed there. It is very true that there can be differential grading of material size and complexity among the distributed locales, and this differential entails greater or lesser material powers in each case. But the material expression of these social powers that enabled the greater material size and complexity of one locale compared to another are best conceived as the result of the focusing on rather than emanating from the locale. That is, there could well be five major autonomous locales distributed across a region, constituting this as a heterarchical field of social powers. Four of these five autonomous locales display equivalent material labor and complexity while the fifth displays a significantly greater magnitude and complexity of material features manifesting, of course, a corresponding greater mobilization of labor. Since each of these locales is autonomous, this disparity could demarcate differences in population size and social complexity. This is one possibility, but it quickly slides into the polity view and assumes that these are differentially linked according to centralized dominance powers. However, there is another possibility. As I noted above, each locale can be considered to be the aggregative focus of the social powers that made its existence possible, and these are manifested in and through its material size and complexity. However, the social powers do not reside in these locales; they are dispersed across the landscape in the many locales of lesser magnitude. This means that, while the largest of the five might display the aggregation of the labor of the largest population, this population does not reside there but in the four smaller locales, these having cooperatively focused their several social powers just in order to construct this fifth locale. It is the center only in that

it is the largest and most complex expression of labor; but it is not the center of social powers that governed this labor, and this is because the social powers so displayed were embodied in the populations of the autonomous locales that cooperatively shared their labor and interests to build and use the fifth locale.

I have already suggested that a useful—but limited—analogy for modeling the social field constituting a heterarchy can be the typical North American shopping mall (Byers 2006a, 225-35). The limiting proviso I would stress is that the firms that lease space in the shopping malls are themselves dominance-based in terms of their individual internal structure; for example, the J. C. Penney outlet at your neighboring shopping center is caught in a gravity well of power centered in the head offices of the J. C. Penney corporation. However, while the J. C. Penney outlet in a given shopping center is subordinate to the central office of the firm, within the center, it is a unit that is autonomous of the other equivalent units (for the most part, retail outlets), and they all cooperate in carrying on their activities in that center. And, of course, the firm that owns the shopping center is also a dominance-based corporation, and therefore, while its wealth and material power is represented in its shopping center, its center of gravity is not. Instead, it is located in its head offices, which may be hundreds of miles away. The shopping mall analogy, therefore, is limited for my purposes since, while the outlets in the shopping center, including the administrative offices located in it, are autonomous with respect to each other, they are themselves the expression of dominance-based corporations. In contrast, not only are the above “outlets” making up the large “central focal” locale mutually autonomous, their respective four lesser locales are themselves internally autonomous, as I clarify later. The fifth locale that they cooperatively construct and use would be the structural equivalent to the American shopping center, except its *raison d’être* was not based

on commercial gain and profit but on jointly performed religious activities that ensured success for all. And of course, it is quite possible that an equivalently sized and complex locale could be located in a neighboring region. These two locales, and the lesser-sized locales that respectively cooperatively built and used each, would stand to each other as autonomous entities. In my view, therefore, while the social field constituting a heterarchy can be delimited, it is primarily a practical and not a jurisdictional delimiting. That is, the heterarchy is not defined by boundaries delineating exclusive rights and control to the ambient territory, and therefore, its social field is quite distinctly different from the social field of a polity.

A useful summary distinction between the central locales of these two social fields, polity and heterarchy, respectively, is to characterize the central locale of a polity as a gravity well, dragging and impelling compliance from its peripheral locales. In contrast, the central locale of a heterarchy can be characterized as the focal center of a magnetic social field, attracting the peripheral locales to willingly participate in the activities that make it up. Another distinction is raised by the contrast between "gravity-well field" and "magnetic field" in that the former is indiscriminate and the latter is discriminate. Iron filings are attracted to the opposite poles of a magnetic field; wooden chips are indifferent in this case. However, both iron filings and wood chips are sucked into a gravity well. In this sense, a polity field is like a gravity well in that any type of social organization will be subjected to and impelled by its pull. In contrast, the extent and force of the social field of a heterarchy is determined by the social nature of the groups involved since it is the interests of these groups that determine the attraction of the heterarchical magnet-like social field. In the case of gravity-well polity center, those peripheral subordinate (lesser) power centers that offer greatest resistance gain autonomy from the polity center and possibly achieve independence

and autonomy. In the case of the magnetic social field of a heterarchy center, those peripheral autonomous groups who exceed the normal levels of participation in the focal center achieve repute for worthiness, and therefore, achieve respect in the eyes of its peers.

It should be noted here that, according to my above discussion of the “magnetic” focal centers of heterarchies and the “gravity-well” capital centers of polities, even though these two are quite contrasting social fields of interaction, they may still be empirically synonymous in that both may display an equal degree of magnitude and formal complexity of construction. Therefore, when dealing with only the objective residue of the centers of these constitutionally contrasting social fields, heterarchies and polities, it is very easy to misinterpret these data. In a significant way, this is what I am saying has been consistently done in Mississippian studies, and although certainly there have been interpretations presented that are close to the notion of these locales as being heterarchies as defined above (e.g., views that emphasize the “communal” perspective) (Saitta 1994), the prevailing interpretation has been to favor the gravity-well polity center view. This book is directed to showing that this is an error, and it also is directed to showing how the same empirical data that have been used to develop this erroneous view can be reinterpreted to support and confirm this alternative heterarchical magnetic field perspective.

Of course, all Mississippian archaeologists recognize Cahokia and other mound-and-plaza complex locales, either single or multiple, as incorporating a religious dimension. However, I think that it is also fair to say that this religious dimension is *always* treated by them as a functional instrument subsumed to the needs of the political and economic elite to entrench and expand the political and economic powers and the reach of the chiefdom polity as well as their own personal standing within it, and this means extending

their own dominance-based powers. This subsumption of the religious sphere is expressed by archaeologists when they attribute the function of the religious sphere to the “legitimization” of the “chiefdom” polity elite. Now I consider this to be a valid argument for analyzing a *real* chiefdom-polity type community (i.e., one that can be correctly characterized as having a dominance-based hierarchical structure and a boundaried territory). However, since I do not accept the premise as applying to the social organizations constituting the Mississippian social system, I will have to discuss the role of religion in the context of a heterarchy constituted in the above manner, as an organization of autonomous, nonpolity organizations that are based on the pursuit of precisely the realization of religiously defined purposes and interests. I will do so in detail in the following chapter.

Cahokian and the American Bottom Settlement Pattern: Alternatives

I am not going to describe and interpret in detail the settlement patterning and structuring of Cahokia and its immediate regions in terms of the orthodox “chiefdom” perspective since this is well known and can be found in many books on this region. What is much less widely known is the alternative cult sodality heterarchy view. I have published only one book on this view of the Mississippian type of center, this being on Cahokia proper, and to accomplish it, I drew on the published reports and descriptions of the Mississippian assemblage as it related to Cahokia and its immediate region. In that book, I did not dispute the empirical data—only the interpretations made of them. Indeed, I also was quite pleased to accept the chronology that has been so carefully constructed and empirically grounded by the Cahokian researchers. In these terms, I recognize the Mississippian period of the American Bottom as consisting of a

sequence of phases demarcated by displaying various formal changes in the archaeological record, although, of course, these diachronic

Table 2.1. The Calibrated Terminal Late Woodland Chronology of the American Bottom. (From Fortier and McElrath 2002, p. 181, figure 2. Used with permission of Alta Mira Press.)

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE MISSISSIPPIAN WORLD

Table 2.2. The Uncalibrated Chronology of the Mississippian Period of the American Bottom. (From Pauketat 1994, p. 49, figure 3.3. Used with permission of The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.)

phases also sustained a common set of formal properties demarcating an underlying continuity of cultural traditions. I will use this chronology as the framework of this book and accommodate it to the equivalent Mississippian chronologies of the Central Illinois Valley region and the Black Warrior Valley region of Alabama when necessary.

Table 2.1 represents primarily the pre-Mississippian period chronology of the American Bottom that I will use, while table 2.2 is a fairly detailed Mississippian period chronology. Table 2.1 was

proposed by Andrew Fortier and Dale McElrath (2002, 181), and it updates table 2.2, which is based on the older noncalibrated chronology. This is why there is disagreement between these tables concerning the dating of the emergence of the Mississippian period in the American Bottom. Table 2.2 places it at ca. AD 1000. Therefore, this initial phase, called the *Lohmann phase*, needs to be forwarded to cal. ca. AD 1050. The two tables then correlate. However, the two chronologies also differ terminologically in a significantly substantive manner. The older chronology consistently used the term *Emergent Mississippian period*, itself divided into a sequence of phases, in order to refer to the period between the end of the Late Woodland and the emergence of the Mississippian period, and this Emergent Mississippian time was primarily defined by the appearance of maize as a subsistence crop. Of course, the term *emergent* invokes a teleological perspective directing us to explain the archeological patterning of this period in terms of what the future Mississippian period “required” in order to emerge. Since this future time (i.e., the Mississippian period) was characterized as nonegalitarian, then there was a strong tendency to interpret the settlement patterning of the “Emergent Mississippian period” as embodying and mapping the indicators of the preliminary conditions required for the emergence of a “nonegalitarian” system from a preexisting “egalitarian system,” these being indicators of emerging ranking and dominance and their subsequent unfolding development.

This calibrated chronology also renames this period as the *Terminal Late Woodland period*, and Fortier and McElrath deliberately chose this terminology to avoid such explicit teleology. I support this change of terminology, as I also support their concern with the teleology implicated by the older terminology; however, I do not support the theoretical characterization that Fortier and McElrath give to the emergence of the Mississippian period. They maintain the orthodox

view that Cahokia emerged as a dominance-based hierarchical “chiefdom” polity. Since they reject the teleological perspective implicated in the “Emergent Mississippian” view, they must promote the position that during the two centuries prior to the emergence of Cahokia as a chiefdom polity there were no significant trends toward the development of dominance-based hierarchy as such. This must be the case since they claim that the transition from Terminal Late Woodland to the Mississippian period occurred rapidly, and moreover, traumatically. That is, in their view, a rapid shift from an “egalitarian” to a “nonegalitarian” social state of affairs must have occurred, and of course, since this entailed major deep structural transformations, this transformative episode would have been very socially disruptive. As noted above, Timothy Pauketat (1997, 31-32; 2007, 146-47) has picturesquely labeled this social trauma as the “Big Bang” in the American Bottom (i.e., abrupt and socially traumatic social change). Hence, for Fortier and McElrath (2002, 182), “the Big Bang was an unpredictable but understandable and explainable social revolution, one that was not dependent on a systematic and directional evolutionary trajectory, nor on the innovation of special technologies or the acquisition of unusual artifacts. Such a social revolution could have taken place in years, months, or even days rather than centuries.” And they conclude by asserting that “[t]he historical appearance of Cahokia in the American Bottom is best described as revolutionary, not evolutionary, so an evolutionary model will never supply as much insight as models of social upheavals based on historical analogies” (2002, 203).

I can certainly agree with them that the emergence of Cahokia was rapid. But I take serious issue with the associated claims—namely, that it was a socially disruptive event of a catastrophic manner entailing major deep structural transformations. Therefore, while avoiding teleological claims is important, there is another and more pressing

reason that I prefer using “Terminal Late Woodland” rather than “Emergent Mississippian.” I think that the term *emergent* is properly applied only to the actual Mississippian period. That is, the Mississippian period is emergent from the Terminal Late Woodland, and the latter is best qualified as the “terminal” Late Woodland. I see the settlement patterning of the later Woodland period as manifested in the George Reeves and Lindeman phases as significantly different from that of the prior Dohack and Range phases, and in fact, as expressing the maximum accommodation of the integrated or nucleated communities of that time to the constraints of the environment, given both the immanentist cosmology of the resident communities and the increasing intensity of their subsistence and settlement practices arising from the unanticipated impact on population sizes of their adoption of maize agriculture as a significant component of their subsistence practices. This maximization, as I discuss later, was resolved by the rather rapid transformation of the settlement practices of these communities, thereby constituting and enabling the emergence of Cahokia and related multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes that characterized the Mississippian period. Therefore, I will characterize the transformation in terms I briefly alluded to in Chapter 1, that is, as the outcome of the communities of the American Bottom region strategically shifting from an integrated to a bifurcated settlement articulation posture. While this shift was rapid and radically transformed the tangible formal settlement patterning of the region, the deep structures of these dual clan/sodality communities remained largely unchanged, and therefore, the transformation was not “socially traumatic” in the manner suggested by Fortier and McElrath (Byers 2006a, 16, 32, 82). Despite this difference in interpretation, however, I will certainly use this formal chronology to contextualize the equivalent pre-Mississippian times in the neighboring regions as influenced by Cahokian interregional relations.

Cahokia as a Monumental High Order Cult Sodality Heterarchy

Treating Cahokia as a monumental complex embodying and expressing an essentially religious social nature and purpose means that its primary social nature or, more correctly stated, the primary social nature of its autonomous constituent units, was not political and/or economic but religious (Byers 2006a, 224-25). Rather than its social field being that of a gravity well typical of a polity, it was more akin to being a magnetic field characteristic of a heterarchy, which I briefly defined above as an affiliation of autonomous social groups, whether these groups are institutionally political, economic, commercial, or religious, or whether they were kinship, companionate, or contractual in nature, and so on. In this case, I treat the heterarchy of Cahokia as a structure of companionship-based religious groups. Therefore, the layout of Cahokia manifested a complex heterarchy constituted of such groups, and they stood to each other as mutually *autonomous cult sodalities* that shared a common endeavor—religious ritual of a particular thematic nature, namely, world renewal. The carrying out of this shared endeavor was enabled by the symbolic pragmatic meaning and nature of the mound-and-plaza site complexes themselves.³ As component units sharing the same social nature (i.e., as cult sodalities), I have argued that they treated each other as *mutually autonomous*, each perceiving itself and equivalent others as being responsible for its own affairs and the social activities that realize these. I further theorize that the autonomous cult sodalities of a set of neighboring communities normally affiliated to form a primary type of mutualistic cult sodality heterarchy that I will refer to as a *first-order cult sodality heterarchical affiliation*. At least in the American Bottom, each first-order cult sodality heterarchy normally built a single mound-and-plaza complex (i.e., one mound and associated plaza with associated sodality structures—renewal lodges,

sweat lodges, hostels for transient members to occupy while participating in ritual practices, and the like). As noted above, a first-order cult sodality heterarchy was an affiliation or alliance of minimally two to possibly four or more autonomous cult sodalities; and just as the primary ritual of the component sodalities was directed to world renewal performances, so the first-order heterarchy, in virtue of its being a magnetic center attracting and not compelling cooperation among the cult sodalities of a region, collectively performed ritual that was also directed primarily to world renewal, usually mediated by mortuary practices, as I more fully elaborate later.

The first-order cult sodality heterarchy was itself autonomous with regard to other first-order cult sodality heterarchies in the region. And as autonomous organizations, several first-order cult sodality heterarchies that were relatively close neighbors were perfectly able to affiliate to form a higher order heterarchy, which I refer to as a second-order cult sodality heterarchy.⁴ Now, as I noted earlier, figure 2.1 indicates that Cahokia consists of twelve (or so) multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes, each consisting of two or more mounds in association with one or more associated plazas (e.g., the Ramey Group, the Morrell Group, the Kunnemann Group, and so on). These complexes were spatially organized into two concentric rings, one outer and one inner. These two concentric rings roughly encircle the great Central Precinct, which as I noted above, was itself the largest of these multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes. With regard to the dual concentric rings made up of twelve or so multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes, I postulate that each of the latter was constituted of an affiliation of several autonomous first-order heterarchies. As such, each formed a higher order affiliation, what I will now call an autonomous *second-order cult sodality heterarchy* (e.g., the Kunnemann Group). It seems reasonable to treat this total set of second-order heterarchies making up

the dual concentric rings as constituting a still higher order cult sodality heterarchy. Hence, I postulate that these two concentric rings of twelve or so autonomous second-order heterarchies constituted what I will now call a *third-order heterarchy*. As indicated in figure 2.1, the dual ring formation of this third-order heterarchy actually encircled and framed the Central Precinct, which included Monks Mound, the largest platform mound north of Mexico, plus several other mounds which, in fact, made up some of the largest platform mounds of the Cahokia complex. Furthermore, for a significant period of its use, this Central Precinct was sectoried off from the surrounding third-order formation of second-order heterarchies by a massive U-shaped three-sided timber wall having its open northern sector overlooking the Cahokia Creek. This monumental timber-walled feature is usually referred to as the *Great Palisade*. All this careful spacing and sectoring suggests that the Central Precinct and its monumental features should not be subsumed to the third-order heterarchy manifested in the dual ring formation of second-order heterarchies. Instead, it should be treated as structurally distinct and manifesting an even higher order heterarchy formation. Therefore, it is reasonable under this theoretical scheme to characterize the Central Precinct as being the embodiment and manifestation of a *fourth-order cult sodality heterarchy*.⁵

But this fourth-order heterarchy does not simply incorporate the dual concentric third-order heterarchy consisting of the twelve or so second-order heterarchies making up most of Cahokia proper. I postulate that the fourth-order heterarchy as embodied in the Central Precinct embraced not only the third-order heterarchy consisting of the two concentric sets of encircling second-order heterarchies but also the total set of cult sodality heterarchies of both the northern expanse sector of the American Bottom and the narrow southern sector, as I briefly sketched out in Chapter 1, and probably *all* of the

other heterarchies of the adjacent uplands of the American Bottom, on both sides of the Mississippi River. Hence, this fourth-order heterarchy includes the third-order dual concentric heterarchy ring as well the large second-order (possibly third-order) heterarchies of St. Louis and East St. Louis, as well as the smaller second-order heterarchies of Pulcher and Mitchell to the south and north of Cahokia, respectively.

These four complex neighboring heterarchies, either all four as second-order heterarchies or split as two third-order and two second-order heterarchies, as well as the twelve or so second-order heterarchies that made up the third-order heterarchy encircling the Central Precinct of Cahokia, would each be constituted of several first-order heterarchies; and, as noted above, each one of these latter first-order heterarchies would likely be individually responsible for one of the many single mound-and-plaza complexes that are distributed north-to-south along the length of the American Bottom, as well as the several along the Cahokia Creek between Cahokia proper and East St. Louis and the several mound-and-plaza complexes found in neighboring tributary valleys, as well as those in the upper Kaskaskia valley (the Emerald and Pfeffer sites). Hence, all these first-order heterarchies, integrated into the several levels of higher-order heterarchies, are postulated to have cooperatively affiliated to constitute the fourth-order heterarchy collectively responsible for the great Central Precinct of Cahokia. As the “seat” of a *fourth-order heterarchy*, this monumental plaza, its multiple mounds, including Monks Mound, and its great palisade would embrace the total ceremonial sphere of the American Bottom and its surrounding uplands, the largest currently known in the Eastern Woodland Mississippian social system.

This constellation of monumental multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes constitutes a very internally complex field of

social powers, and as a heterarchy, this field consisted of multiple magnetic centers that linked together cooperatively at higher and higher levels. The lowest level was actually probably the least archaeologically visible, although I maintain it certainly is visible. In fact, I have argued that it consisted of the multiple autonomous cult sodalities dispersed across the landscape in their *individual ceremonial nodal centers* (Byers 2006a, 279-95). Several neighboring sodalities, then, affiliated to constitute a first-order magnetic field that generated a single mound-and-plaza complex, and so on. Although each level manifested real social powers, these powers did not reside in that locale but at the level of autonomous locales that cooperatively built and used the larger magnetic center. And while I have focused only on the American Bottom, I noted above that the fourth-level cult sodality heterarchy of Cahokia probably incorporated many cult sodalities located in the surrounding upland regions. And rather than these building isolated single mound-and-plaza complexes in these uplands, they may very well have done so at Cahokia just so as to focus their spiritual powers where they were most needed, in the lowland regions subject to great floods. Hence, the concentric rings of second-order heterarchies, or at last some of these, may have been under the responsibility of “out-of-American Bottom” cult sodalities who avoided expressing their first-order affiliation materially and, instead, directly linked as first-order heterarchies into one or several second-order heterarchies, manifesting their association by building their complexes as among the core components of Cahokia (e.g., the Powell Mound group). Since these sodalities would be from regions outside the American Bottom, as such, their own complementary heterarchical communities could consist of ethnic groups different from those making up the American Bottom communities.

In short, rather than the St. Louis, East St. Louis, Pulcher, and Mitchell multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza sites, combined with

Cahokia proper and the Central Precinct being treated as “part of the sprawling political-administrative complex” of an extensive political heterarchy consisting of dominance-based hierarchical polities, which is the way that I read Tim Pauketat’s characterization of Cahokia (1994, 4; 2004a, 165-66; 2007, 151), it is here postulated that this same multiplex of mound-and-plaza complexes, along with the multiple single mound-and-plaza sites of the American Bottom, constituted a fourth-order (possibly a fifth-order) world renewal cult sodality heterarchy as the focal center of the magnetic field constituted by the collective concerns of multiple individual autonomous cult sodalities organized as first-order and the latter as second-order heterarchies distributed across the American Bottom and over the extensive uplands, and collectively embracing in all its complex monumentalism the totality of the sacred powers of the cosmos—as these were taken by this extensive set of cult sodalities to be focused and realized in the American Bottom.

While in my earlier interpretation of Cahokia (Byers 2006a) I defined a cult sodality heterarchy as an affiliation of autonomous cult sodalities, and I went on to speak of *affiliations* of cult sodality heterarchies (Byers 2006a, 223-31), I left the way these affiliations were structured somewhat undertheorized. Subsequently, in a separate study, I again used the term *cult sodality heterarchy*, in this case, to speak about the social formations responsible for the even more ancient Middle Woodland period Ohio Hopewell earthworks of the central Ohio Valley (Byers 2011). It was then that I realized how best to conceptualize the relations both within and among monumental Hopewellian earthwork features of this region and period—which varied between being rather small and simple to being large and complex. In this case, I started to qualify these arrangements as the outcome of “first-order,” “second-order,” and “third-order” cult sodality heterarchies, thereby recognizing a cumulative series

of spatially expansive, progressively inclusive cult sodality heterarchical levels. In the case of Ohio Hopewell, I empirically grounded the additional qualification of speaking of widely separated major earthwork sites as constituting several mutually autonomous *dispersed third-order heterarchies*. A dispersed third-order heterarchy is an affiliation of autonomous second-order heterarchies that were individually spatially separated but were allied to form a coherent third-order level system of interaction. For example, I postulated and empirically demonstrated that the well-known monumental sites of Fort Ancient and Turner (on the Little Miami River drainage of the Ohio River) and the Hopewell site (on the North Fork of the Paint Creek drainage) were three autonomous second-order heterarchies that affiliated to constitute what I termed the *dispersed third-order Fort Ancient-Turner-Hopewell cult sodality heterarchy*.

While I postulate that Cahokia is of the same and possibly higher type of social order, clearly its major monumental components are spatially less dispersed. Therefore, I have dispensed with the qualifying term *dispersed* and added a fourth level, as described above, and have now characterized it as a (nucleated?) fourth-order or even possibly fifth-order cult sodality heterarchy. That is, while overall it may embrace the same spatial area as did the much earlier Hopewellian-type dispersed third-order Fort Ancient-Turner-Hopewell cult sodality heterarchy, the spatial distribution of the primary affiliated monumental components—St. Louis, East St. Louis, Pulcher, Mitchell and, of course, the third-order dual concentric rings—is not adequately characterized as being spatially dispersed (as in the above Ohio Hopewellian case), but instead are more “nucleated.” However, if all or some of the second-order cult sodality heterarchies constituting the concentric rings are actually affiliations of first-order extra-American Bottom heterarchies with their autonomous cult sodality components dispersed across the upland regions, then the

total areal extent of the nonboundaried “magnetic field” of social power embodied in Cahokia may be very extensive indeed, sufficient to involve different ethnic groups.⁶

Therefore, speaking of Cahokia in these fourth-order or possibly fifth-order heterarchical terms is a hypothetical application of these concepts to the Mississippian period of the American Bottom region. I believe that this application does not modify the core conceptualization of the social structural nature of Cahokia that I initially gave (Byers 2006a), and of course, it is still consistent with my analogy of the shopping mall. The only cautionary note I make is that while both the latter shopping mall organization and Cahokia, as I am characterizing it, were heterarchical organizations, the outlets of a shopping mall are subordinate components of their owning firms (i.e., these are dominance-based organizations) while the Cahokian components are the outlets of autonomist organizations, and by this I mean that the principle of autonomy operates from the highest level order to the very basic level, and this means that not only were the cult sodalities autonomous, the participants who constituted them were also autonomous agents responsible for their own activities. Therefore, I also still stand by my view that this structurally ordered system of heterarchies was anchored to and emergent from the cooperative interaction of local base components, the multiple individual autonomous cult sodalities of the communities dispersed across the American Bottom and its immediately adjacent uplands (Byers 2006a, 285-95).

I alluded above and have more carefully argued that the autonomous cult sodality of the American Bottom, the basal social unit, was firmly established in its own spatially separate but nonmounded locale—what I term its *ceremonial nodal locale*. These same sites have been recognized by Thomas Emerson (1997b), except that he classifies them into two different institutional types, one being the central

political nodal locale of a dispersed village system of the Cahokian “chiefdom,” and the other being the locale of a specialized mortuary and fertility-related cult organization, itself acting as the auxiliary religious arm of the paramount chief in the Central Precinct of Cahokia. The former type is defined in the following: “An American Bottom dispersed village . . . can be thought of as consisting of a central nodal site, with a nucleated cluster of domestic and general-purpose structures associated with a specialized structure such as a sweat house, and surrounded by a number of associated households spread along the nearby ridge systems Such a nodal site was usually placed on a topographically high, centrally located spot on a ridge system. Together the nodal site and its associated farmsteads could be thought of socially as a community and spatially as a continuous group” (1997b, 78). In characterizing the second or religious cult ceremonial nodal site, he writes that it would be like “the isolated ceremonial node documented at the BBB Motor site. It is not self-evident how such ceremonial sites articulated with the surrounding settlements. . . . [but] this ceremonial node may have served as the local religious center and charnel house for one or more dispersed villages” (1997b, 79).

In contrast, I have argued that these same data manifest two types of cult sodality ceremonial nodal sites, one likely associated with fertility-oriented male-based sodalities and the other with fecundity-oriented female-based sodalities, and these separate and mutually autonomous but *complementary* cult sodalities cooperatively interacted to perform mortuary-mediated world renewal rituals (Byers 2006a, 266-84). I follow Emerson to this degree by claiming that typically these ceremonial nodal locales would have been dispersed across the countryside, and they would have displayed material patterning superfluous to the needs of everyday kinship-based domestic habitation. As Emerson has put it, such superfluity would

consist of large building structures, significant quantities of residue of exotic ritual materials, sweat house structures, mortuary remains, such as those of the BBB Motor site, and so on. But despite the signs of ceremonial practices, these sites would usually be characterized by a distinct absence of mound earthworks. This is because they were the locales of individual cult sodalities, and the latter formed the constituent components of first-order cult sodality heterarchies. Therefore, I suggest that the several autonomous cult sodalities of the several dispersed communities occupying a local zone of the American Bottom would affiliate, thereby constituting a first-order cult sodality heterarchy, and this first-order heterarchy would typically be responsible for a single, sometimes—though rarely—a dual mound-and-plaza complex. Then, as noted above, several of these first-order heterarchies embracing collectively a set of locale zones of the bottom land would ally to form a second-order heterarchy and be responsible for building one of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes of Cahokia proper, or of St. Louis, or of East St. Louis, and so on. This ordering would continue as described above, including first-order heterarchies in the uplands (and possibly even further afield) and be maximized in the Central Precinct and its Great Plaza and mounds, thereby constituting these multiple autonomous cult sodalities of the American Bottom into a global fourth-order (possibly fifth-order) world renewal cult sodality heterarchy.

I think that the terms *third-order* and *fourth-order* will probably be useful only in speaking of the American Bottom system, although it is possible that some of the other larger Mississippian multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza sites, such as Moundville, could be assessed as the material expression and presencing of a third-order heterarchy—although this possibility is an empirical matter for further research. Hence, the notions articulating the first three levels—the basal ceremonial nodal level of the specific autonomous cult sodality,

the first-order (single or possibly dual mound-and-plaza) and the second-order (multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza) levels—will be very useful for characterizing the social nature of regions where Cahokia's religious and social structural influence was most fully realized. Still, when interpreting transregionally, some flexibility is needed in terms of deciding what particular formal material features and attributes will count as marking a ceremonial nodal site of a single autonomous cult sodality in contrast to a first-order affiliation of several autonomous cult sodalities, and so on. While on the American Bottom, the single mound-and-plaza site complexes might be most reasonably treated as demarcating a first-order heterarchy and while the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes might be most reasonably treated as embodying second-order heterarchies and spatially contiguous clusters of second-order heterarchies (e.g., the above noted concentric rings) constituting a third-order level, since the process of Mississippianization was historical and transregional, it is quite possible that in certain regions most heterarchies did not initially commit to mound construction, or alternatively, while they did commit to it, they did so on the basis of long distance by mobilizing and aggregating their collective labor at Cahokia itself. Hence, first-order heterarchies in regions more distant from the American Bottom may have developed rather elaborate nonmound ceremonial nodal sites; and when local mound construction started, possibly because of disaffiliation with the Cahokia heterarchy, these may have initially entailed single mound-and-plaza complexes constituting second-order heterarchies, that is, affiliations of first-order heterarchies. Therefore, in regions more distant from the American Bottom, the single mound-and-plaza complex might actually demarcate a second-order cult sodality heterarchy. This does not mean that we have no further empirical grounds to claim that, despite having only one mound, it was actually a second-order heterarchy, since

other activity indicators of multiple cult sodalities would be expected, such as large mortuary locales, large timber structures, defined transient residential sectors, and so on. In short, I do not think it is necessary or warranted to specify in an overly narrow or restricted manner the formal material cultural criteria by which to distinguish the cut-off points between the different levels. In this regard, for reasons I present later, I will treat the Eveland site in the Central Illinois valley as likely the ceremonial nodal locale of a first-order heterarchy and the later Orendorf site in the Central Illinois Valley as embodying a second-order heterarchy, even though neither of these sites had platform mounds. I think that, given the same general theoretical criteria, the overall variability of the empirical settlement pattern in each region can be reasonably used to establish a classification of the sites that is most appropriate for each region while avoiding falling into an empiricist and recipe-like interpretive trap.

Interregional Relations

Since the magnetic social nature of a complex such as Cahokia would largely determine the nature of the relations and influence that it would have in its neighboring regions, with these alternative social formation characterizations sketched out, “chiefdom”-like polity (gravity well) and religious cult sodality heterarchy (magnetic social field), I can theorize what type of external relations each alternative would promote. Of course, the relations that Cahokia would have if it was a “chiefdom”-type polity have also been well discussed under the various versions of this hierarchical polity perspective. They pretty well all share the view that where it was clear that Cahokia had both greater military-coercive and economic power, then these relations would strongly subordinate its long-distance “partners,” “sucking” these into its gravity-well field. That is, Cahokia would tend to impose its will through the use or threat of use of its superior

military force in order to promote its economic and political interests, effectively creating a form of unstable colonialism that would be sustained only by either direct coercive force (i.e., military means, for example, building and maintaining a fortified outpost of the Cahokian “paramountcy”) (Pauketat 2007, 160) or by indirect means (e.g., by allying with the main leader of a lesser polity in a neighboring region and ensuring that the latter had adequate coercive reinforcements from Cahokia to dominate both his own and the other polities of the region, and so on).

In contrast, treating Cahokia as an affiliation of autonomous cult sodalities constituting a compounded third-order and fourth-order mutualistic heterarchy of autonomous cult sodality alliances means characterizing its external relations in terms of the interests defined by its “magnetic” socioreligious nature. Since, as noted above, it is postulated that the primary religious goal was to perform world renewal rituals, such a pursuit would define two purposes to external relations: (1) the expansion of the magnetic social field of world renewal ritual activity beyond the limits of the region of the heterarchy, thereby demonstrating and achieving its commitment to a “universal” mission; and (2) the attraction-based procurement of religious material ritual resources that would be understood as necessary for maintaining and enhancing the performing of world renewal ritual in Cahokia and the American Bottom. Postulating what these rituals required will have to be theorized and empirically demonstrated later. However, procuring material resources can entail not only peaceful economic exchange but also coercively enforced material transfers. For example, we know that Mesoamerican communities actively went to war with neighbors in order to procure victims to be sacrificed to the renewal of the celestial and underworld gods (Hall 2000, 245-46). We also know they actively pursued “peaceful” trade through the *pochteca*—sodality-like merchant guilds—in order to

procure the critical material resources necessary to produce the tools for effective sacrifice—for example, green obsidian and other green stones that were interpreted by them as having special sacrificial powers derived from the gods (Hall 1989, 262). Hence, green obsidian was not valued simply as a resource for producing efficient cutting blades—although this would be one of its valued properties. Equally and probably even more importantly, it was valued for the intangible sacred properties that certain of its tangible properties manifested, such as color, luster, and source of origin. These tools then were valued as sacred symbolic media by which the cutting out of hearts from living humans in the temple precinct counted as felicitous forms of lethal human sacrificial world renewal rituals.⁷

However, economic procurement of valued material resources for the purpose of mediating world renewal ritual would be strongly complemented by the active expanding of the magnetic social field through actively transferring this ritual to neighboring regions so as to promote and enhance the desire and capacity of those populations to participate in the universal mission of renewing and balancing the sacred immanent powers of the cosmos, the home of all real humans (i.e., those who shared the same belief of the immanent sacredness of the natural order), and of course, by a local host cult sodality actively learning these exotic foreign rituals. These foreign rituals might come to be seen by the local populations as being even more effective for the same collective purpose of world renewal than the ones traditionally practiced locally. Hence, speaking of Cahokia in religious terms does not deny that economic and political factors would influence these relations. What it says, however, is the collective religious interests of the cult sodality heterarchy rather than the political and economic interests of “chiefs” would determine the way the economic and political resources available to the heterarchy would be mobilized and deployed by Cahokia. Furthermore, underwriting

this deployment would be the fundamental notion that the groups in these neighboring regions were also autonomous so Cahokian social groups would interact with their distant allies through constructing mutually beneficial and consensus-based rather than dominance-based relations—relations that enhanced mutually attraction-based intervention. Even its enemies would be treated in similar terms. For example, only if men and/or women were captured from recognized enemy autonomous cult sodality heterarchies according to strict religiously defined rules of military engagement would they count as possible sacrificial victims (Byers 2006a, 252-59).

Different views of the core social nature of Cahokia will implicate different models of the possible social mechanisms that each of these views would identify as necessary for Cahokia to deploy in pursuing its interests in the active establishing and maintaining of its inter-regional relations. I will postulate these social mechanisms shortly (although one of these mechanisms—custodial franchising—was outlined in the introduction). Before doing so, however, a very important point must be addressed. If the social nature of Cahokia largely determined the primary way it would operate and thereby extend its influence in neighboring regions, as I claim would be the case, then the reverse is also the case. That is, the way these neighbors would respond to Cahokia would be largely determined by their own social natures. This raises the serious issue of how a region under a “chiefdom”-like polity regime would be structured compared to one under a religious heterarchical regime, and this issue can be addressed by describing and interpreting the settlement pattern of the American Bottom using these two alternatives. This requires the fuller elucidation of the two contrasting theoretical perspectives and the critical conceptual structures that I have been calling up to now the *Chiefdom Polity model* and the *cult sodality heterarchy view*. I turn to this task in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. I have asserted that it is very likely that no standing curtain wall was built to close the northern side of this major timber wall construction (Byers 2006a, 240-43, 252-59). This does not mean that I claim that it served no defensive or military function. Rather, it means that we have an opportunity here to characterize the nature of military interaction in a social world of this sort, where human sacrifice, both lethal and postmortem, plays a major role in the pursuit of the good life.

2. Recently, Timothy Pauketat has argued that the term *chiefdom* should be abandoned (2007) in speaking about the Mississippian world. With qualifications that I elucidate later, I certainly agree with him, but for very different reasons than he proposes. For example, despite his “rejecting” the term, he is quite firmly wedded to the structural concepts that are presupposed by the term. I hope this becomes clear as I develop my critique of the chiefdom model. I address his current views in Chapter 12, but I plan to give a more fully critical assessment of the two contrasting ways of interpreting and characterizing not only Cahokia but also “social structure” and “community” that he and I have in another book.

3. I define “symbolic pragmatic” later in Chapter 6. This is an important theoretical concept in my approach, and it basically treats the meaning of material cultural style as action-constitutive in nature.

4. As noted above, this second-order heterarchy level would conform to the above discussed four components affiliating to collectively build the incrementally larger fifth component.

5. In fact, immediately to the north of Monks Mound and situated in the flood bottom of the Cahokia Creek is the Creek Bottom group (figure 2.1). I would assimilate this group to the Central Precinct

itself. I have argued that this group of four mounds served the important purpose of mediating the “regrowing of the earth rituals” that were possibly central in the suite of world renewal rites performed at Cahokia (Byers 2006a). Importantly, speaking of the Central Precinct as a fourth-order cult sodality heterarchy must remain as a hypothesis. This is not because I think that it was not a heterarchy but because I am not sure if treating it as a fourth-order heterarchy is correct. It may be better, for example, to treat it as a fifth-order heterarchy. Furthermore, given the history of the locale, it may have shifted from a lower order to a higher order and back again. Further theoretical and empirical research is required in this direction.

6. I note this because I think that Pauketat (2007, 2004a) and Emerson (1997a, 1997b, 1997c) are right to argue that Cahokia drew in representative groups from several and possibly many different ethnicities. Their error is to assume at the same time that Cahokia was a polity. This is not to deny that polities could accommodate multiple ethnic groups. But the mode of doing so would be strongly determined by political dominance-based power (i.e., political power backed-up by military). Pauketat has tried to make this argument, but I plan to discuss this matter in another book.

7. It is notable that central Mexico has many sources of obsidian of high quality, all capable of producing fine and elaborate cutting tools. The green obsidian deposits, however, were rare, and a great deal of effort was expended to ensure its supply. Clearly, much more than instrumental properties are involved in this.

CHAPTER 3

Alternative Theoretical Constructs of the Mississippian Social System

Up to this point, I have emphasized two different ways of treating Mississippian locales. The first has been to treat them as communities manifesting the social structural properties characteristic of dominance-based hierarchical polities (i.e., “chiefdoms”). The second has been to treat them as alliance structures of autonomous sodalities primarily practicing ritual-based ceremonialism. It should be noted that these two views implicate different structural types of community. The former and orthodox view takes a unitary perspective by assuming that these locales embodied communities of different orders of hierarchical magnitude while the alternative view that I am arguing for treats the social organization responsible for these locales not as total communities *at all* but as alliances of autonomous cult sodalities that were, however, relatively autonomous components of their respective communities, while these communities—also autonomous—remained at arm’s length with the cult sodality heterarchies to which their own cult sodalities were affiliated. Hence, while the two views address the same empirical record, they are quite different in their social characterization of this record. Noting this difference is very important since each view tends to obscure the social structures that the other treats as central. For example, I have already noted that, while the notion of the sodality is well recognized in the ethnography of Native North American communities,

treated under what I will conveniently term for now the *polity model*, the significance that the sodality may have played in the formation of the Mississippian system is subsumed as secondary, having only a “supporting role” to play as far as explaining this archaeological record is concerned. In reverse, my claim that these monumental locales embodied cult sodality heterarchies tends to obscure the role of the community. A superficial reading of this cult sodality heterarchy view might leave the impression that communities, as such, did not exist in this social world. Such a reading, of course, would be very wrong since, in fact, my earlier discussion of how these heterarchies came about notes that they were the outcome of the spatial separation of the clans and sodalities of the *preexisting* communities. This was possible because the structural core of these communities consisted of two internally related but contrasting structural axes — kinship and companionship—constituting the community as having a dual structural organization of clan and sodality. As I noted in the close of the previous chapter and as I discuss fully below, I have decided to call this community type a *complementary heterarchical community*. While this spatial separation of the structural components of the complementary heterarchical community generated what I termed the *bifurcated settlement articulation posture*, it certainly did not dissolve the communities themselves. The separation simply modified their spatial patterning while the community persisted as a dual structural totality.

For this reason, it would be useful to present the contrasting community models that each view presupposes. The community model that can accommodate the view that Mississippian communities are “chiefdoms” postulates an essential (i.e., fundamental) set of social parameters that is necessary—although not sufficient—for such communities to exist; while the community model that can accommodate the view that Mississippian mound-and-plaza complexes

are the material locales built and used by cult sodality heterarchies postulates another and strongly contrasting set of necessary but not sufficient social parameters. I have called the former the *Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model* and the latter the *Heterarchical Polyistic Locale-Centric Community model*. The terms I have used refer to the key social structural parameters of each model. The terms of my original title, the *Heterarchical Polyistic Locale-Centric Community model*, were my original choice. But I am now going to change the title and refer to it as the *Complementary Heterarchical Community model*. However, the latter terminology presupposes the original basic parameters articulated by the terms *polyistic* and *locale-centric*, these being respectively that the community is based on more than one social structural axis (in this case, kinship and companionship), and the land tenure the community practices is what I have termed *inclusive territorialism*, characterized as specifying that a community has exclusive control of the locales it builds and regularly uses as well as of the paths it uses and cares for that link these locales and places, but it does not have exclusive control of the land area or its resources over which these paths and locales are distributed.

It is also important to note that both are models of community types. I emphasize this to highlight that while the community postulated under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model is, in fact, identified with the Mississippian mound-and-plaza complex and the lesser settlement sites that are distributed around it, the community postulated under the Complementary Heterarchical Community model is not. Rather, as I noted above, the community type this latter model postulates is *not to be identified with the Mississippian mound-and-plaza complexes*, and yet, as I argue below, it made the formation of these complexes possible. That is, each of the complementary heterarchical communities of a region incorporated one or more autonomous cult sodalities, which in turn, as I discussed

above, allied to form mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies. These heterarchies built the mound-and-plaza complexes as contexts by which they could perform their world renewal rituals. For this reason, following the fuller elucidation of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model, it is necessary to postulate the auxiliary Cult Sodality Heterarchy model that articulates the social nature of the organization of cult sodalities directly responsible for a particular mound-and-plaza complex. In short, while the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model identifies the responsible community with the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex, thereby characterizing it as a *polity* community, the Complementary Heterarchical Community model specifically denies this identity, and therefore, a second auxiliary model is necessary to postulate the social structural nature of the organizations responsible for the Mississippian centers. It is these that I have called *cult sodality heterarchies*.

Another point I want to emphasize is that while the orthodox view (i.e., treating the social organizations identified with the mound-and-plaza complexes as community polities—chiefdoms, states, or whatnot) conforms very nicely to the a priori structures postulated by the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, it is important to note that not all community types that conform to this model are necessarily “chiefdoms.” That is, as I develop this book, it will become clear there are communities that archaeologists and anthropologists refer to as *tribes* that can be nicely fitted within the structural framework of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model—given a slight modification of the set of structural parameters. I want to note this now since some reviewers have faulted my claim that the chiefdom model perspective has monopolized Mississippian archaeology for the last several decades by noting that a number of archaeologists are now recognizing that the spirit of egalitarianism was much more pronounced in these Mississippian

communities than previously thought. Therefore, it is claimed that my critique of current Mississippian studies is simply a “straw man” argument, representing an extreme position no longer widely held as the normal view, thereby promoting my own view as being radically different from the view that it is claimed many current Mississippianist archaeologists actually have incorporated. Well, they are right to the degree that a number of archaeologists have argued against the validity of the term *chiefdom* in speaking about Cahokia and Mississippianization in the same breath and have also pointed out that there is increasing recognition of evidence of “egalitarianism” and mitigated hierarchical stratification (Milner 1998; Pauketat 2004a, 2007; Wilson 2008). However, despite this evidence suggesting that the Mississippian system was much more varied in political structure and organization than previously thought, what still persists in the publications I have read are clear indications that the researchers consider the social parameters that I have postulated under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model to be valid in characterizing these communities. The term *chiefdom* may be “banned” and treated as being among “other archaeological delusions” (Pauketat 2007), but its conceptual premises are still going strong, although sometimes dressed up in other terms.

As I noted above, instead of using my original terminology to speak about the type of community associated with cult sodality heterarchies, which was to call them *heterarchical polyistic locale-centric communities*, I will now call them *complementary heterarchical communities*. However, I will still continue speaking about the community type implicated by the orthodox chiefdom model as the *hierarchical monistic modular polity community*, even though it is quite a mouthful. My reason for this is that the meanings of these terms clearly articulate what I consider to be the basic structural parameters of a community that would conform to the normal

definition of “chiefdom” as these are generally recognized in archaeology. However, as I develop this book, instead of speaking of *hierarchical monistic modular polity communities*, I will often simply say a *chiefdom community* or refer to the *chiefdom polity model* or the *chiefdom view*. This is simply an elliptical means of evoking the total conceptual scheme as articulated under this model.

With regard to renaming the *heterarchical polyistic locale-centric community* as the *complementary heterarchical community*, I still found the former terminology was useful since the meanings of these three terms articulated the basic structural parameters of the type of community entailed by a cult sodality heterarchy, and furthermore, these meanings contrasted in sense with terms of the former—*hierarchical monistic modular polity*—thereby highlighting the differences constituting these two communities as different types. Therefore, to understand what I mean by *complementary heterarchical community*, I will first define briefly the key concepts of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, even though these do not need to be detailed since they are well known by most, and then I will repeat this process with regard to the alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community model, but in a bit more detail since many readers are not likely to be familiar with them.

My use of the term *hierarchical* in the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity Community model specifically uses the normal sense of the term in designating a structure of differentially ranked dominance-based social positions. In effect, built into the standard notion of hierarchy is the notion that social power is graded and dominance-based in nature. That is, in this model, the occupant of the higher ranking position dominates, or has power over, the actions of the occupants of the lower ranking positions, and the occupant of the highest ranking dominant position is usually termed in the literature as *the chief*. The term *monistic* emphasizes the notion

that there is a single (hence my term *monistic*) core social structure that anchors the total community structural frame, and typically, for prehistoric communities, this is considered to be kinship. Of course, kinship is recognized as being internally complex in that it combines several usually mutually exclusive properties and attributes—age and generation, gender, descent or affiliation, positional linkage of rights and duties, types of groupings, and so on. A hierarchical monistic modular community, therefore, is a community, such as postulated under the chiefdom model, consisting of a ranked set of kin groups (often specified as lineages structured into clans and moieties) and the leaders of these ranking kin groups constituting the elite or chiefly class. Of course, with complex chiefdom-type communities, there can be several kin groupings that are not themselves related as kin, usually meaning that subordinate and dominant chiefdom-type communities are related only by political dominance-subordination. The usage of the term *modular* is also straightforward. It characterizes the normative or deontic relation that links the chiefdom to the territory it habitually uses (i.e., its tenurial relational structure), the basic assumption being that a chiefdom claims exclusive control/dominance over a delimited or boundaried area such that this territory constitutes its exclusive territorial *module*. As I briefly noted earlier, this also means that the chiefdom community must be prepared to actively defend its territory from neighboring chiefdoms, as well as any nonchiefdom-type communities, thereby constituting the total community as a polity.

Interestingly, if the term *hierarchical* is replaced with the term *egalitarian*, as in an “egalitarian monistic modular polity community,” I think most archaeologists would recognize this as expressing the properties commonly attributed to a “tribal” community. That is, the difference between the two hinges on the differentiating notions of hierarchy, conceived as ranking, or inequality, and equality (i.e.,

the absence of ranking or inequality.)¹ Therefore, an egalitarian (or tribal or band) society is also possible under this monistic view. It is also based on the primary social axis of kinship, albeit the kin groups are “equal” or unranked (or, as I suggest in note 1 below, balanced in terms of dominance powers). It is also often characterized as controlling a modular territory and as being prepared to defend it from tribal and/or chiefdom neighbors if necessary. Therefore, it can also be characterized as a polity, albeit “less complex” than a chiefdom polity. The degree of complexity, therefore, is directly attributed to the presence of inequality or its variation. As I noted earlier, in both cases, if any nonkinship groups are recognized, such as sodalities, these are typically treated by the archaeologist as being subsumed to the primary kin groups, largely serving as either socialization agents to ensure the appropriate passing on of cultural values to the youth and/or as organizations useful to the community in mobilizing specialized labor for the monistic kinship-based community polity.

The Complementary Heterarchical Community

The above structural parameters—hierarchical, monistic, modular, polity—perspicuously contrast with what I consider to be a more realistic characterization of the traditional Native North American community from which cult sodality heterarchies of different and higher orders were able to emerge—as exemplified and likely embodied in the Central Precinct of Cahokia, as I discussed more fully in Chapter 2. The parameters of this type of community, the type that enabled the formation of cult sodality heterarchies, are articulated in the Complementary Heterarchical Community model. When a community is internally organized in accordance with more than one structural axis, it is what I call a *polyistic* community (in perspicuous contrast to the monistic notion). For traditional historic North American communities, as I noted in the introductory

chapter, I postulate that there were usually two primary structural axes, kinship and companionship, constituting these as dualistic polyistic communities (more social structural axes could and probably would exist). These two are complementary and internally related structural axes, and this complementary pairing is the constitutive base for at least two complementary and contrasting types of social groupings, kinship-based (e.g., unilateral clans and their subgroupings, such as clan segments, extended and nuclear families, and so on), and in contrast, companionship-based social groupings. I have used the terms *clan* and *sodality* generically to refer to these two sets of contrasting and internally related social organizations. By *internally related* I mean specifically that they are mutually constitutive in the sense that companionship presupposes and contrasts with kinship and vice versa. Since the internal structure of a community consists of two relatively *autonomous* types of social components, clans and sodalities, I can speak of this as a type of heterarchy (i.e., a complementary heterarchical community). I have more to say below on this notion of heterarchy since, as implicated here, it comes in at least two contrasting forms, complementary, as in the notion of a complementary heterarchical community, and mutualistic, as in the notion of the mutualistic cult sodality heterarchy, as I discuss shortly.

Sodalities come in various types according to their social nature and purpose—dance cult, warrior society, priestly cult, and so on. Importantly, many of the members of a sodality can be and in most cases cannot avoid being related as kin—particularly when small and moderate-sized communities are involved. But what makes individuals members of the same sodality in a community is not that they can trace some sort of kin relation but that they share some nonkinship property; that is, they are companions sharing peer standing (e.g., by being of the same age and gender set) or by sharing the same experience and performance expertise in some specialization (e.g.,

dancing, singing, being shamans, and so on). This does not mean that sharing the same social property entails companionship. Rather, those who develop companionship relations usually do so on the basis of sharing some property that puts them on a level footing so they can sustain their respective autonomy as peers while participating in activities that they are enabled to perform in virtue of sharing these social properties. The most common type of sodality usually combines the two dimensions of same-age and same-gender to create same-gender/same-age groups of companions—and these individuals stand to each other as *not* being kin-related while simultaneously sharing a key social property that makes them mutual peers. They can also be related “hierarchically” in that same-sex/same-age sodalities may be structured into a single *ranked* sodality, this ranking being organized by age seniority or specialization. While such ranking exemplifies difference, it does not entail dominance. Instead, this vertical organization of autonomous groups of companions constitutes what I call an *enabling hierarchy*, and this strongly contrasts with a dominance hierarchy, the type of hierarchy that I noted above structures hierarchical monistic modular polities (i.e., chiefdom-type communities of one sort or another).

A “polyistic” community (i.e., one constituted with two or more core social structural axes) is typically *locale-centric* because what makes up the “territorial” framework of the community is not the land/water area that its people exploit but the locales that they regularly occupy and for which they are responsible, *as well as* the paths that link these locales together. Hence, their territories are without borders, and instead, their territorial extension is determined by *locale-centric* means. That is, the geographical scope of the community is delineated by the spatial distribution of the primary locales that its participating groups, to some degree, regularly occupy and by the paths that link these locales together. Because kinship

and companionship are internally linked complementary opposites, the respective groups typically generate separate places and spaces where each set gathers to carry out its respective social activities (Ingold 1987, 147-50). Often, the formal makeup and layout of the clan locales and sodality locales can systematically differ, but so can the activity spaces (squares, plazas, yards). Of course, clan and sodality groups can occupy the same area to form a single community plan layout. In such a case, however, the clan and sodality locales and spaces are juxtaposed or even shared with each other, requiring some priority in scheduling usage. In any case, when sharing the same overall location on a rather permanent basis, even if this might be differentially occupied by season or task focus, they generate a nucleated-like settlement of domestic dwellings and jointly or severally used kinship-based and sodality-based locales and spaces, such as clan council houses and male-based sodality clubhouses. Therefore, typically, this nucleated-like settlement plan will be internally structured into two complementary patterns of locales/spaces, one related to the clans and the other to the socalities. Often a central space (e.g., a central plaza) may be established for combining clan and sodality activities in a common performance (Byers 2006a, Chapter 8).

I used the term *bifurcated* above and in the introductory chapter when speaking of the settlement patterning of the American Bottom during the Mississippian period, and it is now time to formally define it. The settlement pattern of a dual clan/sodality community can vary across what I call the *integrated-bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum*; and while the settlement pattern can vary, the basic community structure remains essentially constant. Specifically, when the complementary heterarchical community occupies a common, internally structured “nucleated-like” locale, as noted above, I refer to it as an *integrated community* (e.g., a village) and I characterize it as being in the *integrated settlement articulation*

modal posture. Typically, either the integrated mode will be common to all the communities in a given region or else the complementary opposite *bifurcated* mode will be common. Therefore, either all the autonomous complementary heterarchical communities of the region will be, or usually quickly move into, the *integrated* posture extreme or else they will all be in the *bifurcated* posture extreme of the integrated bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum. Historically, therefore, the settlement patterning of a region can fluctuate between the two extremes. I argue here that the settlement systems of the Mississippian period communities were characteristically in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Typically, during the Terminal Late Woodland Period, communities in those regions that became Mississippian were in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture, and as such, a typical community layout might incorporate a central plaza with public buildings at either end, one being the meeting house of one moiety and its clans, the other of the complementary moiety. The family dwellings may be clustered around the plaza and one or two special-purpose structures with small plazas may be built adjacent to the main plaza. These might be the structures and activity spaces of the sodalities (Byers 2006a, 97-102).

Under special conditions, however, as I discuss fully, the arm's-length nature of the relatively autonomous clans and sodalities can quite easily lead to the two component groupings of the clans and sodalities maintaining spatially separated locales having formally distinct material makeup, one set dedicated to the use of the clan and family kinship groups, the other dedicated to the use of the sodality groups. This constitutes what I have called the *bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture*, and as noted above, typically if one community shifts from its integrated to a bifurcated posture, all the communities of a region will tend to move into this modal

posture, thereby constituting a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture (this is not “automatic” but is the result of a particular causal process that I outline later). Of course, since the members of the sodalities are also members of the clans, when the complementary heterarchical communities of a region are in the bifurcated posture, most individuals need to regularly move back and forth between the two types of locales so that, in effect, they might be thought of as permanent transients between the two types of locales that they occupy—clan-based and sodality-based. The locales are “sedentary” and the users are transient.

Importantly, what this means is that, while the settlement pattern of a given community is bifurcated spatially into clan and sodality locale-types, the community itself is still socially integrated. It is simply the spatial relations and forms of the clan and sodality locales, as well as the internally transient nature of the occupational regime, that have changed while the fundamental or deep dual clan-sodality social structural relations that constitute the community remain largely unchanged. However, what has also changed is the extension of the individual community’s pathway-defined territory, or more correctly stated, the pathway-defined territory of the sodalities that individually belong to the several communities of the region. The formation of cult sodality heterarchies accomplishes this. Necessarily, the members of a cult sodality participating as a component of a first-order heterarchy would have open access to the total set of pathways of those complementary heterarchical communities that had their cult sodalities affiliated to form the first-order heterarchy—although this access would be constrained and limited to needful activities in their capacity as members of allied sodality heterarchies. No doubt, well-entrenched rules of etiquette would be in place governing, for example, that the persons using those paths not included in their own community’s domain wear distinctive clothing

or “decorative” artifacts (e.g., gorgets, ear spools), therefore clearly manifesting that their use of the path was as members of a cult sodality that was allied to the local community’s cult sodality. Also, it is probable that rules of avoidance would be in place such that these persons would avoid clan locales, such as farmsteads, or, if this was not possible, that they politely wait and/or vocally signal their presence and then request a right-of-way. Importantly, the bifurcated posture effectively extended the access that individual members of a local community had to more distant parts of the region, albeit an extension that was governed by respected sodality-based rules.

I recognize that each group type, clan and sodality, always has a ritual aspect. In the integrated modal posture, there will tend to be a great deal of cooperation and overlap and interrelating of the rituals of each so that it becomes useful practically to speak of the sphere of ritual practices of the community as being largely integrated—but never unitary; that is, a clan-wide ritual ceremony will be directed to sacred powers for which the clans were responsible, and the sodalities will typically serve voluntarily to supplement the ritual when asked. However, when the community is in a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, the rituals of the clans become somewhat constrained in their material expression, being largely confined to locales designed primarily for everyday domestic tasks, while the rituals of the sodalities become very pronounced, as illustrated above in terms of rights-of-way passages. Often these ritual needs prevail in generating an elaborately designed layout of the sodality locales. This prevalence also promotes highlighting the type of ritual defining the *raison d’être* of the sodality, thereby warranting referring to them generically as *cult sodalities*. That is, I postulate that, under special conditions (to be discussed later), given their cosmology and ethos (which I also discuss later) and their dual clan/sodality structures, the traditional Native North American complementary

heterarchical communities can, and historically will, take on this bifurcated posture. The cult sodalities of the many dispersed communities of the region retain their mutual autonomy with respect to each other and also their relative autonomy with respect to the clan components of their own communities. It is this relative autonomy of the sodality/clan relation and the mutual autonomy of the sodalities that together form the basis for generating first-order, second-order, and in some special places, third-order or even possibly fourth-order cult sodality heterarchies. These multiple levels—much facilitated by the bifurcated settlement modal posture—enabled a “massing effect” by which the labor resources of widely dispersed complementary heterarchical communities could be cumulatively attracted to and centralized and pooled at each wider and more inclusive order or level to enable widely distributed agents to cooperatively and consensually construct the great multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza mutualistic cult sodality heterarchy complexes.

Hence, while these many single-, dual-, and multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes constitute the *centralized material expression of a magnetic social field and its widespread labor power*, it is important to note that this power was actually distributed and embodied in autonomous sodalities dispersed in the surrounding region, and these sodalities embodied select structural powers of the widespread complementary heterarchical communities of a region. This social power, therefore, is immanent in the many primary ceremonial nodal sites of the multiple autonomous cult sodalities that were responsible for this centralized material expression. This expression is the focus of what I have characterized as a magnetic field of social powers ultimately anchored to the interests of the multiple cult sodalities, which are themselves anchored to the interests of the autonomous components of the multiple complementary heterarchical communities of the region. In this theoretical characterization,

the cult sodalities make up the companionship-based components of the multiple complementary heterarchical communities whose kin-group components are dispersed as domestic-based farmsteads across the landscape in the region's bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture.

While this spatial disengaging of clans and cult sodalities may promote the formation of specially dedicated ritual locales by the latter, along with the emergence of first- and second-order heterarchies, the clans would also modify the patterning of their constituent domestic structures (i.e., the typical domestic dwellings of their component families). In this case, the clans would find that they were freed up from directly sharing ceremonialism with the sodalities, and since their main interest was to focus on subsistence and other clan reproduction activities (e.g., affinal alliances, kinship-based rites of passage, and the like), they would likely quite rapidly disperse across the landscape as individual farmsteads and/or base camp habitation units. There would likely be a tendency for closely related or affiliated families, those recognizing close unilateral kin relations constituting what we refer to as a unilateral clan, to maintain relatively close spacing, possibly only 100 m or so apart, with the gardens around each dwelling blending into the gardens of their close neighboring unilateral kin. The local clan segment leader's farmstead would likely become the meeting place of the related families, and when the inter-clan leaders had community-wide meetings, they would probably rotate from one clan leader's farmstead to another. Thus, even as dispersed clan domestic units they would maintain a spatial ordering probably manifesting clan relations.

In sum, the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture of a complementary heterarchical community was constituted of the multiple clan components in a dispersed farmstead habitation network and the sodality component(s) in a spatially separate but

integrated cult sodality ceremonial nodal locale, with the latter participating in more distantly spaced first-order and second-order cult sodality heterarchies manifesting major features such as plazas, mounds, large renewal lodges, and even sodality “hostels” and “visitors’ lodges,” and as I stress later, most importantly locales displaying major collective burials, what I generically refer to as *collective burial locales* or *CBLs*.

Of course, the inverse settlement modal posture could emerge. That is, the complementary heterarchical communities of a region that were in a bifurcated posture could reconstitute the integrated settlement articulation modal posture. When this occurred globally within a region, since the large sites embodying the world renewal cult sodality heterarchies were the creatures of the multiple cult sodalities that allied and affiliated, the heterarchies would likely disaffiliate. This would lead to the abandoning of these monumental sites and the reemergence of a system of relatively widely spaced autonomous integrated community villages, and this abandonment could and probably would occur quite rapidly. However, this shift in settlement from the bifurcated to the inverse integrated posture, does not necessarily mark a radical modification of the basic dual clan/sodality social structural axes of the complementary heterarchical communities. In most cases, it simply means a modification in the way this structural duality is manifested spatially and materially.

The Complementary and Mutualistic Heterarchies

I have already characterized a heterarchical organization as one based on component units that are autonomous, either mutually or relatively. In this regard, I have spoken of the affiliation of a set of autonomous cult sodalities as constituting a first-order *mutualistic* heterarchy. It is in virtue of their mutual recognition of each other as autonomous groups of the *same social nature*, companionship-based,

that I term the affiliation a *mutualistic heterarchy*. Since I have also referred to the community as consisting of two complementary groupings that stand to each other as being relatively autonomous, clans and sodalities, then I believe it is quite reasonable also to characterize the type of community they form as a form of heterarchy. This is why, as I noted above, I have come to call this social formation a *complementary heterarchical community*. Since this notion of autonomy, either the relative autonomy of clans and sodalities (groups having complementary and contrasting social natures) or the mutually recognized autonomy of sodalities (groups sharing the same social nature), is so central to my theorizing the nature of the traditional Native North American community, at least for the Eastern Woodlands, it calls for some further elucidation. Since the notion of autonomy figures centrally, I will start with it, focusing first on the notion of the individual human as an *autonomous agent*. In my view, to be an autonomous agent is to be and be recognized by relevant others as being responsible for one's actions, to know that one is recognized in this manner, and indeed, to take oneself as typically acting responsibly. This principle of autonomy can be extended to groups, the difference being that the former is personal autonomy-of-action and the latter, collective autonomy-of-action. Hence, agentive autonomy entails both individual and group autonomy-of-action. It is because of this principle of agentive autonomy applied to groups that clans and sodalities can exist in the above complementary manner. Each group recognizes the other as autonomous, and by this I mean that each group recognizes the other as being responsible for its own particular and traditional sphere of activities. Recursively, the group recognizes its social responsibility to perform the activities constituting its sphere and for which it is recognized as being responsible and sees its responsibility as ultimately to its community. Hence, in a social world where the principle of agentive/collective

autonomy prevails, *ceteris paribus*, a clan does not (ought not to) interfere into the activities and plans of another autonomous group, whether of the same social nature, as in the case of another clan, or of a contrasting social nature, such as a sodality. Similarly, *ceteris paribus*, sodalities respect the mutualistic autonomy of other sodalities and, of course, the relative autonomy of clans. A heterarchy, then, is an organization of affiliated social groups, whether kinship-based or companionship-based, operating on this principle of agentive autonomy. Affiliations of autonomous groups of the same social nature constitute mutualistic heterarchies, as noted above, and affiliations of autonomous groups of contrasting social nature constitute complementary heterarchies. Hence, this contrast is the basis for speaking of mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies and complementary heterarchical communities. Choosing to call the latter *complementary heterarchical communities* is, of course, partly to avoid the jargon, but it more importantly serves the purpose of highlighting the potential that is immanent (and imminent) in the reality of the dual kinship-companionship structural axes. This terminology effectively targets the built-in intangible complexity of this type of community, and thereby enables me to characterize the overall tangible Mississippian settlement pattern in bifurcated terms (i.e., as complex systems of cult sodality heterarchies in parallel with complementary heterarchical community networks).

One of the key properties of such a community as specified by this model, then, remains the orientation it has toward the territory that it habitually occupies. In a sense, it does not occupy the territory that it exploits. Rather, as noted above, it occupies only the locales and paths that crisscross it, and it is these “paths and locales” over which it has exclusive control. By dwelling in its locales and using its paths, the community both accesses the resources of the territory and also is able to monitor how others, their near and more distant

neighbors, access the same resources. Its monitoring ability arises from the fact that these neighbors must request from the habitual occupants the right to use their paths and locales in order to access the resources of the surrounding territory. But no one, even the habitual occupants, can claim exclusive control or use of these resources. In this sense, the local complementary heterarchical community that treats the locales and interconnecting paths as their domain stands simply as the primary collective squatter on the land, and the neighbors take second, third, etc., priority as co-squatters. I have called this prioritized squatter-like tenure *inclusive territorialism*. This is in contrast to the *exclusive territorialism* specific to the Monistic Modular Polity Community model. In the latter case, whether “chiefdom polity” or “tribal polity,” the territory, and also the paths and locales that it contains, are all identified by the occupants and users as their collective, usually corporate, exclusive property. In the case of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model, however, territory is recognized as being “no-man’s-land.” No mere human can claim to have exclusive control of the land or its resources such that others in need can be arbitrarily denied access. This attitude to the land arises from the deep cultural tradition of immanent sacredness of the land that is characteristic of those who also bear a “squatter ethos,” as I discuss below (Bailey 1995, 29-31).

I have called these two views of human-land tenure *exclusive* and *inclusive territorialism*. In my view, exclusive territorialism is typical of the monistic modular polity type (“hierarchical” or “egalitarian”). This translates the land and its resources into being the community’s proprietorial domain, and as such, the community as a polity exercises its domain by ensuring that others are excluded from access unless they, the proprietors, authorize it. This authorization usually entails entering into some type of dominance-subordinate relation between the two communities. Alternatively, a type of balanced

reciprocity (i.e., balanced dominance) arrangement is established so that both parties can share access to what each sustains as its own exclusive domain. In contrast, as I noted above, the complementary heterarchical community relates to the territory it regularly uses in terms of having first-come squatters' rights. Others also have squatters' rights—but clearly in terms of a priority system that is grounded by the notions of temporal priority and resource sharing. Hence, territories are inclusive rather than exclusive, and this means that the community that habitually uses a range of land for its economic support is recognized as having first-come squatters' priority of usage over other communities. This first-come priority, however, is qualified by the principle of autonomy, and therefore, it has strings attached to it. In having priority of usage, these habitual users also have priority of being responsible to care for it, and it is recognized by its neighbors as the premier caretaker or *custodian* of the territory it habitually exploits. Since it does not own but, as the custodian of the land, has first-come usage or *usufruct rights*, this constitutes their occupation as manifesting *custodial usufruct tenure* (Ingold 1987, 150-55). Therefore, the premier habitual caretaker user-group not only has ranking priority of usage, or custodial usufruct of the inclusive territory, it also has ranking duties as custodian, constituting it as its *custodial domain*. By being responsible for its use and care, it becomes responsible to ensure that all others also use it properly. Since this priority of custodial usage, or custodial usufruct, is underwritten by the principle of autonomy, the custodial community also has responsibility to recognize the autonomy of its neighboring community(ies) by ensuring that they have equitable access to the resources of the community's custodial domain by which to sustain their own autonomy (Ingold 1987, 157, 224). In effect, this type of social system eschews constituting exclusionary social borders. Inclusive territorialism fits the notion of a magnetic field since it is

the nature and needs of the community that determines its focus of attraction. In contrast, exclusionary social borders are the essential conditions of gravity-well polities, and such boundaries would entail dominance relations so that neighboring polities would struggle against each other for dominance, each trying to drag the other into its orbit by destroying the orbit of the other. Where the neighbors are in parity, then they usually establish an alliance, a balancing of dominance-based powers, constituting themselves as a mutualistic political heterarchy. Inclusive territorialism enhances and honors rights of access, and this means that rather than linear boundaries, linear paths are sacred, becoming important links such that each community has a complex set of custodial locales connected by a complex network of custodial paths. These paths, in principle, seamlessly connect to the paths of its neighboring complementary heterarchical communities so that all are connected into a regional and transregional network of custodial groups who share the sacred duty of caring for the world that they collectively occupy and exploit (Ingold 1987, 237-40).

This is the type of human-land tenure system that the Complementary Heterarchical Community model postulates for the communities of the American Bottom—and in general for the prehistoric communities of the Eastern Woodland region. During the Late Woodland and Terminal Late Woodland periods (ca. AD 400/500–1000/1100), most of these communities were in the integrated settlement articulation posture. Of course, the uniqueness of the settlement posture of these communities during the Mississippian period of this region was that these same communities transformed their settlement patterning by moving rapidly from the integrated to the opposing pole, taking on a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture.

The Mapuche as Disanalogy

Later I will give a careful description and analysis of the Hidatsa to serve as a positive analogical example of the type of community system characterized under the Complementary Heterarchical Community model. Right now, however, I am going to use the South American Mapuche as an analogy in order to give a “living” illustration of the type of society that I think most proponents of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model see as the generic type of community constituting the prehistoric Mississippian period in the Southeast and Midwest. I will then proceed to argue why the Mapuche actually would not be the appropriate analogy for applying to the Mississippian assemblage. In fact, the Mapuche turn out to be an excellent counterfactual analogy or a *disanalogy* in the sense that the critical social attributes that we know the traditional Native Eastern Woodland communities had, and that made them unique, were precisely what the Mapuche lacked. It was the absence of these attributes among the Mapuche that may be the primary reason they were able to sustain the type of hierarchical monistic modular polity communities that they did, while, as I argue in this book, the traditional Eastern Woodland communities possessed the attributes that made it extremely *unlikely* that they would develop a dominance-based hierarchical social system akin to that of the Mapuche. That is, I am going to agree with the ethnologists who have described the Mapuche as a chiefdom system and use their descriptions to argue why, given what we already know about the historic Native North American communities, such systems would not likely have developed in the Eastern Woodlands, despite the fact that the communities of both regions did share some important types of cultural and social attributes.²

The Mapuche social system consists of a set of indigenous sedentary communities located in the interior Andean valleys of

south-central Chile. They are today mixed horticulturalists, herders, and foragers organized into exogamous patrilineal (i.e., not patrilineal) communities termed *trokinches*. Although they practice sedentism, the individual families, nuclear and extended, are distributed in a pattern of dispersed farmsteads, each family usually located spatially separate from related families, albeit not overly so. Particularly important for drawing an analogy with the Mississippian period settlement pattern as construed under the Chiefdom Polity model is that each *trokinche lineage* built and sustained a collective ceremonial ground consisting of a large plaza, sometimes including burial and sacrificial platform mounds, and it was the ranked chiefly leaders who organized the multiple ranked families of the extended lineages to perform these collective tasks. The families even built individual dwelling shelters around the perimeter, thereby generating a U-formation plaza that likely enabled rank differentiation to be manifested (Dillehay 1992, 382-84). These apparently quite substantially built shelters would be occupied transiently by the families of the patrilineage during periodic *trokinche*-wide ceremonies. This arrangement delineated the central field as a large U-Form plaza, and very interestingly, it was referred to as a *puma* and figuratively represented the cosmos. The open side of the U-Form plaza normally faced east, the side of the rising sun, and when possible it also faced a body of water.³ Two major sets of ceremonies were performed in the context of this plaza, mortuary or “funerary” and world renewal. The Mapuche even constructed one or two burial mounds for former, well-remembered chiefs, and in some cases, a low rectangular platform was constructed where major renewal rituals mediated by animal sacrifice were performed (Dillehay 1992, 405-407).

Of very great interest is that, according to the description of the cultural beliefs (i.e., the cosmology), there is little doubt that traditionally the Mapuche took the world to be immanently sacred, and

as such, land was not ownable, only useable. Hence, the Mapuche did not recognize land ownership or *proprietary domain*, as I term it. Rather, they recognized (and currently recognize) that their occupancy of land was based on usufruct rights and obligations. That is, their tenure would be more appropriately termed *custodial usufruct* rather than exclusive corporate ownership. However, as I argued earlier, agentive autonomy is the core ethos value that normally corresponds to an immanentist cosmology, and therefore, the Mapuche should also display a dual social structure based on relatively autonomous patrilineal kin groups and companionship-based sodalities. However, this is not the case. Instead, and despite their custodial usufruct notion, the individual *trokinche* held largely exclusive access to the land it habitually used. This exclusivity sustained dominance structures mediated in terms of the *patrilineal descent principle*, particularly emphasizing the subordination of the junior generation males to the senior generation males of the *trokinche*. That is, even though the Mapuche recognized a type of custodial usufruct of land, the kinship groups were based on descent in virtue of the fact that a type of *exclusive* custodial usufruct of land—not proprietorship in our standard sense—was practiced. This was realized as an entrenched inheritance traced through the male line and ranked by seniority—characteristic in its essentials with the type of system that most proponents of the chiefdom perspective imagine for the typical prehistoric Mississippian “community,” such as Moundville or Cahokia. Hence, a set of patrilineally related families constituted an internally ranked patrilineage identified with an area of farmland that they habitually gardened, and the *use of the land for gardens* that made up this farmland was inherited by the junior male generation from the senior male generation (i.e., father-to-son, sometimes also from mother-to-son).

How would this be possible given that land usufruct and not land ownership was recognized? This was not simply a semantic distinction since, in fact, Dillehay (1992, 384) explicitly noted that what was inherited by Mapuche was *land usufruct*, not land ownership or proprietorship. There was a proviso, however. If a kinship descent group abandoned its usufruct-based domain, then in accordance with the rules of custodial usufruct, the land would be available on a first-come basis to others, whether lineally related or not. However, Dillehay noted that, at least within the primary territory that the Mapuche occupied, there was no abandoned land, and if a young man was denied access to land by the chiefs of his patrilineage (i.e., his senior “fathers”), then to gain access to land for gardening he would have to leave the territory and go into an unoccupied region, effectively socially and physically isolating himself from his *trokinche*. The only benefit of moving would be that he could open the unoccupied land for his own use to support his own family. Hence, if successful as a farmer, he could become a founding apical ancestor of his own *trokinche*. This apparently was a practice that often occurred in pre-Hispanic times.

All this would certainly appear to reinforce the validity of using the Mapuche as an analogical example for modeling the Mississippian chiefdom system. However, things get a bit more complicated. The success of a young man striking out on his own in this manner obviously depended on his having a wife or having access to a marriageable woman. However, according to Mapuche marriage practice, because the lineage was *exogamous*, as long as the man remained with his *trokinche*, the man was reliant on it to gain a wife for him from another patrilineage. The rule was that to gain a wife, a man needed access to gardening land usufruct, and the usufruct, not the land to which it gave access, was transferred to his prospective spouse as a marriage gift. Hence, the exogamous patrilineages

were caught up in a network of marriage exchange relations in which women, land usufruct, and material goods figured. Each lineage stood in two relations with other lineages, being wife-givers to some and wife-receivers from others. The wife-receivers had to give bride wealth to the wife-givers in the form of special textiles and silver objects, as well as transfer to the in-marrying women usufruct rights to gardening land that it, the wife-receiving patrilineage, controlled. Typically, patrilineages related as wife-giver/wife-receiver were ranked with the latter being subordinate in honor to the former. All this means that mobilizing bride wealth and allocating land usufruct was not in the discretionary control of the young man who needed a wife. Rather, these powers were held at the discretion of the senior males of a *trokinche*. Indeed, this dominance power of the senior males was exploited since historically it was common for the senior male leaders of a *trokinche* to reserve more women to be their own wives than they allowed the junior males of the patrilineage to receive. Although today senior males probably no longer monopolize the women as wives for themselves, the fact is they still control the distribution of the in-marrying females and can favor some junior males over others, as well as not uncommonly still practicing polygyny and thereby taking some of the marriageable women for themselves. The result is a form of polygyny dominated by the senior males of the *trokinche* and through this senior generation's discretionary control of allocation of in-marrying females the younger males are dominated by their patrilineal elders. Hence, control of land usufruct and control of wife distribution came to be, and still are, monopolized in the hands of the senior males of the patrilineage with the ranking senior male occupying the leadership position; that is, he is the *trokinche* chief. Dillehay (1992, 407) cites one historically remembered dominant chief who had about 24 wives and almost 100 offspring.

One upshot of this dominance structure was, of course, differential inheritance of exclusive land usufruct and allocation of women combined with a complex system of interpatrilineal *trokinche* relations of dominance and subordination mediated through and by the history of women exchange. This state of affairs is explicitly noted by Dillehay (1992, 413). Another upshot was the suppression of any tendency toward same-age/same-gender companionate groups. There is no report of such groups existing autonomously of the *trokinches*, which is itself very indicative since companion age-sets have been consistently recognized by the ethnologists of traditional Native North American communities, as I noted earlier and will discuss in greater detail in the subsequent chapter. Dillehay notes that the major labor mobilization that was necessary for building, maintaining, and using the ceremonial plaza for the *trokinche*-wide ceremonialism was carried out by the lineage and under the direction of the ranking chief. Of course, this means that his junior brothers and their sons as well as his own sons (i.e., the junior generation of males of the *trokinche*) would be the major source of labor. Louis Faron also discusses labor mobilization and labor relations, and in all cases, this is carried out through dominance relations. The customary labor mobilization process, the *mingaco*, entailed the chief's inviting "the household heads of his reservation to assemblage at his house on a certain day to begin plowing his fields After the chief's land had been prepared there was a round of similar activities in which each household head that acted as host fêted the participants, organized the work, and so on" (1968, 19). Faron goes on to define the tradition of *mingaco* as "a word used by the Mapuche to describe cooperative labor . . . [that was] organized around a core of males of a dominant patrilineage . . . and headed by a lineage elder who is chief" (1968, 20).

Pervading the Mapuche social structure, therefore, is a dominance-based hierarchical order, and by default, no autonomous age-set sodalities existed. And of course, the fact that junior males of the same exogamous lineage would compete with each other in order to gain wives through the goodwill of their senior male leaders would ensure that autonomous companionship groups would likely not emerge—at least of the type I have claimed characterized traditional Native North American communities of the Eastern Woodlands peoples. In fact, Faron (1968, 24-25) makes it very clear that while age-set “buddies” and “companions” were part of Mapuche life, these were always patrilineal relatives, and seniority prevailed so that not only was the senior “buddy” the leader and dominant over the junior “buddy” or “buddies,” these were typically lineage brothers or parallel cousins. Interaction between unrelated same-age/same-gender persons or groups was typically discouraged or occurred only in formal contexts through the mediation of the chiefs of the lineages to which these same-age/same-gender persons belonged. He also notes that all collective labor was organized within the lineage and according to seniority (1964, 20; 1968, 22). In short, the Mapuche culture seems to be characterized by the absence of a concept of agentive autonomy, and of course, its absence sustained a very different kind of existent social reality since along with this absence would be an absence of *inclusive custodial usufruct* as I have defined it. Instead, a form of *exclusive custodial usufruct* of land prevailed.

What then does the Mapuche community illustrate that is of value for understanding the Mississippian period social system? Importantly, it illustrates that while an immanentist cosmology and custodial usufruct can indeed prevail, nevertheless, the expected principle of agentive autonomy, both individual and group, and the development of dual kinship and companionship structures may not. The Mapuche example also teaches that the likely reason this

is so is that some intervening social factor emerges that is capable of transforming the principle of inclusive custodial usufruct of land into a type of pseudoproprietorship. This is what I suggest occurred among the Mapuche and, as suggested above, I will use the term *exclusive custodial land usufruct* to refer to this type of land tenure. In the Mapuche case, the intervening factor that transformed inclusive custodial usufruct into exclusive custodial land usufruct, thereby mimicking the conditions of proprietorship of the land and, as a result, promoted dominance of the senior generation over the junior generation kin, would appear to be the monopolization by the senior males of discretionary control of marriageable females, thereby constituting exogamous patrilineal polygyny. This monopolization may have deep historical roots since the Mapuche have had a history of ongoing warfare against the Spanish invaders, and this history of violent and losing struggles may have promoted such intergenerational dominance. However, it may be that it preexisted the arrival of the Spaniards. The point is that in using the Mapuche as a model of the “Mississippian community,” thereby claiming it was a “chiefdom” like the Mapuche, also entails commitment to the recognition that these communities had some type of social practice that would have had the same effect as I claim was generated by the Mapuche practice of dominance control of the marriage system by the senior-male generation. Since many Mississippian archaeologists specifically assume descent-based kin groups, whether matrilineal or patrilineal (there seems to be a preference for the former), it would appear that the same type of senior generation monopolization of polygyny would be the most logical candidate. And of course, this would also entail commitment to the view that autonomous sodalities did not exist among the Mississippian peoples.

However, I do not recognize that this type of polygyny ever emerged in traditional or prehistoric Native North American

communities, at least not those that occupied the Eastern Woodlands. Besides the current ethnographic literature on traditional Native North American communities, I also endorse the unilateral rather than unilineal claims that both Kirchhoff (1959) and Knight (1990) have made for traditional Native North American communities east of the Rockies.⁴ Indeed, like the Mapuche, the historic Native North American communities were also under great military pressure from the invading Spaniards, as well as both the French and English. Yet they retained their principles and practices of autonomy, inclusive custodial usufruct of land, and the norm of monogamy rather than polygyny. Of course, in normative terms, polygyny was practiced in many historic Native American communities. However, this practice came under the constitutive principle of the agentic autonomy. Therefore, it was often the moral duty of a man to marry the widow of his brother or of a deceased boon companion in order to assure the custodial care and continued autonomy of the widow and her children. Hence, sororate, levirate, and boon-companionate marriages were normative practices (i.e., recognized as valued and warranted), but they were not the statistical norm for marriage, which was primarily monogamous. Among the traditional Mapuche, polygyny controlled by the senior males was both a normative practice and the statistical norm, at least historically, with senior males typically having more than one spouse, thereby ensuring that younger males would find it difficult to marry unless they retained a near servile relation to the older males.

It turns out, therefore, that the Mapuche can serve as an important cautionary analogy (or disanalogy) for modeling the Mississippian period community structure. The Mapuche may be best viewed as an example of a community based on an immanentist cosmology and practicing a land usufruct tenure that, however, generated a pseudoproprietorship of land that I termed above *exclusive custodial*

usufruct, and the latter effectively constituted the same structural constraints that a real regime of land proprietorship would constitute. Therefore, instead of encouraging companionship and autonomy, it suppressed both, and this generated conditions that largely precluded the formation of companionship-based groupings, while entailing dominance and subordination, descent inheritance, and differential dominance-based ranking. Therefore, even though the Mapuche manifested a type of settlement patterning that could be formally similar to the patterning I have termed the *bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture*, it really would, in fact, be simply a vacant center/dispersed farmstead pattern—that is, a patterning manifesting a lineage-based exclusive custodial usufruct community, or, a modular chiefdom polity, with dominance/subordination prevailing between men and women and the senior and junior generations. If such is the case, then it would raise a major problem for understanding the Mississippian pattern since it is also notable that, while the patterning of the Mapuche centers could certainly be interpreted as manifesting the immanent sacred powers of the cosmos, they are also somewhat puny and plain in comparison to the many Mississippian multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes. The latter involved scales of labor organization and mobilization that, apparently, the Mapuche could not match, even though their population numbers (2,000 to 10,000 per center) were easily equivalent if not greater than available in the Mississippian period. I noted above that for the Mapuche not only were the patrilineages dependent primarily on their own labor sources to construct these, not being able to call on other patrilineages except those to which they stood as superior through being wife-givers, the dominance-based mobilization of the junior generation as the major source of labor was largely self-limiting and narrow. This may explain why, for all their formal similarity to the Mississippian mound-and-plaza locales, the

Mapuche ceremonial centers were somewhat limited in monumental size and simple in content.

Critical Methodology

To complete this chapter, a comment is in order on the critical methodology that I use in this book. The theoretical framework in which this model is placed is itself complex and requires elucidating relevant ecological, cultural, social, material symbolic, and mortuary theories. I argue that all these aspects of social reality must be understood and related in order to comprehend the nature of the interregional interactions in which Cahokia engaged and, therefore, postulate the social mechanism that was responsible for the Mississippianization of this vast region. The knowledge expressed in a theoretical framework preexisted the framework that is developed in that the knowledge is derived from currently recognized and generally considered sound knowledge relevant to the object of study. It can therefore be used to generate hypothetical models of the necessary but not necessarily sufficient, conditions that generated the empirical data in the state that we have discovered it via fieldwork. When theoretical knowledge is used to generate a model characterizing the essential structural nature of a phenomenon, such as the social nature of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex we term *Cahokia*, retroductive rather than deductive logic is used (Danermark et al. 2002, 93). Retroduction is a transcendental logical mode of discovery that asks the question, Given our currently well confirmed theoretical knowledge, what conditions must have existed in the past for the patterning of the empirical data (i.e., the archaeological record) to exist as we now perceive it? Postulating the necessary conditions is only possible if we have adequately sound theoretical knowledge about them, and often this knowledge is used in archaeology through the medium of anthropological analogy, as

illustrated above. Therefore, the archaeologist constructs, through retroductive inference, a model that postulates the structures of the type of social systems that the prehistoric populations must have had for the empirical patterning to exist as it is currently available for us to perceive. Notice, perception is itself a theoretically mediated achievement. Hence, while I can agree with many of the Cahokian archaeologists about the size and number and average floor area of the structures revealed at Cahokia, the fact that most interpret these as sedentary domestic residences differentiated in terms of elite and commoner while I interpret them as revealing the rich array of hostel residences used by transient occupants is a function of our models or basic presuppositions. The problem and disagreement is resolved, as I discuss below, by comparative critical analysis of the explanatory powers of the two or more models addressing these same objective data upon which we can all agree.

Since this is a hypothetical model, it needs to be tested to see how well it “fits” the empirical data. A classic means of doing this is through predicting by deducing from the model a range of currently unperceived empirical patterns that ought to be discernible, given the adequacy of the hypothetical model. I have no problem with accepting this deductive-predictive method as *one* mode of testing, but only when subsumed to the more important method of using the model to *explain* why the patterning is the way it is. One reason I give priority to explanation rather than deduction is that the latter requires controlling the causal conditions that would generate the predicted patterning. That is, it requires controlled experimentation. An experiment is the method by which naturally open systems are contingently closed so as to enable the experimenter, using his/her theory, to introduce variable factors to cause and observe their empirical effects. These effects serve as indexical signs of the usually intangible, that is, nonobservable, causes that generated them.

Because experimentation is a material behavioral process that the experimenter controls, he/she can have considerable confidence that no unknown causal factors are intervening to influence the changes that the variable factor he/she introduces brings about. This is not simply a question of natural science as opposed to social science, although because of the open nature of social systems, social science experimentation is particularly problematic. There are a number of nonexperimental natural sciences, such as geology, evolutionary biology, meteorology, and so on, that rely on retrodution and explanation rather than deductive prediction since, of course, given the nature of the objects and processes that these natural sciences study, they cannot be subjected to experimental control. Since archaeologists as social scientists are definitively removed from the object of their theory, this being the prehistoric social systems they are studying via the archaeological record, and human societies are in any case irreducibly open systems, deductive testing is particularly problematic and unreliable (Bhaskar 1978, 1979).

However, as noted above, a limitation of retroductive models is that they delineate only necessary and not sufficient conditions. Therefore, not only are the models tested by using them to explain the empirical data, this explanatory test method must be comparative. That is, it is effected by comparing how well alternative and often contrasting models explain the same data. I consider this comparative step to be critically important. It is often referred to as *abduction*, a term coined by Peirce, the nineteenth-century American philosopher of science and signs. He treated abduction in both formal and less formal terms, effectively claiming that empirical data can be tested by redescribing or reinterpreting them within alternative and often contrasting theoretical frames (Danermark et al. 2002, 88-95). This means, of course, that at least two plausible theoretical models are required since these must be tested against each other

in terms of their explanatory power with respect to the same set of empirical data. Alternative and contrasting theoretical knowledge is usually available, particularly in social science, since almost all our concepts are contested, and this applies equally in archaeology. Now, entrenched perspectives are rarely deliberately produced. Rather, their rationality is often so taken-for-granted that they essentially constitute the premises of a dominant paradigm. And if deductive prediction is the primary testing method, then this dominant paradigm comes unwittingly to prevent alternative paradigms from even being conceived much less tested. This does not prevent alternative models and comparative analysis from being proposed and tested, of course. However, the alternatives typically share the bulk of their *a priori* assumptions, and therefore, the comparative test tends to focus on refinement and even relatively trivial differences. And while these can be significant, at the same time, the process further entrenches the dominant paradigm, effectively preventing it from being critically tested. Of course, debating these alternatives still constitutes inferential abduction, although at a low level of generality. For example, as I outlined in the introductory chapter, there is considerable theoretical debate among Mississippian archaeologists over the precise nature of the Mississippian chiefdom community. Each resolutely works at the problem by showing how the data he/she/they have collected support their model of the chiefdom and how these same data weaken the alternative claims and even falsify them. However, this debate entails low-level and nonradical redescriptions of the Mississippian social reality since most of those involved share the same core premises that, indeed, the Mississippian communities were chiefdoms of one sort or another. Where the disagreement arises is over the precise types.

The inferential abduction that forms the methodological core of this book takes a more fundamental position by proposing an

alternative model that disagrees on most—although certainly not all—of the essential theoretical assumptions of the orthodox model. It then compares the two by using each to explain the same empirical patterning. Which model is favored is determined by assessing their respective explanatory powers in terms of the depth, breadth, and coherence of the explanations that each model enables of the same empirical data. Also, the model that generates the fewest anomalous results and that can, at the same time, dissolve or resolve most of the anomalies generated by the alternative model(s) is the model that is accepted—for the moment. That is, the accepted model is always a contingently accepted account since, under this comparative view, which can also be termed the *fallibilist* view, all models are to be treated as approximate representations of the social reality that they characterize and which they are used to explain. The model that is most effective in terms of leveraging the most coherent understanding and reasonable explanation is the one that is contingently accepted. The others are set aside as (for now) falsified. Particularly in social science, the reality being explained is complex, and therefore, no single model can capture its full nature. Furthermore, since the model articulates only necessary and not sufficient conditions, even the best model is only an approximation of what it is about and must be open for further development, correction, and adjustments.

I have drawn this methodology from the critical realism of the work of Roy Bhaskar (1978, 1979). He refers to it as the *hermeneutic spiral methodology*. It is hermeneutic because he insists that we must explain the empirical data as the outcome of interaction among intentional agents (i.e., human beings), and therefore, it requires meaning interpretation as a basic part of the explanation. It is a spiral since, if done properly, it entails *critique*, and this encourages correction, reanalysis, reformulation, and modification of the models. And when the anomalies they reveal cannot be dissolved by

simple modifications, it even calls for the complete reconstitution of the fundamental models by means of retroduction (i.e., deconstructing, reconstructing and if necessary postulating new basic premises). Critiquing all the models, not simply the opposed model, is fundamental. And it presents a problem in etiquette. It is important to note that the critiques I present are critiques of the *models in respect to the relevant data and not of the modelers*. I have attempted to keep the persons identified with the models I critique separate from the critique so as to avoid transforming the critique into a personal criticism. That is, the reason this book is critique-heavy is because this is its fundamental method for demonstrating the truth of existential claims (i.e., that these claims give the best current characterization of the nature of the phenomena that generated the data).

Bhaskar's realist philosophy of science has influenced many social scientists who have turned to using retroduction and abduction (i.e., recursive articulation of necessary conditions and comparative explanation) to generate and test models against each other (Bhaskar 1978, chapter 3; 1978, 11-28, 164-69; Byers 2004, 106-107; 2006a, 21-22, 212-13, 284-85; also Archer 1995, 1996; Collier 1994, 20-25; Danermark et al. 2002; Sayer 1984, 79-136). As I noted above, it is referred to as the hermeneutic spiral method: *hermeneutic*, the science of interpretation, because the process deals with the archaeological record as the outcome primarily of intentional (i.e., meaningful) human conduct in the context of a particular social and natural reality, and therefore, this reality is interpretively constituted in both the experiences of the responsible population and in our own understanding. It is *critical* because it always involves debating and assessing the explanatory power of the alternative theoretical models against each other in terms of the validity of their central concepts and against the same data. It is *rational* because it always involves cognitively choosing from among the models the one that "best fits" the data

(i.e., the model that makes the most coherent, logical explanation). Finally, it is *spiral*-like because, although hermeneutic interpretation is circular and recursive, in this case, its critical comparative method follows a hopefully, or presumed, “upward circling” (i.e., a spiraling), thereby resulting in new verified knowledge. This new knowledge then becomes the source of further critical interpretation, thereby risking its replacement and, hopefully, growth of knowledge.

NOTES

1. I actually think that the nonegalitarian/egalitarian distinction to differentiate between these two types of communities may best be treated as a continuum and not a dichotomy. That is, under this conceptual structure, an egalitarian community does not fundamentally contrast in structure with a nonegalitarian community since both are based on dominance structures. The difference is one of balance. I discuss this in more detail in Part 3.
2. Paul Pacheco (1996, 22-24), in fact, has used the settlement pattern of the Mapuche to model the Middle Woodland period Central Ohio Valley social system—often referred to as the *Ohio Hopewell*. Although he does not give particular emphasis to the hierarchical aspect of the Mapuche, nevertheless, I believe that the Mapuche type of social system serves just as well as a disanalogy for modeling the Middle Woodland period of Ohio as it serves as a disanalogy for modeling the Mississippian system (Byers 2011, 34-41).
3. A similar open U-formation of the central plazas of the Inca capital of Cuzco and those of their major prehistoric predecessors has been recognized as having the same symbolic meaning, effectively presencing the sacred powers of the cosmos conceptualized as a great puma (G. Conrad and Demarest 1984, 116-121 and figure 21, 117; Moseley 1992, 137-40).

4. With considerable acuity, Knight (1990) does *not* recognize lineal descent as the governing principle of either historic or prehistoric native North American communities east of the Rockies. Rather he explicitly argues that as the general rule filiation and not descent was the tradition. Even though he has more recently equivocated on this claim (Knight 2010), I will give careful attention to the validity of Knight's 1990 argument later in the book and spell out what I believe its real relevance is for understanding Mississippian "chiefdoms." Of course, I now formally withdraw my earlier claim that lineages prevailed (Byers 2006a).

CHAPTER 4

Calumet Ceremonialism and Interregional Interaction

Robert Hall (1991, 18-21) has noted that when European explorers, traders, and missionaries initially engaged with the peoples of the Upper Mississippi and Western Great Lakes regions (e.g., the Winnebago, Ioway, Oto, Missouri, as well as the Osage, Kansa, and Pawnee), these different peoples were linked into a widespread system of intercommunal reciprocal exchange and trading, referred to in the anthropological and ethnohistoric literature as the *Plains Interband Trading System*. He then went on to characterize the primary social mechanism that generated and sustained this system—what he referred to as *Calumet ceremonialism* by which two leaders from different cultural communities became socially and spiritually linked as mutually adoptive kin (Hall 1991, 10-11, 22). Usually the senior adopted the less senior as his “son,” thereby forming an adoptive or, as Hall called it, a *fictive* father-son relation by which material interaction between the communities could be effected through peaceful reciprocal exchange. Hall went on to postulate that this Plains Interband Trading System with its key Calumet ceremonialism can be considered the continuity of the Late Prehistoric Oneota Interaction sphere of the same region in which he claimed a similar Calumet-like ceremonialism also operated (1991, 27-29). He noted that the archaeological record generated by this Oneota Interaction sphere marks what is referred to in the archaeological literature as the *Coalescent*

tradition, ca. AD 1100-1500. This places its emergence approximately during the Stirling phase of the Mississippian period of Cahokia (ca. cal. AD 1100-1200; see table 2.1 and table 2.2).

At that time, Cahokia was also caught up in its own system of long-distance interaction, which Hall referred to as the *Cahokian Interaction sphere*, and there is considerable evidence in the way of ceramics to suggest that the participants in these two spheres were also interacting or were soon to initiate interaction. When the northern component of the Cahokian sphere “collapsed,” thereby leaving behind its widespread signature in the form of Mississippian assemblage materials, the Oneota Interaction sphere came to encroach on many of the same regions north of the American Bottom where Cahokian interaction had earlier prevailed. Hall specifically noted that the Oneota ceramic distribution that delineates the maximum geographical extension of this interaction sphere is almost congruent with the earlier distribution of American Bottom Mississippian ceramics in the same region and that, as noted above, in all likelihood, this interaction sphere was mediated by a form of Calumet-like ceremonialism parallel to the historically known Calumet ceremonialism (1991, 30). It was this type of ceremonialism and the fictive-kinship relations it served to generate and sustain that he claimed would have been the *social mechanism* by which Cahokian chiefs politically and economically linked themselves to Upper Mississippi Valley community leaders. I am going to call this view of the processual mechanism that mediated Cahokian interregional exchange and influence the *Calumet Adoptive-Kinship model*. Of course, the interregional process of interaction that it enabled could be termed the *Mississippianization* of these northern regions.

Hall has explicitly treated Cahokia as a hierarchical monistic modular polity (i.e., a paramount chiefdom). He has argued that the communities in regions to the north of the American Bottom would

have been nonhierarchical or “egalitarian” Late Woodland types, and therefore, the alliance relation between prominent leaders from the two types of communities would be asymmetrical in that the Cahokian leader would be a chief who inherited her/his position, itself being constituted as the focus of dominance powers, social powers characterized as endowing the occupant with powers over the actions of others, while the Calumet adoptive-kinship partner or partners would have been charismatic-type leaders who had achieved their community leadership standing. “The principle difference of the ceremonies proposed as mechanism of the Cahokia and Oneota interactions is that the former would presumably have been performed upon the initiative of the leader (Sun? Thunder Chief?) of the Cahokian chiefdom to establish the formal relationships with regional leaders and the latter was probably performed, as in historical times, upon the personal initiative of local leaders to relate themselves to other local leaders at a more egalitarian level, not within a regional hierarchy” (Hall 1991, 31). Hall also explicitly noted that the capacity of Calumet-like ceremonialism to generate long-distance adoptive-kinship relations between “strangers” derives from the religious commitment that all participating communities had toward the same or equivalent gods as represented in the creation myths of the cosmologies of the different cultural groups that inhabited this region. The model picks out particular components of the relevant creation myths that highlight the relations among the gods, in particular, the deity father-son kinship relation. Hence, the claim is that the Calumet-like ceremonialism by which Cahokian adoptive-kinship alliance relations were constituted among otherwise unrelated and spatially distant socially asymmetrical leadership-based parties embodied the special sanctity of the gods, who were themselves, according to the myths, related as kin—“father” and “son” (1991, 30-33).

Critical Alternative

I can second Hall's claim that Calumet-like "father-son" adoptive ceremonialism was used to generate a type of long-distance relation that mediated interpersonal interaction. I want to stress, however, that Hall's emphasizing kinship, particularly the father-son relation, and claiming that it was sanctified by the paternal-filial relation among the gods themselves, is largely a function of the influence of the theoretical perspective that he and many other archaeologists use—namely, the hierarchical monistic modular polity view. I claim that it is not a fully accurate, or even adequate, characterization of the actual communities. This is clearly demonstrated by the same creation myths that Hall summarily presents, which highlight that not only did *deity kinship* figure in the mythical episodes but also *deity companionship* figured, and possibly more importantly than did the former. Indeed, the narrative core of the primary myths characterize two relational structures mediating deity interaction, kinship and companionship, and the deities represented as companions were often depicted as "boon companions." In fact, a reanalysis of the myths under this dual structural view arguably suggests that the principle of companionship was probably even more fundamental in mediating the interdeity relations by which the world was created than the complementary principle of kinship. Extrapolating the social categories and cultural values manifested in myths to social life, this dual relational structuring of the myths strongly suggests that companionship was as important and as sacred a commitment between active social agents as was kinship. If this is the case, then, while certainly a Calumet-like ceremonial adoptive-kinship mechanism no doubt operated, rather than playing a primary role in constituting the Cahokian Interaction sphere, it may have been merely an auxiliary mechanism that was parasitic on the more basic mechanism, one that invoked the sanctity of companionship among the gods

as the basis for interregional alliances. Thought of in these terms, Calumet-like ceremonial rituals constituting “adoptive” *companions* would be a powerful and primary alliance-constitutive mechanism particularly relevant to mediating interaction among the sodalities of widespread complementary heterarchical communities, as I characterized these in the previous chapters.

The centrality of companionship in the Mississippianization process is the main theme that is explored and developed in this book, and I will explore it under two proposals. First, when the complementary heterarchical communities of a region were in a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, interrelations among the sodalities of these communities would be no less important, and in fact, probably more important in effecting relations across the sodalities of the total set of communities than would be the parallel formation of personal adoptive-kinship relations among the formal leaders of these same communities. Second, much of the potency of these intersodality relations would have been grounded on Calumet-like ritual that drew on the core values (i.e., the basic principles, rules, and protocols of companionship) as these were expressed in the myths of the creator gods who, in their capacity as “boon companions,” assisted each other in their monumental tasks of creating and recreating the cosmos (i.e., of creating the world that humans experienced and occupied).

These two related proposals do not deny that kinship played an important role in the way the gods were conceptualized as pursuing their world creation tasks. No doubt, this role underwrote the meaning of kinship in real social life. However, it is time to rebalance the onus of relevance and consider that, in fact, companionship was also a potent social force, as clearly implicated in the role it played in the same sacred beliefs about the world creation activities of the deities (see below). Hence, under special developing conditions, such

as the perceived rise of levels of sacred pollution in the environment, often recognized by the human community as being generated by their own intensifying level and degree of intervening into the sacred natural order via expanding and intensifying of routine subsistence and settlement practices, it is quite reasonable that companionship was recruited in special ways to serve as the medium by which new world renewal ritual practices could be innovated, particularly if these practices entailed greater than traditional labor inputs for their effective performance. As I briefly noted earlier and elaborate in some detail shortly, the expanding demand for labor that these new ritual practices would have entailed would have motivated and promoted a dual trend of integrating preexisting sodality groups of the individual communities of a region and, at the same time, extending intersodality alliances across these regional communities. This dual process would quickly generate a bifurcated settlement modal posture. Hence, under these perceived conditions of rising sacred pollution resulting from intensification and even innovation of traditional settlement and subsistence practices, companionship and its capacity to generate alliances through Calumet-like rituals may have far surpassed the effect of kinship in mediating the Mississippianization process.

Creation Myths and Calumet Ceremonialism

To illustrate and analogically ground his adoptive-kinship alliance premise, Hall used the Winnebago creation myth of Red Horn and his two sons, each of the latter born of a different female god. He then traced similar creation myths through many historically known and interrelated peoples of the Midwest. He even demonstrated the temporal depth and spatial scope of these cultural structural creation themes by connecting them to similar themes in Mesoamerican myths, particularly among the Toltec, Aztec, and Maya (Hall

2000, 246; 1989, 243-45; also see Brown 2007a, 59, 93-94; 2007c, 221; Brown and Kelly 2000, 498-500). In the Winnebago cosmology, Red Horn was a central god responsible for carrying out the creation of the world. However, he was opposed in his creative work by the Giants, another set of gods, and these succeeded in slaying him. In vengeance for this homicidal act, Red Horn's sons pursued the Giants, defeated them, recuperated their father's bones and the bones of the others of the community that the Giants had killed, and used these to reincarnate him and his people so as to re-establish the community (i.e., recreate humanity) (Hall 1997, 149-50).

Now, as important as this story of filial vengeance and reincarnation by the sons of Red Horn is, it is hardly the whole story. That is, the same suite of Winnebago creation myths, and by extension, those of most Eastern Woodland peoples, can be used to demonstrate the equal importance and sacred nature of companionship. In this regard, it was not only Red Horn and his people who the Giants killed; they also killed all his companions, who were also gods. That is, Red Horn and his boon companions, the Thunderbird god Storms-as-he-walks and Turtle, along with all their other companion gods, constituted in effect a male-based warrior sodality that had been engaged in a series of battles of lethal sacred combat with the Giants, succeeding to overwhelm them each time. Furthermore, even though Red Horn is represented as having brothers, these male kin do not figure in these battles, at least not as kin of Red Horn. In fact, when he was still an adolescent and the youngest of his brothers, he contested a race against them and other male kin in the community with the prize being to marry the daughter of the village chief. He was refused permission by the chief to compete, but he did so anyway. Using his powers to transform into a sacred arrow, he defeated all the other competitors, and won the chief's daughter. But rather than marrying her, as the youngest son, he offered "his would-be bride to his

next older brother, who similarly declined and offered her to the next older until finally the oldest of the ten accepted and married her” (Hall 1997, 149).

Clearly, his autonomy as a creator god was seriously constrained by the rules and protocols of kinship. Hence, his true nature as an autonomous god, a Thunderbird, only emerged fully when he was in the presence of his fellow companions, the other Thunderbirds, and it was in their shared persona as companion deities that they were able to save humankind against the hostile underworld gods, the Giants. It is only following a series of initial victories by Red Horn and his boon companions against the Giants that Red Horn’s sons were born. Red Horn married twice, one wife being a mysterious woman with no relatives, probably representing a celestial goddess, and the other being the daughter of the conquered leader of the Giants, the god of the Beneath World. He had one son with each. Therefore, these sons were themselves half kin as well as companions since they were the sons of the same father but of different and unrelated mothers representing the Above and Beneath Worlds respectively.

Now, I think it is germane to note that these companion-brothers figured in the second suite of stories. They revenged their father’s death at the hands of the Giants, as well as the deaths of his boon companions, and, ultimately, used their bones to reincarnate them and all the humans of the original village.¹ Therefore, the adventures of Red Horn’s *sons* constitute the second or follow-up mythic cycle, and this suggests that in terms of priority, the sacredness of companionship may well trump the sacredness of kinship. More importantly, however, it is clear from the myths that companionship was a critically important and highly respected social structural principle and that the “good life” always included a balanced appropriation and allocation of time and creative energy between one’s kin and one’s companions.

As I noted above, the Winnebago creation myth of Red Horn and his companions is not a unique story since many neighboring cultural communities of this extensive region had equivalent myths depicting culture heroes that were companions. For example, the Ioway, Oto, Missouri, Osage, Miami, and Illinois have stories in which the equivalents of Red Horn and his companions figured importantly (Hall 1991, 18-21). The Osage and Pawnee had Morning Star as the equivalent of Red Horn. Furthermore, while the Winnebago and other myths envision the culture heroes as boon companions responsible for the creation of their communities, sometimes they are represented as "accidental companions." The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara share similar myths in which their dual creator gods were "accidental companions." Their creator gods, First Creator and Lone Man, have mysterious beginnings in that they are descended from nonhumans. While they are portrayed in human form, they can also transform into powerful animals or objects, such as falcons, eagles, and even sacred arrows. These two gods happen to meet, and they cooperate to create the world, one companion producing one half of the middle world, and the other the complementary opposite half of the middle world. Only after the middle world is created are married human couples brought to earth by the gods, thereby founding the original clans, and the gods encouraged them to practice exogamous marriage. Hence, while Hall is correct to suggest that the kinship-related components of these myths underwrote Calumet-like adoptive-kinship ceremonialism and ritual, I postulate that equivalent Calumet-like ceremonialism served to found and sustain companionship-based groups and relations.

It is possible that the tendency of archaeological scholars to be oblivious to, or certainly downplay, the particular nature and centrality that companionship plays in many creation myths might be related to their reliance on the emphasis that North American

cultural anthropologists have placed on kinship. The latter have provided us with the theoretical views that we apply largely unproblematically to the archaeological record. I think that this kinship focus by anthropologists—to the detriment of the structural importance of companionship—is well represented by the work of Alfred Bowers (1965, 2004). He has made several classic studies of the historic Hidatsa and Mandan communities of the Upper Missouri Valley and was himself adopted into the Hidatsa social world. Nevertheless, while Bowers gives plentiful empirical support to the significance of both kinship and companionship, my reading of his work required “discovering” the essential nature that companionship plays in the structuring both of these communities and their intercommunity relations. Bowers’ initial description of the Calumet-like practices follows Hall’s description very closely. As he puts it:

A Hidatsa would select as a “son” a prominent member of a visiting band, usually the leader of the band, and announce he would come to visit sometime during the summer. In the interim both “father” and “son” would prepare the goods and paraphernalia necessary for the adoption ceremonies. The father would first prepare, or have prepared by some members of the Adoption Pipe *fraternity*, the principal ceremonial object; a wooden pipestem decorated with redheaded woodpecker scalps, eagle feather, and horsetail hanging as a scalp. He would also secure a good buffalo horse, complete sets of clothing for the son and family, and other fine presents such as robes, guns, and bows and arrows. In the accumulation of the necessary things, he received assistance from his own and related households, and from the members of his own clan and *age-grade* groups. (Bowers 1965, 84, emphasis added, noting the role of companionship in this adoptive-kinship ceremonialism)

Thus, even though he does not use the term *Calumet*, he clearly describes the same type of kinship adoption ritual practices that Hall speaks of as Calumet ceremonialism. Furthermore, except that he uses the terms *fraternity* and *age-grade*, the content repeats much of the content that Hall gives, even to noting that the central icon of the ritual was a “pipestem” (the actual Calumet item) decorated with various items, bird parts, in particular the “horsetail-as-scalp-cap,” itself likely representing a sacred scalp (Hall 1997, 152-53). Therefore, importantly, while both Hall and Bowers note the existence of companionship, they equally emphasize that this Calumet ceremonialism was essentially a *kinship* adoption ceremony that, as Hall also very importantly points out, included a strong mortuary component of death and rebirth.

However, as I highlighted with the emphasis I added, sodalities clearly were also involved. In this regard, as Bowers points out in subsequent passages, it is notable that the Calumet-type ceremonialism was the medium of both the “father-son” adoptive kinship relation as described above *and* of the companionship-based relation, the latter being operable between two men, two women, or two groups of men or women from unrelated communities. He also goes on to note that both forms of ritually constructed relations played a critical role in the constitution of a Hidatsa individual’s reputation since “all council leaders had established, by means of adoption ceremony, ‘father-son’ or ‘*friend-friend*’ relationships, with a number of distinguished men of other tribes. Even the children established ‘*friend-friend*’ relationships with individuals of the same age and sex by the formal exchange of clothing and presents” (1965, 91, emphasis added). Hence, in almost an offhand manner, Bowers included the “friend-friend” relation (i.e., what I am calling the *companionship* relation) within this type of adoptive kinship ceremonialism. In doing so, he clearly is subsuming companionship to kinship; that

is, companions are not the same as kin, but they are “like” them; thus, they are “adopted kin.” However, he surpassed his own focus on kinship and went on to discuss the “friend-friend,” or as he also termed it the *pal-pal* relationship in more detail, and while possibly not intending to do so, showed that it ramified well beyond the informal “boys-as-chums” view. In fact, despite his focus on Hidatsa and Mandan kinship structures, he presented a rather detailed description of the Hidatsa age-grade system, demonstrating that this was constituted by a substantive rather than an ephemeral set of groups having constitutive and regulatory rules and conventions, and he even stressed its importance as an autonomous group type in organizational life of the community.

Still, his kinship bias comes out very clearly since it was the intricacies of the kinship system to which he gave greatest attention and detail. Indeed, this is neatly illustrated in his listing of what he labeled the *Hidatsa kinship terminology*. His list included 26 separate English terms, only 24 of which had matching Hidatsa terms, and in typical anthropological manner of that time, he carefully charted from the perspective of “ego” the kinship relations these terms were used to articulate. He then went on to list and describe the mutually binding rights and duties (i.e., the deontics) of complementary paired kin positions (i.e., social relations, “father-son,” “father-daughter,” “elder brother-younger brother,” and so on). However, it is very interesting that to make this list of kinship relations he used only 23 of the 24 listed Hidatsa terms.² The twenty-fourth and unused term was *irakúu*. That is, while Bowers listed *irakúu* as one of the kinship terms, and in fact, in several cases he refers to it as a kinship term, it does not appear in his exhaustive listing and description of his kinship relational pairings. There is a good reason for this, of course, because it was not a kinship term at all. Bowers specifically translated it as “pal” (Bowers 1965, 80-90, 93-94). He also listed the parallel

kinship terms of the Mandan system and included the Mandan term *kotomanaku*, which he also translated in English as meaning “companion” or “pal” (Bowers 1965, 183).

Is it possible that this term *irakúu* or “friend,” “pal,” or, generically, “companion,” does not contrast with the kinship terms and, instead, is simply used as an informal synonym for kinship or used as a diminutive between certain kin? Certainly, this may be why Bowers included it in the list of kin terms. However, there is independent evidence demonstrating that the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara explicitly distinguished between the concepts we can express in English by the terms *kin* and *companion*. Virginia Peters (1995, 26) relates the creation story of the Mandan and Hidatsa creator gods. First Worker (or First Creator) and Lone Man encountered each other and traveled together prior to turning to the creating of the world. In their travels, they met up with a very busy female mouse and, presumably using the above Hidatsa or Mandan terms, addressed her as “friend.” The busy mouse immediately responded and said “‘Not so!’ . . . , ‘you are wrong, you are not my friends; you are my grandsons!’ ‘You must be our grandmother,’ they said. ‘Yes,’ she answered. Then they found other tracks which led them to a large female toad, who said the ground was her body. She said they were her grandsons too” (Peters 1995, 26). These incidents in the creation story can be reasonably interpreted as saying that for the Mandan and Hidatsa the concepts expressed in the English generic terms *kin* and *companion* were internally and contrastively related by *complementary opposition*. A friend, pal, companion, and so on, was defined in complementary contrast to a person related as kin, a family member. If these mythical encounters can be used as interpretive guides, then Hidatsa persons relating as *irakúu* were explicitly not relating as kin, even though, given the type of integrated face-to-face villages the Hidatsa had, it is likely that every person in a community

could relate to every other in more than one kinship position. This is a point that Bowers stressed (1965, 71).

This simply reinforces the notion that the kinship and companionship groups were relatively autonomous, and explicit avoidances sometimes had to be taken to ensure that the proper etiquette was followed. Wearing particular symbols would probably serve to assist here so that two or more persons who were relatives but were interacting as companions would recall this latter relation to the fore by the particular costuming they wore. As we say, they wore “different hats” when relating as companions, and even brothers in different age-set sodalities jointly attending to a common sodality ritual performance would assume the proper *irakúu-irakúu* conduct as symbolically evoked by the sodality “hats” they were wearing. That is, in this context they would carefully eschew types of conduct and forms of clothing appropriate to the kinship relations that they also embodied. Finally, to reinforce the claim that kinship and companionship constitute complementary social spheres, it is notable that while the Hidatsa have a number of different terms of address that have the same referent, “elder brother,” “elder sister,” and so on, and these are distinguished by one set being used only by male relatives and the other only by female relatives, at the same time, and in contrast to these kinship distinctions, both males and females use the same term, *irakúu*, to address and/or refer to a person as a “pal” or “companion.”

Therefore, despite Bowers’ listing these terms, *irakúu* and *koto-manaku*, as being among the respective Hidatsa and Mandan kinship term sets, their usage actually expressively demarcates and is constitutive of a non-kinship sphere, the companionship-based or friend-friend sphere of relations, as contrastively complementary to the kinship sphere. As Bowers specified in the earlier quotation, two young boys, for example, can become *irakúu* by exchanging gifts.

The same term is used to refer to the relation that binds a group of males who constitute an age-set. Indeed, Bowers points out that the *irakúu* relation can pair equivalent age-grade sodalities differentiated by gender so that they constitute an “*irakúu* brother-*irakúu* sister” alliance. It can also be used to pair equivalent male age-set sodalities from different communities. The fact that the persons making up the *irakúu* age-sets of a community are also the same persons that make up the matrilineal kin groups of this community is what I mean by characterizing the age-set sodalities and matriclans as relatively autonomous and, therefore, why we can say the total community is organized as a complementary heterarchy. That is, it consists of two major complementary and (relative to each other) autonomous groupings: (1) the age-sets, substructured into male and female, and each organized into enabling hierarchies by age seniority; and (2) the clans, structured into complementary moieties.³

All this means that Bowers’ description of the Hidatsa community substantiates the existence of two structural spheres, each anchoring ritually constituted intercommunity alliance relations—one mediated through the “father-son” adoptive relation that Hall primarily addressed, and the other mediated by the “friend-friend” or *irakúu* relation that I primarily address. Bowers’ work also allows me to ground my claim that this *irakúu* term was critical to the constitution of age-set sodality groups which, as lifelong peer friends, collectively moved up the age-set enabling hierarchy, as I discuss shortly. Moreover, he has unwittingly recognized that the concept of companionship is at the heart of intracommunity and intercommunity sodality relations. In particular, he notes that the formation of companionship bonds between equivalent age-set sodalities from different communities was very formal. This confirms my claim that, in fact, for the Hidatsa there were at least two basic types of Calumet ceremonials: one related to the adoptive-kinship sphere and the

other to the companionship sphere. Since this highlights a structural condition that constituted the Hidatsa as a complementary heterarchical community, it is also likely that this would be the case for their neighbors and, indeed, for the prehistoric communities from which they descended, since these social structures were part of the deep social structural core that constituted this type of society.

A Hidatsa age-set is a group of self-selected (i.e., “voluntary” peers) *irakúu*, and as such, it can relate to other equivalent *irakúu* age-set groups in the same terms, whether male or female. Male-based age-sets in the same age-grade that are not age equivalent relate in terms of seniority, and they use the kinship terms that denote senior-junior generations; that is, the male age-set that is immediately senior to another will refer to the latter as their “*irakúu*-sons,” and the junior age-set will reciprocally refer to the senior age-set as their “*irakúu*-fathers.” Female-based age-sets use the appropriate “mother-daughter” terms. Male and female age sets relate to each other by using the “*irakúu* brother-*irakúu* sister” terms. However, this kinship terminology clearly is being used figuratively in order to delineate not kinship but relative seniority among non-kin or companionate groups. The figurative usage is clear because, first, the Hidatsa did not use the kinship terminology that existed in order to constitute the senior brother-junior brother contrast and, instead, used the parent-child terminological distinction, which clearly signals the figurative use of these terms since the median ages of the two contiguous age-sets in the same age-grade were actually only differentiated by three to five years, and second, because part of the process of transferring sodality rituals from the senior “father” to the junior “son” age-set was for the latter to offer their wives (with their consent) as sexual partners to their “fathers.” If the males of the senior age-set who effected this offer were actually related to the junior as real kin, despite its being performed within the sodality context, such an offer would

likely count as incestuous and would be taboo, and would be strictly avoided. Furthermore, a member of the senior age-set will “adopt” members of the junior age-set who are agnates, that is, whose actual fathers come from the same matrilineal clan while they belong to their different matrilineal clans as determined by their mothers. Now in the senior-junior age-set context, they refer reciprocally to each other as *father* and *son*. However, when these same males are in a shared kinship context, as same generation agnatically-related males, they would address each other as elder and younger brothers respectively (Bowers 1965, 82). These behavioral contrasts and apparent contradictions reinforce the conclusion that when used in the *irakúu* context the kinship terms—*father* and *son*—are being used figuratively in order to recognize the difference in seniority between two *irakúu* age-set groups of the same generation. As I discuss below, these relations of seniority play a major role in understanding the Calumet-type ritual of transferring sodality custodial responsibilities from the senior to the junior age-set.

In short, a closer examination of the Hidatsa and Mandan, typical practitioners of Calumet ceremonialism, would suggest that Hall’s description of this ceremonialism as the medium of the Oneota Interaction sphere and the earlier Cahokian Interaction sphere has overlooked a second parallel, and certainly an equally if not more important form of Calumet-like ceremonialism by which long-distance relations were constructed. I will call it *Calumet companionate* or *irakúu ceremonialism*. If we follow Bowers in this regard, there are two distinct variant expressions of this Calumet *irakúu* ceremonialism. There is one form that transfers the ritual performance rights and obligations in the care of a senior age-set sodality to its immediately junior age-set sodality, from *irakúu*-fathers to *irakúu*-sons, thereby promoting the latter to the more senior level while the former retires from that level and then does the same with the age-set

that is immediately senior to it. Then there is a second form dealing with intercommunity relations between *equivalent* age-sets of their respective communities.

Equally important, however, is that Hall has tied the Calumet ceremonialism into mortuary ritual, and these mortuary rites ensure a three-fold purpose: releasing the *personal* or *free* soul of the deceased in order to enable it to travel to the land of the Dead, releasing *name souls* so that they can be “adopted” by selected living persons, and releasing the *living souls* of the deceased to enable rebirth.⁴ Of course, there is an important sense in which the kinship system is primarily tied into mortuary rites, as Hall has emphasized in his characterization of Calumet fictive-kinship ceremonialism as being a medium of kinship-adoption rites. However, companionship is also centrally tied into mortuary rites, treated here as *rebirth rites* and as *world renewal rites*. Bowers’ work has again unwittingly presented empirical evidence in this regard. As noted above, the Hidatsa and Mandan are matrilineal. However, he asserts that it is not the deceased’s matriline (i.e., the deceased’s cognatic clan) but the matriline of the deceased’s father (the deceased’s agnatic clan) that makes up the set of persons responsible for organizing and conducting the mortuary rites. The members of the deceased’s matriline, his/her cognatic clan, are responsible to provide all the needed material mortuary goods for the organizers to conduct the rites (Bowers 1965, 75). Since both the agnatic and cognatic matriline of the deceased operate in this complementary manner, it would appear that the companions or *irakúu* of the deceased are excluded. However, it is not so simple.

Now Bowers particularly stresses the fact that the clans and age-sets normally enable any two individuals in the community to invoke several different relations in which they can stand to each other by selecting the relation appropriate to the social context in which they are jointly involved. “[M]any factors of social participation

affected the relationship between individuals and extended the system to include nonrelatives, age-grade associates, ceremonial participation, adoption of children and ceremonial adoptions by both men and women, and equations of Hidatsa with Mandan clans. All these produced systems of interaction between individuals in which two people often stood in several relationships to each other. This was not mentioned specifically by informants and came out in the study of various customs" (1965, 71). The Hidatsa clearly recognize that only those linked through the mother are treated as and treat each other as members of the same matriclan (i.e., as cognatic kin). However, as I noted above, a person is also recognized as being affiliated to his/her father's matriclan—but as an agnate. Therefore, agnatic and cognatic kin relations are differentiated by the sex of the linking parent, and this is clearly recognized by the division of mortuary responsibility between the cognatic matriclan of the deceased (i.e., his/her mother's clan), and his/her agnatic matriclan (i.e., his/her father's matriclan). This means that there would be no contradiction between the same-sex/same-age agnates (e.g., two agnatic "cousins") also forming *irakúu* relations. In fact, as agnates they could become special *irakúu*, those who have fathers of the same matriclan. Of course, this does not mean that only agnates can form *irakúu* relations; it simply means that being *irakúu* and agnates would not be contradictory. In contrast, senior and junior cognatic brothers would find it impossible also to be "*irakúu* brothers" since the seniority principle would apply, and in a companionship context, the elder brother and younger brother would belong to different age-sets and stand as "*irakúu* father" and "*irakúu* son" to each other.

This "*irakúu* father–*irakúu* son" relation entailed a very important Calumet *irakúu* ceremony by which transfers of status were constituted, and of course, this was the mode by which the age-set system was sustained and reproduced. A Hidatsa or Mandan age-set sodality

that was prepared to move to the next level in the hierarchy based on seniority would propose to their “*irakúu* fathers,” those constituting the immediately senior *irakúu* age-set, that they undertake transferring all their collective rituals and responsibilities to their “*irakúu* sons,” the junior age-set sodality, thereby promoting the latter one step up the age-set hierarchy. (As noted above, the senior age-set, of course, would then approach their own “*irakúu* fathers” to arrange the same type of transfer, and so on up the hierarchy.) When agreement was arrived at, the senior age-set undertook responsibility to train the junior age-set in the ritual and obligations of their forthcoming new status. That is, it was the responsibility of the “*irakúu* fathers” to teach their “*irakúu* sons” all the rituals of the senior age-set sodality that the junior age-set sodality was being prepared to “adopt.” To do this, each member of the senior age-set selected from among the members of the junior age-set those who were his junior *agnates*. As I noted above, he addressed them as his “*irakúu* sons,” and they addressed him as their “*irakúu* father.” Furthermore, each promotional step occurred the same way so that each *irakúu* subset linked as *agnates* through having fathers from the same matriclan would probably have remained especially close within the overall *irakúu* age-set of companions and, in all likelihood, would have developed into sets of *boon companions* within their age-set.

I have to speculate how this would relate to the mortuary practices. However, given the rules of the age-set, the logic of this suggestion is valid. Bowers points out that a Hidatsa person selected from among his/her companions those who would receive special gifts on his/her death, and these would also participate in special ways during the mortuary rites. “[T]he members of the [deceased’s] father’s clan who officiated were selected in advance, sometimes years beforehand. It was the duty of the [deceased’s matri-]clan to provide goods, horses, and food for the funeral rites as payment for the official mourners

who comprised the adults of the [deceased's] father's clan" (Bowers 1965, 75). Being "selected in advance, sometimes years beforehand" has to be seen in the context of Bowers' comment that the actual selection was usually made by the person in anticipating her/his own future mortuary rites, and therefore, for males this would probably amount to individuals choosing their own *irakúu* agnates (i.e., their "boon companions") to undertake an important part of these rites, and indeed, they probably would take on special responsibilities in their dual capacity as agnates and "*irakúu* brothers" who had shared experiences from jointly hunting, sharing self-torture, warpath expeditions and battles, extended long-distance ordeal quests, and so on. Therefore, while Bowers stipulates that the agnatic matriclan of the deceased (i.e., the deceased's father's matriclan) was responsible for organizing this person's mortuary rites, his own analysis of the age-set system supports the conclusion that several of these agnates would also be age-set companions (i.e., *irakúu*, of the deceased), and indeed, would probably hold the special status of being agnatic *irakúu* of the deceased (i.e., boon companions).

Added to this is the fact that, typically, the age-set of the deceased was also expected to contribute to the matriclan of the deceased in material support of the mortuary ceremonialism. Therefore, through these agnatic *irakúu* and the material responsibilities of the total age-set, the sodalities would be directly involved in mortuary practices, and furthermore, the latter practices can easily be seen as having both human renewal and rebirth as well as world renewal rituals built into them. For example, in Hidatsa tradition, the sacred name spirit of the deceased was actually under the custodianship of his agnatic clan. "In ritualistic training, they [the father's clan] assumed a dominant role, for, at birth, a 'son' or 'daughter' received a name taken from those ritualistic possessions believed to afford supernatural protection. All through life, the people of the father's

clan offered prayers and sold sacred objects and rites to the 'sons' and 'daughters', and in death they disposed of the body with appropriate rites to send the spirit away. On some occasions, special rites were performed years after the death of a 'son' or 'daughter' who had died away from the village, at the time when the skull was brought back and placed at a skull shrine" (1965, 76). This special relation with the deceased through the name spirit is likely why the agnatic matriclan played such a prominent mortuary role. It was probably responsible for spirit name release rites by which the free spirit of the deceased could be sent to and be "reborn" in, the land of the Dead, and by which his/her spirit name could be reborn as the name of a newborn agnate.

In this regard, what Bowers has to say about the mortuary rituals, or as he calls them, *funeral rites*, is very germane, but also it is very puzzling since he describes alternative treatments in the total mortuary process and does not explain them. Following the first night of separation rites in the deceased's lodge, this person was wrapped in a shroud and taken by members of his father's matriclan, among whom would likely be his surviving boon companions, and placed on the village scaffold. "The final rites were held at the grave or scaffold where the body was taken by persons of the father's clan and either placed on a scaffold or interred, according to the wishes of the deceased or his nearest clansmen" (1965, 76).⁵ This community-wide mortuary scaffold was typically outside but adjacent to the village and associated with a skull circle or skull shrine, this being made of the skulls of both deceased members of the village and selected bison skulls placed in a circle on the ground beside the scaffold (Bowers 1965, 170-71). These skull circles and mortuary scaffolds were particularly important as sacred places for young men who wanted to invoke spiritual aid and power through ordeal rituals involving self-torture and extended fasting. The actual length of the scaffolding

period varied, however. It might be terminated after four days when the rites of mourning were performed, thereby releasing the free soul to travel to the land of the Dead, and immediately after which the body was removed and buried either under the floor of the lodge that the deceased had occupied or immediately outside this lodge. Alternatively, while the rites of mourning would be performed on the fourth day to release the free soul, instead of removing the body, it would be left on the scaffold until the flesh had completely decayed. At that point, the skull was set aside to be deposited in the skull circle later, the bones were removed and bundled and usually buried in the stream bank, although Bowers also comments that sometimes the bones were deposited "within the refuse accumulation of the village itself, apparently without ceremony" (Bowers 1965, 331).⁶

Bowers does not explain this variation except to say that it was the custom for some Hidatsa and Mandan lodges to do it one way, some to do it the other way, and some to do it both ways by alternating the mortuary rites for their individual deceased (Bowers 1965, 170). However, the rules and protocols governing mortuary practices tend to leave very little in the way of discretionary choice to the mourners. Thus, this bifurcated mortuary trajectory was probably the result of negotiations among several social groups having responsibilities for the deceased. In fact, given Bowers' description of the mortuary practices, there were likely three major parties involved, each having overlapping but also conflicting interests and concerns regarding the way the deceased ought to be treated: the deceased's own matriclan or, more precisely, matrilinear lodge; the deceased's agnatic matriclan, and, as I postulated above, the deceased's age-set sodality. Assuming that the deceased was male, then, in the latter case, while his whole sodality was called upon by the deceased's cognatic matriclan to contribute to the costs of the mortuary process, particularly to supplying the requisite gifts to be distributed on

behalf of the deceased so as to be a proper measure of his reputation and standing, a core group within his sodality, whom I suggested above may be appropriately termed his agnatic *irakúu*, or *boon companions*, might have considerable say in how the deceased was to be treated. In fact, it is likely that it would be these men, or some of them, who had also been selected by the deceased before his death to be the main organizers of his mortuary rites, and he would have gifted these men some of his most valued possessions, such as his favorite horse, his most potent weapons, his personal sacred bundle, and so on. Therefore, the above decision of continuing the exposure of the body on the scaffold after the requisite four-day mourning period may have been strongly influenced by them. If all the parties consented, this would mean that instead of the mortuary rites being terminated after the four-day mourning period and the deceased being given an extended burial in or near his matriclan lodge, these scaffold laying-in rites would be continued, ensuring that the body flesh fully decayed, followed by collecting the bones, bundling them, and then burying them in the river bank or near the scaffold, and setting the deceased's skull in the skull shrine.

Now this raises some interesting questions. Why should these two alternative trajectories exist? Why would the extended scaffold exposure possibility exist? And why would this relate to the age-set, as I claim? As I discuss in more detail later, the Hidatsa believed that the decomposition of the body during the scaffold-exposure period constituted a postmortem sacrificial act of "feeding of the gods." That is, this was an important type of world renewal ritual process whereby the "living souls" (i.e., the unconscious spiritual energies of the deceased human) were returned to the sacred order of the cosmos. For this reason, I suggest that the age-set sodalities incorporated mortuary rituals that had strong world renewal meaning. The characterization of the Hidatsa mortuary sphere and the

postulated role of the age-set sodalities in this ritual raises important points that must be addressed in some detail in the next chapter, thereby showing how all this serves to illuminate our understanding of the Mississippianization process.

NOTES

1. Red Horn and his companions, on the one hand, and the leader of the Giants and his companions, on the other, probably represent the powers of the Above World (the celestial heavens) and the Beneath World (the watery underworld), respectively—the Thunderbirds and the Great Serpent(s) in various guises (Lankford 2007a, 124). Also, it is important to recognize that the events told in these myths can be easily interpreted as world creation and world renewal events and their ritual performances under the right conditions and by the right ritual agents—namely, those who were recognized as god-companion pretenders occupying allied and opposed postures, would constitute world renewal rites.

2. As I noted, he actually listed 26 English terms but only 24 Hidatsa equivalent terms. This is because two of these English terms, *husband* and *wife*, had no equivalent Hidatsa terms next to them. Therefore, I assume that the Hidatsa have no equivalent terms of address that spouses use toward each other. He also had to make two columns for gender-distinctive terms, that is, different terms having the same referent but used by males only or by females only. Further, not only were there no Hidatsa terms for “husband” and “wife,” a male speaker used the same term for sister without distinguishing between senior and junior sisters, while both females and males had terms by which to distinguish between senior and junior brothers. This latter point may highlight the importance that seniority played in governing interpersonal relations, and certainly, age seniority was

prevalent in organizing relations among the male age-sets (Bowers 1965, table 3, p. 80).

3. Later I reexamine the nature of the moiety. Typically it is treated as strictly a high-level dual unilateral kinship structure governing intermarriage. I think that this is only part of the story when applied to complementary heterarchical communities. I suggest that it probably had two aspects, kinship and companionship, or more specifically, clan and sodality. The clan aspect structured the community in terms of rules of marriage (i.e., exogamy), and the sodality aspect structured the community in terms of generation (i.e. senior and junior age-grades). Treated as a double-aspect duality, the moiety structure would likely operate this way. While a person was born into a particular moiety sector under the clan aspect and would remain in that aspect for life, he/she probably moved from the junior to the senior age-grade or generation aspects of the moiety structure when “graduating” from the junior to the senior age-grade. Therefore, I postulate that while, under the clan aspect of the double-aspect moiety structure, male X might be in the White moiety for life and his spouse, of course, would be in the Red moiety for life, both he and she would be mobile between the junior-senior sodality (age-grade/generational) aspects of the moiety structure. For example, the White clan-aspect male or female might be first a member of the Red moiety (junior sodality-aspect) during his/her adolescence and junior age-grade period, and then he/she would shift to the White moiety (senior sodality-aspect) when his/her age-set was promoted to the senior age-grade standing. I have more to say about this possibility later (see Chapter 13).

4. A number of anthropologists have pointed out that traditional Native North American peoples consider that there are several categories of spiritual powers (“souls”) animating the living human. There

are usually two basic categories, the personal (or free) soul and the living souls. Mortuary practices are tied into releasing both categories of spiritual powers (Lankford 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Von Gernet 1993). I discuss this in considerable detail in Chapter 5.

5. In fact, these were obviously not “final rites,” as the subsequent description indicates.

6. I am sure that readers have all noted several instances when archaeologists report having found human remains in pits that also contain midden and debris, particularly remains of animals and plants; and the claim is made by the archaeologists, by either explicit or implicit allusion, that the deceased were disposed of “without ceremony.” The implication is that the particular deceased must have been very lowly in status since their burial was not in the normal and “respectful” manner. A different way of putting this, however, is to recognize that “middens” or “garbage pits” consisting of animal and plant remains may have very different meanings than they do for Western archaeologists. These contain the immanent sacred powers of those parts of the exploited species that were unused and, instead of being “wasted,” their disposal was a means of recycling this sacred content. Possibly therefore, finding human remains and nonhuman animal and plant remains in the same feature may have been the expression of deep respect. In the Hidatsa case, rather than speaking of such deposits as having no ceremonial significance, it might be more adequate to say that we are looking at the residue of mortuary ceremony having significant world renewal relevance.

CHAPTER 5

Mortuary Ritual, Cultural Traditions, and World Renewal

My brief discussion of Hidatsa mortuary practices in the previous chapter suggests that while certain aspects of their mortuary ritual were equivalent to the mortuary ritual of the Euro-American culture, there are significant differences, which can be characterized as surpassing the ritual complexity constituting the mortuary sphere of the latter culture. Elucidating these differences is the first step for this chapter to achieve, and it leads into linking mortuary practices via cultural traditions to both ecological practices (subsistence and settlement) and world renewal ritual practices, the latter being the primary purpose of cult sodality heterarchies—at least, this is my claim. I will initiate this exploration with a question. What might the Mandan, Hidatsa, and many if not most other traditional (historical) Native American peoples have taken themselves to be doing when carrying out formal behaviors mediated by human remains? I will generically refer to such behaviors as mortuary rites. I consider this question and its answer to be critically important for this book, and so its answer has to be extended. It is also notable that in his discussion of the Hidatsa mortuary rites, Bowers unproblematically described and referred to them as *funerals* or *funerary rites*, implying that these practices can be understood as having the same or nearly equivalent meaningful nature as the key Euro-American mortuary practice, the funeral, even though overall the Euro-American and

Hidatsa mortuary spheres were quite different in the form and number of *behaviors* performed. That is, the Hidatsa and the Euro-American mortuary practices are being treated by Bowers as simply two different ways of performing the same activity—funerals; and from this it follows that, in both cases, the mortuary deposits are simply the material outcomes of funerals. Hence, in his view it would be appropriate to refer to these deposits as *graves*, *tomb burials*, and the like. All that may be needed is to add modifiers in order to note the differences between the types of graves that both funerary sphere types generated, for example, speaking of bone bundle graves or crematorial graves. These formally differentiated mortuary deposits, nevertheless, index essentially the same type of activity—funerary. And this may be why finding human remains in midden pits, for example, is considered anomalous to Western archaeologists and therefore motivating the claim that these mortuary residue index the low standing for these humans.

Up to now, I have deliberately avoided using the terms *funeral* or *funerary* and instead I have used the more generic term *mortuary practices* or *mortuary rites*. This is because the position I promote is to treat the rites constituting the total mortuary sphere of a traditional Native North American community as far surpassing in number and variety the range of mortuary rites constituting the mortuary sphere of most Euro-American cultures. In the latter case, in fact, the set of mortuary rites is structured around a primary or key rite termed the *funeral*, while the other rites are subsumed as auxiliaries of the latter (e.g., preliminary memorial rites, subsequent, often annual “in-memoriam” rites). All these derive their intelligibility from the funerary rite itself such that the Euro-American mortuary sphere is largely identified with the funerary sphere.

Now, this assertion must not be taken to claim that the typical traditional Native North American mortuary sphere did not include

a ritual that was equivalent to the Euro-American “funeral” and its auxiliary rites, because I believe that it did. It simply says that the total mortuary sphere incorporated a much more numerically and qualitatively richer and varied set of rites than does the typical Euro-American mortuary sphere. In fact, the Euro-American cultural focus on the funerary type of rite may be somewhat unique among the history of world cultures in that, as noted above, while there are nonfunerary ritual components of the mortuary spheres of most post-Enlightenment Euro-American cultures, the funerary ritual, as such, has come to dominate this sphere. In some ways, the funeral is the only mortuary rite recognized as “fully” or “really” mortuary in nature. Other rites, such as memorial rites, are pale copies, auxiliaries, “facsimiles,” “reruns” or anticipations of the funeral.

Bowers is far from unique in treating traditional and, by extension, prehistoric Native North American mortuary practices as constituting basically a funerary sphere (i.e., an action sphere that is similar in action type make-up but simply formally more complex to the Euro-American mortuary sphere). Indeed, assimilating these historic and prehistoric mortuary practices to the funerary paradigm is chronic in the literature. This funerary focus has pervaded the archaeological approach to the mortuary sphere, particularly starting in the 1970s, although there are now starting to be some notable exceptions, as I discuss later. But the tendency to reduce Native North American mortuary practices to simply being funerals displaying mortuary treatments that are in many cases radically variant from the current Euro-American funerary treatment has led to seriously constraining and, in my view, distorting both our understanding of the nature of these prehistoric mortuary practices and, by extension, our understanding of the nature of the social systems of the people who were responsible for them. As I noted above, this critical assertion is not to claim that mortuary practices that are meaningfully

akin to the Euro-American funeral were not performed by these communities. Rather, it is to claim that these latter practices and their equivalency to Euro-American funerals likely constituted only a minor part of their rich array of mortuary rituals.

To some degree, this tendency to treat the multiple rites of the traditional Native North American community mortuary sphere as simply funerary types that differed from the Euro-American mortuary ritual sphere only in terms of formal behavioral complexity is a function of treating “behavior” and “action” as synonymous terms. However, to do so conflates two different phenomena. I am certainly not alone to claim that objectively similar behaviors can constitute different social actions (i.e., social practices). This is endemic, even in Euro-American cultures. For example, in these cultures the intentional pursuing and killing of game animals can usually be characterized in one of two contrasting ways (e.g., either as “hunting” or as “poaching”). That is, in this culture, these terms are used to refer to two different social activities, despite the fact that the action of “hunting” and the action of “poaching” amount to the same suite of objective behaviors, “the killing of game.” Why is this? “Killing of game” describes the tangible behavioral level, and it is out of this level that the action or meaning level emerges. At the action level, however, there are two possible and mutually exclusive types of social action—poaching or hunting—despite being grounded on objectively similar if not identical behaviors.

Now it might be argued that all this is simply “semantics.” Killing game is “killing game,” no matter what you name it. However, in a typical Euro-American social-cultural context, when a person carries on this behavior, it can be perceived and thereby constituted as either hunting or poaching—and whether it is treated as one or the other social action has grave consequences for those parties involved. If the responsible person is recognized as warranted in doing the

killing behavior, then he/she is recognized as a hunter. If the same person is recognized as not being warranted in doing this killing, what may be objectively the same stream of behaviors and changes caused by these behaviors is recognized as poaching, and the perpetrator is perceived as a poacher. If apprehended, this person would probably be punished by the community. That is, despite the two behaviors being objectively similar, they are collectively interpreted and, thereby, constituted as two different and mutually opposed social actions, hunting and poaching. Since these behaviors as social actions can cause different responses, in one case, admiration and the other case, sanctions, they are real differentiated social phenomena, emergent from similar objective behavioral streams.

Now, what is it that makes the distinction such that one and the same behavior can be constituted as opposing actions? I treat human action as both a materially caused and culturally constituted or emergent phenomenon, emergent from the causal behavioral level and constituted both by the social position the responsible agent occupies and the type of action intention both the agent and socially relevant other agents take him/her to be exercising. For example, in carrying out his/her animal-stalking-killing behavior, the agent requires doing these behaviors, and doing them competently, in order to fulfill and satisfy his/her action intention, whether this intention is the intention-to-poach or the intention-to-hunt. Being seen and recognized as having the proper intention is necessary, but it is not sufficient to constitute the behavior as the type of social action intended. It is not sufficient since, to perform the action of hunting, it is also necessary to knowingly occupy and, in principle, to be seen to occupy the relevant social position of "hunter." This latter condition is the irreducible social condition, and it is constituted of specific deontic variables (i.e., rights and duties, privileges and obligations) that endow the occupant of that social position with the social powers to

act in the manner intended. Therefore, this means that no individual can perform a social action simply by performing some behavior in exercising his/her intention. Indeed, without occupying the prior existing social condition, in this case, the social structural position we term *hunter*, and being seen or potentially being seen to occupy that position, while a human person could certainly formulate an intention to kill an animal, and actually exercise that intention quite independently of anyone, he/she could not even formulate a hunting intention, defined in social terms, since such an intention entails the social position we refer to as a *hunter*. It is necessary to both have and exercise the associated intention and be recognized simultaneously as occupying the relevant position, thereby being endowed with the appropriate rights and/or duties of, for example, a hunter; and in principle, this endowment entails being able to be perceived by other relevant social parties to be occupying that position. This complex of conditions, both perceiving oneself and knowing that relevant others can also perceive oneself as occupying the relevant social position, is necessary in order for the objective behaviors of the agent to be constituted as the type of social action intended; in this example, “hunting.”

In the view I use in this book, the poacher and the hunter are human agents occupying two contrasting and mutually exclusive social positions, and even though both can be equally proficient in their game-tracking-killing behaviors, they are both perceived by socially relevant others as occupying mutually exclusive social positions—poacher and hunter—and thereby as exercising mutually exclusive action intentions (i.e., purposes)—the intention-to-poach as opposed to the intention-to-hunt; and thereby, each would be perceived as performing radically different social actions—poaching and hunting, respectively. In principle, public perception—either actual or simply potential—makes the difference, a difference that can

exist only in the collective intentionality of the community. Hence, the behavior/action duality. That is, social action is an emergent phenomenon, a social fact, and cannot be reduced to being simply the behaviors that humans intentionally perform in bringing about changes that they desire and want.

How does this relate to mortuary spheres? In this regard, the behavioral patterns that two culturally different peoples perform can be very similar behaviors while, in fact, constituting quite different mortuary practices that are only partly congruent in action terms to each other. This tendency for many archaeologists to draw a near identification of the *funeral* with the mortuary sphere is illustrated by the privileged use of the term by Euro-Americans in speaking about their own mortuary sphere. This term is focal and, as I noted above, its meaning structures the meaning of other mortuary behaviors, such as “memorial services” and “mourning rite.” Treating the funeral as the singular focal ritual of the mortuary sphere amounts to treating the other rites as simply auxiliary and less privileged rites that derive their meaning and relevance from the funerary rite itself. That is, while these are different rites, they are seen as sharing a common social funerary nature. The funeral, along with its auxiliary or “lesser” funerary rites (i.e., mourning and memorial rites), also plays an important economic and sociopolitical role in Euro-American culture. For the most part, those who participate fall into two social categories: the kin of the deceased and his/her immediate acquaintances—friends, colleagues, and so on. Typically, the various kin individually or collectively inherit the property controlled by the deceased. In short, tied to the funeral are the core economic notions of proprietorship and the intra-kin conveyancing of property (inheritance). Of course, in the history of European communities, real estate ownership and control was a primary basis of dominance power since the possession of an estate via kinship inheritance (i.e.,

a proprietorial domain) included deontic rights over who could or could not exploit its resources and the manner of this exploitation (e.g., having peasants, serfs or slaves, and so on). Hence, dominance of the proprietor and subordination of the landless (i.e., those who had no “real” property, i.e., they had no “estate”) were entrenched by exclusive property. Because of this intrinsic nature of the funeral as a rite of transfer of property rights, the propertyless or landless had to compete against each other for usage rights (i.e., usufruct) of land owned by the landlords, thereby becoming constantly indebted to these social persons whose inherited ownership of estates generally ensured their dominant economic and political position.

In short, the *funerary paradigm*, as I will term it, is in harmony with and reinforces the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model (i.e., the Chiefdom Polity model), a key structural dimension of the model being the postulating of exclusive territorialism tied to kinship. Indeed, as illustrated in my brief excursion into the Mapuche and their practice of *exclusive* custodial land usufruct, the paradigm has become a central component for interpreting the Eastern Woodlands prehistoric populations as constituting the community as different types of monistic modular polities. This linking of mortuary practices, exclusive territorialism, and monumental “funerary” features was promoted by Colin Renfrew’s (1973, 540-43) account of the monumental Neolithic earth and stone works of the English countryside as being the material expression of emergent “chiefdoms.” In his model, these chiefdom-like communities were based on dispersed agricultural populations who constructed the monuments as re-declarations entrenching their preexisting exclusive territorial claims, and they used these constructions as gathering places for rites of passage conducted by the chiefly classes, including funerals, weddings, feasts, exchanges, and so on. Douglas Charles and Jane Buikstra (1983, 124) applied a modified version of this view to the

Middle Archaic period of the Illinois River Valley, and they have extended it to include the Early and Middle Woodland periods (Buikstra and Charles 1999, 204-205), albeit in a more mitigated manner in that the notion of dominance-based class structure was downplayed. They also drew on Lynne Goldstein's (1980, 8; 1981, 53-69) seminal work on the Lower Illinois Valley Mississippian mortuary practices. She was developing the notion of the "community cemetery" as the collective funerary depositional zone demarcating corporate kinship groups whose primary sense of unity was based on their collective ownership of exclusive territories, and the "cemeteries" were interpreted as symbolically expressing and affirming these territorial rights and privileges as inherited by the descendants of those interred (i.e., the sacred ancestors of the living). Her work built on the processualist view of mortuary practices, which used variation in mortuary treatment as a method to reconstruct the evolutionary history of the simple→complex prehistoric community through measuring the latter in terms of the variation in the mortuary treatment, the premise being that this treatment—particularly in terms of elaboration—was a measure of the lifetime social standing of the deceased (Binford 1971, 6–29; Brown 1971, 92–111; Peebles 1974, 35-40). Hence, this model has become largely generalized in the literature of the prehistoric Eastern Woodlands. All these approaches presume in common that the mortuary patterning was largely the outcome of *funerary behavior* and, therefore, such concepts expressed by the English terms *cemetery*, *grave*, *tomb*, *burial crypt*, *status burials*, and so on, constitute the funerary paradigm as being the primary interpretive framework of the archaeological record delineating the mortuary sphere during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Clearly the funerary paradigm is not constituted of culturally neutral or "universal" terms. These terms have fundamental economic, political, cultural, and social entailments attached. Indeed,

they implicate a rather coherent socioconceptual paradigm: “corporate property,” “propertied class,” “dominance powers,” “exclusive territories,” “elite,” “nobles,” (lowly) “commoners,” and so on. This makes the funerary paradigm a major armature of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model (i.e., the Chiefdom Polity model). It is not surprising that, as a result, the latter interprets the mortuary records of the Mississippian period as generated by communities constituted by dominance-based hierarchies equivalent to the European feudal system, albeit a much less complex system since it was dependent on stratification and differentiation primarily through the medium of kinship ranking and inheritance rather than economic and political class structure (Knight 1990; Peebles 1974).

However, while still privileging the funeral as such, there are now competing views emerging that indicate a greater willingness to look at broader possibilities than the funerary paradigm. In fact, Lynne Sullivan and Robert Mainfort Jr. (2010, 7-8) use the term *representationist view* to speak critically of the same perspective that I have called the *funerary paradigm*. Their critical reconsideration of the nature and meaning of mortuary practices has been primarily motivated by the recognition that the intensity, complexity, and density of the residue of secondary burial practices found in the prehistoric mortuary record of the Mississippian period cannot be adequately accommodated or narrowed to the serious limitations of the “funeral.” James Brown (2010, 32-33; 2003) has also come to this conclusion, as has Lynne Goldstein (2000), as I discuss below. For now, however, the funerary paradigm is still very potent and active in the modeling of the prehistoric Native North American mortuary record. Even for those who have raised concern over its limitations, the funerary terminology is largely unproblematically used, thereby unwittingly perpetuating the largely entailed premises associated with the monistic modular perspective; for example, a mortuary deposit

with many “esteemed” items such as shell beads and copper plates indexes a “chief” of one sort or another, and all the other separate but spatially associated mortuary deposits without such items index the “commoners.”

The Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary Model

The mortuary model that I have developed, and am still developing (Byers 1996, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2011) and that supports the alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community model recognizes that, while mortuary rites of a funerary nature are probably culturally universal, with respect to traditional Native North American practices, rites equivalent to the Euro-American funeral are often (not always) only among the first in an unfolding series of mortuary rites constituting the traditional mortuary sphere. I have called this view the *Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model*. It claims that usually following from the funerary-like rites, a variably complex sequence of postfunerary-type mortuary rites is performed. It is this complex that forms the basis for my speaking of the sodalities as world renewal cults. I have already characterized Cahokia as incorporating a fourth-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy, and as I noted earlier, I have written extensively on the theoretical elucidation of this sodality organization and the empirical data supporting it and the nature of the mortuary data this model interprets (Byers 2006a, Chapter 9; for the Middle Woodland, see Byers 2004, Chapter 8, and Byers 2011, Chapter 4). The core claim the model makes is that the mortuary sphere consists of a culturally constructed series of incrementally linked human mortuary-mediated behaviors that, as emergent mortuary rites, are intended to release many of the sacred powers that were immanent in the deceased with the point being to reanimate and sustain the social and sacred cosmos. I will use the term *mortuary chaîne opératoire* both to refer to the method

that is relevant to applying the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model and to characterize the actual process of ritual activities performed by the living who used the deceased as their primary sacrificial material media.¹

The *chaîne opératoire* method is not new. It was initially applied to analyze lithic technological production processes. The basic rationale underwriting the method is “reverse engineering” or retroductive inferential logic. This lithic analysis hinges on our current understanding, an understanding that can be expanded through test experimentation, of how prehistoric lithic items and their formal patterning must have been generated, thereby reconstructing what the actual material conditions and prior instrumental steps must have been to bring about the empirical lithic evidence that we have accumulated (Danermark et al. 2002, 93-94). Of course, as discussed in the closing section of Chapter 3, this “reverse engineering” is also the basis of the hermeneutic spiral methodology as applied to reconstructing the meaningful nature of the archaeological record (i.e., its possible cultural content and social structural framework). It seems appropriate, therefore, to extend the retroductive inferential premises of the *chaîne opératoire* methodology to interpret the mortuary patterning in constitutive terms as partly responsible for generating and sustaining the prehistoric community. This assumes that the variations of the observable patternings are the processual outcome of an incremental series of mortuary actions realizing sequentially ordered and differentiated mortuary intentions. Intentions are mental states that require the performance of specific actions in order to be fulfilled. Hence, to exercise an intention-to-mourn, the agents require having conditions both to instigate it (there must be a deceased person) and to fulfill it; that is, the agents as performers of different mortuary actions must be able to behave in certain ways, at certain times, and in particular places in order to bring about certain

changes that fit the culturally determined contents of their mortuary intentions. Most importantly, the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* as conceived treats each mortuary rite as generating the material form(s) of the deceased and any associated materials (e.g., artifacts), some or all of which then become recruited as the media to serve as the material condition necessary for performing the next mortuary action (e.g., macerated bones are disinterred and cleaned and recruited as offering media for a cremation, and so on).

Hence, just as in the lithic *chaîne opératoire* methodology, in which it is noted that the tangible material outcome of an earlier lithic production step becomes the necessary material medium for the production of the next step and its produced material outcome, so in turn, each ritual mortuary stage generates a patterned material outcome that in whole or in part is then used as the constitutive medium of the next mortuary ritual or, possibly, several rituals, and so on. By saying it was the “constitutive medium” of the next ritual stage, I mean that the material outcome of the prior mortuary behavior or some aspect of it is recognized by the responsible agents as a necessary material component in order to serve as the conventional medium (i.e., symbol) to constitute the next mortuary behavioral step as being the mortuary ritual that was intended. The “must” here is not simply a question of instrumental need but, more importantly, deontic or normative need. That is, the “must” delineates cultural conventions that stipulate the material components and the changes that are to be wrought on them that will *count as* the performance of the series of intended actions, in this case, mortuary rituals. Hence, the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* is both a cultural strategy (i.e., structure of procedural steps to achieve the defining goals of the mortuary sphere) and a complex conventional behavioral process firmly grounded in the ethos and world beliefs of the community.

As I noted above, several archaeologists, including Lynne Goldstein (2000, 2010), Timothy Pauketat (2010), James Brown (2003, 2006, 2010), and Lynne Sullivan and Robert Mainfort Jr. (2010), have recently initiated reassessing the way North American archaeologists have characterized the nature of the rich evidence of secondary burials.² I see this as a positive advance in mortuary studies since, of course, it is consistent with my above view, and the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model is specifically constructed to address and account for this patterning. However, my model of the mortuary sphere does not separate it into two parts, overprivileging one (the funerary) as consisting of “real” mortuary acts, and underprivileging the secondary burial data as demarcating only incidental or secondary mortuary actions. Indeed, this division results in significant problems of symmetry of explanation and accounting. The former, the funerary aspect, is in effect taken to be largely self-explanatory, or more cogently stated, explained under the funerary paradigm—thereby entrenching the exclusive territorial assumptions supporting the monistic modular polity perspective. To explain the secondary burial program then requires invoking nonmortuary-related functions (e.g., political, socializing and entertaining, in the sense of being a theatrical-like performance). In my approach, the total sphere is treated as a complex mode of obligatory mortuary mediated performances by which the personal soul of the deceased is enabled to travel to the land of the Dead, and usually subsequently, the multiple living souls are released as sacrificial offerings to the immanently sacred cosmos.

For example, I earlier described the complex of mortuary behaviors that the Hidatsa perform. This description was not a complete outline of their mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process, but it can be used to demonstrate how a mortuary sphere is constituted of multiple related but differentiated mortuary rites. In this case, the separation

rites were undertaken in the deceased's lodge, and these were followed by the scaffolding of the deceased. Together these would likely be equivalent to the Euro-American mourning rites with terminal funeral rites. However, the four-day laying-in scaffolding period served as a major bifurcation-step into two mutually exclusive ritual subtrajectories. In one case, following the performance of the free spirit release rite, the body was removed from the scaffold and was buried in an extended position in the deceased's lodge or just outside it, completing one trajectory. In the alternative case, also following the same free spirit release rite, a second trajectory was initiated by the body being left on the scaffold for about a year, then a series of ritual treatments were performed on the surviving skeletal parts, with the skull being placed in the skull shrine circle and the bones being wrapped and buried by the creek. The year-long scaffolding was an important mortuary ritual period that would not be properly characterized in funerary terms—or even in rites of passage terms, as some have attempted to claim—since it is the living spirits and not the free spirit that were being released. That is, the funerary ritual had been completed with the ritual release of the free soul on the fourth day of mourning. The year-long period of scaffolding, therefore, was a distinct mortuary ritual period in its own right, one that can be properly characterized in world renewal spirit-release terms since it was claimed that this was the period during which the gods of the Above World “consumed” the flesh of the deceased. That is, this mortuary laying-in period served to enable the constitution of a postmortem human sacrifice.³

The notion expressed in the term *postmortem human sacrifice* is central to the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model since it expresses the core of my characterization of the nature of the unfolding series of postfunerary behavioral steps postulated by this model. Postmortem human sacrifice contrasts with lethal human sacrifice

in that in the former death occurs “naturally,” and only subsequently does the deceased, or at least his/her bodily remains, become caught up as the symbolic media of the sacrificial process. In contrast, in the case of lethal sacrifice, the causing of the death of the person figures as an important constitutive moment of the sacrificial ritual *chaîne opératoire*. In the Hidatsa case, the extended scaffold period constituted a postmortem sacrificial offering ritual in that the living souls immanent in the flesh and the hair of the deceased were taken to be sacrificed (i.e., “given”) to the gods. Defining this scaffolding period constitutively as a postmortem human sacrifice also warrants referring to the scaffold feature itself as having a phase of usage that constitutes it as a *world renewal altar*. And, of course, the subsequent gathering of the bones, wrapping them as a bundle, and burying the latter also counted as another world renewal rite by which the living souls immanent in the bones were released and transferred to the surrounding landscape or to the sacred powers immanent in the waters of the river. In this construal, I claim that it would be a serious mischaracterization to refer to the feature in which the mortuary deposition was placed as a *grave*, since this immediately would identify the activity that generated it as a “funeral,” and, as I noted earlier, the “funeral” is a mortuary activity that presupposes and entails a very different type of social system—the type to which the Euro-American mortuary sphere belongs—from the one I claim the Hidatsa constitutively practiced. In short, the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* as a method maps the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* as a real constitutive postmortem process-in-action that generated and reproduced the community’s mortuary sphere. It treats the sequence of behaviors involving body preparation, scaffolding, bone cleaning, bundling, burial, skull deposition, cremation, and so on, as an incremental series of rituals progressively performed with each step selectively appropriating bodily components produced by the prior step for use as

constitutive media for the subsequent ritual step. In total, as ritual actions these behaviors served to release the varied spiritual powers immanent in the human body as sacrificial offerings to the sacred powers of the cosmos. It is quite likely that these steps or certain sets of steps like these, would be spoken of in the Hidatsa vocabulary as different types of recognized mortuary rituals.

For this reason, I have characterized this sequential chain of rites as a *postmortem sacrificial mortuary chaîne opératoire process*. While this process typically unfolds through a series of steps entailing postmortem modification of the human body, and these steps could well entail major mortuary transportation of deceased bodies, of bone bundles, or body parts, including cremations, it certainly does not exclude lethal human sacrifice, although to my knowledge there is no record of Hidatsa lethal human sacrifice (Byers 2004, 140, 183-85; 2006a, 118-19). However, Robert Hall has cited the Evening Star sacrifice of the Pawnee in this regard (1997, 96; 1989, 257). In fact, I have found Hall's (2000, 248-50; 1997, 156-62; 1989, 261; 1979, 260-64) analyses to be full of exceptional insights into the mortuary practices of historic Native North American peoples. As I noted in my earlier discussion, he claims that these have both funerary and renewal components conjoined, and for example, he uses the mortuary aspect of the Calumet ceremonialism to argue that adoptive-kinship ritual was a matter of reincarnating the name spirit of the deceased in the person of a "new son." He has elsewhere argued that such reincarnation grades into spiritual renewal of the corporate group and then of the cosmos; and he has suggested that much of the complexity of the mortuary residue encountered in the archaeological record of prehistoric North American peoples relates to this process of incremental rites (see Hall 1997).⁴

Similar to many other historic Native North American peoples, the Mandan and Hidatsa cosmologies are immanentist types (Bailey

1995, 29-32). As I treat this, it means that the sacred powers of the cosmos are not believed to be, nor are they experienced as being, separate from the natural order that they animate. In perspicuous contrast, in a *transcendentist* cosmology such separation is envisioned as fundamental; that is, the sacred powers that created the world transcend this mundane material world. In an immanentist cosmology, in contrast, sacred powers are treated as isomorphic or congruent with and immanent in the natural order. Bowers effectively describes the Hidatsa world beliefs in such immanentist terms. “[T]he Woman Above rites were associated with certain beliefs and practices relating to the human body after death and . . . there seems to be a relationship between the development of Woman Above rites and the disposal of the dead . . . She and the other gods above were believed to consume the flesh of those placed on scaffolds, after which the skulls were placed near one of these Woman Above or Sun [skull] shrines as a fasting ground for those seeking supernatural powers” (Bowers 1965, 331). I interpret this as a figurative expression articulating a mode of literal deity-performed action by which postmortem practices served to renew the spiritual energies of the cosmos. Seen in these terms, then, the mortuary rite involving an extensive scaffolding of the deceased is quite adequately characterized in constitutive terms as a postmortem world renewal sacrifice.

This discussion illustrates how the paradigm of terms we use to refer to the temporal, spatial, and material context and media of mortuary practices does not consist of neutral descriptive terms but is laden with culturally meaningful characterizations of the features and practices and, by extension, of the nature of the social systems that were responsible for them. In short, in order to speak about the mortuary practices, features, and facilities of another culture, we cannot simply use Euro-American mortuary sphere terms, such as *funerals*, *graves*, and *tombs*, as convenient semantic labels without

risking invoking the rest of the Euro-American cultural paradigm that gives them sense. If we do so, then we unwittingly impose this Euro-American cultural sensibility onto the rest of the archaeological record, thereby characterizing the postulated social systems responsible for this archaeological mortuary record as being much like the Euro-American cultures and societies in which this terminological paradigm is “at home.” As I noted above, I recognize that there was some overlap between the Hidatsa and Euro-American mortuary spheres. However, there is likely to be an even greater divergence in the culturally constituted nature of these mortuary components, given the perspicuously contrasting ways these two peoples understand the nature of the cosmos and how humans ought to conduct themselves in and toward it. What a people mean in using certain terms in expressing their concepts of death, kinship, territory, and so on, plays an important role in constituting their experience of death, kinship, territory, and so on. Therefore, these meanings are also constitutive of these cultural phenomena (Byers 2004, 139-40, 177-84; 2006a, 112-18; Taylor 1985, 275-77).

As I briefly noted earlier, in terms of the immanentist cosmologies of many Native North American peoples, there are often at least two major categories of souls embodied in the autonomous agent: the personal or free soul and the living or “bound” soul(s) (Lankford 2007b, 175-76; Von Gernet 1993, 42-43, 45-46). The former embodied self-awareness, and it was this soul that, if successfully released, would travel the Path of Souls (the Milky Way) to the land of the Dead. The living souls, the second set, were those immanent in the bones, flesh, blood, hair, and so on. While these were powerful souls, they were not effortlessly self-aware or conscious in the way that the free souls were—but they were intentional. I would add a third category of souls, although these may be classed as a sub-set of the free souls, these being name souls. As I noted earlier for the Hidatsa,

these name souls were under the custodianship of the agnatic matrilineal clans, the matrilineal clan of the fathers of the deceased, and they also were released at death to return to the care of the name-soul custodians of the agnatic matrilineal clans of the deceased, usually to be transferred to a newborn, thereby reincarnating this name soul. The Iroquois also, for example, believed that the leaders of the confederacy council, the chiefs, were empowered to sit and act as chiefs only when they received the name souls of their deceased chiefly predecessors in a special condolence ceremony (Tooker 1978, 428-30). A similar practice was performed by the Huron to install selected men as confederacy chiefs (Heidenreich 1978, 371).

I claim that it is in order to release and direct these multiple souls—free souls, name souls, and living souls, with the release of the latter souls constituting world renewal postmortem sacrificial offerings—that the Native North American mortuary sphere is so materially complex. To confirm my characterization of the mortuary sphere in these sequential spirit-release terms, a known historical Native American people unrelated to either the Plains Indians or the communities that were caught up in the Mississippianization process, can be usefully examined. The Huron of central Ontario were quite typical of most Native North American peoples of the Eastern Woodlands both in having an immanentist cosmology and in believing humans had multiple souls—but their ancestral populations of the Late Prehistoric period in the northeastern sector of the Eastern Woodlands were not direct participants in the Mississippianization process. Rather, they are viewed by most anthropologists as “egalitarian” tribal communities, and that I would describe as complementary heterarchical communities in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture (at the time that they engaged with the European interloper). The way these beliefs underwrote their mortuary sphere as a postmortem human sacrificial ritual sequence

is probably not atypical of most historic Eastern Woodlands peoples. Bruce Trigger has noted that “[t]he body of a person who had drowned or frozen to death was taken to the village cemeteries and laid on a mat. A ditch was dug on one side of the body and a fire was lighted on the other. Then some young men, chosen by relatives of the deceased, cut up the body and threw the flesh and entrails into the fire, while the skeleton was placed in the ditch. This ritual was performed to appease the sky or the spirit of the lake, who was believed to be angry. Failure to do so would result in dangerous changes in the weather and in accidents. Thus the men who cut up the body were rewarded for having performed a generous and public-spirited act” (1969, 104; also see Trigger 1976, 52).⁵

Trigger does not refer to this mortuary practice as a form of sacrifice; but his outline of the circumstances of death that call for this practice and his noting the community approval of those who carried out the postmortem manipulation clearly are consistent with the interpretation that this mortuary practice was a form of postmortem human sacrifice, in this case, “feeding” different components of the body of the deceased as sacrificial offerings to assuage the powerful gods immanent in the celestial or watery sectors of the natural order.⁶ Therefore, even though such mortuary rites were not often performed, largely due to their arising from the special circumstances of death by drowning or freezing, what these particular mortuary rites clearly ground is that *postmortem human sacrifice was very much part of the mortuary sphere of the Huron*. This rite particularly called for and was constituted by four steps: (1) the careful digging of the mortuary pit (i.e., the pit altar); (2) the ritual defleshing of the body; (3) the cremation of the flesh; and (4) the burial of the defleshed bones in the pit altar. By extension, many Eastern Woodlands peoples, as well as Midwestern and Plains peoples such as the Mandan and Hidatsa, would have practiced meaningfully equivalent, although

formally different mortuary-mediated rites that, as illustrated earlier, could be appropriately termed *postmortem sacrificial rites* since the purpose of these rites was to assuage or in some way satisfy the needs of the immanently sacred powers that animated and sustained the natural order of the cosmos. In fact, Conrad Heidenreich (1978, 372) makes this quite specific by noting that the Huron periodically used a deceased human as a *postmortem sacrificial offering* to the sky deity. “Feasts were given in [the Sky Oki’s] honor, tobacco and on occasion the body of a dead man was burned as a sacrifice.”

To go further with this sacrificial aspect in mind, however, a more in-depth analysis of the Huron mortuary sphere can show that the above “on-the-spot” ad hoc-type postmortem sacrificial rites were simply a special expression of the generalized postmortem sacrificial core of the Huron mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process. In normal circumstances of death, the deceased had their initial “funerary rites” terminated by their bodies being placed in individual bark-box containers raised above the ground, a type of enclosed scaffolding. The accumulation of these individual “laying-in altar scaffolds” in one area formed the village mortuary locale. I have used the term *laying-in altar scaffold* rather than *coffin* in order to avoid invoking the funerary paradigm. For the same reason, as I noted in Chapter 2, I have generically spoken of any cumulative mortuary deposit as a *Collective Burial Locale* or *CBL*. If I have good reason to qualify the mortuary nature of a particular CBL as being similar to what Euro-Americans speak of as a cemetery, then I would unhesitatingly add this term and call it a *cemetery CBL*. But I consider that probably most prehistoric Native North American CBLs are likely to be the manifestation of a postmortem mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process and would be more appropriately called *postmortem sacrificial CBLs* rather than *cemetery CBLs*. Of course, I recognize that presupposing a postmortem sacrificial CBL would be a funeral-like ritual

involving the spirit release rites of the personal soul. But these rites would likely have been performed at the beginning of the mortuary trajectory for a given deceased, and therefore, these events would leave little in the way of an archaeological signature. Rather, it would be the postfunerary aspect of the mortuary sphere that would be demarcated by the CBLs. That is, the postmortem sacrificial aspect of the total mortuary sphere would tend to generate the CBLs, the point of the mortuary depositions that made them up being to release the living or “bound” souls of the deceased. These living souls, of course, would be the postmortem human sacrificial offerings to the immanently sacred natural order of the world.

In fact, in the Huron case, the “funeral” mortuary aspect of the total mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process was probably conducted in the Long House, and as noted above, the next stage would be to bear the body with both its free spirit or free soul and its immanent living spirits and place it in a separate “laying-in altar scaffold” locale outside the village where it rested until the next mortuary ritual stage was undertaken. That is, the personal soul was not fully released. It could travel minimally but remained near the body during this time, and in fact, Hurons considered this state of affairs as potentially harmful to the well being of the village since the accumulation of such partially released personal souls could bring the village misfortune. The next mortuary stage occurred much later with the collective performance of the Feast of the Dead, and it resolved both this liminality problem of the personal souls and also enabled the collective building of a terminal postmortem sacrificial CBL. An integrated village conducted its Feast of the Dead only every eight to twelve years, and this also was when the village abandoned its old village locale and moved to a newly selected locale a few kilometers away where it built a new set of longhouses. Even though until this important mortuary ritual, the free souls continued to occupy the

immediate zone of the “laying-in altar scaffold” sector, the Feast of the Dead cannot be appropriately spoken of in funerary terms. Instead, it was a dual, possibly a multiple, collective spirit-release ritual mediating world renewal.

It is important to note how this complex spirit-release event constituting the Feast of the Dead was carried out. First, the accumulated individual deceased were removed from their “laying-in scaffold altars” apparently by one or two close relatives in each case. These relatives cleaned the bones of all the extraneous flesh. They *cremated* this flesh, and then they wrapped the defleshed and cleaned bones in fine animal skins to form sacred bone bundles. Similar activity by members of neighboring villages who were invited to participate in the host village’s Feast of the Dead created more sacred bone bundles; and on the appointed day all these people carried the bone bundles of their deceased to add to those of the host village where the ceremony was to occur. Each stage involved much ritual exchange and interaction in the form of feasting, gifting, singing, and dancing, all of which has to be understood as an intrinsic spiritual-constitutive part of the total ceremony. The termination of this collective mortuary practice entailed suspending the sacred bone bundles of the accumulated and curated deceased on long poles over the scaffold that surrounded the newly dug collective ossuary pit (i.e., the terminal spirit-release CBL). The bundles were then unwrapped and deposited as loose bones into the pit, where they were carefully and thoroughly mixed by bone-handlers using long poles.⁷ Then the mass of mixed bones was covered with the outer edge of the large sacrificial shroud, usually made of multiple beaver skins, that was used to line the large postmortem human sacrificial altar pit. Logs were placed over the pit and sand over these to make a low mound, and the whole was covered by a low roofing, realizing in this way possibly the primary symbolism of postmortem sacrifice. Further ritual feasting and

gifting occurred, and then all the invited went home while the hosts abandoned the village and gathered at their new village locale a few miles away (Trigger 1976, 87-90).⁸

I suggest that this collective ossuary feature is properly referred to as a *postmortem human sacrificial CBL* and not a *cemetery CBL*. Why? It is notable that the Feast of the Dead replicated the ritual stages performed on the deceased who died by drowning or freezing—namely, (1) mortuary pit construction (i.e., creating a collective sacrificial altar), (2) flesh removal, (3) cremation of the flesh, and (4) massive bone burial constituting a collective human postmortem sacrificial offering. Of course, in the special cases of death by drowning or freezing, these steps were taken immediately, while the Feast of the Dead was a more drawn-out set of incremental rites. Still, the same structure of formal behavioral steps was performed. Hence, rather than only those mortuary behaviors to which victims of death by drowning or freezing were subjected being treated as postmortem human sacrificial offerings, it is quite reasonable to include all the deceased mediating the Feast of the Dead as constituting a collective postmortem human sacrificial offering. Furthermore, in both the accidental and the planned cases, two sets of spirit-release rites were performed: the release of the free souls and the release of the living souls. It is likely that the cremation of the flesh marked the release of the free soul.

However, this suggests an important difference between the death-by-drowning/freezing postmortem human sacrifice and the Feast of the Dead postmortem human sacrifice. In the former case, the release of the free soul enabled the god to take it. In the latter case, the release of the free soul enabled it to travel to the land of the Dead and be reborn there. In both cases, the cremation of the flesh and the burial of the bones, constituted the postmortem sacrifice of the living souls of the dead to the spiritual powers involved.

Again, however, in the drowning/freezing cases, even these living souls were likely a sacrifice to the gods of the underwater or the sky, while in the Feast of the Dead, these living souls probably were re-incorporated into the natural order of the surrounding immanently sacred landscape, thereby reanimating the land and its multiple species. This means that to the Huron, as with most traditional Native American peoples, the local landscape would have been experienced as participating in the sacredness of the wider cosmos. Therefore, the release of the spirits of the bones was, in fact, the return of their spiritual energy to the local land from which it had been derived. This constituted the Feast of the Dead as a complex spirit-release→social renewal→world renewal sacrificial ritual, a critical part of the larger postmortem sacrificial Huron mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process.

I must note, however, that I am hypothesizing the fate of the living souls. What the Huron believed happened to these souls is not precisely known to us. In regard to the collective beliefs of Southeastern Native American peoples, Lankford simply notes that they were believed to remain with the bones. Hall (1997, 30) has commented that the Huron believed that “animating souls,” or in my view, “living souls,” resided in the marrow of the human bones—probably a widespread belief, especially since there is iconographic evidence from the bone motifs of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC) assemblage associated with such locales as Moundville that bone breakage was not an uncommon mortuary rite (Knight 2007, 157). Hall also comments on the practice of bone breakage as spirit-releasing (Hall 1997, 24, 30; 1979). This would suggest that the spirits of the bones were deliberately released by this act. However, if we take seriously the notion that the Huron believed the living souls remained close to the bones, then this would mean that this spiritual energy would remain within the immediate zone of the collective burial locale, thereby reenergizing the land that the current village

was abandoning. If so, then it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Huron perceived the abandoning of the village and its immediate surroundings as an opportunity for their dead to return to the land, thereby returning the very same sacred spiritual powers that they, when living, had exploited and consumed through their everyday subsistence and settlement practices. Unfortunately, this conclusion needs to remain suggestive since the ethnographic data are mainly derived from the Jesuit missionaries, and they simply could not fathom multiple souls. Instead, they treated the notion of “multiple souls in the same body” as simply multiple faculties or aspects of a singular soul, thereby making the Huron soul belief conform to the Western notion of the belief in a singular soul (Von Gernet 1993, 45-46, 54).

I believe that this complex type of mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process, although manifesting many variants, can be adequately treated as being deeply entrenched in the prehistory of the Eastern Woodlands. This notion of a deep history of multiple variants of activities will be discussed in more detail below. As I noted above, I have called the theoretical framework developed to explain the complexity of the mortuary sphere the *Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model*. This model is consistent with the social structure postulated by the Complementary Heterarchical Community model in that it implicates complementary clan and sodality involvement in the mortuary process. I claim that traditionally the two relatively autonomous social groupings held collective but complementary responsibilities toward the deceased—but their interests were not always congruent. In general, the clans likely focused on the “funerary” and clan renewal aspects of the mortuary process, and the sodalities likely focused on the world renewal aspects. Hence, as suggested in my earlier discussion of the Hidatsa, the complexity of the mortuary record is largely a function of the ongoing negotiations between clans and sodalities, negotiations that would be in response to perceived changing

ecological and demographic conditions, the latter being interpreted as having an impact on the level of sacred pollution that changing forms and intensity of subsistence and settlement practices might be perceived as causing. Therefore, my earlier discussion in Chapter 2 of the immanentist cosmologies of the traditional Native North American communities, their ecological practices, and the above analysis and interpretation of their mortuary practices constitutes a claim on my part that these are structurally related. In emic terms, I treat mortuary practices as being as much practical ecological as religious phenomena of world renewal. Since cultural traditions play such an important role in understanding the Mississippianization process, it is time to turn to a fuller elucidation of these notions.

Cultural Traditions and Intentionality

Before elucidating the model of the social mechanism that enabled the Mississippianization process to emerge and develop, this would be a good point at which to digress briefly in order to more *fully* elucidate the core conceptual paradigm from which these terms of *agentive autonomy*, *deontic ecology*, *immanentist cosmology*, *squatter ethos*, and so on, derive their particular meaning in this book. The core notion I use in the following is *intentionality*, both personal and collective. The reason for this is that I regard human intentionality to be the basic mental property that makes our human culture and society both possible and unique.⁹

John Searle (1983, 1; 2010, 33-41) treats the mind as a real phenomenon that is emergent from and rooted in the neurophysiology of the human brain. A key property of the mind is that it has intentionality (generically, he uses uppercase—Intentionality). In Searle's view, Intentionality is that fundamental, indeed the essential neurologically based property of the brain by which autonomous human agents can direct their attention toward and/or at or about the objects,

properties, states of affairs, and processes of the world, including, of course, their own activities and interactions.¹⁰ These are real mental states, and they are the primary media by which we engage with the objective world. They have two properties, a psychological attitude and a representational content. This dual aspect of intentional states is notated by him as Bel[r] for beliefs, Des[r] for desires, Per[r] for perceptions, and Int[r] for intentions (as in “intending to do X”). In each case, the representational contents of the state [r] specify what the state is about or is directed at. The psychological attitude of an intentional state defines how the intentional state enables the human agent to engage with the world. A belief enables what he calls a mind-to-world (M→W) direction of fit; and a desire has a world-to-mind (W→M) direction of fit. Although used figuratively, this term *direction of fit* is self-explanatory. If the representational content [r] of an intentional state “fits” the world; that is, if it “fits” the phenomenon in the world that is its object, (i.e., what it is about), then we say that the engagement (i.e., the intentional state) is “satisfied” or “fulfilled.” For example, a belief is “satisfied” or “fulfilled” if it “fits” the world as the representational contents [r] specifies it to be. We normally assess a belief that “fits” the object it is about as being *true*. Searle also extends this view to speech. For example, an assertion is a speech act that we make by way of expressing a belief we hold. Hence, just as the mental state of Bel[r] can be assessed as true, if in fact, we have adequate reason to conclude that it “fits” or correctly characterizes/describes its object, so the assertion we make, “I believe that X is the case,” in expressing Bel[x] is also true. For example, the beliefs we have about deer, Bel[deer], are true if there are objects that satisfy it (i.e., there are actual deer that have properties specified by the representational contents [r] of the belief). Also, a Des[venison] (W→M direction of fit) is satisfied if it comes to be that the subject having that desire eats some venison, and so on. Notice that the above belief and

desire have the same general representational content $[r]$, $\text{Bel}[\text{deer}]$ and $\text{Des}[\text{deer}]$, but have complementary directions of fit; that is, the belief[deer] has $M \rightarrow W$ direction of fit, and the desire[deer] has $W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit. Searle applies these notions of “representational content” $[r]$ and complementary “directions of fit” $[M \rightarrow W \text{ and } W \rightarrow M]$ to perceptions and intentions also. $\text{Per}(\text{deer})$ is satisfied if what the perceiver sees in front of her is an actual deer, and $\text{Int}(\text{to hunt deer})$ is satisfied if the agent actually behaves in a manner that counts as “hunting deer.” Thus, just like beliefs, perceptions have $M \rightarrow W$ direction of fit; and, just like desires, intentions have $W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit.

This reciprocal complementary belief/perception $M \rightarrow W$ and desire/intention $W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit for these four intentional states— $\text{Bel}[r]$, $\text{Des}[r]$, $\text{Per}[r]$, $\text{Int}[r]$ —ensures their relative autonomy. That is, even though $\text{Bel}[r]$ and $\text{Des}[r]$ have the same $[r]$, the complementary and reciprocal directions of fit of beliefs ($M \rightarrow W$) and desires ($W \rightarrow M$) mean that they cannot be simply reduced to each other. The same applies to perceptions and intentions. $\text{Per}[r]$ and $\text{Int}[r]$ have reciprocal directions-of-fit, $M \rightarrow W$ and $W \rightarrow M$, respectively. Does this mean that beliefs and perceptions with the same $[r]$ can simply be reduced one into the other so that a belief is simply a special type of perception or vice versa? After all both $\text{Bel}[r]$ and $\text{Per}[r]$ have the same direction of fit (i.e., $M \rightarrow W$). Similarly, both $\text{Des}[r]$ and $\text{Int}[r]$ have the same $W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit. So does this also mean that desires and intentions with the same $[r]$ can also simply be combined together so that desires are simply special intentions or vice versa? According to Searle, the answer in both cases is no. Why? Because, in his view, while both $\text{Bel}[r]$ and $\text{Des}[r]$ are intentional states, they lack *intentional causality* while both $\text{Int}[r]$ and $\text{Per}[r]$ are intentional states that also have *intentional causality*. What is *intentional causality*? Searle specifically treats himself as a realist, and by this, he takes the

natural world with which our intentionality enables us to engage to exist independently of us and our intentional engagements.¹¹ Therefore, with regard to beliefs and desires, having these does not in itself cause the objects that they are about, but through the medium of our intentions and perceptions, we do materially engage with these objects and their contexts. In Searle's view, these intentional states are characterized by having intentional causality. Hence, while we can have beliefs and desires independently of the objects these intentional states are about, we cannot have intentions and perceptions independently of their objects. That is, we have real (i.e., veridical) perceptions, rather than pretend or false perceptions (e.g., hallucinations), only if in fact our perceptions are caused by real tangible objects. Of course, we always perceive these objects within some theoretical framework, whether a specialized scientific model or, more generally, the cosmology of the community with which we identify. What this means is that while perceptions have $M \rightarrow W$ direction of fit (i.e., our perceptions are directed at the world, or better stated, at the specific objects that they are about, and this direction of fit is realized as the interpretive moment by which our cultural beliefs shape the sense of what we see), they simultaneously have $W \rightarrow M$ direction of intentional causality, or better stated, these objects causally impact on our sensory mechanisms, and in virtue of our cultural beliefs, we experience them as being what we believe them to be.¹² Similarly, we can only have real intentions and satisfy them if we are in a situation that enables us to formulate the intentions ($W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit) and exercise/apply them causing the behavior ($M \rightarrow W$ direction of causality) that thereby changes the material world so that it fits the representational contents of the intentions. That is, in his view, quite literally, in exercising the mental state he terms an intention ("intentions" being those intentional states that enable us to behave in accordance with the representational contents of these states), we

cause our bodily behaviors and thereby we “act on the world” so that the world is changed to “fit” the representational contents of our intentions—Int[r]. In this way, we have real physico-material engagements with the world. Of course, the world also has a real impact on us through our sensory organs, eyes, ears, touch, etc. Thus, while the belief/desire reciprocal pairing has no associated intentional causality, the perception/intention reciprocal pairing does have associated intentional causality; and they also reciprocate in terms of their direction of intentional causality, $W \rightarrow M$ for perception and $M \rightarrow W$ for intention.

All this can be put in negative terms. When the agent exercises his/her action intentions, if the behaviors and outcomes the agent intended do not conform to the representational contents of the intentions, then he/she may have tried to satisfy or fulfill the intentions but failed. In terms of perception, if the agent sees X in front of her/him and there is no X there, then she/he is having a hallucination, or some such false or nonviridical visual or other sensory experience. Table 5.1 summarizes these four basic forms in terms of direction of fit and direction of intentional causality. It also clarifies why these constitute four autonomous but integrated intentional states. That is, each has a particular $M \rightarrow W$ or $W \rightarrow M$ direction of fit, while in addition perceptions and intentions have $W \rightarrow M$ and $M \rightarrow W$ direction of

Table 5.1. The Structure of Intentionality

	Direction of Fit	Direction of Intentional Causality
Beliefs	Mind $\rightarrow$ World	None
Desires	World $\rightarrow$ Mind	None
Perceptions	Mind $\rightarrow$ World	World $\rightarrow$ Mind
Intentions	World $\rightarrow$ Mind	Mind $\rightarrow$ World

intentional causality, respectively; and the particular combination each has makes it an autonomous intentional state relative to the others, hence making these intentional states mutually irreducible mental phenomena.

There is much more that could be said in overviewing and summarizing Searle's characterizations of Intentionality. For example, Searle also includes here memories and prior intentions as primary intentional states. But these are structured the same as perceptions and intentions, respectively. Therefore, I will not discuss them except to say that each serves to bind and unify the agent's experience of time and space, thereby being able to act coherently. That is, actual memories (as opposed to false memories) are always of past events and experiences, and prior intentions are always preliminary to future actions/events. In this regard, prior intentions constitute strategies—that is, the planned trajectory of future actions. This is why I would refer to the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* of a community as the ongoing realization of a collective ideological mortuary strategy.

I find Searle's view to be important for my purposes because it postulates human intentionality as real emergent mental capacities and powers, and they are emergent from neurophysiological organic structures of the brain and its associated body. Human intentionality is an irreducibly complex set of causal mental powers that are proximally responsible for human practices, therefore, establishing why it is important for archaeologists to be able to speak intelligibly about the possible types of beliefs, desires, perceptions, and intentions that were possessed and put into regular practices by the prehistoric populations that were responsible for the archaeological record. Even if the representational contents of these intentional states are not immediately known to the archaeologist and may never be definitively known, I claim that their basic premises and presuppositions can become known and empirically demonstrated by archaeologists

carrying out realistic hermeneutic interpretations and explanations of the archaeological record. Since intentional states are fundamental to the constitution of social systems, having a good sense of their nature is important if archaeologists are to account for the archaeological record in social terms—that is, in terms that go beyond the basic physiological needs. Doing so is part of reconstructing the social worlds of the past in nonreductionist terms.

But so far I have been treating intentionality as a mental property of the individual agent. In order to incorporate intentionality into interpreting the archaeological record in social terms, it is important to further characterize these states, in this case as cultural traditions being shared, held, and practiced in common by the individuals who make up a community. The point here is to move from treating intentionality as a complex structure of individual mental properties to treating it as an equal or even more complex structure of *collective mental properties*. This is not a difficult shift to make. However, I first must emphasize that I am not suggesting that collective mental properties are reified forms of intentional states. I claim that they exist as intentional states of a special emergent sort and are firmly rooted in the minds of the individual agents that make up the society. Second, as intentional states, I postulate that the collective intentional states also have *direction of fit*, and furthermore, collective intentions and perceptions also have *intentional causality*. That is, these are universal properties of intentionality for any normal human population. However, a careful qualification must be made here. While direction of fit and intentional causality are universal, the representational contents are not. These vary across cultural traditions and, indeed, differentiate cultural traditions from each other, delineating what anthropologists refer to as different cultures or ethnic groups. Third, another important mental property that apparently is both universal and unique to human populations and makes human cultural traditions possible is effortless reflexivity.

As I have defined it, *effortless reflexivity* is the capacity for normal humans to be able to shift effortlessly from being aware of the objects that their intentional states are about or directed at, whether these objects are present or not, to being aware of their own intentional states themselves. As noted, effortless reflexivity is also an emergent mental property that we have in virtue of the unique nature of our human neurophysiology. This enables us to be relatively autonomous with regard to our particular state of intentional engagement with the world so that even when in a state of rest, our minds can still actively engage in recall and memory-based processes, including “strategizing,” that is, in thinking. Effortless reflexivity also enables us to communicate by learning and using the grammar that constitutes a given language, that is, the social structural knowledge and know-how required to express intentional states via conventional signing, usually oral (again a skill dependent on our effortless reflexivity).

It is effortless reflexivity, then, that enables the formation of collective intentional states. However, as I noted above, collective intentional states are firmly rooted in the property of intentionality that all normal human agents share. What makes them collective rather than simply individual intentional states is that they typically include the often taken-for-granted awareness/recognition that all “normal people” share the same beliefs, desires, and so on. However, collective intentionality can and often does come in a form of explicit self-awareness, particularly when the participants of a recognized social group are undertaking a cooperative task (i.e., a collective task, such as constructing a monumental earthwork). Hence, by collective intentional states, I am in general accord with Searle’s view (2010, 42-47). That is, I am not saying that humans will generate groups or a full community having an emergent “group mind” that transcends the minds of those who make up the groups or community and, thereby, be an emergent super-mind (see note 11). I am

simply saying that individuals living in a community can share, and typically do share, the same range of representational contents of their individual intentional states and, to one degree or another, are reflexively aware of this shared state. Hence, while my collective Bel[r] is an intentional property of my mind and your collective Bel[r] is an intentional property of your mind, part of the the core representational content of this shared belief includes the knowledge that most “normal” humans hold this belief. By *normal*, of course, I am referring to the individuals who make up the community and mutually recognize each other as members. Treated most generally, this largely taken-for-granted knowing of representational contents as being shared among the members of the community constitutes a complex collective intentional state or, as I noted above, a cultural tradition.

Furthermore, just as regular, individual intentionality comes in four basic forms of Bel[r], Des[r], Per[r], and Int[r], there are four corresponding basic cultural traditions. Hence, the large set of beliefs, desires, perceptions, and intentions (and here I would particularly stress prior intentions and memories) that include this reflexive component as part of their representational contents constitute the cultural traditions of a community, and these traditions are defined in the same terms as the four basic forms of intentionality. Cosmology is constituted as collective world beliefs; ethos is constituted as collective desires and attitudes; worldview is constituted as the collective perceptions a people have of their world; and ideology is constituted as the collective intentions characteristic of the community. Of course, just as an individual’s beliefs have M→W direction of fit, so the cosmology (collective world beliefs) of a people has M→W direction of fit. And if the cosmology fits the world as it represents it to be (and typically this fit is taken for granted), then the cosmology is taken to be true. Similarly, just as an individual intention has

W→M direction of fit and M→W direction of intentional causality, so the ideologies (collective prior intentions) of the community have W→M direction of fit and M→W direction of intentional causality. I stress the plural here because the realization of an ideology entails performing actions, and the latter are characterized in terms of their purposes. Therefore, different purposes delineate different ideologies, and these are constituted and held by groups as their ideological strategies. Hence, a given community not only will have a range of ideologies defined by the general purposes that their respective action spheres are purported to realize, the total ideological sphere of a community can be differentiated into alternative ideologies as differentiated ideological strategies, often several of these strategies having the same purpose to realize. That is, a community or a group can be internally structured into ideological factions. While all the factions agree on the specific purposes of the group, they can differ on how best to achieve these purposes. For example, a cult sodality may have factions defined in terms of alternative ideological strategies by which the sodality should pursue its primary purpose, and these sodality factions will need to *negotiate* the rules that will govern the action forms that the sodality must carry out to satisfy its purposes. Hence, the sodality can be described as embodying several alternative ideological strategies while actually pursuing a compromise ideological strategy that enables its members to recognize that their duties are being fulfilled and their purposes are being achieved. When a particular sodality exercises a particular ideological strategy (i.e., a collective intention), it carries out a collective activity by which they change the material world in accordance with the representational contents of their agreed-upon ideological strategy, and if successful, the world is materially changed in accordance to the strategy (e.g., building a platform mound).

As I noted above, an ethos is the set of collective desires of a community. However, there is a particular additional dimension that must be made to the notion of Des[r] in order to characterize the set of collective desires, that is, the ethos of a community. Remember, in virtue of our effortless reflexivity, we can constitute our desires as *collective*, and this means that collective desires transcend individual ordinary, largely nonreflexive (and therefore unexamined) desires, and these collective desires can be cited as standards by which to measure and critique these ordinary desires. Therefore, the collective desires constituting the ethos of a community necessarily take on a different quality from individualized or noncollective desires. We can call this quality a deontic state. Deontic states constitute the moral and ethical values of the community, and they define what ought to be and must be done. They are allocated across social positions. We often refer to their effects as the rights and duties, obligations, responsibilities, and other deontic powers and liabilities that constitute social positions and standings. In a significant way, collective desires become the antithesis of individual desires, and Searle (2010) refers to them as the *desire-independent reasons* for a community and its members to act in the ways they do. In effect, the ethos of a community consists of ethical principles, standards, and values that are used by the members of a community to critically assess individual desires, and if the latter fit the principles and values, then they are “approved.” Taylor has referred to these deontic-type desires, that is, the ethos of a community as *second-order values and principles*. He terms them *second-order* because of their deontic role of being standards and values by which a community can critically assess “first-order” desires and values (i.e., individual desires and values) (Taylor 1985, 15-21). Therefore, the representative contents of an ethos—as a cultural tradition or form of collective intentionality having the W→M direction of fit—consist of the second-order

standards, values, and principles by which those constituting a community assess the rightness/wrongness of the representational contents (i.e., deontic rights and duties) manifested in their own activities as community members, as well as the appropriateness of the material changes that their activities bring about. To incorporate the contents of the ethos is to incorporate the principles and standards that operate as the background for constituting the rules and protocols that, as the representational contents of an ideology, govern the forms of behaviors and states of affairs that will count as being the right actions to do, the right goals to pursue, and the right speech actions to say, as well as the right things to have, use, and make.

In terms of the cosmology $\leftrightarrow$ ethos relation, I have already argued that agentic autonomy is the core principle of a squatter or custodial ethos, and this type of structure of principles and values is typically associated with a cosmology that characterizes the world as immanently sacred. Therefore, cosmology and ethos are obviously related; but the two terms are needed since they are also relatively autonomous intentional states in that, as noted above, the cosmology consists of a body of collective world beliefs that has the M $\rightarrow$ W direction of fit, and the ethos of the community consists of its second-order values and standards, the deontics, that have the reciprocal W $\rightarrow$ M direction of fit. Hence, the ethos cannot be reduced to the cosmology or vice versa, while both can exist only in relation to each other. Furthermore, separate terms are needed to recognize the relative autonomy of collective perceptions (i.e., worldview) (M $\rightarrow$ W direction of fit and W $\rightarrow$ M direction of intentional causality) and collective intentions as ideology, which always comes as ideological strategy spheres defined by the collective tasks they are designed to achieve (M $\rightarrow$ W direction of intentional causality and W $\rightarrow$ M direction of fit) (Byers 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010, 2011).

The critical property by which an ideology incorporates its identity vis-a-vis other ideologies is the representational contents [r] of the shared collective intentions, and as collective intentions, they draw on the properties of both the cosmology and the ethos in that these contents must not only describe what objective state of affairs will count as satisfying the collective intentions, they must also transform these descriptions as deontic phenomena. Therefore, the descriptions of what will count as appropriate behaviors and material outcomes are also prescriptive and proscriptive rules and protocols (i.e., this is the way they *must* appear). Hence, the contents have deontic force; they have normative status of “oughtness” and “rightness” and “proscriptiveness,” “this is the right-and-proper way of doing X,” and so on. The collective behaviors that realize these intentions are transformed into warranted social actions, and this means that the sphere of behaviors that the exercising of the ideology generates will count as a sphere of social actions (i.e., the behavior/action duality), and any of the behaviors of a given sphere that do not conform to the rules and protocols presupposed by the ideology will not count as fully felicitous social actions of the type intended (Searle 2010, 123-32). Worldview, of course, is equally dependent on the cosmology↔ethos structure; but it cannot be reduced to it since the collective perceptions a people have of the world (and of their actions as they perceive them) not only have the M→W direction of fit, they also have the W→M direction of intentional causality. The objects of the world must be the material causes of the agents’ perceptions, while the construction of these perceptions is determined by the agents’ cosmos↔ethos structure. Hence, ideology and worldview are mutually reciprocal phenomena, both informed by the same cosmos↔ethos collective tradition while sharing complementary M→W and W→M directions of intentional causality, respectively.

Deep and Surface Structures

Hence, there are four categories of cultural traditions: cosmology, ethos, worldview, and ideology. These are emergent from the four basic categories of individual intentionality: beliefs, desires, perceptions, and intentions, respectively. Furthermore, the four cultural traditions are organized as two complementary paired sets—cosmology↔ethos and worldview↔ideology. By complementary paired sets I mean that cosmology and ethos cannot be reduced to each other because of complementary directions of fit, $M \rightarrow W$ and $W \rightarrow M$, respectively, nor can worldview and ideology be reduced to each other, also because of complementary directions of fit, $M \rightarrow W$ and $W \rightarrow M$, respectively. Furthermore, of course, because of complementary direction of intentional causality, $W \rightarrow M$ and $M \rightarrow W$, respectively, these also cannot be reduced to each other. Equally important, because the worldview↔ideology set have complementary direction of intentional causality while the cosmology↔ethos has no associated powers of intentional causality, cosmology↔ethos and worldview↔ideology are also irreducible to each other. Indeed, this complex of collective intentional states, therefore, is necessarily stratified with cosmology↔ethos constituting the deep cultural traditions, and ideology↔worldview constituting surface cultural traditions. The reason I claim this is that these two levels relate asymmetrically. By this I mean that while one can have beliefs about, for example, animals, these beliefs do not entail having the intention to hunt them. However, the reverse is not the case. One can only form the intention to hunt an animal if the agent also believes that such an animal exists and is currently available to be hunted. Similarly, having a desire does not entail being in a position to fulfill that desire. But having an intention to hunt an animal presupposes having the desire, or at the collective level, the duty and/or obligation to do so. That is, desires and duties can exist without the intention that

is required to perform an action that is required to fulfill the desires or duties; but if one has the intention, then this state presupposes that the agent has the desire and/or duty that makes forming that intention possible. In short, this asymmetrical relation means that intentions and perceptions, or collectively, ideologies and worldviews can only exist as intentional states if the collective beliefs (cosmology) and collective desires (ethos) exist that make it possible for agents to form these collective intentions (ideologies) and have these collective perceptions (worldviews). Hence, the cosmology↔ethos complementary structural pair constitutes the deep structural stratum of cultural traditions while the worldview↔ideology structural pair, the one that we exercise in materially engaging with the world, constitutes the surface structural stratum.

I have called this overall characterization of a community's cultural traditions in this manner the *integrated view*; and it contrasts with what I take to be the standard view, which tends to use these different terms—*cosmology*, *ideology*, *worldview*, and even *ethos*—in a somewhat cavalier manner, as if each term is simply highlighting different aspects of what is, in fact, a single, monolithic or fused structure of beliefs. I have called this conflatory perspective the *fused view* of cultural traditions (Byers 2006a, 76-82). The integrated view of cultural traditions characterizes these in terms of the deep/surface structural stratification. As a result, the deep structures of cosmology and ethos will tend to have temporally deep and spatially broad continuity while the surface structures of ideology and worldview can and usually do have rather shallow temporal and restricted spatial continuity. This can be nicely illustrated by the core theme of this book (i.e., the Mississippianization process) since I claim that the process presupposes the stability of the cosmology↔ethos deep structural level since the latter is the source of intelligibility of the surface structural ideological and worldview innovations

manifested as the process of Mississippianization. Furthermore, this deep/surface stratification applies formally to social structure also. As I noted above, the dual clan/sodality social structural axes form the deep social structural core of the Late Woodland and the Mississippian social systems. In contrast, the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum is the expression of changing ideological structures—namely, surface structural rules and protocols that define what will count as the appropriate distribution of the constituent kin groups and sodality groups of the complementary heterarchical communities of a given region in circumstances of increasing pollution. Of course, such assessments of increasing pollution of the sacred order and what to do about it presuppose an immanentist cosmology and squatter ethos that remain constant, particularly as these are the basis of the negotiations that must occur for the ideological innovations to be made, decided upon, carried out and implemented. Hence, a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture is the result of a region-wide distribution of communities strategically (collectively) reorganizing their settlement postures by shifting from the integrated to the bifurcated pole of the settlement articulation continuum in accordance with an innovated settlement strategy, as I described earlier. Simultaneously, this reorganization does not weaken but reproduces and strengthens the core social structure—that is, the relative autonomy of clans and socalities as expressed in the emergence of autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult socalities, each sustaining a more articulated and enhanced arm's-length spatial relation between its specialized locales and the kin-based farmsteads and hamlets of its complementary heterarchical community dispersed widely across the landscape. This more articulated and enhanced arm's-length relation also enables the cult socalities of the regional communities to enter into complex mutualistic alliances with each other, constituting what I termed in

Chapter 2 the series of expanding social fields of magnetic power I have termed *first-order*, *second-order*, and possibly *higher order* *cultural heterarchies*. Therefore, we can think of the transformation of the settlement pattern along this continuum as the tangible material expression of changes in the surface structural ideological strategies of settlement and subsistence in response to culturally perceived radical changes in the objective material circumstances arising from changes in the level of community exploitation of the local environment, given their immanentist cosmology and squatter ethos, while the dual clan/sodality deep structural axes remain largely constant, as I noted above (Byers 2006a, 60-82; 2011). Of course, simultaneously and in parallel, just as the deep dual clan/sodality social structure remained unchanged in the context of the bifurcated settlement posture, so the deep cultural traditions of cosmology↔ethos remained largely unchanged in the context of the innovated surface cultural traditions of worldview↔ideology.

This deep/surface stratification of cultural traditions and social structures has great significance for archaeology. For example, it is not hard to assume that there can be two neighboring peoples who have the equivalent cosmology and ethos complex; for example, they both believe that the world is immanently sacred, and they equally hold that humans must live “lightly on the land” in order to minimize polluting it. However, it is quite possible that they would develop different representational contents of the ideological strategies related to the equivalent spheres of activities that each performs (e.g., subsistence and settlement, and even mortuary practices). How is this possible? Even though their cosmologies and ethoses are similar in that they both characterize the world as immanently sacred, and therefore, they both believe and perceive animals to be immanently sacred entities so that the squatters’ ethos principles will come into play, and the standards and values that constitute the

representational content of the ethos will transform the practical know-how of hunting game into prescriptive and proscriptive rules that have moral and ethical as well as constitutive and instrumental (functional) weight, it does not follow that the forms of their hunting behaviors or of the cultural artifacts that they produce and use in performing these behaviors will be the same. That is, a people typically develop their own rules and protocols somewhat unique from their neighbors that, as the representational contents of their action intentions, govern how they ought to behave and produce the proper tools so that in exercising their intentions in behaving, the latter forms will systematically differ between these peoples.¹³ Now while a people typically experience their action rules and protocols as being derived from an intrinsic property of the immanently sacred world (immanentist cosmology) or from a property that transcends the mundane world (transcendentist cosmology), thereby treating these rules as being “written in” the sacred natural order, or as “written in” the sacred heavens, as the case may be, nevertheless, these rules are humanly made and made autonomously but not independently of the associated deep cultural traditions of cosmology and ethos that make forming these rules possible (Searle 2010, 38-41). Hence, neighboring peoples sharing the same cosmology and ethos can sometimes dramatically differ in terms of the forms that their behaviors must display in order to count as appropriate social actions of the types intended. For example, while sharing similar cosmology↔ethos sets, and while both might share the commitment to human sacrifice as a form of world renewal ritual, Community A might come to emphasize lethal human sacrifice while Community B might emphasize (nonlethal) postmortem human sacrifice; and each would likely perceive and assess the emphasis of the other as radically misguided, a mutual regard that could be the basis of violent confrontations, each believing and being convinced that the

actions of the other endanger the sacred world that they all share. As I discuss below, even the tools that are used in both types of sacrifice can be recognizably different, although both treat them as partly constitutive of the sacrificial actions they perform.

The Action Meaning of Material Culture

All this relates somewhat directly to my earlier discussion of the behavior/action duality. Based on the nature of cultural traditions as characterized above, I have argued that what typically happens in a community is that the material cultural things that are required in order to carry out even such practical behaviors as subsistence and settlement tasks come to bear conventional forms, that is, what archaeologists term *material cultural style*. These conventional forms serve to express that the agent performing the behaviors is exercising the proper action intentions and also has the proper social standing—deontic social powers (i.e., rights and duties)—necessary to transform his/her material behaviors (e.g., animal stalking and killing) into the intended social actions (e.g., hunting). I have argued that the use of the properly styled tools is akin to the use in literate societies of licences and permits. Licences, permits, warrants, and so on, serve to express the appropriate action intentions and the proper social standing of the responsible agents bearing these documents, thereby constituting the action nature of their behaviors in the very moment of performing them (I elaborate on this view in the next chapter, calling it the symbolic pragmatic meaning of material culture). Hence, carrying out animal tracking and killing with the properly formed tools (i.e., tools displaying the correct formal stylistics) counts as hunting in that community. This means that a person doing the same behavior without these hunting “licences” (i.e., doing the behavior with wrongly styled tools), even if these tools should have the necessary instrumental properties to achieve the

killing output, *ceteris paribus*, this killing would count as poaching in that community, and therefore, the agent would be perceived as a poacher. Hence, manifested in the stylistics of projectile points and spears are the collective deontics of social action as well as practical know-how that are part of the representational content of the ideological strategies making up the subsistence sphere, and as I noted above, presupposed but not directly expressed by this ideology is the representational contents of the ethos and cosmology, thereby endowing the hunting activity with a ritual dimension. That is, the ideology of a community is the “standard” set of ideological strategies constituting the materially definable action spheres characteristic of that community; and these incorporate not only practical but also not-so-practical spheres, such as governance, family life, mortuary, and so on. Hence, I treat an ideological strategy as a structure of collective prior intentions organized in accordance to achieving some ongoing purpose or goal of a given group having responsibility for a particular sphere of social action of the community; and the community’s collective strategies are realized in the behavioral spheres that constitute the action spheres that are characteristic of that community.

Conclusion

With this rather extensive discussion and characterization of mortuary spheres, cultural traditions, and social structures completed, I am now prepared to present the next theoretical step. I turn to this task in the next chapter by elucidating what I call the *Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model*. I claim that this model specifies the primary (although not the only) social mechanism by which the Mississippianization of the Eastern Woodlands unfolded and developed.

NOTES

1. This view of the mortuary sphere is keyed into my approach to the way humans use the symbolic meaning of material cultural things. I have called it the *symbolic pragmatic view*, and it argues that the stylistics of material cultural items constitute them as warrants of action, as media by which to transform the behaviors they are used to perform into the types of social actions so intended. As warrants, they index and manifest the social position and the social powers of their legitimate users; that is, they invoke and presence the social structural context that is constitutive of the activity that they mediate and constitute. Applying this view to mortuary practices effectively means that I treat the deceased as symbolic pragmatic or warranting devices. This symbolic pragmatic view presupposes the behavior/action duality discussed above, and it is more fully elaborated in Chapter 6.

2. Lynne Goldstein (2000, 2010) has started to shift her focus from the primary or extended burial ritual, demarcating the “funeral,” to the mortuary rituals indicated by secondary burials. She still tends to privilege the former over the latter but is now recognizing that the mortuary sphere of a community cannot be exhaustively characterized in funerary terms. Developing the view that the mortuary sphere is wider and more complex than allowed for under the funerary paradigm has also recently been made by James Brown (2003, 2006, 2010) and recognized by Timothy Pauketat (2010).

3. As I noted above, this is an incomplete description since it does not discuss mortuary rites that were defined by warfare, particularly the important rite of skull retrieval. Bowers comments on this but does not pursue it to any degree. Interestingly, the primary obligation to retrieve the skull of a man killed in warfare apparently fell to his senior sister. She had to arrange the transfer, presumably contacting

the warrior who killed her brother. The method by which this was accomplished (and sometimes it took many years) would constitute an important part of the mortuary sphere, in my view, and knowing it would enhance our understanding of these communities.

4. Robert Hall (2007, 102), however, has expressed skepticism with my elaborating of his insights in my own model since he has recognized that while I have drawn on his theoretical perspective, he is not in support of the manner I have developed it. "The idea of 'post-mortem' human sacrifice appears to be Byers' personal slant on, and partial reinterpretation of, the role of soul release in spirit adoption ceremonies as it relates to world renewal as I have written about it." Of course, I take full responsibility for my "personal slant." I still consider Hall's "slant" to be extremely insightful, and although he limits his contribution to the interpretive connecting of mortuary rites to world renewal rites by arguing that only the recalling from the "Afterlife" and subsequent rereleasing of the free soul was his concern as part of the reincarnation rite of the deceased's name in the body of the "adoptee," as I noted above with regard to the Hidatsa extended scaffolding rite and as I discuss in considerable further detail shortly, there is ample empirical evidence that *living soul* release rites of a postmortem sacrificial nature were a critical part of the mortuary spheres of many traditional Native North American communities.

5. It is not implausible that the young men chosen to carry out this mortuary task would have been selected because they were known to be "boon companions" of the deceased, although Trigger (1969, 103-5; 1976, 52) does not make any comment in this regard. Put in this way, the fact that parents chose the youths means that the task was to be performed by non-kin or by those kin who, in addition to their kin relationship, were recognized as companions of the deceased. As

I commented in Chapter 3, boon companions were crucial in many Native North American creation myths and mortuary practices, and this fact has been noted by Hall, although he often uses the term *fictive kin* (1997, 42, 61-62, 65, 80, 94, 149-50).

6. According to Lankford (2007b, 201-207), bodies of water were in the domain of the Great Serpent (i.e., the Underwater Panther, the god of the Beneath World and the custodial guardian of the land of the Dead in the south), and therefore, probably the treatment of the drowning victim was understood by the Huron to be a postmortem sacrifice to this god of the southern reaches. The Thunderbirds were the guardian custodians of the heavens, or the Above World, and the north was associated with them. Therefore, it is possible that a person who died by freezing would become a postmortem sacrifice to the latter powers.

7. According to Heidenreich (1978, 380-81), the very recently deceased were also part of this Feast of the Dead. However, they would be left intact, wrapped in beaver skins or some other mortuary laying-in garment/shroud and placed at the bottom of the large communal CBL pit dug for this particular occasion. All the other bundles of bones were then deposited helter-skelter on top and well mixed before finally being buried. Therefore, no bodies of the deceased of the village were overlooked.

8. In fact, not unusually, the village fissioned at this point into two components, although they tended to resettle near to each other (Heidenreich 1978, 378).

9. I have also discussed this view of intentionality and cultural traditions in some detail in Byers (2006a, 60-80), and also see Byers (2010, Chapter 10; 2011, 123-34.).

10. He also includes here memories and prior intentions, but I will touch on these later as they can be treated as forms of perceptions and intentions, respectively.

11. In his view, society is the sum total of expressed collective human intentionality, and this sum total is continually expanding as humans constitute new status functional relations via the master speech act, what he terms the *Status Function Declarative* speech act (Searle 2010, 11-15). It is because humans have the primary ability to speak that they can symbolically produce status functions via the speech act of declaration, thereby constituting named social positions consisting of status functions (i.e., deontic positions we speak of as consisting of interrelated rights and duties). In uttering the words “I declare you husband and wife,” the priest constitutes the social reality he/she describes. In doing so, he/she endows the couple with new deontic powers—rights and duties—by constituting them as husband and wife, and through these powers, they can constitute their mutually related behaviors into marital actions. For example, in carrying out sexual intercourse, they constitute this behavior as spousal activities, and any children that result are necessarily constituted as their sons and daughters. Of course, he recognizes that declarative performances, such as weddings, require collective recognition for them to be felicitous. I believe that his view of the declarative speech act as a major social mechanism for producing and reproducing social structures is valid, and it can be used to key us into characterizing the core nature of human society as being based on intersubjective entities (i.e., social relations and social positions) that are grounded on but emergent from collective human intentionality. Importantly, although emergent from the warranted declarative act, these relational and positional phenomena are not themselves properly characterized as having the property of human

intentionality. That is, just as intentionality (i.e., the key property of the mind) is grounded in and emergent from the neurophysiological structures of the brain, so society is grounded in but emergent from the exercise of the collective intentionality of the minds of the human community that bears it.

12. Clearly, the causal and constitutive construction of perception raises epistemic questions about the truth status of both the perceptions we claim to have and the beliefs that are the medium by which we form our perceptual experiences of the objects we see. Remember, the condition of satisfaction of a claim—we see an X—is that the belief it expresses fits the object it is about; that is, the claim or assertion and the belief it expresses are true ($M \rightarrow W$ direction of fit). Importantly, this does not mean that the object is “true.” Rather, the object is real, but our assertion of knowledge about it is true (or not). However, establishing the truth status of an assertion (epistemology), or of the belief it expresses, and of the perception the latter constituted, is a separate question from establishing what a belief and the perceptions it constitutes are (ontology). For social science, establishing the truth and validity of an assertion (e.g., a model) requires careful methodology, as I discussed in the closing of Chapter 2. There I pointed out that I rely primarily on retroduction and abduction. The retroduced scheme that most coherently explains the data is the one I claim is the most rational to accept. Although this does not guarantee “absolute truth,” it certainly is grounds to claim that it is a better approximation of the way things were that caused the empirical data than any other models on tap. And so the hermeneutic spiral and the growth of knowledge proceeds.

13. Below I discuss why the forms of even instrumental tools can vary between peoples, even when they are used to mediate the same physical behaviors.

CHAPTER 6

Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing

In Chapter 4, I pointed out that Robert Hall's correlating the Calumet or Calumet-like ceremonialism with interpersonal alliance construction through kinship adoption processes unwittingly obscured an equally important Calumet-like ceremonialism used to construct alliances. In fact, the latter may have been more important historically than the Calumet adoptive kinship mechanism he postulated since the latter form effected long-distance relations simply between individuals while the type I am postulating effected intergroup alliance construction and the diffusion of ideological innovations—namely, new forms of world renewal ritual. This type of Calumet ceremonialism was one that enabled the transfer of ritual prerogatives (Penney 1989), or given the theoretical framework I have developed to this point, as it may be more adequately stated, *custodial ritual usufruct copyrights* among and between sodalities of different complementary heterarchical communities, even when these sodalities belonged to communities that were culturally distinct and located in spatially distant regions. A similar type of ceremonialism also enabled transfers of the same ritual usufruct copyrights within a community, in this case from a senior age-set sodality to its immediately junior age-set sodality. With respect to the Hidatsa, Bowers (1965) has given several very good examples of both types of transfers. But it is the transfer between equivalent autonomous age-set sodalities

of different and spatially distant communities that I believe is particularly relevant to understanding the development of the type of regional and interregional interaction and exchange that was realized in and generated by the Mississippianization process as this was mapped in the distribution of the Mississippian assemblage. Historically, this form of transfer was not an uncommon practice, and of course, it generated an alliance between particular and equivalent *irakúu* sodalities from distant communities. Notably, given Bowers' description, these practices would constitute an alliance not between the communities but between the sodalities of these communities. When these communities were local neighbors, then under certain conditions (i.e., those that promoted a bifurcated settlement articulation posture), these allied sodalities constituted a first-order heterarchy, and this collective normally would construct a special site that mediated its primary sphere of activities and made these ritual performances possible.

Therefore, characterizing and elaborating on this type of ritual transfer is critical to the development of the theme of this book. However, before doing so, it is important to clarify the nature of the two types of ritual usufruct transfers: the type of transfers occurring from one to another normally more junior sodality of the same community and the type of transfers occurring between normally equivalently ranked sodalities of different autonomous communities.¹ As I discussed in Chapter 4, when an age-set sodality of a Hidatsa community wished to take over the responsibilities of its immediately senior age-set sodality, it approached the latter in order to negotiate the transfer. Of course, the junior age-set had to mobilize considerable material wealth to gift to the senior age-set for their transferring these rights-of-performance to the junior age-set. I also outlined the way this relation was expressed and constituted, with the senior age-set addressing the junior age-set as their "*irakúu*

sons,” and, reciprocally, the junior age-set addressing the senior age-set as their “*irakúu* fathers.” Probably the most important and detailed part of the transfer was the instruction by the “*irakúu* fathers” to their “*irakúu* sons” of a body of sacred knowledge. This instruction involved revealing and transferring all the sacred knowledge (myth) and the ritual know-how on the *proper way* to make, repair, treat, and use the sacred material paraphernalia necessary for performing the ritual performances. This body of learned material consisted of both cosmological knowledge and ideological know-how and prescriptions. The latter presupposed the learning of the sacred stories of the mythical events that created and sustained the world, the related songs and dances they had to learn, as well as the way these fitted into and expressed the relevant creation and re-creation scenarios constituting the cosmology. Included would likely be the sacred names of the gods that constituted the different positions of the ritual enactment. Those who were to be the officiants in the rituals would derive the rights from these names, with which they were “baptized,” and by which they derived the sacred power to constitute the action nature of the behaviors they performed and that made up these key scenarios. As implied here, these scenarios were not merely referencing the events and the gods that they were about. Rather, the officiants and their “audience” took themselves to be directly participating in the very events that the scenarios unfolded. Hence, they were world renewal rituals in the specific sense that their performance did not merely manifest an imaginary event but, in fact, participated in the actual constituting and creating (or re-creating) of the event that the performance was about (i.e., the renewal of the sacred immanent and creative powers of the entities that were the recipients of this renewal transfer, i.e., the gods).

In proprietorial Euro-American societies, much of this symbolic expressive knowledge and instrumental know-how could adequately

fit under the term *intellectual property* and, as ownership-based or proprietorial (in contrast to custodial) societies, the contractual laws governing the ownership and use-in-action of this intellectual property would constitute what is usually termed *proprietary copyright*. What would be the equivalent notions in custodial type societies, such as I have postulated for prehistoric Native North American complementary heterarchical communities? If Bowers' description of the Hidatsa and Mandan is recognized as depicting the dual kinship/companionship social structural nature of most traditional Native North American societies, then it is clear that the equivalent would be *custodial copyright* (in contrast to proprietorial copyright) and *intellectual usufruct* (in contrast to intellectual property). Hence, while still respecting the principle of inclusiveness and sharing, persons or parties holding custodial copyright to an intellectual usufruct had the *exclusive right and responsibility of usage* in that social context (e.g., the local community or heterarchy) to perform a particular activity as defined by that custodial copyright. This exclusiveness of usage, however, was limited to specialized knowledge and know-how, and instead of being the antithesis of agentive autonomy and inclusiveness, it was actually its realization. This is because the deontics of usage were internally complementary in that they entailed both exclusive rights of usage and irreducible obligations to use/exercise these rights. That is, the recognition by the community of one particular or several cooperative sets of custodians as having the exclusive rights to perform a given ritual entailed that the custodian set (or sets) also recognized its reciprocal deontic complement, obligation/duty to its community to perform it when the conditions called for its performance. Hence, autonomous agents or groups holding a custodial ritual usufruct copyright would be burdened with the complementary responsibility to perform these actions as required so as to ensure and enhance the autonomy of the community and all

its members. The principle of autonomy worked both ways, endowing agents with exclusive rights and also endowing those not holding such rights with the right to have the ritual usufruct exercised in a timely and proper manner—subject to the proper gifting to honor the gods. Hence, exclusive custodial copyright of intellectual usufruct imposed a complementary respect for the autonomy that all the members of a community have. When the activity was specialized, as in mediating a form of ritual, then the copyright endowed the holders as its custodians with both the *exclusive right and the overriding obligation* to exercise the ritual usufruct for the community by performing the behavior as specified. When no longer able or willing to exercise this ritual usufruct (e.g., age or sickness), the autonomous agents or parties were obligated to pass on the custodial ritual usufruct copyright to those who had willingly qualified themselves to receive it by having learned it from the current custodians and by having demonstrated that they were honorable persons who would continue respecting the imperatives of this important body of ritual practice.

These obligations of usage and transfer distinguish custodial copyright from proprietorial copyright since, in the latter case, the holder of the proprietorial copyright of this intellectual property would be the exclusive *owner*, and this differs from being the exclusive *custodian* in that the owner would have the exclusive *discretionary right* either *to use or not to use* the copyright knowledge and know-how (and, of course, would have the exclusive right to price the production), and would have no obligation to nonowning parties to exercise the rights. In contrast, the holder of a custodial ritual usufruct copyright is a *custodian* and not an owner so that while being the custodian endowed her/him with the exclusive rights to perform this ritual *within the community or social group* (e.g., *heterarchy*), he/she did not have the discretionary power to withhold using it. At best,

this person or group would have the discretionary power to schedule the exercise of the copyright, drawing on traditional notions of time and place (e.g., only at the equinox and only in the sacred precinct of the cult sodality heterarchy, and so on). Rather, he/she had the overriding obligation to preserve and exercise the custodial ritual usufruct copyright on behalf of the community and its members.

Now this distinction between proprietorial and custodial copyright may seem to bottom out to being no distinction at all. That is, it would seem that since proprietorial and custodial copyright both stress the notion of “exclusivity” of rights of use, then they are effectively the same phenomenon simply wrapped in different terminology. And indeed, the centrality of the deontics (rights and duties) that constitutes these two forms of copyright would seem to be equivalent in the two types of communities. However, I believe that the above distinction of having/not having discretionary rights to deciding usage or not is critically important in distinguishing between the two types of copyright, as I will elucidate shortly. Of course, traditional Native North American peoples have a great respect for custodial ritual usufruct copyright. Typically it was firmly believed that *if* this ritual usufruct or any of its material media, such as the sacred bundles embodying this usufruct, were used by noncustodians, the consequences for the unauthorized users would be devastating; and even the actual custodians could be materially and/or spiritually harmed, particularly if they were party to this improper usage.

As noted above, the custodians were also responsible to transfer the ritual usufruct copyrights at the proper time and in the appropriate circumstances, and just as proprietorial copyright to intellectual property in proprietorial regimes can be transferred in several different ways (inheritance, purchase, rental, licencing, or leasing), custodial ritual usufruct copyright can also be transferred in different ways. The most straightforward form was to transfer the

copyright from the current custodian to a new custodian in the same community. For example, as in the Hidatsa case, from a senior to a junior age-set sodality. This might be termed a *vertical transfer* and typically it is an absolute form of transfer in the sense that when the current custodians perform the transfer, they *extinguish* their rights (and obligations) to exercise that custodial ritual usufruct copyright. I will call this form of transfer the *conveyancing of custodial ritual usufruct copyright*. It is absolute so that, even though the former custodians clearly retain the knowledge and know-how in their collective memory, they have extinguished their rights and prerogatives to perform the ritual. Of course, the newly endowed custodians might still consult their “fathers” know-how just to make sure that they have all the ritual correct, but having conveyed their exclusive rights of performance, they cannot perform the ritual. The members of the recipient age-set are the new custodians, and they also take on all the obligations this involves. Conveyancing of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights is, of course, typically done only within a community and between age-sets that stand in a direct junior-senior “*irakúu* father–*irakúu* son” relation. Being of the same community is important since, as an absolute form of transfer, if the ritual usufruct copyright was conveyed to parties not belonging to the community, the community would lose the benefits that performing this ritual provided when the new custodians returned to their own community.²

As far as the theme of this book is concerned, the second form of custodial ritual usufruct copyright transfer is the most important since I postulate it to be the primary mechanism by which the Mississippianization process itself developed. In this case, it was the transfer of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights between equivalent sodalities of mutually autonomous communities. This might be characterized as a horizontal transfer. As noted above, this also occurred through the medium of a complex Calumet-like ceremony (Bowers

1965, 91-92). Bowers gives a fairly detailed account of an intersodality transfer event that occurred in the 1870s by describing how a junior male age-set from a distant Crow community approached the age-grade equivalent Crazy Dog age-set sodality of a Hidatsa community to negotiate the rights to perform the Grass Dance, a ritual that was under the Crazy Dog custodianship. Following considerable negotiations, including the scheduling, the necessary gifts, and so on, the Crazy Dogs agreed. Bowers particularly pointed out that the Crazy Dogs were most concerned in these negotiations that the Crow age-set not insist that the transfer be conveyancing of the ritual usufruct copyright. Instead, they insisted on a transfer by which they retained the rights to perform the ritual even after these rights were transferred to the Crow age-set. This meant, of course, that in completing the transfer, both sodalities, the Hidatsa Crazy Dogs and the equivalent Crow “crazy dogs,” were now enabled to perform the same ritual within their respective communities. Bowers described it in this way: “The Hidatsa were unwilling to sell in the sense of extinguishing their rights, which would have happened had a ‘father-son’ relationship been established. The Crows, therefore, agreed to a ‘friend-friend’ relationship so that the Hidatsa could *transmit the rite and the information while still holding their own rights*. Then each member of the society selected a friend to whom he supplied a duplicate set of society equipment” (1965, 92, emphasis added).

While Bowers speaks of this “friend-friend” transferring of ritual rights in terms of “buying and selling,” I believe that it is more appropriate to speak of the material exchanges that mediated the transfer as gifting. This is particularly the case because the types of rights and prerogatives that are being transferred are not proprietary but custodial in nature. Furthermore, the exchange event of buying-selling in principle excludes any consideration of the social status of the parties involved (the famous principle of *caveat emptor* makes

this clear). In radical contrast, in the above case, the particular social nature of the parties involved *always* governs these custodial usufruct transfer events. For this horizontal transfer case to occur, it was mandatory that the two autonomous age-set groups from separate communities have *equivalent* standing in their respective communities, and this primarily meant being equivalent in terms of same-age/same-sex or same-age/complementary sex sets (i.e., male and female same-age sets could affiliate). Furthermore, Bowers also noted that the *friend-friend* or, in the equivalent terms I am using here, the *irakúu brother-irakúu brother* transfers constituted alliances between the two equivalent age-sets. Traditionally, they could offer and/or call on one another for assistance unrelated, as such, to the ritual usufruct practice(s) that linked them. Therefore, this was a very important type of alliance construction between sodality components of separate complementary heterarchical communities, and notably, it was between age-sets, rather than between individual persons, at one extreme, or between the total communities, at the other. This clearly indicates that the age-sets were recognized as being relatively autonomous with respect to the clans within the community in that they could ally with equivalent outsider groups independently of intervention by the wider community—although normally a given age-set would consult the wisdom of their own “*irakúu fathers*” on the matter.

Also, very importantly, this horizontal transfer did *not extinguish* the rights of the donor Hidatsa sodality to the custodial ritual usufruct copyright, and therefore, this transfer was distinctly not a form of conveyancing. Unfortunately, Bowers does not use a descriptive term to distinguish it as a separate type of custodial ritual usufruct transfer from conveyancing. Certainly, they were different. The above discussed “*irakúu fathers-irakúu sons*” custodial conveyancing transfer maintained and, in fact, simply reproduced the “*irakúu*

father-*irakúu* son” relation of the two senior and junior age-sets. However, the two equivalent Hidatsa and Crow age-sets were bound together where before they were separate, and their relation was as peers, as “*irakúu* brothers.” That is, the transfer ensured that both parties remained mutualistically autonomous. Since the successful transfer of the copyright left the donors still with their custodianship in place, they could and usually did *repeat* this type of transfer with other equivalent age-set sodalities of other communities. Furthermore, what is even more significant, in my view, is that, in becoming new holders of this custodial ritual usufruct copyright, the Crow age-set also gained the rights to transfer the ritual usufruct copyright to an equivalent age-set of another community, and so on. Both the social fact that the donor age-set retained the custodial copyright, which it could transfer again and again to different external and equivalent age-sets, and as new custodians of the same copyright, the recipient age-set could do so also is very important. This right of repeated transfers distinguishes this type of ritual transfer from the conveyancing transfer—since it entails a “pass-it-on” process that could generate a multidirectional linear linking of intraregional and interregional age-set sodalities constituting a social network mediating a magnetic social field that extended more and more distantly from the community of the source age-set sodality. Therefore, there is, in principle, no social structural constraint that would curtail this distributional consequence. Hence, the practices and the material resources that mediated them could become widespread while the original source of the practices could remain localized. This suggests that the primary factors governing the distribution of a given custodial ritual usufruct copyright would be (1) the local and usually difficult circumstances that a community was facing such that a foreign custodial ritual usufruct copyright of a particular type would be seen by the local age-set as desirable and

beneficial to its community, and by extension to its neighboring regional communities, something worth acquiring, and (2) the reputation of the ritual usufruct as an effective mechanism for rectifying these difficult circumstances. In short, this copyright would act as a magnet attracting the age set(s) of a widespread and expanding set of communities to the source or center of this particular magnetic field of copyright power. Such a social field, of course, is the antithesis of the social field that constitutes a polity. As I noted in chapter 2, the latter is more akin to a gravity well that competes against the powers of gravity of the surrounding polities in order to dominate and use these to its own ends, while the former is akin to selective magnetic fields that are based on centers of attraction, foci that attract groups on the basis of sharing common interests. Hence, a magnetic field is constituted of multiple groups that are discriminatively self-selected (e.g., only the sodalities and not the clans are attracted to acquiring these copyrights, and only they will pursue long-distance relations in order to achieve and enhance their goals).

I think that the term *franchising* may be adequate to characterize this type of horizontal *custodial ritual usufruct copyright* transfer process and that any instance of such a transfer occurring could be termed a *custodial franchising event*. I have added the term *custodial* in order to clearly distinguish this type of franchising from proprietary franchising. These two terminological forms register important differences in the transfer itself, as I specify below. As noted above, in principle, since the initial franchiser retains the custodial ritual usufruct copyright, only practicality and custodial duty limit the number of times this franchiser can transfer the same custodial ritual usufruct copyright to other equivalent and more distant franchisees. But these limits do not establish boundaries in terms of the scope of distribution of the copyright and its sacred bundle since each franchising event endows the franchisees with the same

rights and obligations to franchise the copyright. Furthermore, this distribution is not only an open process of “passing on” (i.e., a process without boundaries), it is a social field that expands through attraction, since it is like a magnetic field that grows its powers of attraction through attracting more and more distant franchisees. However, this also means that its growth and focus hinges on two major factors: (1) The preexistence of a widespread distribution of shared cultural traditions that, while at the ideological level may be formally different, at the deep structural level of cosmology and ethos are equivalent; coupled with (2) common concerns that can be properly addressed only with this type of ritual usufruct copyright. As I have stressed, the nature and areal limits of the social field that was generated by and generated the Mississippianization process was governed by three factors: (1) Its center was magnet-like rather than gravity-like in that its force was focal, based on attraction rather than dominance. (2) It was discriminatory rather than non-discriminatory, attracting only those participants that shared a common social nature rather than indiscriminately “dragging” all types of social groups to its gravity-well center. (3) The scope and strength of the “magnetic” attraction depended on a shared set of common concerns that the often self-selected groups in the widely dispersed communities were equally confronting or being confronted by. In this case, I have postulated the attraction of gaining new ritual copyrights was directly tied to the rising and intensifying levels of pollution in the sacred natural order as perceived by these communities and, furthermore, that these communities also perceived themselves as being partly responsible largely because their own demographic expansion was forcing greater than traditional or normal intensification of their local subsistence and settlement practices.

In general, then, as a holder of a custodial ritual usufruct copyright, part of the responsibility and obligation is for both the donor and the

recipient (i.e., the franchiser and the franchisee) to actively endeavor to “pass on” the custodial ritual usufruct copyright to equivalent parties in other communities. Therefore, in an important sense, not only does this type of custodial franchising make it possible to distribute the ritual and its material media while the franchisers retain their own custodial usufruct copyright, there is a built-in deontic-based (i.e., duty-based) motivational tendency for the franchisers to expand their transferal reach since each recipient age-set sodality takes on the same duty-based reason or motive to franchise the same custodial ritual usufruct copyright to an equivalent age-set sodality of another community that was itself suffering the same local and self-imposed difficulties. Typically, as I noted above, this second-degree recipient age-set (i.e., franchisee) could be even further away from the original age-set sodality franchiser so that, in effect, a “down-the-line” series of franchising events by which a custodial ritual usufruct copyright was repeatedly transferred would occur and, seen from the outside observer’s perspective, probably proliferate in multiple directions.

Archaeologically, of course, the signatures of these chains would be typical “down-the-line” exchange patterning of exotic, ceremonial-like material cultural features, facilities, and artifacts—ceramics, shells, lithics, exotic minerals, and so on—displaying formally similar stylistic motifs manifesting the set of protocols and rules intrinsic to the different copyrights. This is because part of the franchising would entail transferring the custodial material media, the sacred bundles, necessary for the felicitous performances of the rituals or, if not the actual tokens as media, the know-how to produce them, resulting in sacred bundles made up of artifacts displaying these exotic forms but produced from local resources. However, franchising could also occur without continuous chaining since it is always possible, for various reasons, that a given region was circumvented by franchising donors who avoided the complementary heterarchical

communities and the cult sodalities of these regions (e.g., the sodalities of these two regions may have engaged in an ongoing feud over some disagreement about the form of rituals, each viewing the ritual forms of the other as infelicitous and, thereby, diminishing the gains that were supposed to be made in performing them). Finally, it should be noted that each custodial ritual usufruct copyright, as embodied in specific material artifacts constituted as sacred bundles, the latter representing and being the copyright itself, was itself autonomous. That is, a sodality could come to hold several mutually autonomous sacred bundles, each specialized for mediating a specific ritual having a particular sacred aspect of the cosmos as its sacrificial target. Therefore, although each sacred bundle delineated a select magnetic field, specific to its ritual, these bundles proliferated, creating a multiplex magnetic field that became “focalized” in a spatially distributed set of centers, some centers embodying only some of the ritual prerogatives common to the total field, while a few embodied them all. I have referred to these as *first-order, second-order* (etc.) *cult sodality heterarchy centers*. New rituals could emerge to complement old rituals or to replace some of the latter, the argument being that while the old were “good for their time,” expanding stresses or new stresses require an “improved” method, and so on. So each focal cult sodality heterarchy center could have a history of modifying ceremonial packages (i.e., sacred bundles).

Given the central importance that I claim the franchising of custodial ritual usufruct copyright played in bringing about the Mississippianization process, I think it is appropriate to term this above elucidation the *Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model*. Conveyancing is also an important social mechanism, of course. But it is related to reproducing the sodality formation within the community and not to expanding the distribution of this copyright. Therefore, this book will emphasize the franchising form

of custodial ritual usufruct copyright as the social mechanism generating the Mississippianization process. Hence, the model proposes that the Mississippianization of this widely distributed set of Eastern Woodland regions was the outcome of complex multidirectional trajectories of franchising of different, possibly sequentially generated, custodial ritual usufruct copyrights by cult sodalities to equivalent autonomous cult sodalities of communities that were spatially more and more distant from the core franchising source of the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights.

Custodial and Proprietorial Franchising

Now as I noted above, some may find the distinction I made between custodial and proprietorial franchising bottoms out into being no distinction at all since both stress the notion of “exclusivity” of usage. Of course, the two types of franchising can have some formal similarities, particularly in terms of material consequences and multi-directionality. But the substantive differences are striking. Indeed, in my view, the most important is the difference in the nature of the network of relations that these two franchising processes generate. In Euro-American societies, of course, proprietorial franchising is normally a commercial practice governed by contractual laws by which the rights of usage of some specified copyrighted body of intellectual property is conditionally granted by the owner or proprietor (franchiser) to another party (franchisee). The franchiser-franchisee contract typically contains a set of conditions to which both parties are legally bound (i.e., *de jure deontics*). In effect, the franchisee leases or derives strictly monitored and governed usufruct rights from the franchiser, usually first by paying a nonrefundable franchisee “down payment” to express sincerity and commitment, and then by paying a scheduled franchising fee. This agreement constitutes and generates the franchiser–franchisee relation, and this is

structurally parallel to the landlord–tenant relation. Furthermore, the copyright owner (proprietor), the franchiser, retains the right to franchise to as many parties as the owner can contract, subject to various limitations as stipulated in the standard contracts. The franchisee does *not* have this right; although sometimes a franchisee can also contractually receive from the original franchiser the right to subfranchise to other parties within a defined territorial module. These second-degree franchiser–franchisee parties also have to meet specified conditions, such as paying ongoing fees, and the second-degree franchiser typically is likely to be required to pass on a specified proportion of these second-degree franchise fees to the primary or first-degree owner-franchiser. Hence, a rigid *hierarchical* structure emerges that is characterized as being permanent and *dominance-based* in nature, although constrained in application to the parties involved and only in regard to the sphere of action that performing the usufruct practice defines and constitutes.

However, I postulate that this would not be the case for franchising of a custodial ritual usufruct copyright. As noted above, one of the reasons the franchiser transfers the custodial ritual usufruct copyright is to fulfill the custodial responsibility to ensure sharing, continuity, dispersal, and effective practice of the intellectual body of sacred knowledge and know-how. Therefore, actively pursuing franchising is part of the custodial ritual usufruct copyright holder's moral obligations. Importantly, the transfer event entails a form of reciprocal gifting. Significant material exchange occurs since the recipient franchisee must gift the donor franchiser for the custodial usufruct rights, and the latter often must reciprocally gift the franchisee at least the initial ritual objects. That is, the most important material gifts from the franchiser would probably be the items that constitute the primary material media of the ritual usufruct being transferred, the sacred bundle. These would be gifts to the new

franchisees, who would use them for their first, usually public performance of that custodial ritual usufruct. Alternatively, the gift can be in the form of the ritual know-how guided by the franchisers; in which case the requisite material media will be locally produced by the recipients acting as apprentices under the guidance of the franchisers. The initial performance, guided by the latter, would usually count as the completion of the transfer of the custodial ritual usufruct copyright. Also, if the Hidatsa system can be used as the model, if the recipient party is the host, it is obligated to house and feed the donor party as guests for the duration of the franchising transfer event. Since the duration involves a period of intensive apprenticeship, learning all the oral belief knowledge and ideological know-how by which to properly perform the requisite behaviors and constitute them as the intended ritual, including how to produce and treat the material media, this event can be preceded by several months of training. Furthermore, with the completion of the transfer, the new franchisees as host now must also ensure that their guests are given a good send off by loading them with gifts made from local and even more distant regional materials.³ Because the gifting discharges the obligations of the franchisee custodial group to the franchiser custodial group, no controlling or dominance-based type of proprietorial franchiser–franchisee hierarchy emerges. Rather a network of autonomous custodial usufruct franchisers–franchisees emerges. These come to constitute a network of linked mutualistic alliances stretching over space and time. The critical difference, then, between these two types of franchising networks, and what enables us to understand the Mississippianization process, in my view, is that franchising of custodial ritual usufruct copyright generates an *enabling* network that quite easily promotes the performance of ritual and sustains intergroup attraction, the magnetic field effect, and this is in the complete absence of dominance, while franchising of proprietorial

usufruct copyright, of course, entails the formation of a dominance-based hierarchy, thereby maintaining centralized, gravity-well control of intellectual property and the demand-scheduling of a regular flow of income wealth to the owners that its leased usage generates.

This means, of course, that under a custodial regime, the mutualistic cult sodality heterarchical alliance relations are primarily maintained not by coercively imposing fees but by the need of the recipient sodality to replenish the symbolic material media by which the felicity and efficacy of the ritual performances are ensured. For a given franchisee, the source of this material would normally be the initial franchisers and their sodality descendants over the generations. By *sodality descendants* I simply mean that when the primary franchiser custodial age-set matured, they would convey the ritual usufruct copyright to their immediate junior age-set, their “*irakúu* sons,” who would also take over the alliance relation that their “*irakúu* fathers” had entered into with the initial franchisees, who about the same time would also be promoted to the next level in their sodality by conveyancing the same custodial ritual usufruct copyright to their “*irakúu* sons.” Hence, the two spatially distant sodality groups would likely maintain the alliance-by-attraction relation, thereby ensuring the requisite flow of ritual material goods and/or services both ways. This same franchiser-franchisee network would likely mediate innovations to the original forms of rituals as well as introduce to one another new rituals arising from changing conditions within and beyond the initial network, thereby constituting this sequential process of cultural diffusion into an active medium of cultural transformation through attraction. All this, however, may be insufficient to sustain material relations. Later I will postulate and demonstrate that there was another and ongoing resource that all these cult sodality heterarchies needed constantly in order to perform their world renewal rites, and given my elucidation of the Mourning/World

Renewal Mortuary model, this would be the constant procuring of human deceased by which to mediate postmortem human sacrificial offerings that were the primary components of these world renewal rituals. Clearly, expanding the scope of accessibility to this sacred material resource would be a primary motive to both attract, establish, and sustain interheterarchical alliances.

Critical Discussion

David Penney (1989) has also postulated a form of ritual transfer as the primary mechanism of long-distance interaction and exchange, but in this case, he relates it to the Middle Woodland period Hopewell interregional system of interaction and exchange. While transferring ritual copyright is also at the core of his model, our two models differ in significant ways. He uses the term *ritual prerogative* to refer to what I am calling *custodial ritual usufruct copyright*. His *ritual prerogative* is a very apt term since it characterizes the deontic nature of the object of exchange—namely, ritual learning and the exclusive rights of its performance. Therefore I have no problem with it. However, he characterizes the process as a type of individualized transferring of ritual copyrights or prerogatives from master to apprentice, while I focus on the group level, emphasizing transfers between and among equivalent autonomous age-set sodalities. He also highlights the process as being generated by individual sacred power quests or ordeal quests motivated to enhance personal reputation and prestige at the local “home” level of the questor/purchaser. Therefore, an independent agent actively undertakes travels (i.e., vision quests and the like) to learn and “earn” the ritual prerogatives from a shaman and/or a learned person(s) in distant regions, returning home as the *owner* (not a franchisee) of personal ritual prerogatives, and through performing this ritual locally for other individuals and groups, the agent comes to reproduce the exotic materials in his/her homeland.

In order to elucidate this process, Penney also cites Bowers' study of the Hidatsa, and also other historically known peoples. Possibly in harmony with this individualized approach, he also characterizes the process in strongly proprietorial terms, almost as if this was simply a type of market exchange system. "*Ownership* of a medicine pipe bundle offered spiritual powers useful in healing, warfare, and seeking buffalo. The bundles were *purchased* with horses and blankets during an elaborate ritual in which the purchaser learned the songs, rituals and other sacred lore associated with the pipe during an extended period of tutelage. When the training and transfer was complete, the recipient of the pipe bundle received the right to make replicas of the bundle which he could then transfer to others" (1989, 170, emphasis added). "Among the Hidatsa, a Siouan speaking village tribe of the upper Missouri river, men gave sacred pipe stems to their adopted 'sons' or trading partners who belonged to one of the several alien bands that visited Hidatsa villages to trade for corn. Medicine pipes . . . were the focus of a series of sacred bundles that circulated among the Crow, Hidatsa, Blackfeet" (1989, 169-70).

Most importantly, since he clearly models these transfers after the shaman-apprentice conveyancing practice, his characterization of the process is strictly self-limiting. I noted earlier (note 2) that in the practices of many traditional Native North American social worlds, while typically shamans and sacred artisans could convey their knowledge and know-how more than once to separate apprentices, there was a built-in limit of only four or five conveyancing events per shaman/artisan. Whether modeling the widespread distribution of the Middle Woodland Hopewellian assemblage, as Penney does, or the Mississippian assemblage, as I am doing, such a piecemeal mode of transfer would be a poor candidate for causally explaining these widespread extensive and intensive material cultural distributions. Hence, while Penney has recognized that the object

of transfer was ritual prerogatives per se, he has clearly (1) adopted the proprietorial stance, (2) focused on what Hall has argued was a form of the adoptive kinship calumet ceremonialism, (3) emphasized the person-to-person relation that this exchange established (just as Hall did), and (4) postulated a mode of transfer—person-to-person purchase/learning—that would be too restrictive to account for the distribution of these widespread ceremonial assemblages, whether Hopewellian or Mississippian. Indeed, his approach is reductive, largely ignoring any collective dimension, and in fact, it might be worth referring to this as the *entrepreneurial model* of ceremonial assemblages, Mississippian, Swift Creekian, or Hopewellian, as the case might be. Of course, caught up in my proposed franchising of collective custodial ritual usufruct copyrights, there could be “side line” forms of interaction in which sodality members took individual opportunity to pursue personal ritual power, and the like (e.g., spousal exchange, even local shaman-apprentice learning). The two processes are not mutually exclusive. However, with respect to the Mississippianization process, as such, the individualized pursuit would be a secondary, opportunistic, and effectively parasitic sideline consequence of the primary process of collective franchising of custodial ritual usufruct copyright as articulated and postulated by the above Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model.

Symbolic Pragmatics and Material Culture as Warranting Devices

I will pause here to address an important theme that I noted at the end of the previous chapter and that I promised to elucidate in more detail, this being the notion of treating material objects, such as sacred bundles, as *symbolic pragmatic media*. I argued above that a critical part of any transfer of a custodial ritual usufruct copyright is the prerogative (i.e., the rights to make and use the “sacred bundle”),

and the importance of this object is that it is recognized by the franchisers and franchisees alike as an *essential* material medium by which the ritual is felicitously performed. The importance hinges on its meaningful use, and this meaning is not adequately characterized by speaking of meaning in descriptive or referential terms. That is, the meaning of the sacred bundle is not simply the equivalent of what could be uttered in words (e.g., just as the word *dog* refers to or “means” that “scruffy little animal in the corner”), so the item we speak of as a *sacred bundle* is used meaningfully to refer to certain sacred or spiritual powers, and the like. This is the wrong analogy. Rather, I treat the meaning of material culture in *pragmatic* rather than referential terms and would say that generally the meaning of the sacred bundle is the *action or activity* that its use enables the user to perform, and this means that the bundle is a constituent part of the action or activity it mediates. Therefore, the pragmatic meaning of the sacred bundle just is the action/activity it is used to constitute. In short, to understand what I mean by the “meaning of material cultural things” is to understand that all actions are emergent from the behaviors that realize them; and material cultural things are the meaningful media by which this emergence occurs. To make sense of this, it is necessary to rephrase the assertion so as to articulate the action being performed as emergent from the behavior that realizes it. Therefore, I will say that the meaning of the sacred bundle transforms the behaviors that it is used to mediate so that they count as and are the type of social action intended (e.g., a world renewal ritual). It has this pragmatic meaning/capacity because its users both believed it to have the power to transform their behaviors into the particular form of ritual they intended, and they perceived it as having this transformative power. Even if they cannot *see* the power, after all, to them it is immanent and sacred and intangible to ordinary senses, nevertheless in using the material media (e.g., the sacred

bundle), they *know* that the behavior(s) they perform are the rituals they intend and that it is a felicitous ritual in that it brings about the goal intended, even should that goal not be itself perceivable in a direct and immediate sense. This is precisely parallel to my earlier argument that the style of hunting gear has pragmatic meaning in that it constitutes the tracking and killing behavior of the user as the social act of hunting that the user intends and, for this reason, this person is a hunter and not a poacher.

A counterfactual way of putting this is to say that, for the users, in the absence of the real (i.e., authentic) sacred bundle, even if they were to do the behavioral forms of the ritual properly, in their collective and personal understanding their behaviors would not count as and, therefore, would not be the type of social activity intended and desired—for example, a particular world renewal ritual. This is not to say the behavior would have no pragmatic meaning or action nature. Rather, it is probable that if there were some active and culturally knowledgeable persons who were so bold as to do the behavior without using *authentic* material media (i.e., knowingly using facsimiles of sacred bundles, for example), they would know that they were insulting the gods, and hence, they also would know that they were verging on being taken by the gods as merely mimicking a sacred ritual. If the gods were not in good humor, they would count the behavioral event as a provocative action deserving serious penalties against the provocateurs.

I have expressed the same point when speaking of material cultural items as warrants or licences, and of course, again I am speaking in terms of the behavior/action duality. Symbolic pragmatic devices are material things that are used as signs because they bear specific rule-governed form (i.e., style). But they are not used as referential signs. Rather, they are used as conventional expressive signs (i.e., as symbolic devices used to perform actions). As such, they can also be

termed *pragmatic devices* (*pragmatic* meaning “action usage”), and therefore, the form, appearance, and material makeup of the devices are rule governed (i.e., conventional). The conventional nature of the artifacts means that, as signs, they are symbols and their regular use to perform actions means that they are symbolic pragmatic devices, or, to speak figuratively, they are warrants, licences, or action cues by which the behaviors they are used to mediate are constituted as the type of material actions intended—and the users, of course, are constituted as hunters, priests, doctors, or judges, as the case may be.⁴ That is, as warrants, material things are not used referentially to “point to or at” or to designate or “refer to” the actions they mediate. Rather, they are an essential constitutive part of these actions.

This symbolic moment consists of the formal tangible styles that the tools display, and these styles presuppose and exist in virtue of the operating of normative rules, and these entail an authoritative and authorizing social structural context. As noted above, to extend the illustration, take these four action pairs: “hunting↔poaching,” “harvesting↔pilfering,” “storing↔hoarding,” and “cattle round-up↔cattle rustling.” The behavioral components of each contrasting pair require basically equivalent forms of material behaviors and interventions. That is, whatever instrumental behavior is required to successfully hunt is also required to successfully poach. Therefore, these two actions cannot be disambiguated at the objective, observable level. Rather, they are differentiated only at the ideological/deontic level of cultural traditions and social structural relations. It is at this level of interpretive understanding that actions emerge and exist; and, for human communities, these contrasting action forms are real and not simply ephemeral or even epiphenomenal because the deontic context and mediation—intentions and social positions—make the difference. For example, in the above cases, the first of each of the paired actions is usually privileged as an admirable action, and

the agent is treated as doing and performing a commendable activity (e.g., hunting, storing and harvesting—providing food for the kin and/or community), and rounding up cattle (for the ranch); while the second—poaching, pilfering, hoarding, and rustling—is usually treated as a despicable action and can result in severe material sanctions against the perpetrator(s).

What I have tried to show through this pairing of contrasting action terms that, nevertheless, refer to objectively the same behavioral streams is the fundamental importance of style. It constitutes material things as pragmatic symbols. Hence, since our social actions are realized in behavioral processes, whether human agents are fully aware of this or not, they must rely on expressing their *intentions* and *social positions* in the moment of doing their behaviors in order to constitute these behaviors as the types of social actions they intend. Since both intentions and social positions are intangible and abstract but real phenomena existing in the collective understanding and social structure of the community, the most effective manner by which the intentions and social positions of agents are displayed is through the symbols they use in presencing themselves and doing their action. As I noted above, and as I have long argued, in preliterate societies, the stylistic attributes of material culture serve this dual purpose. Hence, the interplay of these two abstract factors—intentions and social positions—as expressed in the material forms of the artifacts, features, and facilities that go to make up the expressive context and media of the behaviors, constitute the action nature of the behaviors so that they are the types of social actions they are intended to be. In these terms, as I also noted above, the style of material culture constitutes it as an expressive conventional sign. Expressive signs are not used to refer or point to but to manifest these intangible intentions and social positions of the users in the very moment of usage. I call this expressive moment of behavior the *symbolic pragmatic moment*.

As I noted above, I have also called it the *warranting moment*. I consider that the relevant meaning of warrants and licences and other authoritative documents as used in literate societies to be pragmatic (i.e., expressive and not referential in conventional meaning). By expanding this notion, I claim that the warranting moment is fundamental to human populations having effortless reflexivity, and of course, this applies as much to preliterate as to literate human language-bearing-and-using communities. Of course, by definition, documentation is absent in preliterate communities. However, the warranting moment is still very much alive and necessary. It is not incidental, therefore, that material cultural style is universal to all known human cultures and, of course, can be identified in deep preliterate and prehistoric time, clearly indexing the existence and manifestation of symbolizing, but a symbolizing that is expressive (i.e., pragmatic, rather than referential in nature). Of course, those who regularly express symbolically would also regularly refer symbolically; that is, material style also presupposes a fully modern linguistic capacity.

However, when archaeologists use the term *pragmatic* with regard to material cultural items, they typically mean to emphasize precisely the “nonstylistic” properties that these things have (i.e., their practical and efficient/functional attributes). And by using the term *pragmatic* in this manner, they mean a sense that is radically contrasted with my “symbolic pragmatic” sense. To be pragmatic is to have practical sense; it is to make and use tools having objectively adequate, material properties that will serve as efficient levers of the efficient causality of the using human agents so as to enable them to achieve their intended material consequences. In this view, efficient form is rational, and for many archaeologists, the symbolic forms that are “added” are largely irrational in that the archaeologist assumes they often diminish the practical efficiency of the object.

Hence, the way the term *pragmatic* is often used in archaeology precisely downplays or subsumes any conventional meaning material cultural items may also have. In fact, typically archaeologists are careful to analytically separate the formal patterning of artifacts and features into the “stylistic” (irrational) and “instrumental” or “functional” (rational) aspects, thereby creating a real dilemma (Sackett 1986). Since the analysis is based on explaining form in instrumental-functional terms, and thereby treating *action* and *behavior* as synonymous terms indexing objects at the same ontological level, this leaves the point of the “style” aspect of things unexplained (i.e., as unrelated to the “action-behavior” for which the “instrumental” form was produced) and, of course, effectively irrational. In my construal, of course, the style–function distinction is a false dichotomy since an action is always an emergent constituted event, and therefore, its formation is always rule-governed. Hence, I use the term *pragmatic* in the way it is used in linguistics—to delineate the conventions (rules) of usage by which the action natures of oral (or signed) behaviors (i.e., speech utterances) are constituted/constructed. Of course, what is studied in linguistics is speech actions, and this means articulating the pragmatic rules of speech, and since all speech is conventional (i.e., symbolic), then in linguistics saying “symbolic pragmatics” is redundant. However, because in archaeology the term *pragmatic* is used by most in a functionalist, asymbolic sense, it seems quite appropriate to be redundant and speak of the meaning of material cultural style as *symbolic pragmatic* in nature. Further, just as linguists recognize that speech acts are symbolically constituted according to pragmatic rules of grammar, so I argue that material behaviors, those behaviors mediated by material culture, are also symbolically (i.e., conventionally) constituted as actions, and in this case, the most important symbols are, in fact, the material items bearing style.

Since many archaeologists are not linguists, it might be very useful to briefly summarize the pragmatics of speech acts, particularly since most archaeologists identify symbolic meaning with referential meaning rather than pragmatic meaning. For example, take the very basic type of speech act that we often make and, indeed, if we could not make it, our social life would indeed be barren: the lowly “promise.” Generically, in pragmatics a promise is a form of *commissive speech act*. It is termed a *commissive* because in uttering its words, it commits the speaker to perform a specific action. The standard way to make a promise in English is for a person to utter the words “I promise to X . . .” In the appropriate in situ conditions, by uttering these words, the speaker expresses the *intention* “to do X” and, simultaneously, expresses and constitutes his/her standing to the hearer, this being that the speaker now stands as a person who has made a promise, and the hearer is the person to whom the promise is made. The speaker is now obliged/committed to that person to perform for her/him the act as promised, and this obligation is constituted by the pragmatic meaning of the word utterance and the in situ conditions as understood by both the speaker and the hearer. Similarly, a *declaration* is often performed by another standard utterance in the appropriate in situ conditions. For example, to perform a marriage, the priest utters the words “I hereby declare you husband and wife,” and so on. Notice the declaration of marriage only works if the priest, the person making it simultaneously in the moment of uttering the words manifests the social position she/he is occupying and the intention to join the couple in nuptial bonds; and in doing this utterance, the declaration is fulfilled and the abstract, intangible but deontically real husband–wife marriage structure is constituted (i.e., it is a structural relation entailing reciprocal rights and duties). That is, both the intention-to-declare-a-marriage *and* the social positions of “priest” and the “bride” and “groom” are

intangible properties and must be manifested expressively not only through the words they utter but also through the in situ tangible conditions, the clothing of the couple, the priest, the church and its contents (e.g., in the chapel of the church, along with the material things worn by the witness-guests, and so on).

I consider that the style of things, governed by conventions, constitutes these things as symbolic pragmatic devices. Therefore, I draw a direct parallel here between the use of pragmatics of speech behavior by which we perform speech actions of various sorts and the use of material symbols, such as sacred bundles, by which a people perform material actions of various sorts. Indeed, I even consider that speech acts are behaviors that require being mediated by material cultural items in order to count as the speech acts so intended. That is, these material cultural things are a necessary part of constituting speech acts themselves as declarations, promises, orders, requests, and so on. As in the above case, the priest does not wear his/her garments in performing the wedding simply in order to be decorative, although some items worn can be simply for esthetic or decorative reasons. But such purpose hardly explains most of the “decorative” materials that we habitually use. That is, esthetics is an insufficient account of style. The religious garments, in the case of the priest, are part of constituting his/her social position, along with the church and chapel, and so on, and all the latter endow his/her declarative utterance with the meaning force that constitutes the type of ritual intended, one that transforms the couple into occupying a new social structure as a married couple. The necessity of material cultural items and features as pragmatic devices to constitute speech actions themselves makes these devices what I call the *sincerity conditions* of the speech actions. I borrow this term, *sincerity conditions*, from Searle, who uses it to refer to the intentional state that must be expressed to constitute an utterance as the type of speech action

intended (Searle 1983, 28, 264). Sincerity conditions constitute the speech actions (and all social actions, even those in which speech is unnecessary) as real rather than pretend actions. For example, to make an assertion, one has to express the relevant belief. The belief is the sincerity condition of the assertion. To make a promise, one must express the intention-to-act (e.g., “I promise (intend) to do X”). The intention is the sincerity condition of the promise. To give an order, the speaker must express the desire or duty he/she wants fulfilled, and so on. I treat material cultural items bearing style as sincerity conditions of the speech as well as nonspeech acts of those legitimately using the items. Hence, to be a judge, the person must dress in the appropriate formal clothing to constitute him/her as a judge and occupy a room displaying the appropriate formal patterning and material content that are necessary for such a room to be seen and thereby constituted as a courtroom. Therefore, when the person utters the words “I hereby find you guilty as charged and order you to be imprisoned (and so on),” this utterance counts as and is a judgment, and the speaker has made a real difference in the social world of the person so charged, transforming that person into a prisoner and a criminal in that world—*unless* it turns out that this setting is part of a (literal) theatrical production. If this is the case, even though all the appropriate formal materials may be in place, and even though the words uttered by the actor may be identical to those uttered by a former or real judge in a real courtroom, this is a pretend courtroom event. Hence, while it is necessary that speakers have full competency in the syntactical rules of their language, it is not sufficient. That is, speech acts are not self-constitutive, as such. They entail their own sincerity conditions that are autonomous material things displaying appropriate forms. The speech competency of the judge, for example, is an enabling power. Without this power, a person could not utter a judgment, but there is a symbolic power

that transcends the individual's competence, this being things that manifest the action powers of the total community. The real courtroom is the expressive medium by which the authority of the society is manifested and presenced, and this endows the person occupying the judicial position of judge with the transformative power to constitute declarative judgments, thereby transforming another person into being a criminal and ordering that this criminal be imprisoned. By saying this, I pick up and complete my earlier point in the closing of the previous chapter—namely, human agents use material cultural things as symbolic pragmatic devices (i.e., as conventional signs); and these constitute the sincerity conditions by which the users express their relevant *intentions and social positions*, and in doing so transform their intentional behaviors to count as the types of social actions intended (e.g., rituals of various sorts).

Discussion

I believe it is safe to say this is not the typical way that archaeology has addressed the symbolic meaning of material culture. Rather than thinking of the meaning of things in symbolic pragmatic terms, which also means in expressive terms, the meaning that is emphasized is the referential meaning. That is, material symbolic meaning is typically treated as simply another way of referring to what these material symbols represent, much like the word *God* is used in a sentence to refer to the entity <God>. This tendency by archaeologists to be oblivious to the conventional symbolic pragmatic meaning of material things and reduce its meaning to reference is what I call the *referential fallacy*. I consider it to be a serious error; and I think it arises from identifying word meaning with reference, as if all we do in using words in speaking is to refer to things that exist independently of our words. This assumption is at the base of what Taylor critically refers to as the designative theory of meaning (i.e., the

meaning of a word is treated as the object or referent that the word is conventionally used to designate or point to) (Taylor 1985, Chapters 9 and 10). Hence, the meaning of a speech utterance becomes simply the complex set of objects or processes or states of affairs that the words are used to refer to or designate. While referential meaning is certainly a valid part of language meaning, it is not validly applied to material cultural style meaning; therefore, this reductive usage is precisely what I want to avoid (Byers 2006a, 34-39; 2004, 62-76; 1999, 270-72; Searle 1983, 1995, 2010).

It might be useful now to return to the custodial ritual usufruct copyright franchising event for a moment and interpret it in expressive pragmatic terms. In this case, I am claiming that—to the parties involved—the material artifacts that are given and/or constructed as part of the custodial franchising event and by which to effect the transfer of the ritual usufruct copyright are critical ritual warrants (i.e., symbolic pragmatic devices). As I noted above, if the franchisee performed the behavioral patterns as specified by the ritual usufruct rules and protocols but without the mediation of the appropriate warrants (i.e., the sacred bundles), their forms, make up, process of production, etc., also being specified by the protocols of the copyright, these behaviors would not be constituted as felicitous ritual performative acts of the types intended. Therefore, these artifacts are not merely an add-on decorative part of the behavioral form of the actor but a deontic constituent of the intended ritual itself. Furthermore, since the production of these artifacts is no less rule-governed than is their use, the actual *chaîne opératoire* that produces the artifacts (or that is used to procure them if they cannot be locally produced) is also characterized as ritual; and it is necessary to follow its forms in order for the users/producers to experience endowing the artifacts they are producing with the warranting power to transform the behaviors these artifacts are subsequently used to mediate so that

these behaviors count as and are the ritual performances that the agents intended.

Critically important in this regard is that, as I noted above, typically the users of these material cultural symbols treat them as participating in the properties of the entities that they represent. This is how I define an *icon*—namely, as an artifact, feature, or facility that is taken by the users to *participate in the essential nature (power) of that which it represents*. I am aware that the standard definition of an icon is a sign that formally resembles in some respect what it represents. But this is a referential definition, and I am taking a strong expressive perspective. So I am also adding to this definition by claiming that the “resemblance” is interpreted by the users of the object as the object’s actually participating in the powers of the entity that it “resembles,” thereby endowing the legitimate user or users with these pragmatic powers to transform his/her/their behavioral processes into the types of ritual actions intended. Of course, in objective terms, treating a material item as an icon defined in this way is a form of reification, endowing an object with properties that it does not objectively have. However, the users take the expressive iconic sign to have a real and essential transformative property. For example, the bison skull that was placed in the skull circle near the altar scaffold likely was taken by them to participate in the powers of the spirit guardian of the bison.

In sum, the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model postulates that franchising and/or conveyancing of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights both among and within cult sodalities characterizes the major process that brought about and sustained the distribution of the Mississippian assemblage identified with Cahokia and the American Bottom. However, the operation of this mechanism as illustrated by the traditional Plains Indian age-set system is not sufficient to elucidate the complete Mississippianization

process since, of course, the Hidatsa ethnology clearly indicates that at the time of their interaction with Euro-American groups their communities were in what I have termed the *integrated settlement articulation modal posture* and, despite the practice of custodial franchising, there is no indication of the existence and distribution of a material cultural assemblage of the type that we define as Mississippian, either in terms of formal appearance or in terms of the monumental nature of Mississippian sites. This suggests that the particular social structural nature of the sodality must be added to the above ritual usufruct transferring mechanisms since, in my view, this type of social structure was among the *necessary* conditions that made the unfolding of the Mississippianization process possible. I have already noted this social structural condition, referring to it as the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. I now turn to a fuller elucidation of this organizational type and how it served as the primary component in generating the Mississippianization process, as well as reviewing and further elucidating the conditions that would have promoted its emergence and development.

The Ecclesiastic-Communal Cult Sodality

Given the magnitude of labor involved in the formation of a major Mississippian site, as well as the labor costs of transporting over significantly long distances the exotic materials used to produce the symbolic pragmatic media, it would seem that custodial franchising done in a one-on-one engagement between age-sets of companions would be inadequate. In the above Crow-Hidatsa example, possibly no more than about ten to fifteen or twenty young men from each community were directly involved. This number, of course, is a function of the individual age-sets and the overall numbers of people in a community. Each age-set is constituted of all of those persons of the same gender in the community who are of the same median age,

$\pm 1-3$ years, and who voluntarily participate in the age-set system. Three to (possibly) five sequential age-sets would make up an age-grade, about a 20-25 year span—a generation. There are normally two active age-grade generations, the junior age-grade incorporating mostly the bachelors and younger married persons whose own offspring are still infants and young children, and the senior age-grade of mature family persons. This leaves the preadult “subgeneration” and the “retirees” constituting the “subgeneration” of elders. Therefore, the junior and senior adult generations would constitute the major active age-grades of three to five age-sets each that were internally ranked by relative age seniority. In a community of 200, allowing for preadults and elders, possibly 70 males would make up the junior and senior age-grades, and this would be roughly divided 40 and 30, respectively. This means that the three to five age-sets of the junior age-grade would consist of only eight to twelve males each. The three to five age-sets of the senior age-grade would consist of only six to ten each, and this is probably an overestimate for the more senior age-sets, given their age.

The Mississippian system, I argue, presupposes the integration of the junior and senior age-grades of a complementary heterarchical community into a single sodality based on linking the two junior and senior age-grades of about 70 active males, while maintaining the relative autonomy of both age-grades and of the several age-sets that make up each. There could also be auxiliary preadult age-sets as “cadets-in-waiting,” and a small set of elders who would serve in the sodality in special capacities of various sorts (e.g., as priestly clergy). As I noted in Chapter 3, an enabling hierarchy is a ranked ordering of autonomous agents or groups, and the ranking is according to some core principle, such as seniority. Since these groups are autonomous, then each age-set is responsible for the sphere of activity traditionally “belonging” to the group ranked at that level in the hierarchy.

Hence, just as each Hidatsa age-set is identified with a range of different tasks and rituals particular to its rank in the age-grade system, so this would be the case for each age-set in the integrated junior/senior age-grade sodality, and since all the components are autonomous, governance would be by sodality-wide consensus. However, added to this structure is the fact that the sodality would be specialized, and given the Mississippian system, I have postulated that this would be a religious specialization. Therefore, I have added the term *cult* to characterize it, constituting it as a complex integrated world renewal cult sodality.

To clarify all this, I find A. F. C. Wallace's theory of religion very useful because its focus is on the organizational aspect of religious belief and practice (Wallace 1966, 84-88; 91-96). In the terms he develops, the religious organization of a community consists of the primary set of religious components that make it up, and he calls these components *cults*. For traditional Native American communities, therefore, since agentive autonomy is central, these components would consist of (1) the individual person as an autonomous agent, (2) the kin groups, and (3) the companionate peer groups in which the individual regularly participates. In Wallace's theory, the religious dimension of these preindustrial communities is a property embedded in these autonomous agents and the autonomous groups they constitute. Thus, an individual person is taken to embody a religious property that is reified and is taken to be part of the sacred powers that it represents. Therefore, the individual takes himself to be in partnership with one or more spirit guardians. Wallace classes this one-to-one structural relation as an individualistic cult organization, and its primary cultic practice would be ordeal questing in which the individual first acts so as to achieve a substantive relation with a powerful spiritual force, his/her guardian spirit, and then, subsequently, regularly goes into seclusion in order to invoke and

interact with this guardian. This usually involves personal sacrifices through self-induced ordeals. Indeed, Wallace elaborates on this individualist cult premise to postulate a shamanistic cult. Shamans are autonomous individuals in a community who are “super” individuals in that they have especially potent spirit companions and, for this reason, have access to particularly potent sacred powers. The shaman, male or female, typically is called upon by others in the community to exercise his/her specialized potency, in which case he/she works with an individual client or a group of clients and constitutes this gathering as a *shamanic séance*, which is the typical but not the only religious posture of the shamanic cult.

Both clans and sodalities also have religious dimensions, constituting what he calls communal cults, kinship-based and companionship-based respectively. For example, to perform mourning rituals, a clan will move into its religious posture, constituting what Wallace refers to as a kinship-based *communal cult*. Similarly, when an age-set goes into its religious posture, it constitutes a companionship-based or sodality communal cult. Hence, under the proper circumstances the Hidatsa kinship-based clans and companionship-based sodalities could transform themselves into communal cults, clan and sodality types, respectively. To do so, they simply shifted into this religious posture by gathering together in the appropriate place and time and dressed in their warranting religious gear in order to perform a ritual of the type characteristically performed by one or the other type of communal cult. Thus, Wallace’s conceptualization of the religion of a community includes the simplest form of cult in its two types (i.e., the individualistic cult and the shamanic cult), as well as the next more complex form, the communal cult in its two forms, the clan and sodality types. All four—individualistic, shamanic, sodality communal cult and kinship communal cult—are situational in nature; that is, all are “temporary” or situation-dependent cultic

formations in that these are simply the time-space dependent religious postures given the social nature of the individuals/groups involved and their usually immediate circumstances.

But his theory also recognizes an autonomous, non-situation-dependent cult type that has its *raison d'être* as an institutionalized or "permanent" religious group. That is, it exists not simply as a religious posture of a particular type of "secular" social group, but as an autonomous religious congregation in its own right. He terms this an *ecclesiastical cult*, and he argues that a complex society, such as a state or chiefdom, is the social context that is necessary for the existence of the ecclesiastical cult type. This is basically an autonomous religious congregation having its own corporate identity. The key attribute of a congregation as a religious corporate organization is that it is structured into clergy and laity sectors. These sectors are internally related in that they exist as contrasting components incorporating *complementary* and often mutually exclusive rights and duties specific to each. Hence, a member of the clergy is a "priest" (there are usually various types), and as such, the clergy possesses rights and duties, and these constitute socioreligious powers that a lay person does not have, and vice versa. In other words, the two social positional categories—laity and clergy—cannot exist independently of each other but are internally related and mutually constitutive. Because a congregation is based on the laity/clergy relation, each sector generates its own leadership structure, and according to Wallace, the particular nature of the relations between these two structural components of a congregation characterize different types of ecclesiastical cults. Using Euro-American religious terminology and its explicit structural ordering, Wallace argues that when the affairs and practices of an ecclesiastical cult congregation are dominated by the clergy leadership, it constitutes what he terms an *episcopalian cult* (i.e., rule by "bishops"). When laity and clergy leadership powers are

relatively balanced, it constitutes what he terms a *presbyterian cult*. When the laity leadership prevails in the affairs and practices, it constitutes a *congregationalist cult*. All three types are ecclesiastical cults since they are constituted by the laity/clergy structure, but they differ primarily in terms of the normal balance or imbalance of deontic dominance-based power relations between the leadership structures of these two sectors.

In contrast, since a communal cult is simply the religious posture of a sodality or a clan, the group leaders simply take on the religious leadership positions often signaled and warranted by literally putting on their religious paraphernalia or regalia (symbolic pragmatic devices). When the group shifts out of its religious posture, the leaders take off their regalia and wear another set appropriate to the moment (e.g., as war leaders of the sodality in its warrior society posture). To serve specialized ritual needs that the sodality would have when in its cult posture, Wallace notes that the sodality usually invites specialists, such as one or more shamans, or a specialized sacred dance sodality or sacred singer sodality, and so on, to exercise his/her/their special skills, and of course, these practicing guest religious specialists are lavishly gifted by the sodality or clan for services rendered. These autonomous religious specialists, who also constitute Wallace's shamanic or artisanal or dance cult type, as noted above, have no authority as such in the sodality or clan and when his/her/their services were completed, the gifting would discharge the sodality's and/or the clan's obligations to them.

Using this complex of four cult categories, individualistic, shamanic, communal (clan and sodality), and ecclesiastical, along with the different ecclesiastical subtypes—episcopalian, presbyterian, and congregationalist, Wallace defines the religion of a community as the scalar combination of the different cultic types that actually exist. Since his is a social theory of religion, he postulates that there is no

individualistic religion because there is no community with only individualist cults. Rather, the simplest community has a dualistic religious organization by combining individualistic and shamanic cults, and this constitutes what he calls a *shamanic religion*. It would correlate with the simplest type of society, sometimes referred to as a band society. Typically such a society is based on extensive foraging, and this means that every autonomous individual would have at least one spirit guardian, and of course, some would be particularly favored in this regard and be recognized as shamans. A tribal or simple chiefdom-type society includes individualistic and shamanic cults, of course, but also communal cults in the form of the religious postures of the basic social components, kin groups of different orders (e.g., clans, clan-segments, extended families, and companionate groups, i.e., sodalities, artisanal groups, even shamanic “colleges”) thereby generating a *communalistic religion*. While the most complex societies, such as paramount chiefdoms and states, also have the typical individualistic, shamanic, and communal cults, what makes them unique religiously is that they also have ecclesiastical cults as permanently organized congregations. With this rich combination of cult types, therefore, the complex chiefdom and/or state constitutes what he terms an *olympian* or *monotheistic religion*. Distinguishing between these two types hinges on whether the cosmologies of the ecclesiastical cults incorporate multiple gods (i.e., olympian religion) or a single god or a single sacred transcendent power, even if it may be manifest in multiple sacred aspects (i.e., monotheistic religion).

Clearly, for Wallace the major religious developmental step, indeed, the *evolutionary watershed* in religious social organization, is the emergence of the ecclesiastical cult type since this is itself structurally complex and always requires a complex society as its context. And this view also reveals a strong evolutionary as well as Euro-American cultural bias to his theory since underwriting and

presupposed by his theory is the assumption that, despite his recognition of their sodality-based communal cults, tribal and even simple chiefdom communities are fundamentally characterized by kinship as the primary structural axis with companionship, if it emerges, subsumed to the needs of this kinship-based community. Also implicated in his perspective is the premise of exclusive territorialism. Therefore, his implicit social model corresponds to the monistic modular polity view, egalitarian if it is simple (i.e., a band or tribal community, or hierarchical and nonegalitarian if the community is a complex chiefdom or a state). Only in the latter, not the former, are there ecclesiastical cult congregations. Hence, under Wallace's theory, not only does the Hidatsa community embody a communalistic religious order with subsumed sodalities, as long as it retains "egalitarian" kinship groups as its primary social components, it remains a tribal society and *cannot* develop ecclesiastical cults because there is no possibility for an autonomous congregation to emerge prior to the formation of a dominance-based hierarchical polity (i.e., at least a complex chiefdom).

I have made it abundantly clear that, when applied to traditional Native North American communities, I consider the monistic modular polity view to be a serious mischaracterization of these communities, whether "egalitarian" (tribal or band) or "nonegalitarian" (chiefdom). Instead, these are more adequately treated as complementary heterarchical communities based on the dual kinship/companionship structure, and this means that the core components of the community are relatively autonomous. This is possible, of course, only because of the unimpeded expression of the core ethos principle of agentive autonomy. Agentive autonomy—when unimpeded in its expression—generates the emergence of relatively autonomous kinship-based and companionship-based social groupings. Hence, while I accept Wallace's view as applicable to complementary heterarchical

communities (i.e., in many cases, these communities are characterized by the whole array of situation-dependent cultic formations, i.e., individualistic, shamanic, and communal cult postures), under certain conditions, these communities *can* generate ecclesiastic-type cult organizations (i.e., permanent congregations), by the sodalities of a community becoming self-integrated into internally structured autonomous groups based on the clergy/laity structure (i.e., congregations). I consider that a key condition enabling this emergence would be the formation of a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, and the type of congregation that would emerge is what I have called the *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality* congregation (Byers 2006a, 124-28; 2004, 274-78). This congregation combines core aspects of both the sodality-based communal and the ecclesiastical cult types. This means that it constitutes an autonomous congregation whose primary *raison d'être* would be to perform practices that have an essentially religious nature and purpose. For this book, I have postulated that these sodalities and their practices were structured around a central religious ritual theme, which I have termed *world renewal*. Of course, other forms of ritual would also be performed by complementary heterarchical communities, many of these being carried out by the sodality, clan, and shamanic communal cults. Hence, rituals of a non-world renewal nature would also be performed by the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities. But these would be of secondary importance in this context and would be assessed and made intelligible by the way their being performed enhanced the ongoing achievement of the primary world renewal ritual goals of the congregation. Furthermore, since the age-sets retained their agentive autonomy within the congregation, they could quite independently take on a communal cult posture, for example, shifting into a military posture to go on the war path on behalf of their communities to exact vengeance against another distant community for some harm it did against one of its own communities.

Just as the key attribute of Wallace's ecclesiastical cult was the laity/clergy structure, so this structure would be central to the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. There would be regular members (i.e., laity), those without any special religious training or sacred powers, and there would be the clergy consisting of one or more priests, who possibly were also shamans "on the side," with apprentices. That is, just as the age-sets retained their autonomy and could independently move into a religious posture as a communal cult to perform rites unrelated to the congregation to which it also belonged, there is no reason that the priests could not also occupy shamanic positions in their communities, and therefore, they could also act as shamans conducting séances for both individuals and clan members of the local community, when the latter called upon them for their religious expertise. Now, in complementary terms, one of the signs of the emergence of an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality would be the recognition that the shamans, who were previously generally "contracted" to assist the traditional communal cult sodality rituals, were no longer expecting to be invited but simply took for granted that they were part of the governance and procedure by which the ritual was planned and performed. By the time this occurred, the laity would already be internally organized into junior/senior age-grades, and each of these would be further structured internally by seniority into ranked age-sets. Effectively, the laity would be organized into a complexly structured enabling hierarchy, and the total congregation would be structured as a *complementary heterarchy* of laity and clergy, and therefore, overall governance of the sodality would be by consensus.⁵ As with Wallace's ecclesiastical cults, the clergy and laity leadership might well compete for overall influence in the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality, thereby generating a range of subtypes possibly akin to Wallace's congregationalist, presbyterian, and episcopalian ecclesiastical cults. However, because of

the necessity of consensual governance, these different cults would likely never emerge as dominance-based hierarchical structures in which senior laity dominated junior laity and/or clergy dominated laity.

Space and length preclude my outlining how the set of differentially ranked autonomous age-set sodalities of a community such as those among the historic Hidatsa could transform into the complex hierarchical organization of an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. However, under emerging conditions that I postulate below, I think the transformation could occur rather easily, and elsewhere I have outlined this process in some detail using the Hidatsa and Shawnee as my analogical cases (Byers 2011, 136-41, 187-96). Using the Hidatsa terminology in the following as generic, I argued that a terminological innovation would likely occur by the age-set and shaman participants starting to speak about and address each other in terms that might roughly be expressed as *irakúu*-shaman (i.e., priest) and *irakúu*-quester (i.e., lay members). Terminological innovation would be important in order to articulate and make specific the mutually reciprocal rights and obligations that these new positions held. In the cult sodality context, the shaman would be an “*irakúu*-shaman” or, in English terminology, this would come to mean a “priest” as distinct from a “shaman.” When the same person was in the community context performing a shamanic séance, of course, he/she would be simply addressed as “shaman.”

These complex ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities would also probably be gender specific. Therefore, a community might have two complementary ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, one female-based and the other male-based. Both of these would have world renewal rituals as primary performative activities, and in fact, as I suggested in my brief discussion of the ceremonial cult nodal sites of the American Bottom in Chapter 2, they would probably cooperate

in joint rituals, the female-based ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality representing and invoking the cosmic powers of sacred female fecundity and the male-based ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality representing and invoking the cosmic powers of sacred male fertility (Byers 2006a, 287-89).

Outlining the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Copyright Franchising Process

It is this complex and autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality congregational organization, of course, that I postulated earlier as being the basic component of the Mississippian period social organization of Cahokia and the American Bottom. I have postulated that it was the “progressive,” bottom-up affiliations of these basic organizations that would have maximized in generating the great Central Precinct of Cahokia as embodying a fourth-order or possibly fifth-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy incorporating the third-order heterarchy constituted by the twelve or so major second-order heterarchies that encircled the Central Precinct, as well as the greater and lesser second-order heterarchies of East St. Louis, St. Louis, Pulcher, and Mitchell, as described earlier. These in turn, moving “down-stream,” would have been constituted of affiliations of first-order autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchies which would in turn be alliances of several autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of the set of complementary heterarchical communities making up the local or subsectors of the valley, as well of the surrounding uplands. Despite this complex fourth-order superstructure, it is the autonomous cult sodality that would undertake the type of franchising of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights that I have articulated under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model—although typically having consulted with their peers in the cult sodality heterarchies

to which each belonged. To be more specific, the individual age-set custodians of a given ritual usufruct of a particular cult sodality, possibly in cooperation with other equivalent age-set custodians of the same ritual usufruct in the cult sodality heterarchy, would be the particular grouping that would make up the custodial franchising expedition that volunteered to travel to distant communities to engage in a particular franchising event as the franchisers to the hosting cult sodality franchisees-to-be in this distant region.

Assume for the moment that the complementary heterarchical communities of the host region where the initial recipient custodial franchising event was to occur were in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture. In this condition, the age-set sodalities of each community of the region would not yet be structured into the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality congregational form. According to circumstances, the individual age-sets would shift into the religious posture, thereby constituting themselves individually as sodality communal cults for the period required to perform their ritual. Of course, several age-set sodalities of the same community, related by seniority, might consensually agree to collectively shift into a religious posture, possibly to cooperate in order to perform a complex suite of rituals. As such, they would constitute a compound sodality communal cult organizational posture that would dissolve when the custodial franchising of rituals was completed. Given the above local social structural arrangements, I postulate that probably the most important effect regionally that this initial custodial franchising event would have would be to instigate a sequence of intraregional pass-it-on custodial franchising transfers that would simultaneously instigate a process of structural integration of the age-set sodalities of the individual communities of the local region by which they transformed themselves into autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality congregations. By the sodalities of each community

emerging into this social formation, they would also promote and bring about the tangible (i.e., empirically observable) bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture across the regional landscape. These two trajectories would be causally related. I detail the causal dynamics of this process below.

In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, I characterized the bifurcated posture as the result of the spatial disengaging of the clans and sodalities of a given integrated community such that the domestic clan-based components of the regional communities (i.e., the family habitation units) dispersed themselves across the local landscape while, simultaneously, the autonomous sodality age-sets of each autonomous complementary heterarchical community in the local region would socially integrate into an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality and collectively build a locale consisting of one or two public structures displaying patterning relevant to the two major cult sodality sectors, junior/senior age-grades and the clergy, along with a small plaza for ritual performances, and so on. In my earlier brief outline of the Mississippianization of the American Bottom, I referred to these as the ceremonial nodal locales of the autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of the region. The ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of a zone with their individual ceremonial nodal locales would in turn ally among themselves and cooperatively construct a larger common aggregation locale forming (usually) a single platform mound-and-plaza complex. This would constitute what I referred to earlier as a *first-order mutualistic ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy*.

However, given that initially the communities of this recipient region were in the integrated settlement articulation modal phase, it is clear that the initial franchising event would be between the visiting age-set of a distant ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality and a local sodality having an equivalent age-set standing as that of the

visitors. Therefore, I suggest that none of the above region-wide process leading to the bifurcated settlement articulation model posture would likely be a result of specific prescriptions and protocols tied into the custodial ritual usufruct copyright being franchised. That is, none of these copyrights would include prescriptions specifying spatial disengagement as part of the obligations of the ritual usufruct. Rather, they would only include symbolic pragmatic protocols specifying material contexts and media that were required for the proper and felicitous performance of these rituals. Therefore, the shift to a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation model posture would emerge as an unanticipated result of the initial custodial franchising event. I postulate that it would likely be the activity of the individual age-set cult sodality that became the custodial franchisee of this new ritual that generated the trajectory leading to this shift in settlement posture. This sodality would quite quickly come to recognize that its own labor capacity was quickly becoming stretched and inadequate to fulfill the material symbolic pragmatic demands of the newly received ritual practices. Hence, I postulate that the commitment to perform this introduced ritual usufruct practice generated a larger performative burden than originally expected, and promoted the age-set to turn to its senior and junior age-sets for assistance. This eliciting of assistance would also likely promote further custodial franchising events emerging as these more senior and junior age-sets also invited custodial franchisers, possibly from the same source region. Very shortly, these age-sets would find cooperative interaction becoming common and desirable as the exercising of these different autonomous ritual usufruct copyrights became enhanced through continual strategic planning among the age-sets. The emergence of a formal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality congregation would occur without necessarily anyone planning it, although no doubt, the fact that the series of custodial franchisers were themselves

autonomous components of ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities would lend itself to emulation among the set of custodial franchisees. In parallel with this integrative process occurring among the age-sets of the initial recipient complementary heterarchical community, a process that would have had its effect in promoting the kin households to initiate their dispersal across the land that the community habitually exploited, the different age-sets would promote performing custodial franchising events in neighboring communities, probably as part of their obligation to “pass-on” this new ritual or ritual suite; and this would also lead to a repetition of the process described above. Hence, quite quickly the set of sodalities of the total set of complementary heterarchical communities of the region would have transformed into ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, each with its own ceremonial nodal locale and the community’s dispersed farmsteads. And this set of sodalities would also likely affiliate to form a first-order heterarchy, and so on, thereby rapidly generating a bifurcated settlement articulation posture across the region.

Mapping the Process

Mapping out a franchising trajectory necessarily starts from the social group acting as the “original” source of the custodial copyright—relative to the region that was being affected. I will term the primary donor sodality of the initial ritual usufruct copyright as the *primary franchiser*, and the initial recipient group in the target region I will term the *primary franchisee*. Since the latter party is encouraged by the deontics instigated by becoming custodians of the new ritual usufruct to pass on this as a coherent body of know-how and ideological practice, when it does so, it will stand as the secondary franchiser to all those equivalent parties in neighboring communities to which it directly franchises the custodial ritual usufruct copyright, and they will stand as secondary franchisees to it. As I noted

above, it is very likely that the franchiser–franchisee events will feed the franchising process since some, and possibly most, of the secondary franchisees in a region will be eager to become secondary franchisers by announcing to the equivalent age-set sodalities of the more distant neighboring communities that they hold the particular custodial ritual usufruct copyright, particularly if the primary franchiser from which the secondary franchisers gained their copyright is known to be participating in a major and highly reputable cult sodality heterarchy located in a distant and exotic place, such as Cahokia in the American Bottom. The historical sequential and spatially radiating series of franchising events, then, would likely become the basis for ranking the series of franchisees in the zone as primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. Furthermore, part of this radiating sequence of custodial franchising events by which the Mississippianization process unfolded in a region would likely always include a franchiser group narrating how, from whom, and when it first received its custodial ritual usufruct copyright (e.g., directly from the extraregional primary franchiser or from the intraregional secondary franchiser, and so on). This would enable each new custodial franchisee to rank its position in accordance with the historical sequence of transfer events as secondary, tertiary, quaternary franchisees. This widespread identification of the custodial franchising steps would enable a rank-order to be established whenever cult sodalities interacted, and particularly when they allied into a first-order and these into a second-order heterarchy. However, this ranking *would not translate* into dominance since, of course, agentive autonomy and consensual governance would prevail. Therefore, it would generate an etiquette establishing priority in discussions, planning, and other collective activities. It would also enable different groups to understand why some may deviate from the copyright template by warranting recognition that local traditions may require modifying the content of the ritual usufruct copyright being franchised.

Cult Sodality-Unit Intrusive Occupation

Importantly, all this enables the archaeologist to assess sites and their contents in these terms, as being sites of primary, secondary, or tertiary franchising events relative to the archaeologically recognized primary franchiser of a given custodial ritual usufruct copyright. This assessment of the sites would then be labeled as first-degree, second-degree, or third-degree custodial franchising sites, with the site of the extraregional primary franchiser group being the zero-degree or simply the primary source site. In the Mississippianization scheme that I am developing, seen in global terms, this primary or zero-degree franchiser source would be Cahokia and the American Bottom region. At the same time, it would also enable analytically moving further back in time and space to link up to the deeper historical traditions from which the American Bottom Mississippian material cultural assemblage may have emerged.

The traditional method to account for the archaeological assemblage in terms of interregional interaction is to explain it in two interrelated ways: (1) long distance person-to-person interaction of different sorts, and (2) group migration. Typically, it is assumed that the signature of the former is the trait-unit intrusive site, possibly marking the long-distance Calumet-mediated adoptive-kinship alliance construction discussed by Hall (1991). The latter is the site-unit intrusive site, marking some type of immigration of a foreign community or sector thereof. However, the trait-unit/site-unit contrast presupposes a monistic modular polity view, and this view largely constrains us to these two possibilities (Tiffany 1991). This is because the monistic or unitary view of communities logically constrains the possible ways that long-distance interaction can occur: either through the medium of individuals interrelating over long distances; for example, by using the kinship-adoption method, as Hall postulates, or as individual ritual prerogative transfers, as Penny (1989)

has argued, or through the migration of a community, or a part of a community that has separated itself from the larger community of origin such that it is a structural clone of the latter.⁶ Each mode also largely correlates with the nature of the relations linking the two communities. Long-distance interaction mediated by adoptive kinship implicates friendly relations characterized initially as economic, religious, and social exchange, and only derivatively as political; migration implicates the reverse weighting of relations, political being paramount and economic, religious, and social being derivative.

I think that the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model makes problematic the scope and relevance of this exchange-based/migration-based distinction; and this is because the notion of long-distance collective franchising of custodial ritual usufruct presupposes the cult sodality heterarchy notion and the notion that its social field was akin to a magnetic field in which attraction rather than dominance and subordination was the primary tendency. Having complementary heterarchical communities offers a third way of interpreting the distribution of exotic material cultural components. In particular, when the region that serves as the source of the exotics is in a bifurcated posture (i.e., the American Bottom), the primary thrust of the interregional interaction is postulated to be mediated by the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities from this source region being attracted to neighboring regions, and vice versa. The age-set or the set of age-sets of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality visiting from this distant region can even take up temporary residence with the hosts. This is actually part of requirement for the performance of the franchising event since extensive instructions on the ritual know-how, belief, and material production for the ritual are required, and of course, regular revisits will generate significant amounts of exotic material. In fact, the initial transfer would likely generate a site that could easily be mistaken as a site-unit intrusion

(i.e., as the result of a migration of a foreign community) because the material assemblage would be rich in both actual artifacts that were brought by the visitors as part of the sacred media of the ritual that is going to be franchised, as well as locally produced follow-up replicas of these exotics. And of course, even some of the major features (e.g., wall-trench structures, low platform mounds, plazas) would have been built in conformity with the stipulations given by the visiting custodial franchisers of what would count as critical symbolic pragmatic media of the ritual. All this, however, would mark not a site-unit or migrant community intrusion but a *cult sodality unit intrusion*. The franchisers, of course, would be *temporary visitors or transients*, and therefore, strictly speaking the materially marked intrusion can be quite adequately characterized as the diffusion of a culturally specialized complex through the mediation of a “transient migration” or visitation and not the consequence of permanent migration of sedentary people.

I postulate that the nature of the cult sodality unit intrusion as marked by a custodial franchising event would modify sites in relation to (1) the distance these sites were from the source locale from which the initial custodial franchising expedition came, and (2) whether this was a primary, a secondary, or a tertiary (etc.) custodial franchising event. As noted above, the primary custodial franchising event was performed by the primary custodian (e.g., directly from the American Bottom) and the initial local age-set sodality. This latter sodality would then become the primary franchisee, and when it turned to franchising, it would be the secondary custodial franchiser, and the recipient sodality would become the secondary franchisee. This group in turn would become a tertiary custodial franchiser, and the recipient would be the tertiary custodial franchisee, and so on. This chain of franchising events, varying in distance and franchiser-franchisee steps, would lead to different and expectable modification

of the source material cultural assemblage that was transferred. While the sites in the region near the source from which the initial franchisers came might quite closely replicate the exotic material culture of the initial visiting franchisers, sites in each more distant region where a subsequent custodial franchising event transferring the desired ritual usufruct copyright occurred would have been carried out by secondary franchisers or even tertiary franchisers. Therefore, they would likely display patterning suggesting a tendency to being more selective in the borrowed features, facilities, and artifacts. This process of modifying and selectivity of the range of copyrights as the spatial distances from the primary source region became greater would likely lead to sites in quite distant regions that have only some of the exotic assemblage of the transferred rituals almost mimicking a typical trait-unit intrusion. This is not because the essential nature of the ritual modified but because, as noted above, the more distant communities might have traditional symbolic pragmatic rules about ritual performances that would clash and contradict with the rules governing the form of the assemblage of the new ritual; and these clashes would demand formal accommodation so as to avoid contradictions with regard to the local traditional ideological rules and protocols. I am speaking here of ideological strategies, of course, and as I noted earlier, these are much less stable in space/time than the cosmological and ethos structures that make them possible. Therefore, being familiar with the ritual practices of potential franchisees in regions neighboring them, the secondary (and even tertiary) franchisers would likely innovate and modify the ritual usufruct copyright that they had received so that in transferring the custodial ritual usufruct they would know that, from the perspective of their proposed neighboring recipients, these modifications would be acceptable and would be deemed to still generate behavioral forms that had equivalent action-constitutive meanings that the original

ritual assemblage had among the primary franchiser sodalities from the distant source region.

In sum, the notions of symbolic pragmatic meaning of material culture, the custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyright(s), the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality, the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, and the complementary heterarchical community open up a very different perspective for interpreting and explaining the long-distance distribution of the Mississippian assemblage compared to the perspective promoted by the hierarchical monistic modular polity view. It also throws into considerable doubt the relevance for arguing that the Mississippian assemblage and its distribution maps migration of sedentary populations. In fact, the latter would likely be the least likely causal condition. Of course, population mobility would be necessary. However, as described above, the type of population mobility required would be limited to transient "migration," sequential visitation, that left its signature in the above mapping of primary, secondary, and tertiary custodial franchising events. Particularly germane here is the recent recognition by archaeologists that while exotic ceramics derived from primary sources (e.g., Cahokia) are common in the Mississippian archaeological record, it is now recognized that many of these ceramics found far from the American Bottom are made of local clays. This recognition has been seized upon by chiefdom polity theorists to confirm their claims that major migration and settlement of sedentary foreigners was part of the Mississippianization process (e.g., Pauketat 2004a, 58-59; 2007, 112-15; Welch 1996, 84-85). Of course, a much simpler explanation is precisely the above, that the continuity of the production of exotically styled ceramics using local clays is the result of the successful entrenchment of the ritual usufruct copyright as part of the ritual repertoire of the recipient franchisees. These copyrights were initially transferred by the primary (or secondary) franchisers,

and the recipient custodial franchisees took up the ongoing production of these critically important symbolic pragmatic devices or warrants as part of ensuring their capacity to perform the very rituals that they had taken on responsibility to perform. More on this point later. In the next chapter, I will initiate applying this total theoretical scheme to the interpretation of the archaeological record relevant to understanding the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley.

NOTES

1. As indicated by the Hidatsa case, these intersodality transfers were likely a common historical practice for the complementary heterarchical communities in the integrated posture. But I postulate they would also occur if the communities of a region were in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Indeed, as I elaborate shortly, the transferral process would be an important cause promoting the complementary heterarchical communities of a region to shift rapidly into the bifurcated posture.

2. While the Hidatsa and Mandan senior-junior age-set custodial conveyancing was a “one-shot” and irreversible “deal,” there are examples where custodial conveyancing can be repeated between the conveyancer and different conveyancee recipients. When the custodial ritual usufruct copyright is held by an individual, such as a shaman or a specialist artisan, the latter can usually retain personal rights of performance while conveyancing the ritual usufruct on usually four or five separate occasions to four or five separate “apprentices.” After that, the shaman or artisan recognizes that while she/he still possesses the substantive knowledge and procedural know-how, she/he no longer has any sacred performative powers so that even if the shaman were to exercise the ritual know-how and

perform the behavior in the normal way, this would be ineffective because what is lacking is the usufruct copyright, the right to exercise this knowledge; and even if the war shield artisan made a shield in the normal way, it would not protect its user; that is, it would not count as or be a real war shield.

3. It is quite possible, of course, that the reverse could occur; that is, the custodians of the ritual usufruct copyright could be approached by a group wanting to become franchisees, in which case, they would be the guests, and the custodial franchising group would be hosts. While the latter would be required to provide housing shelter and food for the duration, the guests as usufruct franchisees would probably be required to bring significant wealth with them as usufruct franchising gifts. I think that both possibilities would operate without making that much difference to the distribution process.

4. Even if some material artifacts could be classed by the archaeologist as displaying “isochrestic style” (i.e., having forms that can be exhaustively accounted for in instrumental or functional terms), they still bear symbolic pragmatic meaning, in my view. I argued in the previous chapter that it is to avoid being perceived as a poacher, or more positively stated, it is to be seen and to take oneself as being a hunter, not a poacher, that style is ubiquitous. James Sackett (1986), who coined the term *isochrestic variation*, and from which the notion of “isochrestic style” has emerged, was simply wrong to say that this variation and its stabilization was the result of the artisan’s routinized production. Even the most routinized and practical production requires strict prescriptions in order for an observable “isochrestic style” to emerge in the archaeological record, particularly since, as Sackett argues, there is an indefinite range of forms that have the same function (i.e., isochrestic) from which any individual artisan can choose. The fact is that for an isochrestic style

tradition to emerge requires that generation after generation of producers choose the same forms, and given that any number of forms are equivalent, it follows that the style is the outcome of functional needs governed by *conventional rules*. As I noted above, these rules serve to generate the action meaning of even the most instrumental of tools so that the user is constituted as, for example, a hunter and not a poacher.

5. It is a complementary heterarchy, of course, because its basic components contrast socially, as laity and clergy. However, when two or more ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities affiliate, they constitute a mutualistic heterarchy because all the sodalities have the same social nature as ecclesiastic-communal sodality-based congregations.

6. Another mechanism that is gaining favor is “pilgrimage.” However, this actually would comfortably relate to the custodial franchising model since part of the motives of the pilgrims would be to enhance the distribution of the ritual usufruct that they believe will benefit the goal of world renewal. Therefore, I see this form of interregional interaction as another variant of the custodial franchising practice.

PART II.

Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley: From Cahokia to Larson

CHAPTER 7

The Central Illinois Valley Terminal Late Woodland Period

The focus of the second full case study, Part II, is the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley. Overall, the Illinois River Valley region can be divided into three cultural sectors: the upper, central, and lower. Although this division appears somewhat arbitrary, there is significant long-term variation and differentiation in the archeological records of these three zones that suggest there were some real and persisting sociocultural distinctions over a long period of prehistory. The central part of the Illinois Valley (figure 7.1) is usually defined as the 210 km stretch of the Illinois River bracketed by Meredosia in the south to Hennepin in the north (Conrad 1991, 120). Alan Harn (1978, 244) notes that the bulk of the major Mississippian-related sites in the valley is largely limited to the 160 km stretch from just south of a major west bank tributary, the La Moine River, to a little north of Peoria, Illinois. The mouth of the Spoon River, another major west bank tributary, is located about halfway between the mouth of the La Moine River and Peoria. Since much of the archaeological record originally used to delineate and define the Mississippian phenomenon in the Central Illinois Valley was found between the mouth of the Spoon River north to Peoria, it is called the Spoon River Mississippian, and it is currently dated from ca. cal. AD 1100 to ca. cal. AD 1450.

Lawrence Conrad (1991, 120-22) has suggested a modification, however, based on more recent archaeological surveys and excavations. While his conceptualization recognizes a general Mississippian system as prevailing in the Central Illinois Valley during this time, he argues that the record manifests sufficiently different but overlapping material expressions to warrant recognizing two neighboring and largely contemporaneous social systems. He refers to these as the Spoon River and La Moine River Mississippian cultural variants. He specifically treats these as autonomous peer *polities*, and they include the upland regions on both sides of the river as part of their respective territories (Conrad 1989, 98-109).

Figure 7.1. The Central Illinois Valley Region of the Mississippian Period and the Primary Cult Sodality Heterarchy Locales of the Spoon River and La Moine River Mississippian Variants. (From Conrad 1991, p. 121, figure 6.1. Used by permission of the Western Illinois University.)

The Eveland phase is generally recognized as the opening scenario of the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian period episode (table 7.1). The Eveland site is the eponymous site of the Eveland phase, and it is a rather small but important locale situated at the base of the western Illinois River bluffs just north of the mouth of the Spoon River (figure 7.1). The site consists of a plaza framed by several buildings displaying the classic Mississippian features, such as the wall-trench attribute, and has associated Cahokian Powell Plain and Ramey Incised American Bottom ceramics, as well as local shell-tempered ceramics with some surface treatment emulating the Cahokian ceramics, supporting the view that the site and its time corresponds with the Cahokian Stirling phase, which has a date of ca. cal. AD 1100-1200 (uncalibrated ca. AD 1050 to 1150).

Table 7.1. Calibrated Chronology of Central Illinois Valley: Terminal Late Woodland and Mississippian Periods

Spoon River Mississippian Variant		La Moine River Mississippian Variant	
AD 1450	(Oneota phase)		Crabble phase
AD 1400	Marbletown Complex		Crabtree phase
AD 1350	-----		
	Larson phase		
AD 1300	-----		
AD 1250	Orendorf phase		Orendorf-Larson Horizon
AD 1200	-----		
AD 1150	Eveland phase		Gillette phase
AD 1100	-----		
AD 1075	Rench phase		
Terminal Late Woodland Period		Late Woodland Period	
AD 1050	Mossville phase		Bauer Branch phase
AD 1000	-----		
	Maples Mills phase		Bauer Branch phase

I am pleased that my estimated adjustments of the uncalibrated dates Conrad presented in 1991 are fairly consistent with Esarey and Conrad's more recent calibrated chronology. I have included their chronology below (table 7.2). There are some discrepancies between table 7.1 and table 7.2. However, in most cases, where my estimate and Esarey and Conrad's chronology are slightly different, they have inserted questions marks (?) indicating, I believe, that these dates are to be treated as tentative. For this reason, I have decided to remain with my estimated dates.

The subsequent Orendorf phase, ca. cal. AD 1200 to AD 1300, correlates roughly with the Moorehead phase in the American Bottom; and this dating is supported by the absence of the classic Powell Plain and Ramey Incised ceramics and their replacement by some typical Moorehead ceramics—Cahokia Cordmarked jars and Wells Incised plates. The Orendorf phase also witnesses the first known large Mississippian plaza-based site, the eponymous Orendorf site

Phase	From - To
Crabble/Bold Counselor	1300-1325 to 1425
Larson	1250 (?) to 1300 (?)
Orendorf	1175-1200 to 1250 (?)
Eveland	1100 to 1175-1200

Table 7.2. Central Illinois Valley Mississippian Period Chronology. (Derived from Esarey and Conrad 1998, 53. Used with permission of *The Wisconsin Archaeologist*.)

itself. The Larson phase follows, ca. cal. AD 1300 to AD 1350, named after the Larson site, which is a mound-and-plaza site complex that is near the Eveland site, except that it is located on the bluffs overlooking the juncture of the Spoon and Illinois Rivers. In turn, the Larson phase is followed by later phases of the Spoon River and La Moine River Mississippian cultural variants, demarcated by at least six more substantial Mississippian-like sites becoming established.

Similar to the Larson site, these six subsequent sites all had plazas with one or more platform mounds and large public buildings. Two of these are associated with the Spoon River Mississippian, these being Hildemeyer, near Peoria, and Kingston Lake. If the earlier Orendorf and Larson sites are added, then altogether there are four major sites representing the Spoon River Mississippian variant (figure 7.1). However, while displaying a major set of plazas, Orendorf lacks a platform mound. The multiple plazas are actually a result of Orendorf being rebuilt several times, and each time apparently it was built with a large plaza and associated public buildings. There are three other mound-and-plaza locales south of the Spoon River and, according to Conrad, these make up the main sites of the La Moine River Mississippian variant. These are the Crable site, the Lawrenz Gun Club site, and the Walsh site. With the exception of the Lawrenz Gun Club site and the Hildemeyer site, both on the east bank, all the other major Mississippian sites, both the Spoon River and La Moine variants, are on the west bank of the Illinois Valley, and each is spaced between 15 and 25 km from its nearest like neighbor. Four of these seven are on the bluff tops overlooking the valley bottom, while the Kingston Lake, Hildemeyer, and the Lawrenz Gun Club sites are on higher terraces of the valley floor.

As noted above, the bluff top Larson site overlooks the juncture of the Spoon and Illinois Rivers, only about 2 km southwest of the Dickson Mounds site, which is itself an important, multiphase mortuary CBL on the bluff top immediately overlooking the Eveland site on the valley floor. Larson is the first Mississippian site in the valley to have what is recognized to be a platform mound as well as a plaza. The plaza is framed by a multiple set of wall-trench structures, both public and dwelling. The Larson phase is dated ca. uncal. AD 1250-1300. In calibrated dating terms, this can also be forwarded to ca. cal. AD 1300-1350.¹ Although the Larson site was apparently abandoned

prior to the end of the Larson phase itself, the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian sites continued to be used in both the Spoon River and La Moine River cultural regions. Probably with the abandonment of the Larson site, Kingston Lake and possibly Hildemeyer were briefly occupied in the northern sector. These were abandoned with the end of the Larson phase, and the Walsh and the Lawrenz Gun sites were occupied in the southern sector (Conrad 1991, 143).

There is no evidence to suggest that Larson phase people gave rise directly to those at Crable There seems to be a gap of about 75-100 years between the occupations at Larson and Crable. This would be time for considerable evolution, but there are no known intermediate assemblages. However, this gap may be a dating problem and the apparent lack of intermediate assemblages may be due to my relative ignorance of the cultural evolution of the Larson phase. During the Crable occupation, much of the Spoon River area was apparently occupied by Bold Counselor Oneota people. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider evidence of connections between the central and lower Central Illinois Valley as evidence of external contact. (Conrad 1991, 153)

In fact, Conrad recognizes the Marbletown complex as following the Larson phase in the Spoon River Mississippian sector. He terms it a complex because of the tentative state of the data supporting it and dates it at ca. uncal. AD 1300-1400. Adjusting this according to the new calibration, it would push the Mississippian phase in this sector to at least ca. cal. AD 1350-1450. The Crable phase was the final phase (ca. AD 1375-1450 or ca. cal. AD 1425-1475), and apparently the Crable site was the final major Mississippian-type site occupation of the central valley. During this phase, the northern sector of the valley was occupied by Oneota-like communities. Also, both

Oneota- and late Mississippian-type ceramics have been found in some of these late Mississippian Central Illinois Valley sites, apparently indicating that the peoples occupying these sites were involved in using both assemblages in the closing days of the Central Illinois Mississippian (Esarey and Conrad 1998).

While this chapter will certainly address different aspects of this total array of phases, the focus is on the mechanisms that were responsible for the Mississippianization of the region. This goal requires that I first summarize the later Late Woodland culture and social system to set the Terminal Late Woodland period context of this transition. I will then critically summarize the various current explanations of the transition, all of which presume that both the Late Woodland communities of the Central Illinois Valley and the contemporary early Mississippian Lohmann phase Cahokia, ca. cal. AD 1050-1100, were monistic modular polities, egalitarian and hierarchical, respectively.

The Terminal Late Woodland Period

For my purposes, the relevant part of the pre-Mississippian times of the Central Illinois Valley is when maize became established as a major subsistence crop. As noted in Chapter 2, I will use the terminology introduced by Andrew Fortier and Dale McElrath (2002, 173) and speak of the *Terminal Late Woodland* period of the region, this being initiated by the emergence of maize as a subsistence crop. For the American Bottom, Fortier and McElrath date the emergence of maize subsistence to ca. cal. AD 900 (table 2.1). They also note that it was probably introduced there even earlier at the Sponemann site, ca. cal. AD 850 (2002, figure 2, p. 181); but that it was not until fifty or so years later that its use as a subsistence crop became entrenched across the American Bottom. Therefore, for them, the Terminal Late Woodland period of the American Bottom would have been ca. cal.

AD 900-1050. This also means that the emergence of the Lohmann phase, ca. cal. AD 1050, is now widely accepted as the earliest dating of the Mississippian period in the American Bottom.

Given this chronology, it is reasonable to suggest that the use of maize as a subsistence crop in the Central Illinois Valley predated its initial ca. cal. AD 850-900 appearance at the Sponemann site in the American Bottom and that the use of maize as a subsistence crop in the American Bottom was probably introduced from the north, possibly from the Illinois Valley or the lower Missouri Valley. This is not to claim that the Sponemann site witnessed the use of maize for the first time in the American Bottom. It may have been used as a ritual medium for many years previously, although little supporting evidence of this is currently known from the American Bottom. What its ubiquitous appearance at the Sponemann site suggests is that it marks the first known appearance of a custodial ritual usufruct copyright that enabled maize, used until then as a ritual medium, to be also used as a type of everyday subsistence crop. Therefore, this would suggest that the Terminal Late Woodland of the Central Illinois Valley started even earlier, ca. cal. AD 700-750. Currently, this date has been proposed by Duane Esarey and his colleagues to demarcate the Maples Mills phase in this region, which they extend to ca. cal. AD 1000 (Esarey et al. 2000, 222-23; Esarey 2000, 397).

Since they report that maize first emerged as a staple food crop in the Central Illinois Valley with this phase, it is reasonable to treat it as delineating the early Terminal Late Woodland period. The subsequent Mossville phase, ca. cal. AD 1000-1100, would delineate the late Terminal Late Woodland period.² It is also interesting to note that correlated with Maples Mills Cord-Imprinted ceramics is the use of z-twist cord to impress both the linear cord markings and the zoomorphs on these ceramics. I find this interesting because not only is the Sponemann site the earliest known American Bottom site in

which maize figures as an important staple crop, but the Sponemann jar of that site also displays z-twist cordmarking, and it is found there along with the indigenous Late Woodland period Patrick phase jar, the latter having s-twist cordmarking. I have postulated that this z-twist/s-twist dualism of the ceramic assemblage of the Sponemann site is not coincidental (Byers 2006a, 142-51). Rather, the emergence of maize as a staple crop from its more constrained ritual use during the early Late Woodland required two sets of new ideological rules (i.e., custodial ritual usufruct copyrights), one set by which to enable this expansion of the traditional ritual use of maize into being used for everyday subsistence, and another set by which to ensure the systematic avoidance of mixing the indigenous subsistence cultivated seed crops with maize, traditionally used to mediate rituals (in my view, likely world renewal in nature). Since both the traditional subsistence seed crops and maize were now being used “side-by-side” as components of the everyday subsistence foodway, keeping these separate while being prepared, served, and consumed on an everyday basis would be necessary in order to prevent sacred pollution of one by the other. I postulated under what I called the *Sacred Maize model* that one way of fulfilling this dual obligation to maintain separation of the two sacred categories of foods was to introduce the z-twist/s-twist ceramic contrast (2006a, Chapters 6 and 7). If I am right, then the rapid escalation of maize correlated with z-twist Maples Mills Cord-Imprinted ceramics marks the z-twist decorative treatment as an ideological change (i.e., a custodial ritual usufruct copyright that was either innovated in situ or transferred by a custodial franchising event conducted by franchisers from another region) that served to resolve the problem that would be raised by the transformation of maize from a strictly ritual medium to also being an everyday subsistence crop in the Central Illinois Valley.

In any case, the Maples Mills ceramics were not the only markers of the Terminal Late Woodland period in the Central Illinois Valley. There was another, the Bauer Branch ceramic tradition. Therefore, Maples Mills and Bauer Branch delineated two spatially separate ceramic cotraditions, and although there was some mixing of these two ceramic traditions south of the Havana site to the Spoon River juncture zone, there is only a scattered representation of Bauer Branch ceramics in the Maples Mills sites further north along the valley bottom. Esarey and his colleagues (2000, 95) note that only one Bauer Branch sherd has been identified at the Liverpool Lake site, a major Maples Mills phase settlement locus. Maples Mills ceramics are also found distributed over much of the northern Central Illinois Valley, on both the east and west banks and as far west as the Mississippi Valley. Bauer Branch ceramics, however, primarily prevail only in the region south of Spoon River and in the La Moine River uplands, constituting what might reasonably be referred to as the Bauer Branch phase of the Terminal Late Woodland period of this region of the Central Illinois Valley.³ In fact, Conrad (1991, 132; also see Green and Nolan 2000, 372) has suggested that it was out of the communities responsible for the Bauer Branch ceramics that the La Moine Mississippian variant of the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian episode emerged. In a similar vein, it might be reasonable to say that descendants of the communities responsible for the Maples Mills and its successor Mossville ceramics were responsible for the Spoon River Mississippian episode variant (Esarey et al. 2000, 222). I will have more to say about this later.

The Maples Mills Phase

The critical role of Maples Mills in the Central Illinois Valley has only recently been clarified by Esarey and his colleagues as the result of their extensive archaeological surveys and excavations of the

regional bottom lands during the 1980s and 1990s. "Until recently, Maples Mills has been almost universally accepted as intrusive into the Illinois River valley. It has also been generally accepted that this intrusion occurred very late relative to the advent of Early Mississippian culture" (Esarey et al. 2000 19-23; also see Esarey 2000, 387-89). Their work has demonstrated that none of this is the case. Their focus has been on the Liverpool Lake site and the Liverpool Landing site, as well as on surveys along this sector of the Central Illinois Valley bottom land. As they point out, their findings establish that Maples Mills was a key player in this region, emerging in situ from the early Late Woodland Weaver phase communities (Esarey 2000, 396, figure 16.6, p. 400; Green and Nolan 2000, 360). The reason these ceramics had been so enigmatic prior to their work is that the average water level of the Central Illinois River was much lower then than in modern times. In Esarey's view, the "disappearance" of Maples Mills is a result of flood control measures undertaken in the nineteenth century that led to the water levels normal in prehistoric times radically rising and effectively permanently flooding what had been in pre-modern times natural levees (personal communication, June, 2010). However, an extended drought effected a major temporary reduction in the Illinois River water levels in the 1980s, and these important prehistoric levees were briefly exposed. This enabled Esarey and his colleagues to expose major occupational usage by communities manifesting Maples Mills ceramics.

Despite the extreme reduction in the 1980s water levels, however, the prehistoric levees were only partially exposed. Fast and efficient surveying and excavating work by Esarey and his colleagues has resulted in a major contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the Terminal Late Woodland period of this region (Esarey et al. 2000). They did an extensive survey of the exposed levees revealing multiple Maples Mills sites. They focused on one of the larger sites

they found, the Liverpool Lake site, which was on the exposed natural levees of the east bank opposite the present community of Liverpool. Even at the lowest river levels during the 1980s, when most of the prehistoric natural levee was exposed, the water table was still very high so that only the upper sectors of most pit features could be excavated. Nevertheless, the size of the site, its structures, pattern of pits, mortuary deposits, and of course, the contents of the upper levels of the pits were recorded. Given the 100% maize ubiquity in the analyzed features of the Liverpool Lake site, as well as the extent of the site, speaking of this and related sites as marking the early Terminal Late Woodland period of this region makes sense. While the Liverpool Lake site is the most extensively excavated on these palaeo-levees exposed during this recent period of low water levels, many other surface indications reveal that there were Maples Mills sites up and down these levees. Therefore, considerable extrapolation can be confidently carried out. "While none of these other Maples Mills villages have the integrity that is evident at Liverpool Lake, several others are on a comparable scale . . . showing that the Maples Mills settlement system was intensely focused on the river and adjacent bottomland environment and that the centerpieces of the Maples Mills settlement system were intensively occupied large villages stretching a kilometer or more along the river bank" (Esarey et al. 2000, 19).

However, they emphasize that the Liverpool Lake site was not a single contemporary extensive village. The linear patterning of the community plan was probably the result of a long-term sequence of shifting occupations, and these occupations were likely both seasonal hamlets and possibly small villages. Therefore, the community habitually returned to the same locale probably every year during the warm season, repaired the structures where necessary, and then, after a sequence of seasonal reoccupations, the same community may

have abandoned that locale in order to move linearly up or down the levee, thereby repeating the settlement pattern. This series of sequential occupations recalls what is currently understood to be the typical settlement pattern of the Late Woodland and early Terminal Late Woodland of the American Bottom. The Sponemann site, which I noted above, is northeast of Cahokia, and the Sponemann phase settlements at that site consisted of at least four community plans sequentially organized from south to north, following the orientation of the ridge on which it was established (Fortier et al 1991, 128-56). Given the absence of any indoor hearths or fire pits, these were also likely warm-season dwellings—although Fortier et al. (1991, 147-48, 155) claim year-round occupation. The Late Woodland period Patrick phase community plans of the Range site are similarly organized linearly along the local terrace ridge, and in fact, the early Terminal Late Woodland Dohack and Range phase community plans also repeat this linear series of sequential occupations (Kelly 1990a, 1990b). Esarey and his colleagues specifically draw a parallel between the Liverpool Lake site and the Range site. “[I]t is clear that Liverpool Lake site cannot be conceived as one large continuous and contemporary village. We must assume the site was repeatedly occupied by Maples Mills phase groups over a 200 to 250 year span. Perhaps the best available known analog for this type of site use is the series of overlapping and repeating communities that occupied the Range site in the American Bottom . . . Structures and pit features, arranged in small clusters, are the external manifestation of band-level social structure and community organization” (2000, 229-30). While I cannot agree that the notion of the “band-level social structure and community organization” is an adequate characterization of the responsible social system, I accept as valid their main claim in that it draws the line with the Range phase community plans, and therefore, it would exclude the later George Reeves and Lindeman phases of the Range site as parallels.

Of course, the basic premise underwriting the “band-level social structure and community organization” concept is that the Maples Mills communities would have formed “egalitarian” or nonhierarchical monistic modular polity-like community settlements, small seasonally occupied and reoccupied villages and hamlets. “For a number of generations, Late Woodland people in this region probably regarded Liverpool Lake and its immediate surroundings as one of their primary homes . . . even though occupation here was probably limited to only specific parts of the year. Thus the permanent agricultural community represented at Liverpool Lake must be viewed as extending well beyond this specific site to the full, and as yet unknown, range of territory occupied by this specific group” (2000, 230). This position echoes John Kelly’s interpretation of the community plans of the Range site during the Patrick, Dohack, and Range phases of the Pre-Mississippian times of the American Bottom (Kelly 1990a, 87-97; 1990b, 119-30). Based on the above, it logically follows, under this view, that the Maples Mills settlement pattern was generated by a seasonally mobile community occupying riverside hamlets and small villages during the warm season where they made and tended gardens of maize as well as indigenous seed-bearing crops such as chenopodium, little barley, and maygrass. During late Fall and Winter, the community would have broken into its constituent kinship units of small families and dispersed to winter quarters (as well as specialized logistical task groups likely consisting of cooperative age-set sodalities of these communities).⁴

Esarey and his colleagues recognize the likelihood that the typical Maples Mills community would have an associated burial locale where they would bury their dead, this being a set of bluff top cemetery CBL mounds (Esarey 2000, 394). However, they also recognize a mortuary pattern that significantly departs from the Range site pattern. The Range site during the Patrick, Dohack, and Range phases

essentially had no in situ human mortuary deposits, although there were a few “stray” human remains. In contrast, the Liverpool Lake site had significant in situ mortuary indicators. Interestingly, while noting that there may be some articulated burials on the Liverpool Lake site, the mortuary data that Esarey and his colleagues found indicate that one form of treatment of the dead that occurred on the site involved the deliberate disarticulation of the bodies. Pointing to the strong striations on the human bone residues, they claim this was done while the bodies were still in a relatively “fresh” state (Esarey et al. 2000, 50). Esarey (2000, 394) recognizes that some of these mortuary remains may have been residue of deceased who were processed there “before being buried in mortuary facilities elsewhere,” but he also noted that one of his colleagues, Dawn Harn, suggested “that the elements may have been unintentionally separated from the rest of the body and ‘swept’ into the trash pits.” Esarey particularly points out the possibility that “the Liverpool Lake site human remains represent a hostile group outside the local population. The number, patterning, and depth of incised lines (e.g., metatarsals and distal fibula) suggest extreme force may have been used to disarticulate the remains. In this case, it may be that individuals from which these fragmented skeletal elements derived were not accorded burial treatment and were thus incorporated into the refuse.” This certainly represents a rather wide range of possibilities.

In sum, following the Middle Woodland period in this zone, the riverside levees were heavily settled by the communities responsible for the Maple Mills ceramics; and less but definitively used during the Mossville/early Mississippian period. As Esarey has noted, the reduced usage by the Mossville period peoples may be the result of the general tendency of the populations associated with the Maples Mills/Mossville ceramics to shift to the higher terrace region to carry out their gardening practices, including growing maize, a practice

that was continued in the Mississippian period. This shift did not mean abandoning the levees. However, it is correlated with a lower level of usage, as their work has revealed. This reduced level of levee settlement density is attributed by Esarey to the rather rapid development of the dispersed farmstead pattern. I have argued that this is characteristic of the bifurcated settlement articulation posture.

The Bauer Branch Phase

As I noted above, a second series of ceramics largely parallels the Maples Mills ceramic series and defines the contemporaneous Bauer Branch phase. The distributions of these cotraditions overlap to some degree, particularly in the Spoon River junction region. However, the primary region of Bauer Branch is the drainage of the La Moine River with a significant distribution defining the western upland regions between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Importantly, during the early Terminal Late Woodland when major Maples Mills warm-season settlement focused on the levees of the Illinois River north of the Spoon River junction, apparently Bauer Branch settlement largely avoided the bottom land region of the Illinois trench and focused in the smaller branch streams and the associated uplands. According to William Green and David Nolan (2000, 363-64), these communities tended to consist of clusters of dispersed autonomous households. Also, as noted earlier, while maize was a major subsistence crop for the Maples Mills villages, it was used very little by Bauer Branch communities, and only a select range of the traditional indigenous seed crops was regularly used—for instance, chenopodium, maygrass, and erect knotweed. They point out that panic grass and sunflower were used to an important degree and suggest that these possibly replaced little barley and sumpweed that were more common in neighboring zones (2000, 367). They stress that associated with these dispersed homestead community clusters

were mortuary mounds—usually located on bluff tops overlooking the smaller upland creek tributaries. “Small groups of conical and oval mounds or individual mounds were built on bluff tops overlooking creek valleys” (2000, 364). In their view, these were the mortuary mounds not of a given Bauer Branch community but of an alliance of groups from different communities. “The mortuary centers feature diverse but apparently contemporaneous ceramic inventories that may reflect the gatherings of different groups. At these places, members of different groups could meet occasionally or regularly and exchange information, maintain alliances, and initiate exogamous relationships. Interaction and ritual at such mortuary centers would have provided opportunities to minimize hostilities over territory and other matters, although abundant evidence of violent death indicates that raiding or warfare was common among Late Woodland peoples” (2000, 349).

Although they use the socially characterless term *group* rather than the term *community*, I think their reference to exclusive territories makes it clear that they treat these groups as coming from different communities, with the latter presumably being autonomous monistic modular polities. This view is implicated when they note that the

[l]ocations of these [mortuary] sites may correspond to the second meaning of the frontier—interfaces between neighboring groups whose territories extended far from the burial loci, either along the main valleys or in the uplands A group’s members who reside near the frontier-boundary are more likely than their core-dwelling cohorts to come into direct contact with neighboring groups Certain segments of a group may be more likely to interact with near-neighbors of other groups than with more distant members of their own group.

Such frequent contact with ‘others’ is likely to generate ‘boundary arbitration’ through, for example, intermarriage and accompanying ritual. The archaeological signals of these processes may include multiple-group aggregation centers as discussed above. (2000, 349)

This characterization of a grouping of mounds as delineating the frontiers between mutually exclusive monistic modular communities recalls R. Berle Clay’s characterization of Adena mortuary mounds in the Central Ohio Valley as being the expression of similarly dispersed Adena communities that were in mortuary-mediated alliances. “[It] is clear that the early [Adena] burial mound functioned ritually as an expression of society *on a different level of organization* from that of the local group. I interpret this to mean that the burial mound probably served multiple groups and not an isolated polity. However directed, mortuary ritual probably represented the negotiated outcome of interaction *between* allied local groups. Reconstructed, the Adena mound occupied an ‘edge’ location with respect to the groups that used it and, because of this placement, it is difficult to interpret from the mound and its burial population what groups used it” (Clay 1991, 32, emphasis in original). However, Green and Nolan are adding to Clay’s view by suggesting that the Bauer Branch mound groups had the potential to constitute particularly dynamic interfacial locales among groups from different communities in that the “groups” of a community that occupied the frontier regions of its exclusive territory would likely come to have closer relations with the complementary sectors of their neighboring communities than they would have had with their own cultural communities that occupied the cores of their territories. The implication here is that these frontier mound groupings may have been the locales where cultural innovation and transfers most commonly occurred. As I discuss shortly, they imply that the region around the mouth of the Spoon

River may have been the interface zone between the Bauer Branch and Maples Mills communities and, therefore, may explain why this region was among the earliest to be influenced by the Mississippian interaction.

In view of the predominance of the Adams variant (Bauer Branch) in the La Moine River drainage and of Tampico (Maples Mills) in the Spoon River, Conrad (1991) suggests that the populations were ancestral to the La Moine River and Spoon River variants, respectively. The lower Spoon River locality probably had long been a territory contested by Bauer Branch and Maples Mills people, but if the Sepo material associated with the early Spoon River Eveland phase developed from Bauer Branch, then perhaps Spoon River ethnogenesis was facilitated by the social dynamics of the Adams-Tampico frontier-boundary, along with a crucial “bump” from Cahokia. A similar scenario, but with Bauer Branch probably contributing more to the mix than Maples Mills/Mossville, may characterize the development of the La Moine River variant as well. (Green and Nolan 2000, 372)

Discussion

In the above quotation, Green and Nolan refer to the *Tampico* and *Adams variants* and to the *Sepo ceramics*. The former two terms include the Bauer Branch and Maples Mills phases as regional expressions of these two Late Woodland period variants. In their taxonomic scheme, *variant* is used to refer to a set of phases defining a region by displaying closely related formal material cultural traits. Two or more variants in the same large region, such as their Tampico and Adams variants in the west-central region of Illinois, can constitute a tradition. As the quotation indicates, they treat Maples Mills as a phase within the Tampico variant and Bauer Branch as

a phase within the Adams variant. When discussing the Mississippian period, it will be useful to speak in terms of two Central Illinois Mississippian variants, as they note above, these being the Spoon River Mississippian variant and the La Moine Mississippian variant. As they suggest, each of these variants may be the result of differential interaction with the American Bottom by communities of the Maples Mills and Bauer Branch phases respectively. However, they also suggest a special interactive process constituting the Spoon River Mississippian variant. In this case, they cite their frontier model by suggesting that the intercommunity dynamics it postulates may have been operative so that interaction among groups from local Bauer Branch communities south of the Spoon River and groups from local Maples Mills communities north of Spoon River, “along with a crucial ‘bump’ from Cahokia” constituted the complex conditions that brought about the emergence of this Mississippian variant. I consider this to be a very intriguing insight, and below I will comment further on it.

As I noted above, they also refer to *Sepo materials*. This requires further clarification. Until Esarey and his colleagues’ recent work, the rather minimal and dispersed distribution of the Maples Mills assemblage was such that Alan Harn was able to make the reasonable argument that the Late Woodland period of this region was dominated by what he termed the *Sepo ceramic assemblage*, which he saw as unrelated to Maples Mills. Instead, he saw it as descended from the ceramics of the earlier Late Woodland Meyer-Dickson phase, ca. AD 300-500 (Harn 1975, 1991a, 1991b). Therefore, it became accepted that Sepo ceramics prevailed into Mississippian times. Harn called this long period of time, ca. AD 500 to ca. cal. AD 1100, the Sepo phase, and he also recognized that these same ceramics were the majority type in the early Spoon River Mississippian times. However, in Esarey’s view, there is no longer any convincing evidence supporting

this claim. Certainly, the ceramics referred to as *Sepo ceramics* are abundant, but in fact, they have been found only in the early Spoon River Mississippian period contexts. Esarey argues that these are a marker of this period and traces their emergence to modifications of Mossville and Bauer Branch phase ceramics. He seems to give priority to Mossville, and he notes that the latter is the direct Terminal Late Woodland descendant of Maples Mills. “[T]he remnant Late Woodland Sepo traits in the Eveland and Dickson Mounds assemblages are derived from one or both of the temporally intervening Late Woodland manifestations that have been well documented (Bauer Branch or Maples Mills). Of these two, the Maples Mills and Mossville phase sequence can contribute many of the remnant Late Woodland ceramic traits seen at Eveland and Dickson” (Esarey 2000, 399). Green and Nolan come to a similar conclusion except that, as indicated earlier, they suggest that attributes of Bauer Branch ceramics had the more active role in the formation of Sepo ceramic series (Green and Nolan 2000, 372). However, given the Liverpool Lake and related sites and surveys, combined with the relatively recent reports on the Rench site that I discuss below, I think Esarey’s is the more balanced view. “I previously suggested . . . that the Bauer Branch phase was a more logical precursor of the Sepo ceramics at Eveland and Dickson than Myer-Dickson [phase ceramics]. The social processes underway during both Eveland and Mossville phases have already been defined as an amalgamation of a Late Woodland people with a Mississippian lifestyle. Faced with a Mossville phase ceramic assemblage that can supply many but not all of the remnant Late Woodland traits in the Eveland phase, it seems plausible to conclude that Eveland’s Late Woodland roots were derived from *both* the Bauer Branch phase and the Maples Mills/Mossville phase sequence” (Esarey 2000, 400).

The Mossville Phase

Following the Maples Mills phase (i.e. the early phase of the Terminal Late Woodland period) was the Mossville phase, forming the late Terminal Late Woodland period in the upper sector of the Central Illinois Valley (Esarey et al. 2000, 222-23). Esarey particularly emphasizes the Mossville ceramics are directly descended from Maples Mills ceramics. For my purposes, one of the most important of the Mossville phase sites is the Rench site. Its importance arises from the fact that it displays the earliest known archaeological representation of the Mississippian assemblage in this region. To anticipate a bit, while the Rench site is now recognized as important in the history of the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley, it is still not seen as marking a central role in the process itself. This honor continues to be accorded to the Eveland site. As I noted above, the Eveland phase is roughly contemporary with the Stirling phase of the American Bottom, ca. cal. AD 1100-1200, while the second half of the Mossville phase component of the Rench site would be roughly contemporary with the later stages of the preceding early Mississippian period Lohmann phase of the American Bottom, ca. cal. AD 1050-1100 (table 7.1; see Esarey et al. 2000, 223; also see note 2 of this chapter).

In terms of the hierarchical monistic modular polity view, I can understand why the Eveland site is treated as the earliest of the known Spoon River Mississippian sites. Its Mississippian materials cover a greater range of assemblage categories than those at the Mossville phase component of the Rench site. These latter appear to be marking merely the prelude to the process of Mississippianization and not the first major step in the process. Indeed, most interpret Mississippian content of the Rench site as marking a trait-unit intrusive event or short series of such events while, because of the richness of its Mississippian assemblage, the Eveland site is widely treated as

the earliest known site-unit intrusive Cahokian occupation. From the perspective of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model and the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, however, an alternative reading emerges that suggests Rench is the earliest known site manifesting the initial stages of the Mississippianization process—that is, a single or series of custodial franchising events that marks the cult sodality of this site as possibly the earliest franchisee of the relevant Cahokian ritual usufruct copyrights. This would require a reorientation of priorities, suggesting this process was initiated at the Rench site, and/or other similar but currently unknown sites, starting about the mid-to-late Lohmann phase in the Cahokian chronology, ca. cal. AD 1075. However, I will leave my empirical evidence, giving reasons for stating this until later. At this point, it is necessary to give a descriptive overview of the site. Following this, I will give the monistic modular polity interpretation of settlement patterning of the Terminal Late Woodland period of the Central Illinois Valley. This will be followed by a critique and then my alternative custodial franchising interpretation.

The Rench Site

The Rench site is located 20 km north of Peoria in the northern extreme of the Central Illinois Valley trench on a high terrace at the base of the western bluff (figure 7.1). It is part of what is probably a rather extensive multiple component archaeological site. Unfortunately, only a very limited part of this larger site could be excavated. Given the limited knowledge of its local context, current conclusions must be considered tentative. Mark McConaughy and his colleagues (McConaughy 1991, 111-12; McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 126) report that the Mossville component is contemporary with the Lohmann phase of the American Bottom, and certainly the archaeological assemblage and radiocarbon dates support this claim. In fact,

conspicuous by its absence is one of the primary markers of the post-Lohmann times—Ramey Incised ceramics of the American Bottom Stirling phase. Instead, the prevailing American Bottom ceramics are Powell Plain and some Cahokian Cordmarked, along with some Cahokian Red Slipped ceramics, and these are typical of the Lohmann phase (McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 84). While Mossville ceramics constitute the majority representation of the local assemblage, the Cahokian-style ceramics come in a close second, indicating that considerable and relatively sustained indirect or, more likely in my view, direct interaction with equivalent Lohmann phase American Bottom groups. There were also a few Maples Mills and Starved Rock Collared ceramics present (and even possibly one Bauer Branch sherd), indicating some spillover from the preceding Maples Mills phase as well as some contemporary interaction with more northern and southern Terminal Late Woodland communities (McConaughy 1991, 120; McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 86). This means that the Rench site constitutes the earliest currently known interactive contact with the American Bottom.

The residual contents of two building structures and associated pits make up the core component features of the site. McConaughy (1991, 101; also see McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 76-79) refers to these structural features as House #1 and House #2. House #1 combined a rectangular basin floor and associated wall trenches and wall posts. Also, it had three centrally aligned roof support posts, suggesting that it had the typical gabled roof of the American Bottom Mississippian period wall-trench structure. The size of its floor plan also was within the standard American Bottom range for the late Lohmann phase, being 4.2 m by 2.8 m, or about 11.8 m². Much of the floor of this structure had been destroyed by heavy plowing. Only a “shadow” of the wall trenches remained, about 2 to 4 cm deep, and the earth fill above the floor was loose so that if there had

been a basin there, it had been destroyed by modern plowing. McConaughy notes that there was no indication of an interior hearth. Interestingly, he does not suggest that, in fact, it may have also been destroyed by the modern plowing that (may have) destroyed the basin. This structure was destroyed by fire when abandoned.

House #2 contrasted in form, displaying the attributes typical of the Late Woodland period in this region. McConaughy (1991, 101-102) refers to it as a wigwam. Fortunately, the floor of House #2 did not suffer the same degree of plow damage as did House #1. Its floor plan was defined by a relatively deep rectangular basin that extended 25 cm below a 30 cm deep plow zone. It was an elongated structure of bent wood construction with straight standing end walls and no wall trenches and no central support poles. Its floor plan was 6.1 by 3.9 m or 23.8 m², about double the floor area of House #1. It also had a number of interior pits and a fire hearth. This building structure was located only about 11 m northwest of House #1. Like House #1, House #2 was also destroyed by fire. Both structures were spatially associated with a set of impressively large external pit features. Two or three of these pit features figure centrally in the interpretation of the Rench site, as I discuss below.

McConaughy interprets House #1 and House #2 as the dual seasonally specialized residences of a nuclear-family-based household. Partly because House #1 had no internal hearth, he claims that this would have been occupied during the warm season, the cooking being done outside. He treats House #2 as the cold-season or winter quarters for the family, primarily because of its internal hearth and pits, as well as its greater size, allowing space for various production tasks to be performed inside. "House #1 lacks any evidence of an interior hearth, and this implies a warm-weather use for this structure. Cooking fires were more likely built outdoors during the spring and summer months, while an indoor hearth for cooking and

heating, as was found in House #2, would have been beneficial in a cold season dwelling” (1991, 108). McConaughy and his colleagues make the observation that “If the two LLW/M [Later Late Woodland/Mississippian] houses provided shelter for a single family group on a year-round basis, overlap in warm-season and cold-season animal exploitation could mask distinctive seasonality indicators. Despite this, the presence of medullary bird bone, pied-billed grebe, a tooth from a deer-fawn, 10 genera of fish, and a diversity of turtle species indicates that LLW/M House #1 and F-336 were the focus of warm-season activities. In contrast, animal remains from LLW/M House #2 and F-637 include fewer fish and turtle taxa, and a mandible from a deer killed in December; considered together, these data may reflect cold-season activities” (1993, 124). However, there seems to be equivocation among the coauthors of the report concerning the seasonality postulate. Terrence Martin’s summary overview of the faunal data concludes that these “do not provide definitive evidence with which to confirm or reject the hypothesized seasonal use of the domiciles and their associated refuse pits” (McConaughy et al. 1993, 114). While it is noted that relatively “large quantities of hickory, walnut, and butternut shell were recovered from the floor (Level 2) of LLW/M #2,” suggesting that this structure was occupied during the fall when nuts would have been gathered, they also note that “these nuts could have been stored for extended periods and are not totally reliable indicators of fall or winter occupation” (McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 128).

The site had several exceedingly large external storage pits and they suggested that the material stored may have been primarily maize, as well as other foods, used for trade with Cahokian groups. “[T]he large size of F-336 suggests that it was originally used as a storage facility, perhaps to keep maize for use as seed for food or planting, or for surplus maize to be used in trade with other groups”

(McConaughy, Martin, and King 1993, 80). In fact, McConaughy calculates that the largest of these pits, Feature 336, could have been used to store up to 3 million maize kernels, enough to supply food to between 33 and 44 persons for one year. There was another only slightly smaller storage pit, Feature 637, as well as several other medium-sized storage pits. McConaughy argues that these were likely contemporaneous features. Because the quantities that could be stored were far in excess of the needs of a nuclear family, he postulates that the surplus was used for exchange. He concludes that this family must have been trading with equivalent groups in the American Bottom (McConaughy 1991, 125).

There is one puzzle that he notes. What would the local community of nuclear families be receiving in exchange for their surplus maize and other possible foods? His conclusion is very interesting. He directly relates the Cahokian ceramics to specialized ritual practice and concludes that they were trading maize in exchange for ritual prerogatives or, as he calls it, “ideology.” “The large pit features from Rensch and the maize recovered suggest that the inhabitants were producing a surplus of food. It is possible that food was traded by the Rensch people to the American Bottom for this pottery and ideology. In other words, the exchange was based on ‘food for thought’” (1991, 125-26).

I will now critically address these three views, starting with the Maples Mills scenario, proceeding to the Bauer Branch scenario, and ending with the Rensch site scenario, and following the hermeneutic spiral method, will present my alternative interpretation of these data. This prepares going to the next step—that is, shifting to the standard views of the Mississippianization of this Central Illinois Valley, which I summarily present in the subsequent chapter. Because of my critical approach, this will require a further descriptive and critical chapter. I then present my alternative interpretation of

the Mississippian period archaeological record, demonstrating that it manifests the working out of a complex history of cult sodality heterarchical development.

Critical Assessment

It is interesting, indeed, that to characterize the Maples Mills phase settlement pattern, Esarey and his colleagues draw direct analogies with the community plans of the early Terminal Late Woodland Dohack and Range phases of the Range site. John Kelly has treated these as nucleated settlements that display the initial emergence of both fertility ritual and rank order. He argues it was from these small nucleated settlements that the George Reeves and Lindeman phase *simple chieftdom villages* developed (1990b, 128-30; 145-46). In contrast, I have interpreted the small Dohack and Range phase settlement clusters with central “plazas” as the developed expression characteristic of complementary heterarchical communities in an integrated settlement articulation modal posture. I termed this particular settlement plan pattern the *plaza-periphery integrated settlement articulation mode* because the plaza was encircled by domestic structures, and at the same time, sodality structures were located on the outer periphery of the community plan. Hence, I would now redescribe this plan using my new terminology for these communities as manifesting a plaza-periphery integrated village of a complementary heterarchical community having the clans and sodalities sharing the plaza and its associated ritual features while the kinship (family) components of the clans occupied the domestic dwelling structures that encircled it while the sodality (companionship) components built and used specialized locales on the outer periphery of the village (Byers 2006a, 176-77, 179, 211-12). I also went on to argue that the community plans of the succeeding George Reeves and Lindeman phase settlements manifested an alliance of two or more

integrated complementary heterarchical communities. I characterized these George Reeves and Lindeman phase settlement plans as manifesting a compound plaza-periphery integrated community village alliance (2006a, 203-204; 211-12). Today, I would redescribe the George Reeves and Lindeman phase compound plaza-periphery settlement pattern settlement plans of the Range site as manifesting an integrated *mutualistic heterarchical community* village consisting of two or more autonomous complementary heterarchical communities. That is, when two or more autonomous complementary heterarchical communities ally and share the same integrated village setting, since they share the same social nature (i.e., the two or more communities are individually complementary heterarchies), their alliance constitutes a *mutualistic heterarchy*. I also suggested then that this type of village settlement plan manifesting a mutualistic heterarchical community alliance may have been the maximal possible expression of the integrated posture of complementary heterarchical communities under the deep cultural immanentist cosmology↔ squatter ethos traditions that prevailed in this type of community formation. Possibly the only rational step its members could take to resolve the intensification of pollution that I postulate they would have perceived their large compound settlement to be causing would be for the clans and sodalities to agree consensually to spatially disengage and move into what I have termed the *bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture*, which, as I have argued, marks the Mississippianization of the settlement pattern.

Hence, if the analogy can be transferred to the Maples Mills phase village settlements such as the Liverpool Lake site and the Liverpool site, they would be structurally equivalent to the Dohack and Range phase sites of the American Bottom, and therefore, they would constitute plaza-periphery integrated villages of complementary heterarchical communities—albeit within the material constraints of

levees that tended to be regularly flooded. It is possible that the type of mortuary data that Esarey and his colleagues identified involving major defleshing, therefore, represents the in-house activities of the sodalities in their communal cult posture so that the postmortem manipulation and deposition of these disarticulated bones are the residue of behaviors that mediated postmortem human sacrifice.

While I can also endorse much of the Bauer Branch settlement pattern as outlined by Green and Nolan, particularly their claim that the mortuary mounds were probably the locale of alliance interaction, some modification is necessary. In fact, the direction of the modification is already suggested in their frontier zone view—namely, the upland regions between regional communities may have been especially dynamic zones for interactive innovation. First, I would point out that they rely unproblematically on the notion that these clusters of dispersed homestead communities were based on exclusive territorialism. Their view that mortuary mounds are the product of intercommunity alliances or, as they appear to be saying, alliances of groups from separate communities, seems inconsistent with the traditional archaeological view of the role of mortuary mounds in regimes of exclusive territorialism. In the latter case, they are treated as serving as monumental claims of exclusive territories, and therefore, under the orthodox model, they should be in the core, and not the frontiers, of territories. However, I think that their basic premise that the mortuary mounds served to mediate joint activities of autonomous “groups,” and thereby generated dynamic transformations, is valid, except, of course, under my interpretive modeling, these autonomous groups would have been cult sodalities. Of course, this modification does not fit with their apparent commitment to the exclusive territorial premise. Therefore, the latter exclusive territorial view needs to be modified. Indeed, their insight fits very nicely with the fundamental notion of inclusive territories. If so, then this means

that the groups the mortuary mounds served to bring together would be autonomous sodalities from complementary heterarchical communities that had in common the status of being custodians of the land and its resources, having the collective obligation to preserve and care for the territories that they collectively used. In short, they would be excellent vehicles of intercommunal cult sodality alliances, and many of their rituals would be world renewal in nature, possibly mediated by postmortem human sacrificial rites. I return to this point shortly.

The interpretation given by McConaughy and his colleagues of the Rench site and their explanation for its mixed Mississippian and Terminal Late Woodland assemblage lean toward the economic exchange model of interregional interaction, leading to interpreting the “exotic materials” as the result of a trait-unit intrusive form of interaction. Although McConaughy does not use the term *Calumet ceremonialism* to characterize the nature of the social relations that motivated his postulated surplus maize production and exchange, his intriguing notion that the nuclear families of this region may have been trading maize for “ideology” is certainly consistent with the theoretical assumptions of Robert Hall’s (1991, 22) notion that “Calumet ceremonialism” would have been useful for establishing adoptive kinship alliances through which such trade and ritual exchange could be effected. In this case, the alliances would have to be treated as somewhat low-level, certainly not between major “chiefly” rulers and the small nuclear families of the Central Illinois Valley.

However, I have serious problems with this interpretation. My main concern is that this exchange model does not explain why a nuclear family would build two structures that contrast in the manner described. I am also very puzzled by the quantity of maize that the nuclear family would have produced to anticipate trading it to a distant region in exchange for ritual. Why would a nuclear family or

even a small set of nuclear families do this? Indeed, could it, given the surplus horticultural labor this would require? Explaining these different house forms, one conforming to the local pattern and the other to a foreign pattern, by saying that these were used for warm and cold seasonal occupation seems to be a significant non sequitur. After all, if the wigwam structures were traditional for the region, then there would seem to be no reason to build a different type of structure, House #1, requiring different construction methods with the wall-trench and standing mud-daubed single post walls in order to occupy it in the warm season. Why not simply build a smaller version of the same traditional wigwam type for summer occupation? Alternatively, if this was a warm-season structure of a nuclear family, why not build a simple standing shelter instead of constructing a basin, wall trench, large roof support posts, and so on? I would add to this the fact that the data are equivocal about whether these structures were occupied in different seasons. The absence of a hearth in House #1, the wall-trench structure, is less than convincing evidence that it was occupied in the warm season since, as the excavators note, the damage caused by modern plowing had almost destroyed the wall trenches, and this suggests that any evidence of a hearth could also have been destroyed, particularly since the house had been burned down, implicating the possibility that any residue of a fire hearth could be masked by the residue of the house burning.

A very different interpretation than the one given by McConaughy and his colleagues dissolves these interpretive anomalies. I specifically address three major key attributes of the site: the co-presence of the wall-trench and bent-pole structures, the large pits, and the mix of both American Bottom Lohmann phase and Terminal Late Woodland Mossville phase ceramics. I propose treating this set of features and artifacts as indicating the Rench site as a *ceremonial nodal locale* under the custodianship of a local autonomous

communal cult sodality or set of communal cult sodalities having particular concern for world renewal ritual. While clearly some of the rituals performed at this ceremonial nodal locale would not be related to world renewal as such, for example, personal spirit quests in the pursuit of sacred powers, rites of passage, and so on, many of the rituals performed there, possibly the majority, would involve the local community's sodalities acting as hosts in the gathering of neighboring autonomous communal cult sodalities, as well as visiting sodalities of distant communities, with the overall purpose of sharing in the performance of critical renewal rituals. This regular gathering of guest sodalities would require both a specialized structure in which the rituals could be properly performed as well as a larger residential structure, something on the order of a "club house" or a "hostel" where members of visiting communal cult sodalities could reside in the village of their hosts for the duration of the ritual cycle.⁵

Interpreted under the Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, given that the wall-trench structure is distinctive to the American Bottom beginning in the Lohmann phase, it suggests that the local communal cult sodality, possibly in cooperation with the set of communal cult sodalities of the communities of the local region that had already been cooperating as regular visitors to the community where this set of features constituting and defining the Rench site was located, had become a primary usufruct franchisee of an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality or alliance of such cult sodalities located in the American Bottom during the later part of the Lohmann phase, which would be possibly the middle or later Mossville phase in local terms. Therefore, these visiting representatives of this American Bottom ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality or alliance would figure as the primary custodial franchiser. Following the initial custodial franchising event, the Rench locale served as

the focus for the secondary custodial franchising to the many other sodalities of the complementary heterarchical communities of the local region, even the distant and more southerly reaches of the local region, who were invited or who requested invitations to participate in these new rituals that the host sodality sponsored. Regular visits from representatives of the distant American Bottom ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality(ies) would be planned, particularly to transfer material resources necessary for the felicitous performance of the Lohmann phase world renewal rituals. Among the material resources would be American Bottom ceramics that played an important, possibly a critical, warranting role in constituting this sacred ritual and, therefore, would account for the Cahokian Red Filmed, Powell Plain, and other Lohmann phase ceramics.

Most importantly, the practical as well as sacred needs that performing such ritual would require could easily and very reasonably account for the large storage pits. McConaughy and his colleagues suggest that these pits stored a surplus of maize and possibly other crops for the purpose of trade with American Bottom visitors. While it is quite likely that such visitors might be provided with maize to sustain their traveling supplies on their return back to the American Bottom, it is also likely that much of this stored food was used to serve the needs of the visiting communal cult sodalities that gathered for the ritual cycles. As noted above, these sodalities might also come from some distance bearing their own maize contributions since the ceramics identified suggest that Terminal Late Woodland groups from rather far afield participated. Hence, much of the maize and other supplies stored in these large pits would serve not only to provide guests with food for traveling back to their distant regions but also to provide for the ritual feasts. Of course, as soon as this perspective is used, the problem of labor recruitment for producing and accumulating this stored food is dissolved. While a nuclear family,

or even a set of nuclear families, in the local village would likely not be able to supply the gardening, harvesting, and construction labor required, the Rench autonomous communal cult sodality and the cooperating sodalities of the communities in the surrounding region would already be caught up in a network of intercommunity *irakúu* sodality alliances and would be able to mobilize the required labor and subsistence resources from across these alliances.

Most importantly, the particular nature of the world renewal ritual, in this case, apparently associated with maize, might explain why Cahokian ritual material was present. Given the commitment to maize production and use, the Mossville phase community occupants of the Rench site, and their neighbors, were probably caught up in intense performances of renewal rites directed to alleviating the risks and uncertainties of the local hydrological regime. Hence, any “foreign” ritual that was specialized to address this problem might quite quickly become popular and be eagerly embraced by the local peoples. I have suggested that one of the central world renewal rituals of the American Bottom was what I have called the *regrowing-of-the-earth ritual* (2006a, Chapter 17). Whatever the actual name the postulated ritual might have had, I have argued that the layout of Cahokia, the Central Precinct with its great palisade, Monks Mound, and the Grand Plaza, as well as both the Kunnemann and the Creek Bottom multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes, may have operated systematically as the monumental media of a complex suite of “regrowing-of-the-earth” rituals. Such rituals might attract the intense interest of Central Illinois Valley communities that were closely dependent on “fine-tuning” a hydrological regime that may have been prone to excessive and/or erratic swings between high-water and low-water levels. Caught up in this specialized ritual, of course, would be ritual for enhancing the fertility of the fields used for maize, and therefore, both forms of world renewal ritual enhancement would be perceived very positively.

The initial activities of the primary custodial franchisee recipients of the American Bottom-derived ritual usufruct copyright in the Central Illinois Valley, therefore, would be represented by the occupants of the Rench site (there are probably others, but the Rench site is the only one widely recognized in the literature). This communal cult sodality would then act as the secondary custodial franchiser by very quickly organizing the autonomous communal cult sodalities of neighboring integrated complementary heterarchical community villages into an alliance. It would be this alliance that would become responsible for the earliest currently known and clearly demarcated Cahokia-style ritual locale, possibly characterized as a cult sodality ceremonial nodal locale encapsulated within the Rench site village. The commitment to the custodial ritual usufruct copyright would also likely initiate the transformation of the mutually autonomous ranked communal age-set cult sodalities of the Rench community to integrate into an *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality*, as described earlier. With the emulation by these groups of the ritual and cult sodality structure of the visiting American Bottom groups, generated by a series of intraregional custodial franchising events, it would not be long before the ritual dynamics initiated at this site would promote a tendency for the Rench community and the neighboring complementary heterarchical communities of the allied sodalities to move globally into the bifurcated articulation settlement modal posture.

Not only does the Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model explain the empirical patterning of the Rench site more coherently than does the notion that it was a nuclear family site caught up in long-distance trade, it can as well retrospectively explain the mortuary data of the Liverpool Lake site. As I suggested above, major defleshing and depositing of bones by the riverside, some of them partially cremated, would be consistent with postmortem human

sacrifice directed to assuaging the spirits of the Beneath World while also invoking the powers of the Above World to reverse the sinking of the land or, its reverse, the rising of the land above the “normal” water level. This practice recalls my earlier discussion of the Huron practice of a similar process of defleshing, cremation of the flesh, and the burial of the bones of those who had died by drowning or freezing. That is, these Huron mortuary data likely represent the expression of a mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process involving a clear example of postmortem human sacrifice. It is not unreasonable to infer that a similar mortuary *chaîne opératoire* ritual process was being manifested in the human residue of the Liverpool Lake site.

The focus of the Maples Mills communities on maize agriculture in the floodplain zone contrasts with the Bauer Branch minimal use of maize. This was not likely the result of the inability of the latter to plant and harvest maize or the limitations of the upland region for growing it. Rather, it likely directly reflected an avoidance strategy on their part and, therefore, had important implications separating the Bauer Branch and Maples Mills/Mossville communities in terms of ideology/worldview. As North American anthropologists have long recognized, maize has been treated by Native North American peoples as a particularly sacred plant. Taboos and imperatives are built into its cultivation, storage, and consumption (Bowers 1965; Hall 1997, 2007; Swanton 1911; Will and Hyde 1964). The minimal usage of maize by the Terminal Late Woodland Bauer Branch communities, who no doubt were perfectly aware of its being used for subsistence by their neighboring Maples Mills/Mossville communities, suggests a deliberate avoidance in using this plant as a staple crop. Therefore, Green and Nolan’s claim that the Bauer Branch communities may have sustained somewhat distant arm’s-length social relations with Maples Mills communities is consistent with my characterization of cultural traditions in Chapter 5 as integrated structures

of collective world beliefs (cosmology), collective deontic principles, standards, and values (ethos), collective perceptions (worldview) and collective intentional strategies (ideology) (2006a, 60-80; 2011, 123-34, 288-92). That is, this arm's-length relation was the expression of mutual suspicion these two different communities groupings had of each other, that despite sharing cosmology↔ethos structure, arose from their holding contrasting ideological subsistence and ritual strategies. A continuing commitment to the traditional ritual-based strategy by the Bauer Branch communities may account for the rather delayed emergence of the La Moine Mississippian variant as many of these upland communities actively avoided interacting with the Maples Mills and the later Mossville phase communities.

However, as Green and Nolan point out, those members of dispersed communities that occupied the region close to the cultural frontier interface might have come to interact more with each other than they did with those of their own more distant cultural community members. Under the complementary heterarchical community perspective, this would be highly likely since the groups that were interacting across the frontier zone would likely be sodalities that sustained relative autonomy vis-a-vis their clans. Hence, Green and Nolan's suggestion is consistent with this notion of ideological variation as marking factionalism; and the emergence of some recognized new style is partly constitutive of the resolution of these surface structurally generated avoidances. In this case, the formation of Sepo ceramics that mark the Eveland phase of the Spoon River Mississippian may have been the outcome of these Bauer Branch-based and Mossville-based sodality groups interacting in the frontier region resolving their ideological differences by finding a compromise that enabled amicable and cooperative interaction—indeed, a cooperation that was promoted and fueled by undertaking and jointly receiving a suite of Cahokian-derived “regrowing-of-the-earth” custodial ritual

usufruct copyrights in a complex custodial franchising event, one that possibly occurred at the Eveland site itself.

In fact, all this suggests reconsidering the patterning of the Bauer Branch settlement data. Is Green and Nolan's fundamental insight reasonable—namely, that communities sharing a similar cosmology and ethos while strongly contrasting in their subsistence ideological strategies, nevertheless, had fairly easy access to each other, or more precisely, their respective autonomous sodalities had relatively easy access to each other across their shared inclusive frontier zones and, therefore, interacted with each more often than with those culturally related groups in the cores of their respective regions? Indeed, I think it is. If so, then can we anticipate there being other elements of the Bauer Branch settlement patterning that fit this notion? I think the answer is clearly yes. I think that all the main empirical points they raise are consistent, in fact, with the view that these were complementary heterarchical communities, and indeed, that the Terminal Late Woodland Bauer Branch communities were already in a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture while their Mossville phase neighbors were still in a more integrated posture. As Green and Nolan point out, the Bauer Branch homesteads were dispersed into loose clusters across the landscape, and the mortuary mound locales that they postulated were the outcome of intergroup alliances were located spatially isolated from these loose clusters. Furthermore, not only was their settlement pattern in the bifurcated posture, their subsistence system was largely avoidance-based in orientation, likely designed to minimize the amount of sacred pollution that gardening would induce. In this case, they maintained the traditional indigenious seed plant cultivation and gathering system and minimized the exposing of the land that would be required to enable subsistence-based maize gardening. Instead, they likely sustained a few small and isolated maize gardens, sufficient for traditional rituals.

It is interesting that Green and Nolan refer to the mortuary mound alliances as consisting of *groups* from communities rather than consisting of communities as such. Possibly I have misread them. However, they make it clear that for those communities on opposite sides of the mutual cultural frontier zone, there would be “groups” in each that were near the common frontier, and it is these who would ally with each other. What kind of “groups” in a tribal community could carry out such alliances without seriously undermining the unity of their own community? I would suggest that these would be relatively autonomous groups (i.e., sodalities). That is, the social conditions that Green and Nolan’s alliance model would require have been thoroughly articulated under the Complementary Heterarchical Community model. If these frontier-zone alliances were, in fact, alliances of sodalities of the neighboring complementary heterarchical communities of these upland zones, then cult sodality heterarchy CBLs would be expected, indicating that the sodalities of the region were already moving toward specializing as world renewal communal cults. This would explain the apparent early pre-Mississippian period emergence of the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture in the region. The dispersed homesteads would be occupied by the kinship-based groups of the Bauer Branch communities, and the mortuary mound locales would be under the custodianship of intercommunity communal cult sodality alliances (i.e., mutualistic heterarchies). This would suggest that the Bauer Branch and Maples Mills/Mossville phase communities occupied neighboring regions while pursuing distinctly contrasting deontic ecological settlement and subsistence strategies, with the former already anticipating the bifurcated posture for minimizing sacred pollution and enhancing the sanctity of the land, while the latter were entrenched in the integrated settlement articulation posture. Much more research is required to empirically ground this suggestion, of course, so I leave it as a hypothesis.

Conclusion

There is one more important question to address. As noted above, McConaughy wondered precisely what the Cahokians gave those in the Rench site in exchange for the large amounts of maize that they would have received. His answer was ritual prerogatives or, as he terms it, *ideology*. I find his equating subsistence trade goods with what amounts to *custodial ritual usufruct franchising*, using my terms for characterizing this exchange, problematic since, in effect, these belong to separate, arm's-length culturally constituted spheres—economic and religious. Clearly, my warranting perspective emphasizes that material goods can have significant ritual meaning. However, I have already argued that the large quantities of food that these storage features could accommodate were not used primarily for economic exchange but for ritual feasting and reciprocal ritual gifting. That is, it sustained the ritual practices for which the local communal cult sodalities were the hosts by serving to support the practical subsistence needs of the gathering of guest communal cult sodalities. Probably significant amounts of this food would have been brought in advance by these visiting outsiders as their contributions to the anticipated sequence of ritual gatherings for the seasonal cycle. That is, the food was earmarked for ritual-related consumption. Therefore, probably very little of this food would be part of the ritual exchange process itself. This ritual exchange would require special material goods that were directly identified as symbolic pragmatic “capital” dedicated to the performance of the type of rituals that the communal cult sodalities performed (the escalation of these performances would itself promote the transformation of these into ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, of course). If the primary custodial franchisers were to be properly reciprocated for their transferring of the critically important ritual usufruct copyright(s) and constituting the local communal cult sodalities as primary franchisees of

different copyrights, as I argued above, then the material goods the latter groups would be required to give would be commensurate with the performance of these rituals. Clearly, it would be to the benefit of the franchisers to be able to bring such materials back to Cahokia where they could then be used to mediate their own world renewal rituals. In short, the Cahokian visitors would be motivated to franchise their custodial ritual usufruct copyrights by their expecting to receive concrete material goods that were part of the ritual process itself. What these goods might be, and the fact that they may have been regularly given as part of ongoing ritual exchanges, will be postulated and argued for as part of my alternative interpretation of the summary description and critique of the Central Illinois Mississippian period. This alternative critique is initiated in Chapter 10 when I interpret the Dickson Mounds site as a postmortem sacrificial CBL of possibly a second-order world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy.

However, rather than leaving the reader in suspense, I will here suggest that the material gifts were likely the bones of the deceased, treated in this case as symbolic pragmatic devices for mediating post-mortem human sacrifice. Such a suggestion should not be viewed as outrageous, given my earlier discussion that a major theme of many creation myths involves the bones of the creator gods and the humans they protected being used to reincarnate both them and the human community. Indeed, it is consistent with both Brown's (2003, 2010) and Goldstein's (2000, 2010) recent interests in secondary burials. Brown treats these as the result of performance art having strong religious-mythical meaning, and Goldstein has treated these as not "real" mortuary behaviors *sensu* funerals, since, as secondary burials sometimes occurring long after death, they were not caused by the deaths of the persons but by some other factor. In her study of Aztalan (2010, 108-110), the outstanding Mississippian site of

southwestern Wisconsin, she strongly alludes to some form of sacrifice, and, although she does not use the term, this would be consistent with my notion of postmortem sacrifice. She also recognizes that the overall paucity of human remains suggests that many are “missing.” This would not be surprising if, in fact, human bones were an important medium of gifting between cult sodalities that were very long-distance interacting agents, as I argue later.

NOTES

1. The Larson site correlates with the later Moorehead phase in the American Bottom chronology, ca. cal. AD 1200-1300. The Moorehead phase is followed by the Sand Prairie phase, ca. cal. AD 1300-1400. However, recently Emerson and Hargrave (2000, 6) raise the likelihood that Cahokia was effectively abandoned by cal. AD 1350 and the whole of the American Bottom was largely abandoned by ca. cal. AD 1400. This means that the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian period continued after the equivalent period was terminated in the American Bottom. Of course, some adjustment is required under the most recent chronology by Esarey and Conrad. See table 7.2.

2. Dating the Mossville phase as ca. cal. AD 1000-1100 is probably an exaggeration. According to Esarey (personal communication, 2010), the Mossville phase was probably much briefer, and as he noted then there are insufficient sites that display Mossville attributes to make a firm estimate. I will leave the dating “as is” here, but from this point on I will work with the shorter period of AD 1050 to 1100, recognizing, as he also notes, that the transition to the Mississippian times was apparently rather abrupt.

3. However, as I discuss shortly, the Bauer Branch phase subsistence practices did *not* include maize as a staple crop, and therefore, strictly speaking, it should be referred to as a Late Woodland and

not a Terminal Late Woodland phase (see table 7.1). Still, it corresponds in time with the Maples Mills phase, which did have maize as a staple crop. To simplify, therefore, I will speak of both Bauer Branch and Maples Mills phases as constituting the Terminal Late Woodland period of the region and accept the absence of maize used for subsistence from the former and its active use for subsistence by the latter not as an anomaly of the terminology but as a historical puzzle to be solved. That is, it may reveal the existence of a social system boundary constituted in part by an ideological subsistence strategic differentiation.

4. While I have no difficulty accepting this description of the settlement system cycle, I would differ with the authors by noting that these would have been complementary heterarchical communities, and therefore, they would consist of relatively autonomous clan and sodality groupings. This means that the settlement pattern, as such, was the manifestation of an integrated community settlement articulation posture. Although it would be empirically very similar to a monistic community polity, embodied in this social structure would be the tendency under particular material conditions to shift into a bifurcated posture. This, of course, is what I am setting out to demonstrate.

5. It should be noted that I am using the term *communal cult* here since I am claiming that the context is an integrated village, and therefore, the sodalities would be mutually autonomous, and there would be no ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality as yet. The Rench site, however, presages the formation of this type of sodality since, according to my model, the custodial franchising transfer would instigate the process of intraregional transfers and the creation of conditions promoting the shift to a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, as I discussed earlier.

CHAPTER 8

The Central Illinois Valley Mississippianization Process: Orthodox View

I will first address the Mississippianization process in the Central Illinois Valley in terms of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, or Chiefdom Polity model. To do so requires both this chapter and a critical assessment in the following Chapter 9. When I have completed this task, I will present the alternative interpretation and explanation, also requiring two chapters—Chapters 10 and 11. The alternative requires applying both the Complementary Heterarchical Community model and the auxiliary Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. The episodic period during which the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley unfolded and developed in the Central Illinois Valley is referred to as the *Spoon River Mississippian period*. And the Eveland phase (ca. cal. AD 1100-1200) is generally treated as the opening stages of this process (Conrad 1991, 120-21). The term is taken from the Eveland site itself, which, as noted earlier, is situated at the base of the western bluffs of the main trench of the Illinois River just upstream from the mouth of the Spoon River (figure 7.1). Other possible sites of this phase are likely embedded as early components of other important later Mississippian period sites (Conrad 1991, 127; 1993, 299-302, 310; Harn 1994, 18, 26-27). The Eveland site is interpreted as the actual locale or, at the least, as representing the type of locale where the actual regularized and intensive contacts between Cahokian and

local Terminal Late Woodland peoples were initiated. As noted in the preceding chapter, it contains local Sepo ware, alongside a rich representation of Cahokian ceramics, in particular Ramey Incised and Powell Plain. The Eveland site has a plaza with residential locales and special purpose “civic” and religious features (Harn 1978, 244; 1991b, 130-34; Conrad 1991, 124, 131; 1989, 100, 105-106). However, it lacks a platform mound. Conrad specifically refers to it as a nodal site, while also recognizing the possibility that other similar sites may exist undiscovered—for example, the Kingston Lake site may have started as a Mississippian nodal site, only later developing into a major Spoon River Mississippian locale displaying the attributes that are treated under the orthodox view as those of a chiefdom polity center. It is notable that the Eveland site has only four or five structures that Conrad (1991, 124-25) refers to as dwellings, with several of these being superimposed. Nevertheless, there are several large public structures in association with the plaza, including two structures referred to as sweat lodges. All these display the classic wall-trench and floor basin Mississippian features. One of the public structures is cruciform in shape, actually composed of four rooms connected to a common central chamber. The cruciform, including even the internal organization of this structure, is very similar to one found in Cahokia associated with Mound 55 (H. Smith, 1969, 49-88). The public structures also display evidence of rebuilding, suggesting some temporal continuity.

The Eveland site has been widely interpreted as a site-unit intrusive settlement locale, probably generated by a small community emigrating from the American Bottom (Harn 1978, 244; 1991b, 141; Conrad 1991, 131). One well-regarded view developed by Thomas Emerson (1991a, 235-36) is that the Eveland site is the administrative and political seat of a Cahokian chief and a few of his supporters who sought refuge in this region after losing in political in-fighting with

other chiefs in Cahokia. Indeed, according to Harn, the permanent sedentary population of the Eveland site was probably no more than 50 people at any one time. "Surface debris on the site is light and dispersed over an area of less than two hectares . . . reconnaissance indicated the presence of few other structures beyond those that were excavated . . . [but there were some] concentrations of ceramic and lithic debris that could represent a small number of additional house locations. Short occupancy by a small number of people is indicated for the Eveland site. It is probable that its resident population was less than 50 individuals, based on the presence of perhaps less than ten domestic structures" (Harn 1991b, 131). Hence, under this view, the Eveland site during the initial stages of the Eveland phase would have been an American Bottom Mississippian sociocultural enclave surrounded by Mossville phase Terminal Late Woodland communities of the region that continued the traditional indigenous way of life by occupying small villages and hamlets. If so, then this means that the only initial change to the settlement pattern would be the introduction of the ceremonial nodal sites of the Eveland type. However, Conrad postulates that there are probably residues of many Eveland phase nodal sites distributed across the Central Illinois Valley and that these did instigate a substantive change in the countryside settlement by the nodal sites promoting the dissolution of the small, nucleated-like villages and the redeployment of their families to constitute multiple dispersed villages. For him then, this initial Eveland phase would see the rapid formation of what I have referred to as a *bifurcated Mississippian type settlement* "distributed across the landscape in dispersed villages, with nodal centers such as Eveland and perhaps Kingston Lake serving as focal points . . . As yet there is no evidence of towns or compact villages such as those in the American Bottom. Dispersed villages are difficult to identify because of the limited area of light debris scatter that normally characterizes their

components and the tendency of shell-tempered pottery to disintegrate rapidly in the plowzone . . . [R]ecent highway excavations have demonstrated the existence of numerous dispersed villages in the hinterlands . . . There could be scores or even hundreds of Eveland phase sites in the Central Illinois Valley that have gone undiscovered or unrecognized” (Conrad 1991, 131).

The collective burial locales (CBLs), typically referred to under the orthodox view as *cemeteries* consisting of graves, both individual and group, containing extended as well as flexed primary and also secondary bundle and isolated bone burials, have been treated as an important component of the settlement pattern. According to Conrad, these came as both mound and nonmound cemeteries and were found both on the bluff tops and in the valley bottom. The bluff top CBLs were distributed usually a few kilometers from each other and have been treated as the cemeteries of the dispersed villages constituting the local communities. “The Beckstead mound 4.8 kilometers up the bluff [from Orendorf] was built at about this time. It yielded twenty-two extended, semiflexed, flexed, and bundled burials and one loop-handled Powell Plain jar, one strap-handled Ramey Incised jar, and two strings of marine shell beads. The Maurice Thompson Mound located just over 4.8 kilometers further up the bluff yielded flexed, bundled, and cremated burials and Powell, Ramey, and St. Clair Plain sherds” (1991, 130). The Beckstead and Maurice Thompson burial mound sites, given the ceramic contents, serve to represent the type of lesser bluff top site that existed during the Eveland phase. I say that these would be “lesser” bluff top sites because they clearly are distinguished from the very impressive Dickson Mounds site, which I examine in some detail in the next chapter. This latter CBL mound site contained an estimated 3,000 burials and was initiated with nonmound Eveland phase burials, probably associated with the Eveland site itself.

As Harn specifically notes, “During the Eveland phase, there is no indication locally of the highly structured community organizational scheme consisting of fortified central towns with plazas and temple mounds that characterized contemporary Stirling Phase Cahokia, or that would characterize succeeding Spoon River Mississippian occupations” (Harn 1991b, 141). Therefore, it was only during the subsequent Orendorf phase (ca. cal. AD 1200 to AD 1300) that the Central Illinois Mississippian settlement pattern first incorporated the distinctive “central town,” and indeed it was the Orendorf site itself where the earliest known of this type of complex locale emerged (figure 7.1). Although Conrad makes no comment about the relation of his postulated ceremonial nodal site center of the Eveland phase and the central town settlement of the subsequent Orendorf and later phases, it would seem that his view would be amenable with the suggestion that the “central town” with its plaza, platform mound, and public structures was the historical result of an overall increase in population size of the postulated typical hierarchical monistic modular polity of the Central Illinois Mississippian system. I return to describe the Orendorf site and the Orendorf phase in more detail in Chapter 11.¹ The Larson site (the eponymous site of the Larson phase, ca. cal. AD 1300-1350) is situated on the bluff top about 2 km southwest of the Dickson Mounds. It displays the mound-and-plaza layout attribute with a number of public structures fronting the plaza, and a palisade. More structures, probably for dwelling, frame the other three sides of the plaza with rows of houses built behind the latter.

The Spoon River Mississippian Settlement System

Harn has carried out a comprehensive study of this region, and based on his survey and excavations, he presents a direct hierarchical settlement articulation model in which a given territorial module

embodies a central core site type at the highest dominance-based hierarchical level along with a series of lower level sites, with each lower level consisting of a category of sites distinguished by size, content, and interpreted function. He postulates that Larson is the *central town* of what he terms the *Larson settlement system* (1994, 28). Distributed along a sequence of finger ridges to the north of Larson is a series of what he terms *primary villages* and associated with each, he argues, is a dispersed set of *subsidiary sites* (1994, 23). These latter sites consist of a rather mixed-bag range of settlement types: small farmsteads, which might be seasonally occupied, and special-purpose task sites, such as hunting stations, gardening camps, and so on. These subsidiary sites, particularly those displaying the residue of special-task activities, are found in all zones from the natural levees and lakesides in the bottom lands of the Illinois River Valley to the bluff ridge and into the back uplands. In contrast, the *primary villages* and a fourth category that he terms the *intermediate settlements* are located largely on or near the high bluff line. The Buckeye Bend site, postulated as a primary village, was apparently the sole exception in terms of location at this time since, unlike other primary village sites, it is found on a terrace of the Spoon River, about 6 km southwest of the Larson site (figure 7.1). The intermediate site category consists of an occupational locale that is smaller than the primary village site type and larger than the subsidiary site type. Intermediate sites are also “intermediate” in function, being neither secondary centers, as he interprets primary villages to be, nor local centers for subsidiary sites. In fact, he treats the intermediate site indeterminately as a type of catch-all settlement category. Some sites in this category he recognizes as possibly rather large seasonal hunting camps. For example, the M.S.D. 1 site on Big Creek, or some others, such as the Fouts site, he recognizes as a loose aggregation of household structures having no apparent social organizational pattern.

The set of sites—representing the full range of types—constituting the Larson settlement system is treated by him as possibly the first full-scale Spoon River Mississippian polity. That is, only following the Eveland and Orendorf phases did this social organization fully emerge, and subsequent to the abandonment of Larson, this organizational template was replicated upstream and downstream. Hence, any subsequent given polity consisted of a central town having one or more platform mounds with an associated plaza. The plaza was encircled on three sides by dwelling-like structures that were usually laid out in straight rows, sometimes one behind the other. Fronting on the plaza on the end nearest the mound there were usually several large public building structures. Apparently, sometimes a site would be abandoned and then reoccupied. Each central town had its associated subordinate primary villages, largely limited to finger bluffs strung along the bluff line and each separated from its nearest neighbor by two or three kilometers. Each of these, including the central town, had associated subsidiary sites, some being domestic-based family houses, others being specialized task sites, and a series of intermediate sites. As noted above, the intermediate sites, which in terms of objective attributes placed them below the primary villages and above the subsidiary sites in the settlement hierarchy, seemed to fill an awkward structural position since it did not “fit” below either the central town site, or the primary village site or above the subsidiary site; that is, it was a functionally and hierarchically anomalous site category.

While among the archaeologists of the Central Illinois Valley region there is some disagreement with Harn’s particular structural and developmental version of this settlement model, there is little dispute over its basic premises: the central towns were the “capitals” of hierarchical monistic modular polities. However, there is considerable disagreement over the complexity of the hierarchical structure

of these polities, their number, and their historical development. For example, Conrad recognizes the chronological relations of Orendorf, Larson, Kingston Lake, and Hildemeyer, effectively accepting that these constitute the historical development of a community whose population migrated and split, constituting what he terms the *Spoon River Mississippian Culture* variant of the Central Illinois Mississippian. However, he considers the more southerly Walsh and the Lawrenz Gun Club sites to be central towns of autonomous polities largely contemporary with the more northerly Larson polity (Conrad 1991, 146). Both he and Harn agree that Crable was probably the final expression of the Central Illinois Mississippian settlement system. However, they do not agree on the complexity of the hierarchical levels of the subordinate towns. Harn's four-tier hierarchy I outlined above is a modification of his original three-tier hierarchical settlement pattern (which I critically examine shortly). Conrad favors an even less complex hierarchy, possibly a two-tiered system. "[T]he Larson community data are best viewed as indicative of a dispersed village pattern in association with a central town that may have been used by most people during times of strife or ceremony" (1991, 142). Of course, both he and Harn see this central town type of site as mediating a significant social structural change, this being, minimally, the emergence of simple chiefdoms.

Another area of some disagreement relates to the mode of occupation of these settlement systems. Harn has been a strong advocate of seasonally cyclic occupation. In particular, he has consistently argued that "central towns" such as Larson were occupied primarily in the cold season while the primary villages and the intermediate settlements of a given modular system were occupied during the warm season. "[T]he major occupation of the central town took place during the cold months and, although there may have been a number of permanent residents in the town, a substantial population dispersed

into the surrounding countryside during warmer weather. Occupation of these outlying areas was nuclear-based at permanent centers (hamlets), which were located in close proximity to or at junctures of a variety of major natural resource zones. Exploitation of these various zones was further facilitated by the smaller semipermanent camps and day-activity stations placed within specific microenvironments" (Harn 1978, 257-58).² Conrad has expressed skepticism in this regard. "Harn . . . [claims that] the Larson community . . . population . . . [amalgamated] in the central town in the winter and . . . [dispersed] during the period from early spring to fall Resolution of the problem is hampered by the fact that there was at least some occupation of the principal town during the summer and the hinterlands during the winter, the relatively small samples available, the general lack of understanding of storage pit longevity, the few good winter indicators available to us, and the fact that nonwinter foods were stored for use during the winter" (Conrad 1991, 142). Apparently in response to this cautionary remark, Harn has pointed out several recent excavations of "subsidiary sites" in which there are indicators of cold-season occupation, suggesting some but relatively few were permanent year-round settlements. "Although some relatively permanent subsidiary sites undoubtedly existed, it is doubtful that either their inclusion or their exclusion would significantly skew population estimates for the total settlement system" (1994, 52).

Critique

While I find many problems with this settlement system model, and these problems are indicated in the somewhat convoluted development of the conceptual framework, as I discuss below, there is one aspect of Harn's direct settlement articulation model that unwittingly harmonizes with the alternative view that I will be arguing. I think it is important, therefore, to initiate this critique with a positive step.

There is an interesting convergence between Harn's model and its seasonally-cyclic settlement claim and the Complementary Heterarchical Community model and the Ecclesiastic-Communal Cult Sodality Heterarchy model in that they would agree on the "part-time" nature of settlement occupation. He does not use the term *transient*, but his model effectively postulates a type of occupational transiency, in this case, caused by a seasonally mobile population. I have specifically argued that, as a cult sodality heterarchy, the mound-and-plaza locale would be sustained by transient occupation, although this pattern would be dependent on the ritual schedule. Of course, if the ritual cycle was keyed into the seasonal cycle, then settlement patternings that our two models postulate would be even more parallel. In any case, it is the consequence on population estimates that is most important. Typically, this is based on estimating the total floor dwelling space in a given region, applying a reasonably estimated number of occupants per m² and then multiplying it by the estimated occupational spaces in the region. The basic premise, of course, is that occupancy is sedentary and permanent. Therefore, the estimate maps the total population of the region at any given time. Should systematic internal transient residency be practiced, however, depending on the structuring of the occupation locales, the mathematical total has to be adjusted. That is, in Harn's case, since the total population—in general—occupied separate cold-season and warm-season housing, and if the unadjusted estimate for the region is 2,000 "sleeping" spaces, then these would actually manifest 1,000 persons occupying the region. In my view, both his and my models of the settlement patterning would be congruent in terms of total population, although, of course, the causes of the transient residential occupancy practice would be very different. This is an example of how a type of empirical patterning can actually have more than one set of causes—the expressions of these types can mimic each other. It

also clarifies why a successful prediction of an empirical patterning based on a hypothesis cannot be treated as validating the latter since another and quite contradictory hypothesis could serve as the basis for predicting the same patterning.

Not recognizing the logical limits of the hypothetic-deductive method is referred to as the fallacy of affirming the consequent. In this case, it simply means that since the premise on which a prediction is made is assumed to be true, then claiming the prediction is valid affirms the premise. However, the very possibility that the same empirical data could be predicted on the basis of a premise that, in fact, is a contradiction of the former, invalidates this testing method. What is required is (1) experimentation in which the conditions are controlled so that alternative causal interference is prevented, and/or (2) using alternative models to explain the same empirical patterning, and specifying the favored model on the basis of explanatory adequacy. The latter is the method I have opted for (i.e., what I have called the *hermeneutic spiral method*).

Of course, the fact that his and my view converge in this way clearly does not mean that I agree with his view. It is now my task to explicate the inadequacy of this dominance-based hierarchical settlement system model. First, this inadequacy is signaled by the somewhat convoluted development of this conceptual framework. I want to stress that the inadequacy of this model does not stem from the way Harn developed it. Rather, it stems from the basic premises of the postulated nature of the communities involved (i.e., being monistic modular polity types), and as I have commented several times, these premises are shared by most archaeologists. Therefore, this critique directly addresses the model and not the modeler. My critique is an essential part of the hermeneutic spiral methodology that I noted above guides my work and by which I establish the validity of my model. Therefore, a critical history of the development

of the Harn model is important here. As noted above, Harn initially constructed a three-tiered settlement hierarchy model: central town–hamlet–camp. Apparently, he decided that the notion of the hamlet lumped together too broad a scope of empirically variable sites, from the Myer-Dickson to the Morton site, from the Fouts to even the Buckeye Bend site. The Myer-Dickson site seemed altogether too complex to be a mere hamlet since, as noted by Harn in a later (1994) publication, it had a cluster of about 20 wall-trench structures, a plaza, a possible platform mound, and even a nearby and very complex CBL—namely, the Dickson Mounds site, containing more than 1,000 Larson-phase burials. The Fouts site, however, was also classed as a hamlet, consisting of a dispersed cluster of 15 wall-trench/basin structures that did not display any formal or coherent pattern. This might still be called a hamlet, but it was much too simple to be classed with the Myer-Dickson site. The upshot arising from this lumping and splitting was to reconfigure the original settlement model. However, this was done using the same monistic modular polity conceptual framework, and therefore, it did not resolve the splitting/lumping problems, while it generated new problems. The “hamlet” category was eliminated by “splitting” it into two new categories, the “primary village” and the “intermediate site.” The primary village now became all those sites that displayed patterning less complex than the central town site, particularly lacking a platform mound, while being more complex than most other sites, in particular, by having the formal plaza-structure pattern minus the platform mound. In fact, the Larson site itself might nicely fit under this category—except that it has a platform mound. Therefore, the Larson site was retained as the sole central town in this region during the Larson phase, and Myer-Dickson, Morton, and Buckeye Bend, all sites with plazas and associated wall-trench structures, but lacking platform mounds, were classed as primary villages—that

is, as second-level administrative and religious centers linking the lower level settlements to the Larson site.

However, this still left a rather mixed empirical bag of sites. Under the new scheme, as noted above, these were subdivided into the “intermediate” and the “subsidiary” site categories. The latter term clearly specifies the lowly social status of these sites—namely, specialized task sites. The intermediate sites, however, are particularly problematic. Some could be termed *hamlets*. For example, Fouts was classified as an intermediate site, along with Keeler, both of which under the older central town-hamlet-camp hierarchy were classed with Morton and Myer-Dickson. In fact, in his commentary, Harn makes it quite clear that the “intermediate settlement” is a nominal category, a sort of “catch-all” that can be used to cover any site that is too small and simple to fit the “primary village” and too large and internally complex to fit being treated as a “subsidiary site.” As he put it, “Many sites of intermediate size between the primary villages and the smaller subsidiary sites are present. In general, these sites lack the internal organization that characterizes the villages, but they are more complex than the smaller sites in terms of gross numbers of residents. Although the physical position of the intermediate settlements mirrors that of the primary villages, this class of sites often appears to be independent of other subsidiaries, and its function is unclear” (Harn, 1994, 22). Indeed, it turns out that this fourth and “lowest” category, the subsidiary site, is also largely a nominal one, simply including all those sites that cannot be fitted into one of the other three categories. They range from individual wall-trench structures, some with interior hearths and some without, to being simple activity locales without any permanent structures and displaying specialized usage in the form of hunting tools (e.g., arrow points), or being in a particular ecological zone (e.g., riverside or lakeside). They form the bulk of the sites recognized and are distributed across all

the ecological zones. "Many appear to be associated with the towns and primary villages, . . . they are radiated in such a diverse manner from the various centers that . . . it is difficult to determine to which larger site each might be associated" (Harn 1994, 39).

While the direct hierarchical settlement articulation model seems to express a rational ordering of settlements, this model does not order the empirical data in a coherent manner, and this is largely because the concepts he develops are chaotic. "A rational [conceptual] abstraction is one which isolates a significant element of the world which has some unity and autonomous force, such as a structure [components internally and necessarily related]. A bad [conceptual] abstraction arbitrarily divides the indivisible and/or lumps together the unrelated and the inessential, thereby 'carving up' the object of study with little or no regard for its structure and form" (Sayer 1984, 126-27). I suspect that variations on his model, for example, reducing the number of levels, would simply replicate the incoherence or, possibly, generate greater incoherence. Two examples of this chaotic "carving" are illustrated in the treatment that several sites receive, in particular Orendorf and Morton. As I noted above, chronologically Orendorf is set as emerging prior to Larson. Under the initial classification model, Harn recognized Orendorf as the earliest known Spoon River Mississippian "central town." Under the revised conceptual structure, while the definition of the "central town" remained unchanged, as a result of fairly extensive excavation at Orendorf, Harn redefined and downgraded it to being a "primary village," as defined in his new classification scheme. Importantly, these new data demonstrate that it displays all the material criteria to count as a "central town," as this is defined under both schemes, except that it lacks one criterion that Harn treats as essential—it lacked a platform mound. According to both the original and revised classification scheme, this absence disqualified Orendorf from being a "central town."

However, the revised classification enabled it to be termed a *primary town*. The Orendorf site was “once considered a central town in the overall settlement scheme However, subsequent excavations [of the mortuary area] have demonstrated that its small platform mound functioned as a substructure of a charnel house marginally located in the burial precinct, rather than functioning as an integral part of a major temple facility located on a plaza within the community core. Orendorf is now considered to be a primary village, a concept that is detailed shortly” (Harn 1994, 21). Apparently, it was this discovery of the absence of a “real” temple platform mound that motivated the new model since, under the old model, it would require reclassifying Orendorf as a *hamlet*. Given that it was a large settlement with many more structures than discovered at Larson, this would indeed be an anomalous matter. It is not surprising that Harn goes on to detail this concept of “primary village.” Primary villages are “large settlements exhibiting planned internal organization. This structuring normally features plazas and large ceremonial buildings, sometimes enclosed within a substantial stockade, but the sites *lack a central temple mound*. One of these important primary villages within the Larson settlement system is Myer-Dickson, which nearly mirrors Orendorf in having planned internal structuring that included an impressive ceremonial building fronting a plaza that was surrounded by rows of houses. Like Orendorf, Myer-Dickson also had a platform mound in its nearby cemetery that presumably supported a charnel house” (1994, 21, emphasis added).

I find a classification system that uses the presence/absence of a single attribute feature, albeit an important one, to be excessively formalistic and rigid, particularly when the social entities being classified share a complex range of formal attributes, while differing on only one. This takes a very formulaic approach that promotes splitting and lumping. Splitting is accomplished by ignoring the

multiple formal similarities among the major empirical objects being classified and favoring one attribute, the essential importance of which is undemonstrated. This immediately suppresses exploring the possible reasons for the absence of this one particular attribute when all the other attributes by which to classify a complex reality are present. This is particularly troubling when, in fact, the “temple platform” that is treated here as the essential criterion of a settlement system being “fully” Mississippian emerges only ca. AD 1300 with the Larson phase, at least 200 years after the initial establishment of the “founding” Mississippian site-unit intrusive outpost, the Ewell site. Where is the coherence of treating a settlement pattern as “Mississippian” when the “key” feature that counts as Mississippian is absent for two centuries? Furthermore, by promoting the platform mound to the position of being the primary criterion of Mississippianization, a new category of site, the “primary village,” is created that, in effect, separates archaeological sites into different social categories that share much more than they do not share. For example, his downgrading of Orendorf from a “central town” to a “primary village” followed a series of intensive surveys and excavations that confirmed that the Orendorf site actually consists of at least five sequential settlement plans that partially overlapped, Orendorf D being the only one that did not since it was built separately from all the preceding plans. However, each plan displayed a large plaza; the structures displayed multiple rebuildings; at least some had palisades, full or partial. It also seems that all these shared an associated mortuary locale with a “charnel structure.” The plazas and the alignments of the rows of houses that incorporate their three sides were oriented according to solstitial turning points, and so on. All these features and attributes are recognized by Harn’s “central town” category. Therefore, despite this intensive work revealing a complex of shared attributes that were equivalent to those of the Larson site,

because this sequence of settlement plans lacked a full-scale platform mound, its absence disqualified Orendorf from being a “central town.” This suggests the incoherence of the orthodox model since it means that a Mississippian social system can exist for 200 years without a central town, supposedly the seat of the ranking chief.

Another case of the inadequacy of this nominal classification is the Morton site. Based on surface survey and the presence of multiple burial mounds, and using this new categorization, Harn interpreted the Morton site as a “primary village” rather than a “hamlet,” meaning that if excavated it should display at least the same complexity as Orendorf. Subsequent excavations by Sharron Santure, Alan Harn, and Duane Esarey did not support this attribution. As they noted, “Harn (1978, 253) had previously included Morton as a hamlet—town like settlements without a platform mound, but probably having rows of houses and public buildings situated around the plaza—in his settlement plan for the Larson Phase” (Santure, Harn, and Esarey 1990, 7). The excavators go on to note that “it was expected that much of the site would be covered with Larson Phase houses and pits. Now, following several years of cultivation and artifact collection, Oneota Bold Counselor Phase artifacts [post-Mississippian] greatly outnumber the Larson Phase artifacts from the site. Although Larson Phase domestic structures and features occur within the area of Oneota occupation, as well as across the surrounding bluff top, the exact nature of the Larson Phase occupation has not been clarified by present investigations.” That is, excavation and survey revealed the absence of even the type of features that Orendorf had (e.g., rows of houses, plazas, public buildings, serial reconstructions, and so on). The excavators avoid accounting for the anomalous nature of Morton under Harn’s classification system by simply concluding that “the exact nature of the Larson Phase occupation has not been clarified by present investigations.” They go on to suggest that the “analysis of settlement

type is inconclusive due to the restricted spatial perspective and the small artifact assemblage” (1990, 30).

I take issue with their conclusion. Even though the total areal excavation was limited, they noted that they had devoted several years to surface collecting the well-cultivated area only to find that “Oneota Bold Counselor Phase artifacts greatly outnumber the Larson Phase artifacts from the site.” They even noted that scattered “Larson Phase domestic structures and features occur within the area of Oneota occupation.” Therefore, it seems very reasonable to me to conclude that if any “rows of houses and public buildings situated around the plaza” existed, this combined excavation and surface surveying would have revealed them. In my view, the conclusion is clear—Morton does not fit into the current model. What is required is reconceptualizing the social reality that was responsible for the empirical patterning of this settlement system. However, the very rigidity of the current direct settlement articulation model and the commitment to it that most of the archaeologists of this region seem to have work against any fundamental “in house” reconceptualization occurring. Indeed, part of this commitment and rigidity probably arises from the taken-for-granted nature of the core premises of the conceptualization of Native North American communities that many Euro-American archaeologists have. These largely unexamined assumptions strongly occlude the possibility of even forming alternative theoretical possibilities. After all, what else could a traditional or, for that matter, a prehistoric Native North American community be like but a monistic modular polity type? “Practical” (i.e., Euro-American cultural) know-how informs us that exclusive territories and kinship lineal descent structures are fundamental to the continuity of any preindustrial community. The only variation allowed for in this scheme is the egalitarian/hierarchical contrast (which I further critically address in Part III).

I consider this muddle over the social nature and standing of Orendorf and Morton, etc., and of the “primary village” concept as such, to exemplify the inadequacy of this conceptual scheme. In effect, this analysis counts as a falsification of this scheme (Sayer 1984, 126-27). This is not to deny that a direct hierarchical settlement articulation model is itself inadequate. It can very well apply to some social systems (e.g., a traditional West African chiefdom-type system). Rather, I am claiming that it is not adequate in accounting for the empirical data constituting the settlement patterning generated by the Mississippianization process. This means that an alternative model is required that enables us to structure the data into a more coherent pattern. For example, the categories of “central town” and “primary village” in this direct settlement model represent, in my view, an irrational splitting into two separate social entities what are probably minor variants of the same type. The empirical differences likely developed historically as ideological innovation developed and do not constitute a core structural difference. Hence, the categories of “central town” and “primary village” individually mask variations that would probably, if recognized, actually reveal the insufficiency and inadequacy of the central premises of the four-tiered model, the main inadequacy arising from the premises of the monistic modular polity perspective, such as the claim that settlements were hierarchically organized in the direct settlement articulation mode, that each settlement system constituted a “closed” territorial unit, and that the dominant social structural and cultural axes were kinship-based organizations, such as lineages and clans, structured by differential ranking.

Other Puzzles

As noted above, the central town settlement is described in unitary terms as having several key features: a “temple” platform mound,

a plaza, public structures fronting the latter, dwelling structures in rows incorporating three sides, with the third side open, a palisade, and so on. Although the palisade is not identified as an essential feature, when it exists it is described as enclosing the settlement, thus emphasizing its unitary nature. However, this description leaves out too much in that it does not account for major components of the settlement pattern, and furthermore, promotes ignoring attributes that, in fact, are anomalous under this definition of the “central town.” For example, Harn notes that at the Larson site there are at least three rather isolated sets of apparently standard wall-trench structures organized spatially in a row-like manner (Harn 1994, 51). One set of 30 east-west structure basins is west of the site; and the other two sets are 200 m and 600 m northwest of the “town center.” All these seem to be far enough away from the main site to count as separate sites or, at least, as requiring auxiliary characterization, explanation, and interpretation. Those who accept the basic premise that the “central town” was, in fact, the political, economic, and religious core of a unitary polity apparently have very great difficulty explaining these additional components. Indeed, they are usually simply mentioned with the suggestion that such outliers might represent a “special social group.”

Now this attempt to rescue the primary model is not carried out by simply ignoring the existence of major data that it cannot adequately explain. Rather, it is done by recognizing the data and then arbitrarily introducing a factor that has no grounding in the theoretical model. In this case, Harn simply expands the estimated areal size of the “central town” by adding these outliers and claims that the total community had a 50 ha area. But this seems highly arbitrary and problematic, given the fact that treating this large area as one site entails recognizing the spatial separation of these major outliers from the supposed core of this hierarchical, centralized community.

He arbitrarily warrants this simply by postulating a series of zones. There is the core zone where the “town proper” is concentrated. Then the inner periphery is defined, marked by a fairly heavy midden. Finally, the outer periphery is noted, usually having rather limited debris scatters, as well as including the isolated rowed sets of wall-trench basins noted above. In this description, therefore, the Larson site is arbitrarily expanded or reduced to incorporate possibly three separate major sites into the principal site that do not if treated individually fit any of the categories in the settlement system scheme. Furthermore, these actual outliers have quite heavy midden. Harn comments that the furthest two are so midden heavy that only excavation would reveal the full patterning. He then added to the notion of inner and outer peripheral zones the recognition that there are scattered individual house structures. None of this complexity is actually explained by this ad hoc adding of features, and certainly it is not included in the definition of the “central town,” nor does it enlighten us as to precisely what the nature of this complex constellation of features constituted. In my view, according to the “central town” definition, none of the above additional patterning should be recognized as part of the Larson site—that is, under the definition of the “central town” type, it should not be there. However, by incorporating the inner and outer peripheries into the estimate of the total size of the “central town,” Harn’s model assimilates them without explanation. Hence, a great deal of archaeological patterning is simply subsumed as some undefined part of the “central town,” and thereby it is not accounted for by the “central town” concept, or to be more precise, it is not amenable to the premises that underwrite this settlement model—namely, those of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, or as I have also termed it, the *Chieftdom Polity model*.

A similar obscuring of patterning is apparent in the application of the “primary village” notion. I noted above the case of the Morton

site. The excavators of the 1990 report even predicted that it should display the features defining a settlement of this “primary village” type. However, excavation and survey revealed a set of dispersed Mississippian period sites that, at best, would fit as examples of the intermediate settlement type. Nevertheless, Harn’s later 1994 work continued to interpret this site as a “primary village.” A similar confusion arises with the Myer-Dickson site, which he classifies as a “primary village” on the grounds that, while it is associated with a major mortuary site, the Dickson Mounds, and at least one cluster of 20 row-organized dwelling-like structures and a large public structure, it has no “temple” mound, although he recognizes that one of the Myer-Dickson site components has an Eveland phase platform-like mound. The Myer-Dickson site is estimated to be about 40 hectares in size. Conrad has noted that “[d]iscontinuous, although in some areas extensive, excavations of the Myer-Dickson site suggest that it was a loosely organized collection of private and public buildings, square grounds, and open spaces extending over forty hectares along the Illinois River bluff around Dickson Mounds. One square ground was surrounded by perhaps twenty apparently private structures and a very large (14.6 x 24.7 meters) building seemingly aligned with the summer solstice. Five massive posts along the axis of the buildings were set in large pits with insertion ramps” (Conrad 1991, 142).

Characterizing the site as “a loosely organized collection of private and public buildings, square grounds, and open spaces” hardly fits under the definition of a “primary village.” At best, the concept might apply to the 20 structures and the large building structure; but the latter seem to be excessive for a “primary village” which, according to Harn’s definition, was used primarily as the warm-season base for scattered nearby subsidiary sites focused on subsistence procurement activities. Instead, it may be closer to a “central town.” Of course, because of the absence of a temple foundation platform mound,

the classification scheme does not allow this. Finally, it should be noted that while formally the presence of the Dickson Mounds site conforms with Harn's claim that "primary villages" are associated with burials, his model has emphasized the limited numbers of such burials at a "primary village." Therefore, the fact that the Dickson Mounds site has an estimated 3,000 burials presents problems in identifying the Myer-Dickson site as a "primary village." Even if this claim is accepted, which I do not, his population estimate for it of approximately 400 occupants does not suggest that this population could be responsible for the estimated 1,000 Larson-phase deceased in the spatially associated Dickson Mounds site. This is particularly the case when the Myer-Dickson site occupation period is noted by him to have been short, possibly less than a generation (Harn 1994, 55-56). Based on a high annual mortality rate of 5%, he estimates that the population would take 50 years to provide enough deceased to make up the Larson phase burials of the Dickson Mounds site. He then proposes a very high mortality rate of 15% to reduce the required time to a 10+ year period. However, I find this to be extremely problematic and arbitrary—a matter of fitting the model to the data. Interestingly, he suggests a solution but does not follow it up, this being that the Dickson Mounds site may have been "receiving burials from other nearby sites, such as Larson" (1994, 55). While I am going to pursue this line of argument later—namely, the possibility of long distant sources of mortuary deposits—one of the limitations of the argument under his model is that, according to his seasonal model of occupation, the Myer-Dickson population would already be counted as part of the Larson site population. He notes this by saying that, in fact, the only way 1,000 Larson-phase deceased could be provided in a 10-year period is if "all the major occupations of the primary villages [of the Larson settlement system] had been contemporaneous" (1994, 55). However, this would mean effectively reducing the active

occupation of the “primary villages,” the intermediary sites, and the “central town” of total Larson settlement system to a mere 10 years.

Just as the key concepts expressed by the terms *central town* and *primary village* discourage a reasoned and coherent explanation of the complexity of the empirical data that make up actual sites classified in this way, so also do the concepts expressed by the terms *intermediate settlement* and *subsidiary site*. Originally Fouts was treated as a *hamlet* and then when the latter term was replaced with *primary village*, Fouts was downgraded one level to being an *intermediate settlement*. Fouts consists of 15 house basins, and they are somewhat dispersed, although within immediate view of each other. However, the way these house basins are spatially distributed can easily support the claim that several of them could count as individual “intermediate settlement” sites and others as clusters of such sites. Conrad describes the site in these dual terms. “The house pits scattered over approximately four hectares are grouped in apparently nonrandom clusters of two ($n=1$), three ($n=3$), and four ($n=1$). It is possible that the cluster of four actually represents two clusters of two, but the bilateral symmetry of the arrangement suggests that they were meant to face each other across a small courtyard. With the exception of a broad crescent arrangement that excludes the cluster of four, no patterning of arrangement is discernible. The remaining four house pits are located about ninety meters from the rest across a ravine” (Conrad 1991, 142). The problem is, the “subsidiary site” concept is a major catch-all, embracing “isolated” farm dwellings, such as some of the outliers of the Fouts site, as well as a mixed-bag of special task locales interpreted as hunting stations, gardening stations, and so on. Thus, recently Harn excavated the dispersed cluster of “subsidiary sites” referred to as the Norris Farms sites. Some of them, such as Norris Farms 26 and 27, were dwelling sites, apparently not significantly different from those of the Fouts site. He treats Nos. 26

and 27 as individual sites, probably because they are spatially more distant from each other than are the dwelling structures of the Fouts site. However, they are also on a larger, more accommodating part of the bluff top and could quite reasonably be treated as a type of dispersed hamlet or, in Harn's terminology, an *intermediate site with dispersed dwellings*.

I noted above that seasonality of residential occupation was invoked by Harn to address problems that this chaotic scheme has generated. Strictly speaking, however, it is not his particular direct hierarchical settlement articulation model that is the problem. Rather, as I noted earlier, the problem resides in any version of the hierarchical monistic polity model. Both Conrad, who promotes a simple two-leveled version, and Harn recognize the mixed nature of the occupational data, raising the issue of whether this was a sedentary year-round or cyclic seasonal system. The common factor at work here is that both are committed to a monistic modular view that treats sites as occupied by kinship-based groups. Therefore, only two possibilities exist: sedentary occupation year round or seasonal occupation entailing abandoning the set of sites occupied in one season while the same component groups move to the seasonally complementary site or set of sites. However, both views confront empirical data that contradict their claims. Harn chooses cyclic occupation, arguing that most of the population of Larson occupied that settlement only in the cold season and abandoned it in the warm season, choosing to distribute themselves among those sites he classes as "primary villages," "intermediate sites," and "subsidiary sites." As I noted earlier, Conrad has expressed some skepticism in this regard on the basis that the empirical evidence for seasonality is ambiguous (1991, 142), and in fact, more recent excavation has established that many of Harn's "intermediate settlements" and "subsidiary sites" display interior heating and cold-season faunal and floral procurement while

their “next door neighbor” sites of the same order display no interior heating features and warm-season floral and faunal procurement. In fact, this is the case for the Norris Farms 26 and 27 sites mentioned above. They are only about 200 m apart. “Norris Farms 26, experienced sporadic reoccupation through several generations before and during the Larson phase There is some suggestion that its functional emphases also shifted Changing emphases on seasonality may also be indicated involving both summer and fall-winter occupations. This is contrasted to the situation at Norris Farms 27, a typical bluff-edge subsidiary site. Seasonal indicators at that site included summer-ripening plants, immature animals, a variety of other warm weather fauna, external cooking facilities, and polished hoe flakes. A few nuts were present to suggest that its occupation may have extended into early fall” (Harn 1994, 42).

Interestingly, the contrasting seasonal occupational data displayed by these two neighboring Larson-phase sites are found in other equivalent circumstances. Hence, structures in one “primary village” may display only warm-season indicators while at another “primary village” there will be cold-season indicators. As I noted above, this suggests that while Harn may be correct to say that cyclic occupation of settlement sites occurred, it certainly does not seem to be keyed into seasonality but, instead, cuts across it. That is, separate but similar neighboring sites of the same categorical level can display opposing seasonal occupational data. As I detail later, this applies not only to the “intermediate” and “subsidiary” site levels but also to the “primary village” and “central town” levels. Hence, while Harn may well be correct concerning some sort of mixed or cyclic occupation pattern, his classification system is unable to accommodate to or explain its particular nature.

Conclusion

I have focused on Harn's model as a particular example of the interpretation of the nature of the Mississippian period settlement pattern of the Central Illinois River Valley because his is the most fully articulated expression of what apparently most archaeologists assume was the case. Of course, I have made it abundantly clear that I take issue with this view, and I have postulated that the Terminal Late Woodland–Mississippian period transition manifests the shift from an integrated to a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture and the subsequent development of the Mississippian period of the Central Illinois Valley occurred as the entrenchment of this bifurcation. Shortly, I will readdress some of these anomalies and show how they are dissolved by my alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models and the auxiliary Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. However, before completing this particular hermeneutic spiral, since the purpose of this book is to account for Mississippianization in regions that are distant from the American Bottom source, it is necessary first to go beyond the above descriptive characterization of the Terminal Late Woodland–Mississippian period transition with a summary of the primary explanation under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity or, as I am also calling it, the *Chieftdom Polity model*, of how and why this process occurred. As I noted earlier, the primary mechanism that has been proposed is migration (Hall's adoptive kinship model is treated in the literature as auxiliary).

Therefore, I must first summarize and critique what I will call the Migration model. It comes in three versions. This will be followed by a summary and detailed critical analysis of the two primary lines of evidence in support of this model. These two lines are derived from the Dickson Mounds mortuary site. First, the patterning of the treatment of the deceased in this latter site is generally explained under

the Chiefdom Polity model in funerary paradigm terms (i.e., as resulting from its being the cemetery CBL of a chiefdom-type community), and second, it is claimed that the patterning of anatomical forms of the deceased demonstrates an emigration of a chiefdom-based community. I complete this critique by critically addressing and refuting these claims in the next chapter. In the subsequent Chapter 10, I present the alternative account by treating the settlement patterning as the outcome of a process of custodial franchising of “foreign” ritual usufruct copyrights, as postulated under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. I partly demonstrate the validity of this claim by reinterpreting the patterning of the Dickson Mounds site and demonstrating that it is most coherently understood and explained as the postmortem sacrificial CBL of a second-order cult sodality heterarchy that emerged and developed in the Central Illinois Valley. In Chapter 11, I confirm this interpretation by critically addressing a number of puzzles concerning the overall settlement patterning of the Central Illinois Valley. These puzzles arise from the Chiefdom Polity model. I use the Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models and the auxiliary Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model to explain the Orendorf site as well as several other major sites, thereby dissolving the puzzles. The completion of this task ends Part II of this book—from Cahokia to Larson. I then turn to Part III—from Cahokia to Moundville—by applying the same hermeneutic spiral methodology—and the same set of models, orthodox and heterodox, to the Terminal Late Woodland and Late Prehistoric period of the Southeast, focusing on west-central Alabama with particular emphasis on the Black Warrior River Valley and its premier Mississippian period site, Moundville.

NOTES

1. The concept that this term *central town* expresses is developed by Alan Harn (1994, 30), who, in his most recent and comprehensive discussion of the post-Eveland phase settlement pattern, has re-classified and “downgraded” Orendorf from being a “central town,” as he initially classed it, to being simply a “primary village.” I discuss his reasoning for doing this later. When I present my alternative view of all this, I will treat it as the earliest known of these major Spoon River Mississippian-type sites—that is, probably a second-order cult sodality heterarchy.

2. It is notable that while Harn wrote this in 1978, he has made no significant change in his seasonality views. All that is necessary here is to change the term *hamlet* to *primary village* and add the term *intermediate settlement*, and the statement would express the same position that he has given in his more recent report (Harn 1994, 52-53).

CHAPTER 9

The Migration Thesis and the Dickson Mounds Site as a Cemetery CBL: A Summary and Critique

Most archaeologists using one or another version of the Chiefdom Polity model favor and are proponents of migration as a mechanism of the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley region. Given the empirical data marking the initiation of this process that I reviewed earlier, the migrants of choice are taken to be from an American Bottom chiefdom-based community, likely Cahokia itself. Of course, the Calumet Adoptive-Kinship model is also seen as defining a relevant mechanism in this case. However, I have already noted that this type of one-on-one fictive kinship-based ceremonialism would probably be seen by most proponents of the chiefdom perspective as playing an ancillary long-distance alliance role. Therefore, the main contender is migration, and of course, the alternative explanation under the complementary heterarchical community view forefronts as the primary social mechanism the transfer of ritual usufruct copyrights by means of custodial franchising among transregional ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities.

Under the Chiefdom Polity model, there are at least three variants of how migration instigated and promoted this Cahokian–Central Illinois Valley relation. One has been presented by Alan Harn (1975), one by Lawrence Conrad (1991), and the third by Thomas Emerson (1991a, 1991b). I treat these as three versions of the Migration thesis, and they all see migration as flowing into the Central Illinois Valley

from, in all probability, the American Bottom.¹ However, they differ in the precise nature and motivation of the migration and the impact it had on the local indigenous communities. The views of Harn and Conrad are most opposed in characterizing this impact; while Emerson's view tends to be a compromise of the other two. Harn's view is the most moderate in regard to the scale of the postulated migratory intrusion and the scope and depth of its impact on the local Terminal Late Woodland sociocultural system. He sees migration as having only a triggering effect that introduced changes that had mitigated or limited deep structural consequences. He specifically argues that this initial intrusive migration probably amounted to about 25 people, possibly no more than 50 at the maximum, and that while they certainly introduced some new styles and techniques, particularly in the production of Mississippian ceramics, these were probably accepted because they were in harmony with processes of change that were already occurring (Harn 1975, 426).

In contrast to Harn's moderate or mitigated view, Conrad takes an approach that interprets the initial Mississippian assemblage as the outcome of a major migration having radical or deep political, social, cultural, and religious structural impact. "The dominant elements in the Central Illinois Valley Middle Mississippian culture are derived from the American Bottom region through the mechanism of population movement. Evidence indicating this includes the simultaneous introduction of new ceramic, artifactual, and architectural complexes while the previous ones were present in unaltered form; the introduction of a concept of theologically based coercive force that was unknown among the indigenous late Woodland bands, but existed at Cahokia (e.g., sacrifice of in-group members); and the sudden appearance of physically distinct people" (Conrad 1991, 119). In this view, the Cahokian migrants constituted an elite military community with strong sacrificial religious practices. Therefore, the rather

abrupt appearance of the Mississippian assemblage marks the Spoon River Mississippian as a colony. To support the claim of his model, he argues that Harn's settlement model is misleading. Fieldwork has demonstrated a much more dispersed settlement system during the Eveland phase than is allowed for by Harn's model, one that would suggest that the size of the Mississippian immigrant group was much larger than the size favored under Harn's model (1991b, 131). Finally, as noted in Chapter 7, Conrad interprets the data as reflecting a dual polity system—namely, the Spoon River and the La Moine River Mississippian variants. In effect, in Conrad's view, the Spoon River and La Moine River Mississippian polities were colonies whose power elite originated from the American Bottom and who used the indigenous Terminal Late Woodland commoners to extract local surpluses. Combining these with goods drawn in from further north and west, they transferred this wealth to the American Bottom, thereby serving the economic and political needs of the ruling chiefs at Cahokia (1991, 128, 131). He does, however, claim that this characterization of the impact of the migration was limited to the early Eveland phase and by the Orendorf phase the Central Illinois Valley chiefdom polities were operating more or less autonomously of Cahokia.

The model that Thomas Emerson (1991a, 229-30, 235; 1991b, 179-80) presents also claims that the Eveland site was the consequence of a migration from Cahokia and, therefore, that the Spoon River Mississippian system was instigated by a foreign incursion. However, it takes a different tact that seems to hover between the moderate view that is promoted by Harn's model and the more radical view of interpolity foreign dominance and indigenous subordination that Conrad's model proposes. Emerson's model also notes that the Eveland intrusion was not the first Cahokian contact with the Central Illinois Valley, in this case, referring to the Rench site empirical data

(1991a, 223). Still, Emerson does not see that this early Rench site type contact made any significant cultural impact on the indigenous Terminal Late Woodland communities of the Central Illinois Valley, although it may have served to open friendly channels of communication that facilitated the occurrence of the later migration. In short, it was not until an intrusive group of what he claims were refugees led by their chief or chiefs fleeing from Cahokia as the loser or losers in American Bottom factional political competition that the impact of the Cahokian way of life was more fully felt by the local population. It worked primarily by the immigrants' practices instigating a process by which the indigenous communities in the Central Illinois Valley emulated this introduced culture (Emerson 1991a, 235-36; 1991b, 178-80; 1997b, 51, 59-60; Farnsworth, Emerson, and Glenn 1991, 117). In effect, the immigrants reproduced the style of life that they had abandoned in the American Bottom by introducing this style to the indigenous peoples, and according to the logic of this argument, the newcomers would have been the enemies of those from whom they fled and left behind in Cahokia. For this reason, the newcomers would have promoted friendly alliance with the local leadership while sustaining their enmity with the distant Cahokian factions that forced them to flee the American Bottom.

In sum, all three versions of the Migration model take for granted that the interaction was the result of a sociocultural intrusion organized in terms of dominance-based hierarchies of social power and prestige. This premise is clearly articulated in a key human osteological study of the human remains revealed by the excavations of the Dickson Mounds. Robert Blakely (1973, 160-61) has treated these mortuary deposits of individual and group burials as funerary in nature. The burial pits were graves, and Conrad (1972, 97) has even explicitly argued that the clusters of burials were composed of the deceased of constituent kin groups of the community. The

identification of the burials as the collective graves of individuals related by kinship underwrites Blakely's central concept of "breeding population." That is, presupposing a monistic community perspective, his comparative formal analysis of a sample of the estimated 3,000 individual burials of the Dickson Mounds was directed to discerning whether these burials manifested one or more separate *breeding populations*, the implication being that if there was more than one, then these would be discrete because they constituted at least two effectively mutually exclusive monistic communities, one being of the indigenous peoples and the other of peoples who had migrated into the valley. This study is relied upon by much of the Mississippian period archaeology of this region to support the basic premise of the migration thesis, including the proponents of the above three versions (Blakely 1973, 161; Conrad 1991, 130-31; Farnsworth, Emerson, and Glenn 1991, 114). Therefore, in order to critique the migration thesis, and as part of critiquing the Chiefdom Polity model explanation of the Mississippianization process of the Central Illinois Valley, I now turn to a summary and in-depth critique of the Dickson Mounds treated as a cemetery CBL and of Blakely's osteological interpretation of the deceased as manifesting at least two socially different and biologically discrete communities. I refer to his analysis as the *Discrete Breeding Populations Mortuary model*. This will be followed in the next chapter by presenting the alternative account of the same data under the Cult Sodality Heterarchy and the associated Custodial Franchising models.

The Dickson Mounds Site as a Cemetery CBL

Measured in terms of content, size, complexity, and historical development, the Dickson Mounds site is one of the most important CBLs in the Central Illinois Valley. As noted earlier, it is situated on the western bluffs overlooking the junction of the Central Illinois and

Spoon Rivers, and therefore, it also overlooks the Eveland site at the base of this bluff. In fact, Eveland phase mortuary deposits probably were the earliest of the long-term accumulation of mortuary deposits that generated this CBL site. Harn (1980, 76) has estimated that the total content as being over 3,000 individual mortuary deposits. Many of these, probably the majority, are extended, and many were apparently wrapped quite tightly in some form of mortuary shroud. "The arms of extended burials are often at the sides and legs extended, but frequently the body was so tightly wrapped at the time buried that the arms are drawn either across or under the body with hands either over the pelvis or under the hips, the shoulders nearly to the face, and the legs crossed" (1980, 58). Although apparently no residue of these wrappings has been found, they were probably a combination of binding ties and a shroud-like textile or animal hide, and over the centuries, of course, these decayed. However, it is important to note that there also were many flexed, semiflexed, and bundle mortuary deposits. Even more important, in my view, is that there were as well quantities of disturbed skeletal parts and even loose and unrelated human bones, and many of these disturbed deposits were the result of prehistoric and not historic interventionist activity. There were also many artifacts with no associated human remains, although probably there originally were. If so, the human remains had been removed and the artifacts left behind. Harn believes that many of the loose bones were the result of those using the Dickson Mounds apparently digging into prior mortuary deposits, disturbing these, and then making another mortuary deposit in the same pit. "Many bundles of bones and partially disarticulated bodies accompany mass graves, suggesting that the remains of some people were either treated differently than others prior to interment or were exposed for some time before burial. These bodies may have been placed in predesignated locations (a charnel house?) at death and

their flesh allowed to decay, or they may represent reexcavated burials or persons who died away from the immediate area” (Harn 1980, 76; also see Cobb and Harn 2005, 47-48, 50). Conrad has also noted that many of the extended burials were apparently accompanied by bone bundles or bone piles, in many cases of infants and children (1972, 21-22, 97).

Although most of the current literature treats the Dickson Mounds site as a large cemetery CBL, there is normally a distinction made between those deposits found in the ground (i.e., the “cemetery” as such) and those mortuary deposits that were found in the mounds proper (i.e., the “cemetery mounds”). However, this distinction is not recognized as having any particular relevance under the cemetery CBL notion since almost all of the burials are treated as different ways of terminating the same mortuary practice, a funeral, or, alternatively, as indiscriminately disturbing previous funerary grave burials. As a mortuary locale, however, the spatial organization of the Dickson Mounds displays a rather unique pattern for an Illinois Valley mortuary mound cluster. In this part of the Midwest, the bluff top edge “ecotone” zone was used for several thousand years for mortuary deposition so that, from the middle Archaic through to the Late Woodland, mortuary depositing in bluff top mound and nonmound CBLs was very common. While Middle Archaic mortuary deposits are usually unmounded, although sometimes having minor stratified accumulations, the more recent CBLs are composed of sets of separate but clustered mounds spaced slightly apart from each other. Many of these date to the Middle Woodland period and contain clear indicators of the Hopewellian assemblage.

The earliest mortuary deposits of the Dickson Mounds site, in fact, were actually burials in pits dug into the surface of the bluff. There are apparently three unmounded “cemetery” CBL components. All these are probably Mossville/Eveland phase deposits. The rest of the

mortuary deposits are contained in 11 or so discrete but spatially associated mounds. These partially overlap each other, clearly implicating a sustained but differential usage over time (Blakely 1973, 53-54). Despite this stratigraphy, however, the interface between a lower mound and a mound partially overlapping it is often not clear (Conrad 1972, 22). Furthermore, it seems that the range of ceramics that accompanied many of the individual mortuary deposits in the same mound represented more than one ceramic tradition, possibly three or more. In some cases, a multiple burial mortuary deposit might have ceramics of each tradition accompanying different particular burials. This combination has made working out a firm chronological stratigraphy very difficult. To one side of the earliest of the “cemetery” features are Mounds A and B. These may have been contemporary and probably correlated with the Eveland phase, along with Mound C. Apparently Mound D was later than Mound A but earlier than Mounds E and F. These both had Powell Plain ceramics, and this would suggest that they were also Eveland phase mounds, with Mound F overlapping, demarcating the early Orendorf phase. Mound L was a somewhat anomalous feature. It was in the form of a low platform without any mortuary deposits contained in it and it superimposed Mounds A and B as well as one of the premound “cemetery” components. Mound H appears to have been a later extension to it. One of the initial mortuary CBL components was partly superimposed by Mound L, and the two others are partly superimposed also, one under the northeast corner of Mounds L and H and the other about 10 m northeast of Mound D (Blakely 1973, 45). This does not complete the description of the relevant mortuary patterning of the Dickson Mounds CBL. I will extend this description later as part of completing my critique of treating this site in terms of its being a cemetery CBL and as part of my presenting the alternative postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* interpretation. I

will now focus on Blakely's treatment of the site as embodying two discrete cultural and mortuary populations.

The Discrete Breeding Populations Mortuary Model

Robert Blakely's research goal was to establish "what is the nature and degree of the biological relationship between the Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian populations" and "what are the biological and extrabiological causal factors?" He initially defined these two populations on the grounds of associated artifacts and mortuary treatment. He lays out his research program by suggesting that there were three possible answers to the former question, and choosing which was the correct answer was the goal of his dissertation.

(1) [T]hat there is no closer biological relationship than one would expect to find between any two continuous breeding populations; if true, this would argue for population replacement accompanying and accounting for the cultural transition;

(2) that the two groups share a sufficient number of biological attributes to suggest that the Middle Mississippians were evolutionary descendants of the Late Woodland population, indicating that changing selective pressures and/or mating patterns were induced by the diffusion of new ideas and practices into the Central Illinois Valley; or

(3) that some combination of (1) and (2) took place, allowing for both gene flow and local evolution.

He added a corollary to his central question by asking, "How diversified were the individuals within each of the two populations at any given time and what were the forces that produced this intergroup variation?" (Blakely 1973, 2-3).

At the time of Blakely's work, about 1,000 burials had been exposed, including the burials that Harn and Conrad had excavated during the 1960s. Blakely (1973, 54) drew his sample from 492 of these approximately 1,000 burials. His sampling selection procedure was quite rigorous since he reduced the 492 that he started with to a grand total of 95. This was the result of first requiring that a burial be accompanied by a skull since the latter was used as the basis of the comparative morphological analyses of the two culturally-defined burial groups that his sorting procedure generated. Furthermore, the skull had to lack indications that the deceased had been subjected during its life to any cultural practice of head deformation. Even if a burial passed these criteria, it was excluded if it was assessed as a female, or if it was assessed as a preadult (i.e., an infant or child). Finally, even if a burial was an adult male with a skull indicating no culturally motivated deformity, it was dropped from the sample selection process if it had no associated artifacts, these being necessary in order to definitively class it as one or the other cultural group, either "Sepo Late Woodland" or Middle Mississippian. It was this rigorous set of criteria by which he reduced the total initial sample of 497 to 95. He then proceeded to sort these 95 into his two basic culturally defined burial populations (1973, 147).

As noted above, his question was whether these two mortuary populations, defined in terms of "cultural" distinctions, consisted of "two continuous breeding populations" (which I have respecified as two discrete breeding populations), or if "the two groups share a sufficient number of biological attributes to suggest that the Middle Mississippians were evolutionary descendants of the Late Woodland population." Accordingly, he sectorized the total sample by using the two predominant contrasting types of burial treatment accorded to full bodies: (1) extended/supine burials and (2) flexed/semiflexed burials. He referred to the latter as Sepo Late Woodland burials and

the former as Middle Mississippian burials (1973, 46), the rationale being that George Neumann observed that in the Central Illinois Valley *Late Woodland* period whole-body burials were deposited in either a flexed or semiflexed position and on their sides, while *Middle Mississippian* period whole-body burials were usually in extended and supine positions. Interestingly, while artifact association was also a necessary criterion for the burial to be selected as part of the sample, only ceramics were treated as culturally relevant. That is, Blakely did not use the nonceramic artifacts, such as projectile points, practical tools, or even decorative body items to assess the possible cultural identity of the burial, arguing that, being common across the region, these items were nondiagnostic (1973, 46). Equally interesting is that, although he recognized ceramics as culturally distinct, only if the associated ceramics corresponded to the “proper cultural” body treatments were they used to “confirm” the cultural identity. If an extended/supine deceased (i.e., “Middle Mississippian”) was associated with Late Woodland ceramics, the ceramic cultural associations were ignored, and the burial treatment was given the sole priority so that the deceased was classed as Middle Mississippian. Similarly, if a flexed or semiflexed deceased on its side was associated with Mississippian ceramics, the burial treatment was given sole priority, and the deceased was classed as Sepo Late Woodland. “When an extended burial was associated with Sepo pottery, it was placed with the Mississippians on the assumption that burial type was more diagnostic than grave furniture . . . [And] flexed and semiflexed individuals with typically Mississippian grave goods were classified as Late Woodland” (1973, 66).

Following a series of comparative statistical analyses of the skulls that I briefly describe below, he concluded that the best answer to his three research questions quoted above is no. 3; that is, “some combination of (1) and (2) took place, allowing for both gene flow

and local evolution.” However, this combination did not mean that the two “culturally” defined burial populations were mixed. Rather, the mortuary deposits sorted by “culture” counted statistically as two discrete or separate continuous breeding populations, but one of these, the Mississippian, also internally divided into two chronological stages of the same discrete breeding population. That is, while they differed somewhat, they also shared “a sufficient number of biological attributes” to suggest that one was descended from the other, thereby “indicating that changing selective pressures and/or mating patterns” (Blakely 1973, 3) caused by the migrants occupying this new area did make an observable difference on the descendants over time. How this conclusion was arrived at was by a two-step analysis. First, he showed that the Sepo Late Woodland (N=29) and the Middle Mississippian skull samples (N=66) displayed a degree of variation consistent with these two burial groups being separate or discrete breeding populations (i.e., “two continuous breeding populations”). However, his second, multivariate analysis warranted chronologically sectoring the Middle Mississippian group into an earlier Middle Mississippian-B group (N=32) and a later Middle Mississippian-A group (N=34). Hence, he concluded that the Middle Mississippian-A burials “were evolutionary descendants” of the earlier Middle Mississippian-B group.

He arrived at these conclusions based on selecting 69 cranial variables, divided into 46 measurable variables distributed between crania, faces, and jaws, on the one hand, and 23 indices, that is, proportional relations among selected measurable variables, on the other. He took the cranial variables and plotted them individually in terms of relative size (e.g., small-medium-large) or in terms of relative width (e.g., narrow-medium-broad), and so on. He displayed these variables in a series of 46 histograms. He then organized the 23 indices that were generated by calculating the proportional relations

among the selected measurable variables and displayed them in the same manner. Once these steps were completed, he subjected the former to a series of univariate analyses and the latter to a series of multivariate analyses, and the conclusions, as noted above, were that (1) the two cultural groups were samples of discrete “continuous breeding populations”; and (2) the Middle Mississippian “continuous breeding population” was divided into two: Middle Mississippian-B and Middle Mississippian-A. This overall continuous breeding population modified over time. He also concluded that this dual finding answered the corollary question, namely—that “because the Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian populations were relatively distinct and since the Sepo sample represents the earlier inhabitants, it *seems probable that the Mississippians were immigrants into the Fulton County area*. From whence they came can only be speculated; they most likely migrated from the Cahokia area.” (Blakely 1973, 159, emphasis added). He follows Harn in this regard by suggesting that the initial migrant group could have been quite small. “Harn . . . has suggested that if the Mississippians did indeed migrate into Fulton County, the migrants surely were few in number. An initial migrating group consisting of 25 individuals could leave, over the approximately twelve generations during which the Middle Mississippians used the cemetery, more than enough descendants to account for all the skeletons recovered from the cemetery and those estimated to have been lost” (1973, 159-60).

Critique of the Discrete Breeding Populations Model

I will develop this critique in two stages. First I assess and critique Blakely’s sampling and sorting methodology. I then address what I consider to be a more profound problem—namely, his core concept, the “continuous breeding population,” and how this concept generates a research question that has a built-in singular answer. I then

critique his broader theory and methodology, particularly his committing the fallacy of affirming the consequent and how the social theoretical presuppositions that he worked with and which underlie his breeding population concept combined with his sampling procedure seem to have made it impossible to come to any other conclusion than the one he did.

Sampling and Sorting Critique

I first want to address directly his decision to exclude from his sample all those burials that did not include artifacts, no matter what their physical positioning in burial—extended/supine or flexed/semiflexed on the side.² This procedure guaranteed a 50% reduction in the sample size. He was then faced with the problem of deciding what to do with the ceramic-associated burials if their styles differed from the burial treatment criteria—for example, if a burial assessed to be Middle Mississippian because of its patterning (i.e., extended/supine) contained Late Woodland ceramics, or vice versa, a Sepo Late Woodland burial contained Mississippian ceramics. He arbitrarily resolved this problem by giving priority in selecting cultural identity to burial treatment over ceramic associations. He also simply ignored the nonceramic artifacts. These selection criteria mean that artifacts of either general category were not necessary to sort the burials into the cultural identity categories. Instead, the burial position treatment was given primary diagnostic weight. If this is the case, then I am truly puzzled over his above method of excluding *all nonartifact associated burials*, even those who were adult males with skulls that had not been subjected to cultural deformation practices. His reason was that artifacts were needed to assign culture; however, his ignoring nonceramic artifacts for this purpose and his prioritizing burial treatment as overriding ceramics eliminates any validity for his rejecting burials solely on the grounds that they had

no associated artifacts. Presumably, their burial position, whether flexed or extended, would have been obvious, and therefore, they would fit into one or the other cultural category, Late Woodland or Mississippian. This method resulted in unnecessarily reducing his sample to the point that the reliability of the statistical findings becomes seriously and possibly fatally diminished.

The second issue I have is his deleting all females from his sample. This is extremely problematic, particularly given that his core concept is the “continuous breeding population.” I find his reasons for doing this to be particularly unpersuasive. “Subadults and *adult females* were excluded from the population samples because their inclusion would have introduced additional variables and would have made population affinities and evolution more difficult to discern” (1973, 75-76, emphasis added). Despite his stated reasons, apparently his primary reasoning for this exclusion was related to the history of skeletal analysis in North American archaeology. George Neumann, his mentor, is well known to be instrumental in establishing categories of “race” among prehistoric Native American populations using only (assumed) male skulls. Hence, Blakely notes that the absence of a female record of prehistoric skull variation partly justifies his dropping the female skulls from his sample. He adds to this justification the grounds that it is a “known” fact that sexual dimorphism is strong in Native North American biological morphology, and furthermore, skull diversity among Native American adult males is greater than among adult females.³ These justifications imply that not only could the variation among prehistoric female adults be ignored, but if they were not ignored, they could mask the male variation between the sample groups. Finally, he notes that, in fact, ignoring the female factor was simply the way things were done then (Blakely 1973, 68-69).

I consider these to be invalid reasons, and given that the primary concept with which he was operating was the notion of a breeding

population, I consider that his systematically dropping the female skulls from his sample to be a fatal error. While certainly the concept of a "continuous breeding population" does not entail an absolutely exclusionary breeding group, the biological nature of the phenomenon expressed by this concept entails both females and males; and that, as an ongoing population, it is sufficiently closed so as to prevent any significant transgression of the boundary that ensures its continuity. Hence, there is no other way a valid sampling of a human population as a breeding population can be made other than by ensuring that both sexes are included in realistic proportions. It might well be that female skulls identified as Late Woodland may have had less prominent development of certain attributes, such as sagittal keeling, than did the complementary male skulls of this population; but this does not mean that female skulls of this population would not have sagittal keeling. Since he claimed that sagittal keeling was one of the more important attributes associated with the Sepo Late Woodland group, "eighty-eight per cent of the Sepo adult males exhibited sagittal keeling" (1973, 117), the lesser degree of sagittal keeling in Sepo adult females compared to Sepo adult males, assuming that it was there, would likely show up prominently when these adult females were compared to the adult female skulls of the presumed Middle Mississippian population since, as he notes, "only five per cent of the Mississippian crania evidence sagittal elevation" (1973, 117). Of course, unless the total analysis is replicated *while including the female skulls*, we can never know. Indeed, it could turn out that the adult females of both groups are more like each other than are the adult males. If so, then this would suggest that whatever was causing this continuity in females and discontinuity in males across the two groups, it would not suggest separate continuous breeding populations tied to migration but a continuous breeding population that varied over time according to differential movement of males

and females of the same community during their lifetime such that they became separated by the time they died. If so, such a patterning could result from cultural practices (e.g., marriage alliances). I will also note, by the way, that built into this analysis is the view that any “foreign” mortuary deposits could only have occurred there if the deceased had migrated to the region prior to death or had been born there from parents who had migrated and settled there. That is, there is no thought to alternative ways “foreign” bones could have become deposited at the Dickson Mounds site. As I noted earlier, Blakely’s interpretation commits the logical fallacy of affirming the consequent. I can imagine another possibility—namely, rather than persons “migrating” and ending up in these mounds, it is possibly the bones that “migrated,” coming into the zone as a result of visitors bearing sacred bone bundles and gifting these to their hosts. Exchange of bones may have been a potent social mechanism for generating this complex mortuary deposit, as I discuss in more detail later.

Conceptual Critique

1. Comparing Intragroup Variation across Discrete Populations

Blakely’s two-stepped analysis first generated two mortuary populations, the Sepo Late Woodland and the Middle Mississippian, which he concluded were two discrete continuous breeding populations; and the second multivariate step generated the Middle Mississippian-B and Middle Mississippian-A populations, which he concluded constituted a continuous discrete breeding population that, nevertheless, slightly modified intrinsically over time. His corollary question addressed the relative degree of variability that these male groups displayed. “A second, corollary question is how diversified were the individuals within each of the two populations at any given time and what were the forces that produced this intergroup variation?” (1973, 2-3). To establish this, he carried out a correlation of

variability (CV) analysis. If the CV coefficient is below 1, there is very little variability (or diversity); if it is 10 or higher, it marks it as being unusually variable.

As a broad indicator of intragroup variation, the mean CV of all 69 craniometric variables was calculated for each of the Dickson skeletal series. The assumption was the larger the mean CV, the greater the overall variation in each of the samples. The results are as follows:

$\bar{X}$ CV	
Sepo Late Woodland	6.43
Middle Mississippian-B	5.99
Middle Mississippian-A	7.34

The increased intragroup variation among the later Mississippian individuals was probably [the result of] . . . the larger sample size of the Middle Mississippian-A sub-sample and the hypothesized relaxed selection operative during the last stages of mound development. (1973, 126)

What this indicates is that all three displayed more than moderate intragroup variability (heterozygosity), suggesting that real variation existed in each of the three culturally defined male “gene pools” represented by these three burial populations. Whether this variation counts as delineating one, two, or three “continuous breeding populations” is questionable since, of course, the greatest difference in CV was between Middle Mississippian-B and Middle Mississippian-A. These were the two groups of males that he concluded constituted a continuous breeding population modifying slightly over time. He has to postulate subcauses to explain this—that is, sample size and “relaxed selection” arising from differential status ranking—and neither of these explanations is demonstrated. Equally interesting, however, is that while the Middle Mississippian-B group was slightly

less variable than the Sepo Late Woodland group, which would support the thesis that a small founding population migrated in, the increase in variation within the Mississippian population far exceeds the level of variation of the Sepo population, an increase that is not persuasively explained by invoking “relaxed selection.” Indeed, if by this he means that over several generations the postulated Middle Mississippian group “relaxed” the barriers that would sustain the distinctiveness of its breeding pool, then we could expect a rising of the variation that would level off to about the same as the local population, about 6.43. Since the variation was much greater, it seems clear that this greater modification cannot be attributed to “relaxed selection” but to some other mechanism by which a much greater gene variation was generated. This would have to be a social and not a biological mechanism, as I discuss shortly.

2. *The Continuous Breeding Population Concept*

As I noted above, Blakely’s conclusion that the two major burial populations were discrete or separate continuous breeding populations also allowed him to conclude that “*it seems probable that the Mississippians were immigrants into the Fulton County area.* From whence they came can only be speculated; they most likely migrated from the Cahokia area.” (1973, 159, emphasis added). However, the probabilistic manner in which he phrases this conclusion does not correspond to the meaning of the concept “continuous breeding population” that he uses to characterize the structuring of the burial population that his analysis discerned. A continuous breeding population embodies a largely constant gene pool being reproduced over time. If the notion is to make sense when applied to an aggregation of burials accumulated in one place over time, then it means that the latter must be shown to be genetically exclusive over time so that the Middle Mississippi-A group, as he says, were the aggregate descendants of the

Mississippi-B group or, more correctly, the genes of the Mississippi-A group were largely the reproduced outcome of the genes of the Mississippi-B group, and the only source of variation allowed would arise from mutations and local selectivity, along with a very limited externally derived input of genes (both of which I suggested above do not explain the rocketing increase in variation). In short, a breeding population is largely a “closed shop.” Now if two breeding populations—that is, two “closed shops”—are aggregated in the manner found at Dickson Mounds, it is misleading to say, as he does, that “it seems *probable* that the Mississippians were immigrants into the Fulton County area.” This is because, according to the conditions he sets up—namely, the chronological primacy of the Sepo Late Woodland burial population as the indigenous community and its being a discrete or “continuous breeding population” from the (mostly later) Middle Mississippian “continuous breeding population”—these conditions necessarily exclude almost all of the former from being the ancestors of the latter. Therefore, there is no other reasonable conclusion than to say that the latter were immigrants, and to qualify this conclusion in probabilistic terms is misleading. According to the biological premises of his model, and assuming these have high truth status, there is no other possible way they could have come to be there, if we accept the conditions of temporal priority and essentially exclusive nature of the entity specified by the “continuous breeding population” concept, or as I have redescribed it, the “discrete breeding population,” that are central to his analysis.

Since the validity of his central concepts make it such that the reality they delineate makes his conclusions necessary and not simply hypothetically probable, why does he qualify his conclusion in the probabilistic manner that he does? This is not simply a matter of style since the use of the term *probable* contradicts the necessity implicated by his finding that the Sepo Late Woodland and Middle

Mississippian burial populations were separate continuous breeding populations. However, reexamining the characterization of these two populations that he gives in this conclusion immediately highlights that he is not speaking in such absolute terms. In fact, as he put it, “the Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian populations were relatively distinct.” His use of the qualifying phrase *relatively distinct* is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is no doubt that there were many redundancies in the morphological forms of the two populations, and therefore, it is adequate to characterize their formal properties as only “relatively distinct.” Indeed, the core concept “breeding population” can allow for this claim without contradiction, as long as “relatively distinct” is taken to mean some degree of formal redundancy as is necessary in order to recognize that these discrete populations are nevertheless of the same species. However, when we move to the structural or causal level, to say that the two breeding populations (rather than two gene pools) were “relatively distinct” is contradictory. If they are only relatively distinct structurally, then they are simply variations of a continuous breeding population that modified over time, such as he claims for the Middle Mississippian-B and Middle Mississippi-A groups. If the Late Woodland Sepo and Mississippian groups, however, are two discrete continuous breeding populations, as he claims, then, while they can be “relatively distinct” formally, they cannot be “relatively distinct” structurally.

Overview Discussion

I think it is very important to ask about the social structural presuppositions that Blakely must have had that made it seem reasonable for him to focus on the concept of breeding population in order to analyze the Dickson Mounds burials. After all, if a human “burial population” and a human “breeding population” are related, this relation is contingent and not entailed. That is, while each of the individuals

in a burial population had to have been born, raised, and then survived until such time that he or she died and was buried in the given CBL, there is nothing in any aggregation of burials, as such, that would even suggest that the individuals that make it up had to be genetically related. If they were, then this is the result of factors that transcend genetic structures, as such. Another way of putting this is to note that each deceased belongs to a breeding population, but the deceased members of the latter can be widely dispersed. For them to be spatially aggregated requires nongenetic or social and cultural factors operating over time and space that would generate this aggregation. Of course, Blakely sectorized the burial population aggregation into culturally and chronologically ordered groups and assumed, with some practical justification, that cultural sharing means some sharing of life experiences. However, there must be more assumptions operating than that to justify invoking the concept of “breeding population” as correlating with “burial aggregation.” In short, “burial aggregations,” “cultural pools,” and “gene pools” are separate levels of reality, and to treat them as related means intervening causal mechanisms at each level that must have ensured a high degree of isomorphism.

A real continuous or discrete breeding population localized in an aggregated burial population presupposes spatial, social, and cultural exclusionary mechanisms over time such that the gene pool that the population bears is not modified by externally derived gene inputs or outputs. In short, linking these levels means exclusionary mechanisms operating at every level from conception and birth to socialization to marriage, breeding, to death to burial.

Ensuring exclusivity of burial populations usually presumes that human cultures act as exclusionary mechanisms, in the form of cultural rules and principles as well as social structural barriers, to ensure, either deliberately or unwittingly, that intercommunity

exchange of breeding capacity is minimized. Along with the premise of culture as an exclusionary structural mechanism that serves to minimize genetic input into or loss from the living cultural community bearing the gene pool would go the notion that the territories these communities occupy are exclusive or, if two or more communities lived “together,” then there would be intercommunity cultural rules of exclusion in the form of ranking, endogamy, and politico-economic dominance of one community group, the proprietors or lords or elite, over the other, the nonproprietors, peasants, commoners. Of course, as effectively self-supporting and self-reproducing social systems, whether egalitarian or ranked, kinship principles would be the primary bearers of exclusionary cultural rules: rules of marriage, postnuptial residency, unilineal descent prescriptions and proscriptions, endogamy, and so on. In short, Blakely’s focus on cultures as defining continuous breeding populations entails a radical form of the monistic modular polity perspective and its presumption of exclusive territorialism, whether the communities were egalitarian or hierarchical.

Confirming this claim, of course, is his assumption that a mortuary population is necessarily the outcome of a kinship-based cultural community in the sense that mortuary locales or CBLs are *cemeteries* where the funerals of the deceased members-to-become-ancestors of the domestic residential kinship-based community are terminated. Therefore, there is an essential culturally constituted congruency between the residential, kinship-based community and the mortuary locale with those buried in the latter having been born and raised in the living community and, having died, were also buried among those deceased of the same community who predeceased them. Of course, if there is differential mortuary treatment within the culturally delineated burial population, then this marks internal social structuring differentiating between elite and commoner, caste, class,

or specialists, and so on. If, as in the Dickson Mounds case, the same mortuary locale is shared by what are deemed to be two culturally as well as genetically distinct breeding populations, as Blakely's conclusions claim, and this sharing is itself temporally differentiated (e.g., one displacing the other), it follows that these two groups were also dominance-based rank-related in that one culturally-delineated exclusive (discrete) breeding population was dominant over the other exclusive (discrete) breeding population.

Hence, treating a burial population occupying a cemetery as being more than one unrelated continuous breeding population presupposes that the deceased of each population are the deceased of separate but co-residing communities, each based on the single structural axis of kinship and these two lineages being unrelated culturally as well as genetically (i.e., strict intercommunity endogamy). This translates into Blakely necessarily setting up an either/or answer: either the two culturally defined burial populations consist of the same historically developing community over time with the cultural changes marking the effects of cultural diffusion; or these two culturally defined burial populations are discrete breeding populations of two separate but spatially co-residing communities structured by dominance and subordination, also with one replacing the other over time. If one is rejected, then the other is the default explanation. In short, Blakely's methodology, and the social structural presuppositions that inform it—namely, those of the funerary paradigm and the Polity model, both the egalitarian (tribal) and hierarchical (chiefdom) versions—have created a research project that demands an either/or answer.

As I noted above, rejecting the null hypothesis and then falling back on the only alternative presented commits the fallacy of affirming the consequent (Sayer 1984, 191-92), which simply means that although it can be shown that the formal variations across the two

populations are statistically significant (although according to my above methodological critique, I think this analysis fails in this regard also), thereby enabling the analyst to reject the null hypothesis, this rejection does not demonstrate that the fallback is the cause of those differences. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, what must be done is to postulate alternative causes and again test for these. This can be done fairly easily by retroductive inference, moving from the situation that we know (i.e., the empirical data) and retroductively postulating the conditions that made it possible, given our current state of knowledge. The problem is, then, our “current state of knowledge,” particularly if this state is defined by only one model. However, as I noted with regard to the distribution of seasonal subsistence indicators that Harn focused on to ground his claim that the population of the Spoon River Mississippian dispersed and nucleated seasonally, these same data can be explained, and more coherently explained, by alternative hypotheses (e.g., the operation of ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities). In short, to avoid committing this fallacy, the hermeneutic spiral method is required, and this means critically presenting more than one credible or plausible set of causal conditions and mechanisms in the form of alternative models and then testing these models by showing which explains the empirically observed effects in the most coherent and least contradictory and most anomaly-free manner. If we have exhausted our current knowledge in the range of models presented, then it is rational to accept the model that explains the empirical observations in these best-fit terms (i.e., in the most coherent and least contradictory, most anomaly-free manner). Of course, since all the models are only approximations of the causal conditions that they postulate, and our current knowledge is always limited and fallible, the rational choice is only a contingent truth or, as I prefer to call it, the *best current approximation*. It is also open to critique and rational replacement,

and this clarifies why I refer to this method as a hermeneutic spiral rather than circle, the premise being that a recursive, spiraling criticism and replacement process expands and enhances our knowledge of the phenomenon (Bhaskar 1978, 1979).

Blakely's central concept "continuous breeding population" harmonizes with the monistic modular polity view, and the latter is used by him exclusively as a taken-for-granted correct characterization of the nature of the social reality that was responsible for the Dickson Mounds site. It thereby largely precludes alternative possibilities from even being suggested. That is, either the culturally defined Sepo Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian burial populations constitute a single historically developing monistic modular polity community manifesting a kinship-based continuous breeding population, or it is two or more discrete kinship-based/continuous breeding populations. To avoid this problem, rather than the core concept being "breeding population," it should be "gene pool"; and different models of how gene pools can be stabilized or modified through time in a region should be postulated, as I demonstrate below. Therefore, the important question that should be asked is whether the culturally delineated Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian burial groups manifest sufficient morphological variation to ground the conclusion that the chronologically sequential gene pools they manifest can be treated as significantly different such that new gene variants have been added or older variants subtracted. If a positive answer is given; that is, if the null hypothesis can be rejected, since it is clear that the two populations display statistically significant morphological variation among the skulls, several models must be presented and tested by showing how one or the other best explains this variation. Of course, this includes the possibility that these differentiated gene pools constitute discrete breeding populations, thereby manifesting monistic modular polity communities. However, it also includes the

alternative possibility that the variation grounds a system of complementary heterarchical communities and their relatively autonomous cult sodality components. Along with this possibility would go the rest of the conceptual structure of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model—namely inclusive territorialism, dual clan-cult sodality structure, world renewal ritual mediated through postmortem and (possibly) lethal human sacrifice, and of course, the possibility that such mortuary practices manifest long-distance interaction among equivalent companionship-based cult sodalities that were caught up in custodial franchising processes as franchisers and franchisees of ritual usufruct copyrights constituting a linked but geographically distributed chain of cult sodality locales—and possibly one of the most important symbolic pragmatic mediums of this interaction chain was human remains, in particular, bone bundles. Of course, I favor the latter model for explaining the structuring of the Dickson Mounds mortuary population, and I present and empirically ground this alternative in the next chapter.

The Gene Flow Model

Dawnie Steadman (1998, 307) has taken an inter-gene pool flow approach to this question of the morphological variation among separate mortuary populations. Instead of trying to demonstrate discrete breeding populations correlated with cultural distinctions, she has assumed an open intraregional and interregional system that is continually subject to in and out gene flow. Instead of asking if different mortuary populations are continuous or discontinuous breeding populations, she asks if these populations, as manifested by the burial data, were subject to greater or lesser degrees of interregional and/or intraregional gene input through population movements of different sorts. She puts it in this way:

According to population genetic theory, if all populations within a region exchange migrants from an outside source at an equal rate, the relationship between the average within-group variation and genetic distance to the centroid (the average heterozygosity of all subpopulations) for each population should be linear (the null hypothesis). However, when one population increases the rate of genetic exchange with external populations, their within-group heterogeneity will increase due to the influx of new genes and the linear relationship will be violated. Therefore, subpopulations that receive more extraregional gene flow will have greater within-group variation than expected by the null hypothesis. Conversely, if a population received less than average external gene flow their observed heterozygosity will be lower than expected. (1998, 313)

She carried out a diachronic comparative analysis of six Central Illinois mortuary populations—two Late Woodland populations, three Mississippian populations (Eveland, Orendorf, and Larson), and one Oneota mortuary population—to establish her conclusions. Interestingly, the Dickson Mounds Eveland and Larson phase burials figured centrally in this analysis. I will ignore the Oneota population and focus on the Late Woodland and Mississippian findings. She also used cranial measurements to establish the data patterning for assessing the gene structure. Importantly, she used both males and females.

Except that her method of assessing the morphological reproduction and transformation of the burial populations differed from Blakely's, in other respects she operated with the same assumptions that these mortuary sites were the *cemetery CBLs* of the respective settlements treated as monistic modular polity communities and those buried were deceased members of these communities. Therefore, if any modification to the gene flow could be attributed to

variation in the rate of population flow, this would be some form of residential kinship-based community exchange, and the method by which this gene flow was effected would be migration of the deceased while they were alive, and the latter migration would likely be governed by marriage practices, themselves governed by the rules and protocols underwriting local and long-distant economic and political interaction. That is, while her gene flow approach is certainly an important advance, it can still be tied to the same set of social structural premises on which the three different migration views are based. In this case, she also accepted the chiefdom-type political and economic nature of Cahokia as a major influence on the Central Illinois Valley, and this influence effected a similar shift by the local community system to transform the Late Woodland “tribal egalitarian” system of monistic modular polities into hierarchical polities (i.e., chiefdoms).

Her findings, however, were opposite to those of Blakely. For her, the Late Woodland and early Mississippian burial populations (in this case, primarily the Eveland phase burials of the Dickson Mounds) showed no significant diachronic change. The Orendorf and Larson phase burials did, although these indicated only a rather minor increase in heterozygosity. She concludes that the Late Woodland–Mississippian transition was not related to mass extraregional immigration. Instead, “Mississippian development and expansion within the central Illinois valley was a local affair, such that *in situ* cultural transitions and intraregional gene flow had a more significant impact on their population structure than interregional migration” (1998, 321). She underlined this claim by specifically denying mass immigration: “The population genetic and biodistance results indicate that the Late Woodland and Eveland Mississippian samples were not as heterozygous as expected if the Mississippians were a genetically distinct population that entered the region around AD 1050.”

However, she does recognize the possibility that the development of the Spoon River Mississippian may have involved some minor extraregional migration since, as noted earlier, there was a greater than expected increase in heterozygosity of the Orendorf and Larson phase burial populations. However, since the increase was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, she concludes that, while the Mississippian period population was continuous with the earlier Late Woodland period population, this “bump” in heterozygosity was probably “indicative only of a small-scale immigration.” In contrast, the greatest amount of gene flow was “intra-regional gene flow among contemporary populations . . . [while] immigration from outside the region was nominal, even during periods of great cultural upheaval” (1998, 321).

Critical Conclusion

To understate the case, these are very interesting results. Since her analysis embraces both males and females, it certainly sets aside Blakely’s male-specific analysis and answers my earlier sampling criticism. In this case, she concludes that, at the gene pool level, no statistically significant extraregional migration occurred, although she recognizes that there may have been some minor or “nominal” extraregional gene input. Her analysis, however, suggests a means to control for the degree of the variation of the heterozygosity among the adult male burial population that Blakely analyzed. As Steadman puts it in the long quotation above, “if all populations within a region exchange migrants from an outside source at an equal rate,” the null hypothesis would be that “the average heterozygosity of all subpopulations . . . should be linear” (1998, 313). An increased rate of extraregional influx of genes, however, will increase their intragroup heterozygosity, thereby having “greater within-group variation than expected by the null hypothesis. Conversely, if a population received

less than average external gene flow their observed heterozygosity will be lower than expected.”

Assuming that Blakely's CV analysis that I summarized above corresponds to the degree of heterozygosity among the *males* of each group, it would appear that compared to the Middle Mississippian-B population, the Sepo Late Woodland population was receiving new male-derived genes more quickly than the Mississippian-B population was receiving them and that, in general, the shift from the Sepo Late Woodland to the Mississippian-B times at the Dickson Mounds corresponded to a net *loss* of male heterozygosity. However, the reverse occurred with the communities providing the Mississippian-A male burial population. Its male heterozygosity recuperated and actually surpassed that of the Late Woodland communities. If Blakely is correct to say that the Middle Mississippian-B male burial population actually had some new morphological forms, this suggests the addition of these genes was from extraregional sources. However, its overall lower male heterozygosity still suggests a net reduction or narrowing of the traditional range of Late Woodland male-derived gene input sources. Another way of putting this is to suggest that while it received new extraregional male heterozygosity input it also lost even greater traditional extraregional sources of male gene input. By the Middle Mississippian-A times, however, its male heterozygosity rebounded. Assuming continuity of the morphology that distinguished the Mississippian-B male heterozygosity from that of the Late Woodland, this rebound of heterozygosity suggests that the pre-Mississippian sources of male gene input had recuperated. The overview, then, would mean that the social sources of the Dickson Mounds burials had recuperated their traditional level of male heterozygosity by regaining former or traditional extraregional sources while retaining its more recent extraregional sources. Through all this, however, Steadman's analysis concludes that the

actual extraregional gene in-flow was minor, a mere “bump.” This suggests that *there was no significant change in female-derived heterozygosity*. That is, the statistical differences that Blakely established among male burials were insignificant when the female burials were included, suggesting that the intraregional sources for female burials were constant but tended to mask, or at least limit, registering the new extraregional male input source to being a mere “bump.”

Of course, this conclusion could be verified or rejected by applying Steadman’s method to the original sample that Blakely used and, in this case, applying it to both male and females and then repeating the analysis separately for the males and females. For the moment, however, I will assume that the validity of this extrapolation is adequate. In these terms, therefore, it means that the minor fluctuation in heterozygosity of the Central Illinois gene pool that Steadman identified, and which would not have any significant overall gene pool impact, would seem to be derived from variation in new extraregional sources of male contribution to the mortuary record. In short, what Blakely notes as the Sepo Late Woodland/Mississippian-B distinction is attributed to (1) *new* extraregional sources of input but countered by decrease in *traditional* extraregional input sources, resulting in a net *reduction* of heterozygosity; and (2) this was largely the result of new extraregional sources of males, not of females, entering the region, while traditional male extraregional sources decreased. This conclusion would appear somewhat innocuous. However, I suggest that it has some major implications for the Migration model. Not only were the number of newcomers rather small, they were primarily male; and at the same time, the traditional sources of extraregional male immigrants reduced.

This small number of immigrant inputs, sufficient to cause merely a “bump,” may appear to be consistent with Harn’s interpretation of the emergence of the Spoon River and La Moine River Mississippian

variants in that he has sustained the view that, in general, the transformation was largely controlled by the indigenous communities rather than being imposed by Cahokia. However, it also suggests that the increase in male input cannot be characterized as migration in the sense expressed in the Migration model. This is because the new extraregional sources were largely only males. Therefore, they would not have been bringing their families. Of course, this conclusion is also not consistent with Conrad's interpretation, which has emphasized the active intervention of Cahokia in the organization of the Central Illinois Valley. In his view, at least for the Eveland phase and possibly longer, this region was largely a colony of Cahokia, and the ruling chiefly lineages were collateral lineages of the ranking chiefly lineages of Cahokia and the American Bottom. Emerson was very persuasive in arguing that the immigrants that entered the Central Illinois Valley avoided the lower stretches of the Illinois Valley (Farnsworth, Emerson, and Glenn 1991). Therefore, Emerson's migration model would be favored along with Harn's model. However, if the new extraregional migrants responsible for the new morphological forms of the Mississippian-B mortuary population of the Dickson Mounds, despite the overall reduced heterozygosity of this burial population compared to the preceding Late Woodland period, were pretty well only males, then the refugee model is also *inconsistent*. This is because the refugee group was the displaced chiefly community, and presumably, this would be a total residential group, elite and commoner lineages, and this would include the women of these lineages and families. Of course, it is possible that the refugees were exclusively elite males who fled. This would require some significant reinterpretation and empirical validating, and I certainly think that this is a possibility that should be explored.

However, there is another possible explanation of this rather minor but male-dominant influx. This is the process postulated under

the franchising aspect of the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. Steadman's view is that any reduction in heterozygosity of the mortuary population would be a result of the reduced extraregional infusion of genes. This is consistent with her monistic modular polity perspective, in which it is assumed that the CBL population represents a cemetery of a local community. However, under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, this reduced heterozygosity, despite increased male immigration, could be the result of a systematic "exporting" of local "homegrown" human bones (or even "importing" of human bones from far afield). Indeed, in my discussion of the Rensch site in Chapter 7, I mentioned that the Cahokian-derived cult sodality usufruct franchisers would expect gifts that were relevant to the type of ritual they were transferring. In the next chapter, I will formally postulate that among these gifts would be "homegrown" human bones. That is, reduced heterozygosity along with slightly increased formal morphological changes (i.e., "foreign") may have been caused by interrelations with the American Bottom as the result of gifting and/or "gaming" of these "foreign" sacred bone bundles. In these terms, many of the deceased of the Central Illinois Valley, who previously would have been distributed across the CBLs of this region, were reciprocally gifted as sacred bone bundles to the American Bottom.⁴ I make some initial attempts to demonstrate this claim in the following chapter, in which I treat the Dickson Mounds as a major world renewal sacrificial CBL of the Spoon River Mississippian regional second-order cult sodality heterarchy.

NOTES

1. As I have noted previously, an elaboration of the role of migration has been promoted, in this case, particularly by Timothy Pauketat (2004, 113-14; 2007, 85-88). In fact, his focus has been on migration as the primary causal condition generating the emergence of Cahokia itself. His argument is that the “Big Bang” initiated or was initiated by the attraction of multiple ethnic groups from distant regions to participate in the ritual practices occurring in the “New Cahokia,” either initiated by, or then followed by, quite massive emigration of these multiple ethnic groups that took up permanent residency in and around the American Bottom. He sees that this massive emigration not only provided the expanding population base that such great constructions as the Central Precinct required but also the hiving off of other construction programs that emulated the “New Cahokia,” thereby generating the St. Louis and East St. Louis, and similar sites (2004, 165-66; 2007, 138-40, 151). His argument is that the interaction among these different ethnic groups (2007, 107-12)—what he calls the X-factor—generated a new vision of the world, and this was the basis of Mississippianism. Therefore, his view of the role of migration in Mississippianization is the reverse of the way it is imagined for the orthodox model. I cannot fully address his most recent view in this book, but I plan to do so in a subsequent book.

2. The fact that ceramics were the most commonly associated mortuary artifacts but that only half the burials had accompanying artifacts replicates a pattern at the Moundville site in western Alabama. In Chapter 17, I analyze the mortuary pattern of Moundville and strongly argue against the view that the social standing in the community during the deceased’s lifetime played the central relevant role in whether the mortuary deposit had an absence or presence of ceramics. Instead, this manifests a particular trajectory in

the funerary→mourning→spirit release→world renewal mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process. I will not present that argument now, but I consider that the overall approach I use in Chapter 17 to account for the mortuary patterning of the Moundville site is relevant to the Dickson Mounds site as well.

3. Of course, such an assertion suggests that there has been prehistoric research on this matter. However, as noted, this is precisely what Neumann did not do. Furthermore, I believe that Blakely could have easily established whether any differential variability of skull morphology based on gender existed by simply assessing the female skulls in comparison to the male skulls and then controlling statistically for any difference.

4. By “gaming” gifts I am suggesting that the sacred bundles of human bones were not only important gifts serving as future symbolic pragmatic media of postmortem sacrifice, but that these bundles were “gambled” in sacred games with the winners either retaining custodianship or becoming the new custodians of the bundles. I have demonstrated that this was very probably the case for the Ohio Hopewell (Byers 2011, Chapter 10).

CHAPTER 10

The Dickson Mounds Site as a World Renewal Cult Sodality Heterarchy CBL

It is clear from the descriptions of the Dickson Mounds mortuary data that have been given by Harn and Conrad and that Blakely has used that all three were operating from within the premise of the funerary paradigm—namely, that this complex mortuary deposit was generated by a historical series of funerary events that terminated in *grave* burials. However, as I discussed when presenting the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, I consider it highly problematic to apply the funerary paradigm to interpreting the prehistoric Native North American mortuary data such as the Dickson Mounds site, and to do so risks distorting our understanding of the social system that was responsible for that mortuary record. I am certainly not alone in considering it necessary for North American archaeologists to rethink the way we conceptualize and analyze the material manifestation of the mortuary spheres of prehistoric Native North American communities. I have already noted that several archaeologists have taken issue with the funerary or representationist perspective (Brown 2003, 2010; Goldstein 2000, 2010; Sullivan and Mainfort 2010). These archaeologists have astutely noted that the rich complex of “secondary” burials demands a different approach. Goldstein (2000, 198-99) has directly raised the issue of how to interpret the secondary burials that make up much of the archeological record of Cahokia. But her concern and focus on interpreting the residue of

Cahokian mortuary practices could easily be generalized—for example, by applying it to the Dickson Mounds site. Her point is to emphasize that secondary burials are not the outcome of mortuary practices similar to those generating primary or extended, in-flesh burials in that the latter mortuary practices were motivated by the immediacy of death. That is, for her in-flesh extended burials are the residue of funerals; while secondary and tertiary burials were instigated by some circumstance that exceeded or surpassed the funerary purpose. Hence, she has effectively recognized that formally different mortuary patternings in the same cultural context must be treated as material outcomes of the exercise of a range of types of actions that fulfilled a corresponding range of different mortuary intentions. This is a very important insight. Extrapolating from it entails recognizing that much, and I would say most, of the archaeological mortuary patterning of prehistoric Native North Americans cannot be considered as directly manifesting funerary activity as such. Therefore, whatever the causal conditions that were responsible for this complex patterning, they cannot have arisen from the universal generalization that underwrites the representationist view—namely, that variation in the mortuary treatments of human communities tends to correspond and vary according to the complexity of the social structures of these communities.

Having made this remarkable insight, however, she is only partly able to transcend the funerary perspective, largely, in my view, because she continues to treat the funeral as the only “real” mortuary practice. Other and subsequent treatments are, therefore, “secondary.” In effect, the secondary mortuary deposit is not a full-fledged mortuary activity because it is not a full-fledged funerary activity. “Most significantly, secondary disposal of the dead represents a ritual that can only in part be understood as a mortuary practice, because the secondary disposal of the dead is *not really a mortuary*

treatment in the same way as primary burial because the secondary treatment is triggered by something independent of the death of the individual” (2000, 201, emphasis added). Of course, to say that “secondary disposal of the dead represents a ritual that can only in part be understood as a mortuary practice” makes sense only if the notion “mortuary practice” is treated as being effectively synonymous with “funerary practice.” As soon as this synonymy is denied, then “funerary practice” becomes simply one of an indefinite range of possible *types of mortuary practices* that characterize a community’s mortuary sphere. This is the central point of the Mourning/World Renewal Ritual model and the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process it postulates, considered here both as an analytical interpretive method and as a culturally (i.e., emic) constitutive and reproductive process of the community.

James Brown has also clearly gone beyond the funerary paradigm. I find that his recent work with the Cahokian Mound 72 mortuary assemblage closely parallels my own (Brown 2006, 204-209; 2010, 32, 49-50; 2003). He has reinterpreted the mortuary features and artifacts deposited directly on the earth immediately beneath the primary 72Sub1 mound feature of Mound 72 as the outcome of a complex world renewal ritual that reproduced in performance form the mythical death and resurrection of the great Thunderbird Morning Star (or possibly Red Horn). He specifically differentiates among the human remains by noting that most were curated bodies used for this performative ritual while others, including the Morning Star imitator, may have been living victims. That is, he has addressed these mortuary data in terms that I am treating as post-mortem and lethal human sacrificial practices. He even refers to the multiple secondary burial deposits, body part burial deposits, and even deposits of human cremations in these terms. Hence, he has definitely transcended the funerary paradigm, noting that many, if

not most, of these “re-worked” mortuary remains are the outcome of mortuary rites that must be given mortuary action interpretations in their own right. They are not “lesser” or “secondary” mortuary rites but different types of mortuary rites from the funerary rites. “The burials have little to do with reaffirming the social and political status of particular deceased individuals . . . the dead were chosen to enact a public ceremony with a collective, community-wide purpose. The manner in which the dead were deployed in the performance of the ceremony possess the layout features of a cosmogram . . . [and] reference specific acts and events in a cosmic theater. Individually these burials include the recent dead, the old dead formed of disarticulated remains, and the dead who may have been sacrificed for the event” (2006, 208). I would go further, however, to emphasize that in a social world that characterizes the cosmos in sacred immanentist power terms, those responsible for such performances would take themselves not to be “referencing” but, more strongly, invoking, manifesting, and thereby presencing the sacred powers of the cosmos and doing so in order to reenergize them through the offerings of the sacred powers immanent in the human bodies themselves and their material components.

As I noted earlier, the mortuary rites that in the context of traditional Native North American communities were somewhat equivalent to Euro-American funerary rites would probably be simply among the initial mortuary rites performed for the deceased, and therefore, they only made up that part of the mortuary sphere that would leave little archaeological indication. This is because these rites separated the personal soul, either wholly or partially, from being bound to the body and transformed the latter into a sacred material state that served as the symbolic pragmatic medium for the next and ongoing series of mortuary rites, possibly involving an extended scaffolding period, or “laying-in” period, by which the soft tissue

served as a sacrifice to the gods, as I noted earlier was the claim made by the traditional Hidatsa, and so on. The resulting bones, including the skull, would then serve as symbolic pragmatic media (i.e., symbolic “capital”) for the next mortuary rite (e.g., releasing the living souls of the bones to the river or the land). That is, according to the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, this sequential “disassembling” of the body would normally follow the initial postmortem funerary steps with the material outcome of the latter (i.e., the defleshed bones) serving as the symbolic pragmatic devices by which the subsequent mortuary behaviors were constituted as different forms of spirit-release and world renewal rites. Therefore, interpreted under the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, rather than postfunerary ritual steps being treated as “secondary” in terms of social importance, they should be understood as important and necessary sacrificial mortuary acts by which the spiritual powers that human flesh and bones embodied are systematically returned to the sacred powers of the cosmos from which these powers were derived. Seeing the mortuary sphere in these terms, therefore, human bones take on an importance that cannot be imagined under the funerary view since they are perceived and experienced by the community as valued symbolic pragmatic media of critically important rituals for which they were responsible and obliged to carry out.

Following from this claim, it becomes quite plausible to postulate that for the communities involved, the traditional supply of this symbolic sacrificial capital through natural death might have to be supplemented by long-distant procurement ventures, the sort of ventures that could be initiated by alliance construction through custodial franchising events. This means that Goldstein’s insight that secondary burials of different types may mark significant transportation of human bones can be easily assimilated into the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model by characterizing Cahokia as a

critical context by which the mortuary “secondary burial” behaviors that were performed there were constituted as the different types of *postmortem sacrificial mortuary rituals* intended and perceived as being done.

I have italicized *postmortem* . . . in order to draw the reader’s attention to the likelihood that there was a complementary and opposing form of long-distant procurement of human mortuary resources—namely, sacred war between spatially distant groups with the purpose of procuring living humans to serve as lethal sacrificial human offerings in the world renewal ritual practices that the successful group would perform in its home heterarchy. I have claimed that lethal human sacrificial practice was more prominently performed in Cahokia during the Lohmann phase than during subsequent phases, arguing that these two opposing alternative forms of human sacrifice—postmortem and lethal—served as the basis for generating and fueling factional disputes within a cult sodality heterarchy, such as the fourth-order Cahokian heterarchy. I have labeled the factions the autonomist and the centralist, respectively. While both forms of human sacrifice were practiced, in general, the latter or centralist faction was identified as promoting and favoring lethal sacrifice as the preferred form, and the autonomist faction favored postmortem sacrifice. Of course, the factions recognized the validity of both forms of sacrifice. Where they differed was in the overall weighting that these forms should be given. The centralist faction, I have claimed, was promoted by a specialized priestly cult sodality responsible for the Lohmann phase Woodhenge 72 and the Mound 72 sacrificial deposits noted above. Monks Mound and its great plaza was produced largely to be the focus of postmortem sacrificial rituals promoted by the autonomist factions. Because of the strong tendency for long-distance sacrificial warfare to generate ongoing vengeance-based responses from the distant sodalities that lost and, of course, lost

their companions as victims, the fourth-order cult sodality heterarchy of Cahokia required enhanced centralization of power at the cost of reducing the realization of the principle of autonomy among the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality components. These components became internally divided into being factional supporters of the centralist lethal sacrificial view and the autonomist postmortem sacrificial view.

I claim that lethal sacrifice reached its zenith during the Lohmann phase, although it likely was never the quantitatively dominant form of sacrificial ritual. Briefly stated, I have argued that the postmortem/lethal factional division finally led to the autonomist faction prevailing, marked by the abandonment of Woodhenge 72 and Mound 72 and the building of subsequent woodhenges west of Monks Mound along the east-west axis marked by a sacred post set in the southwest corner of the primary terrace of the mound, thereby incorporating the woodhenge practices more closely into those prevailing in the Great Precinct. I have argued that the Great Precinct locale was used primarily by the autonomist factions and their favoring of postmortem human sacrifice. This shift in faction-based action power demarcated the Stirling phase, characterized by the principle of cult sodality autonomy prevailing along with postmortem human sacrifice being the most highly valued form of human offering. Lethal sacrifice no doubt continued but at a much lower level, largely governed by the need to procure “volunteer” victims from within the cult sodalities that constituted the basic components of this large Cahokian heterarchy (Byers 2006a, 464-72, 484-509).

As I noted above, I am not claiming that funerary rites—or their equivalent—were not performed or were not an important rite within the total set of mortuary sphere practices of the social systems of the Eastern Woodlands, in general. Rather, I am claiming that these rites should be treated as only one mortuary rite among others, in

this case, the rite by which the personal or free souls were released to travel to the land of the Dead, while leaving behind a rich repertoire of other spiritual powers embodied in their flesh and bones to be released by the performance of subsequent mortuary rituals of the type Goldstein has implicated in speaking of secondary burials. It also means that rather than interpreting the mortuary residues in isolation from the contexts in which they were found, such as the Dickson Mounds site or the well-known Mound 72/Woodhenge 72 complex, so that the mortuary record and the monumental facilities that contain it seem to be only contingently or incidentally associated, it is more coherent to consider them to be substantively or intrinsically associated in the sense that, for those responsible, the mortuary behavior only counted as the mortuary ritual intended in virtue of its being performed in the material context of, for example, the Dickson Mounds, or Woodhenge 72 and the major features of its associated Mound 72. This, of course, is a reexpression of the symbolic pragmatic perspective concerning how the symbolic meaning of material culture, mediated by the conventions of stylistics, serves as a critically important “tool” or warrant for human practices. That is, the actions performed are emergent phenomena, and part of their constitutive emergence entailed these features as primary symbolic pragmatic devices (i.e., monumental iconic warrants) of the type of mortuary practices performed, practices that can reasonably be interpreted as world renewal postmortem and (likely or possibly to a lesser degree) lethal human sacrificial offering rituals.

In short, I postulate that human bones were treated as *symbolic pragmatic capital*, and procuring them was promoted because they were perceived as critically valuable resources in their own right. Cult sodalities, or their different age-sets, would be well motivated to invest time and effort to procure them through long-distance expeditions since they were media necessary for the performance of a

range of rites by which the multiple sodalities could discharge their sacred duties (also see Byers 2011, 267-95). Hence, the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process and the process of long-distance custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights as postulated under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model turn out to be intrinsically and not merely incidentally or contingently related. I now turn to developing this notion of human deceased, particularly but not only their bones, as sacrificial ritual media in presenting my alternative account of the Dickson Mounds as a dual postmortem and lethal human sacrificial CBL site of a Spoon River Mississippian second-order world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy.

Human Bones and Postmortem Human Sacrifice

It is necessary now to pick up my earlier comments in the closing paragraph of my summary of McConaughy's claim that the Rench site mediated a "food for thought" exchange (Chapter 7). At that time, I noted that under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, whether as custodial franchising events constituting transfers to new franchisees or as conveyancing events constituting transfers from a senior to a junior age-set of a cult sodality, these would entail gifting of material goods that were meaningfully related to the custodial ritual usufruct copyright (or copyrights) that was (were) being transferred. I suggest that human body parts might be among the material media of this gifting, particularly if it was franchising gifting. Following from my above discussion, I postulate that a key, although not the only material good that the Cahokian cult sodalities would value as meaningful gifts appropriate to custodial franchising would likely be human remains, particularly but not exclusively, *human bones* (other gifts might be valued, such as exotic cherts, shells, copper, and other materials that the recipient

group could use to produce and replace their own ritual warrants on returning to their home heterarchy). Particularly germane here are my earlier comments that in the myths of many historic Native American communities human bones figured importantly since they were perceived to have particular sacred powers. In his Calumet-like adoptive-kinship thesis, Hall cited the relation binding Red Horn and his sons. He specifically addressed that part of the Winnebago creation myth in which the Giants fought, defeated, and killed Red Horn, along with his Thunderbird boon companions, Storms-as-he-walks, and Turtle, as well as the people of their village, and that subsequently Red Horn's two sons revenged these deaths by killing the Giants. They then retrieved the *bones of their father, his boon companions, and the villagers*. These victorious brothers/companions returned these bones to their home, ground them up into a fine dust, and used them as media by which they reincarnated their father, his companions, and the villagers. A similar myth of the Iowa relates that the culture heroes—who were equivalent to Red Horn and his boon companions—were also killed in their great battle against the Giants. Each of the two culture heroes had a son, and these two young men also became companions who went out to revenge the deaths of their fathers, destroyed the Giants, retrieved their fathers' heads (i.e., their skulls), and the two fathers, themselves boon companions, were reborn. As Hall also notes, Red Horn and other culture heroes were often associated with the earth and the sky (i.e., gods of the Above World), and the Giants were associated with the underworld (i.e., the gods of the Beneath World). Therefore, the powers of these gods constituted the sacred core components of the cosmos. The narrative of their rebirth would be a figurative expression of world renewal (see Hall, 2000; 1997, 149-51; 1991, 30-31; 1989, 241-43). The bones were those of deities as boon companions, and the rebirth of these deities or culture heroes constituted the renewal

of the cosmos, including humanity. Therefore, it is very reasonable to postulate that the gifting of human bones was actively pursued by cult sodalities in order to serve as key media of postmortem sacrifice by which the world was renewed/reproduced. And this would suggest that actual human bones would likely serve as an “ideal” gift to establish and even reproduce Cahokian long-distance alliances.

Seen in these terms, then, I am now postulating that the primary but certainly not the only material medium of this Cahokian world renewal ritual would be the bones of the deceased who were under the custodial care of their allied cult sodalities. Many of these bones—derived as gifts or the rewards for winning in sacred games, such as the chunky game—would come to be added to the CBLs of the custodial franchisers (e.g., the Dickson Mounds complex). However, as Hall also points out, there was significant and, to some degree, contrasting variation among the mortuary practices of different cultures. There were many Native North American peoples who used the hair of the deceased, often kept attached to the scalp, rather than or as well as the bones to mediate different mortuary rituals (Hall 1997, 26-28). In such cases, the hair became a central component of sacred bundles. In this regard, it is particularly notable that a number of Mississippian archaeologists, those directly involved in recent research on the Mississippian iconography inscribed on or in the major artifactual categories constituting what is termed *Southeast Ceremonial Complex* (SECC), have recognized the importance of the various representations of hair in this iconography. The primary imagery that is used is referred to as the *Birdman theme*. James Brown (2007a, 71) has drawn parallels between this imagery with the above culture heroes, particularly Morning Star of the Osage and Red Horn of the Winnebago. He has noted that the most outstanding expressions of the Birdman theme are found on engraved marine shell gorgets and cups and embossed copper repoussé-sheet plates,

particularly displaying all the attributes of what he terms the *Classic Braden style*, ca. cal. AD 1200-1300 (Brown 2004, 109). One of the classic motifs associated with this Birdman depiction has been termed the *bellows-shaped apron*. Brown now views it as representing a “sacred scalp” (2007b, 39-40).

Both Brown (2004, 119) and Kent Reilly (2004, 132-34) have also claimed that the ancestral predecessor of this Classic Braden style engraved marine shell and sheet copper repoussé material is the set of outstanding Missouri red flint-clay figurines depicting either male or female figures. The male figures have been identified by Reilly, particularly by the hair, as representing a god akin to Red Horn. That is, the sacred scalp and the carefully maintained hair mark these materials as expressing and presencing the Above World gods. Hence, there seems abundant evidence to interpret both human hair *and* human bones as important media for the performance of world renewal rituals. Clearly, bones will tend to be preserved in the archaeological record somewhat more effectively than hair. However, both could be used as media of gift exchange by which long-distance alliances initially constituted through custodial franchising could be sustained from generation to generation.

As culturally constituted practices, the degree to which the human deceased were subjected to postmortem transformation might well vary. Hall points out that in some cultures, the bones were considered as sacred items up to the point of the spirit-release rite, and then they were seen to be devoid of any further sacred power. However, more distant neighboring communities might treat the same set of bones as having important residual powers that could only be released by rites of bone breaking or, possibly, by cremation. Therefore, it is likely that world renewal cult sodalities from different regions would differentially assess the value of the multiple different stages of the postmortem manipulation of the deceased. For example, in the

Central Illinois Valley, certain types of burials might be treated as exhaustively releasing the sacred powers of the bones and, therefore, making these available for gifting to a visiting group from the American Bottom, who perceived the bones as still retaining important sacred properties that could be used for further world renewal ritual.

Hence, under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, I postulate that the American Bottom Mississippian period was characterized by a particularly complex system of postmortem human bone-mediated world renewal ritual. Furthermore, part of the reason for this was the particular nature of the American Bottom environment and the subsistence system it supported. I argued in Chapter 7 that the major concern of river-bottom maize cultivating populations would be the ongoing and no doubt fluctuating state of the hydrological regime. Agriculture, particularly maize, was highly reliant on the proper balance of precipitation and drainage of surface water. Too much water and crops could be destroyed by seasonal floods, not enough during the growing season (i.e., serious droughts would result in crop failures or at least significant shortfalls). It is eminently reasonable to assume that probably a central—although not exclusive—ritual was developed particularly to sustain the balancing of the hydrological cycle of the immanently sacred natural order. Hence, the performance of such ritual forms, and their being enhanced, would likely play a basic role in the emergence and development of the American Bottom multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes. I postulate that the mortuary sphere largely consisted of a composite of different types of mutually autonomous world renewal rituals performed for this purpose. I have called the primary suite of rituals the *regrowing-of-the-earth* rituals, and the primary but not exclusive focus would be tying the postmortem (and lethal) human sacrificial ritual to the seasonal floods (2006a, 456-60).¹

I have already interpreted the Rench site as a ceremonial nodal sodality locale, although it probably was an enclave of a larger integrated plaza-periphery village. I have postulated that, given the Maples Mills–Mossville phase transition of regional settlement from the natural levees to the higher terraces, the Mossville communities may well have been experiencing some major hydrological instability, and therefore, would be very attracted to incorporating ritual usufruct practices that seemed to successfully address the fluctuations of the water levels that were characteristic of floodplain-based hydrological regimes.² The Rench site, therefore, may be a ceremonial nodal locale of an emergent ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality that arose as a rather direct result of undertaking one of the earliest custodial ritual usufruct franchising events of an American Bottom ritual usufruct copyright, thereby transferring the practices it entailed to the Central Illinois Valley region. I also noted that the food resources associated with such sites would likely be brought in by the members from their home area fields. Treating the Rench site in these terms implicates the Mourning/World Renewal Ritual model, and under this model, a critical part of the custodial ritual usufruct copyright being franchised would entail postmortem human sacrifice. This effectively means that human bones, and possibly hair in the form of scalps, would be major gift media for the custodial franchising events. Since the use of hair is empirically difficult to demonstrate, I will now focus on the evidence that possibly human bones were systematically used as gift media.

All this suggests that some of the bones of the deceased of the Rench cult sodality, or the bones of the deceased kin of its members, such as children, elderly parents, and so on, would probably be used as gifts to the primary custodial franchiser group, and this group would likely carry them as sacred bone bundles back to Cahokia for use as sacrificial media. Collecting and gifting these bones would not

be an act of desecration. Rather, it is likely that the mound burials that the local community had performed had served to discharge their sacred duties to the dead, and therefore, as I suggested above, they may have perceived these remains as largely devoid of powers that they could significantly use for ritual. Modeled on the type of myth discussed above in which the sons of Red Horn retrieved his bones and those of his companions, such disinterring activities would be part of the sacred ritual, sanctified and warranted by the ritual goals they served and performed by a group who had the specialized know-how and power to use these same bones for further sacred acts of world renewal.

It has been argued by Brown (2007a, 89-90; 2003, 96-97; and also see Reilly 2004, 132-34) that playing the well-known chunky game may have been an iconic performative ritual of the conflict that the sons of the dead god-heroes played against the Giants. As I noted above, Brown has suggested that the Beaded Burial deposit of the platform of the primary mound 72Sub-1 under Mound 72, Cahokia, manifests just such a ritual performance (Brown 2003, 97). Pauketat (2004a, 115-18; 2005b, 203-206) has picked up the same view, and he has postulated that the widespread distribution of the paraphernalia of the chunky game may mark the introduction and development of this ritualized game by Cahokian-based groups, which, in my terms, would have been *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities*. To put all this in context then, it is plausible that the chunky game, and possibly other “sporting” or gaming events, served to renew the sacredness of the bones of the deceased where it was played, enlivening these bones with the energies of the players so that they could be *reused* as a medium of additional world renewal rituals. It is even possible that personal items in the way of beaded necklaces, pipes, and so on, would be added to the bone bundles by “losers” so as to enhance the sacred powers of the bones with their own sacred powers that were

“built up and stored” in these items, a process that would be part of the point of playing the “game.” Of course, this cannot be definitively demonstrated, but such a practice would certainly be consistent with the notion of the games as enlivening sacred bones and would, to some degree, account for the association of personalty with bone bundles in burial deposits. Hence, part of the ceremonial core of the custodial franchising event may have involved such games between the primary usufruct franchisers and franchisees, enlivening the human bones of the local deceased and transforming them into appropriate gifts for discharging franchising debts by the local cult socialities (see Byers 2011, 296-315, for a similar interpretation of Ohio Hopewellian mortuary practices).

In short, under the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, the deceased would serve as the material media of the religious aspect of the ritual exchange. Such an exchange could have been sustained by regular imports into Cahokia of human bones; that is, not the living but the deceased in the form of their tightly bound bodies and/or their carefully cleaned and bundled bones, including skulls, “migrated,” and these mortuary packages would have been extremely important for reenacting the ritual world renewal cycle, since the latter would probably be based on a seasonal flood cycle (Pauketat 2010). However, subsequent to the initial custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights, the Cahokians might turn to the use of copper, marine shell, ceramics necessary for the performance of the ritual, and other resources to which they had access, in order to use as gifts of exchange for human bones, thereby sustaining this long-distance primary custodial franchiser–franchisee interaction. They certainly would have come to use their own deceased for this purpose, in addition to using copper plates and engraved shell cups as described above, or the bones of deceased that they had procured from more distant places through warfare, bearing the full bodies

wrapped tightly into extended bundles carried on litters. In return, they might receive bone bundles of the deceased of their Central Illinois Valley cult sodality allies.

The use of litters in the mortuary process is widely recognized in the Mississippian literature. However, to my knowledge, it has not been suggested that this would be the favored form of transportation of deceased over long distances. However, there are the well-known instances of the 10 burials in Mound 72, each wrapped and tightly tied to their litters, several containing extended bodies, albeit in some disarray, others being used as essentially bone bundles of several deceased (Fowler et al. 1999, 56, 181; Goldstein 2000). Then there is the equally well-known use of litters in the Great Mortuary feature of the Craig Mound, Spiro (Brown 1996, 23-27, 80, 87-88; Brown and Kelly 2000, 483-84). Importantly, Robert Hall has noted that many historical Plains Indians, such as the Omaha, Osage, and Pawnee, identify the Big Dipper and Little Dipper as the “litters” that bore the Above World gods, such as the Great Bear. Hall treats the Omaha camp circle as an iconic synecdoche of this heavenly reality. Commenting on the two tent lodges that were placed within the circle, “one containing the sacred pole and one containing the sacred white buffalo,” he notes that “the first tent ties into the symbolism of the North Star and tribal authority, the second into the symbolism of the dipper constellations—the bear, the crook lances, tribal authority, burial, and mourning. Since the night sky symbolized the Underworld, the mound burials of leaders on litters, related as litters were to dippers, must have symbolized the new status of dead chiefs . . . as powers of the Underworld” (1989, 261, 272-73). What can be suggested from this, of course, is that transporting the bundle burials in litters from the Central Illinois Valley to Cahokia would itself be a sacred procession replicating the movements of the Above World (and even the Beneath World) gods, and this bearing of these

bones as sacred bundles would be part of the world renewal ritual process that would be terminated at Cahokia.

Does all this sound plausible? I suggest it does. Presupposing this claim that human bones were used as long-distance gifts and game tokens would be an established tradition of bone exchange mediated through shared intercommunity mortuary practices. Such practices would promote an ongoing process of “mixing” the bones of the deceased from different communities, similar to the practice that I earlier noted was entrenched by the Huron in their Feast of the Dead (Trigger 1969, 1976; Heidenreich 1978). In this case, neighboring villages, and quite distant villages, including non-Huron allies, brought the sacred bone bundles of some of their deceased to be deposited and *mixed* with those of the host Huron village, a practice that I noted was both a world renewal ritual terminating the village’s *mortuary chaîne opératoire* for that generation, as well as a recognition on the part of guest participants from neighboring communities of the continuity of custodial land usufruct by the host village despite their abandoning the immediate zone. That is, by members of neighboring communities participating in the host community’s Feast of the Dead in contributing the bones of some of their own deceased, they also were publicly recognizing that the abandonment of the village and its surrounding garden lands did not count as the host village’s releasing their custodial usufruct of the land so that these neighbors could exercise it. Rather, these neighbors were acknowledging the ongoing custodial usufruct rights of the host to this land and that the abandonment was simply temporary and a means of renewing its sacred powers.

Most importantly, postulating a systematic process of bone exchange and transfer significantly relates back to Steadman’s research that I reviewed in the previous chapter. She (1998, 313) argued that the heterozygosity of gene pools in the mortuary record of the

Terminal Late Woodland and Spoon River Mississippian periods of the Central Illinois Valley manifested a continual process of intra-regional and even extraregional transfer of humans. She presumed that these CBLs were cemeteries of the communities, and therefore, the burials would be members of these communities. This means that the “mixing” would be the result of intercommunity alliances, probably effected by marriage. Now while some of this mixing could still be attributed to intermarriage (i.e., intermarriage and inter-CBL bone exchange would not need to be mutually exclusive practices), I claim that the particular pattern of modifying heterozygosity of the Dickson Mounds, Orendorf, and Larson CBL data as she described it and as I amended it using Blakely’s CV analysis, more comfortably fits the “bone migration” than the “person migration” thesis.³ For example, this would explain why the heterozygosity of the Eveland phase burial population of the Dickson Mound CBL significantly reduced while displaying “new” sources of genetic material. In general, it would appear that the outflow level of human bones as gifts was greater than the inflow of a rather limited number of Cahokian or American Bottom-derived bone bundles being buried there. That is, rather than the reduced heterozygosity of the burial population being the result of loss of traditional extraregional and intraregional sources of shared deceased, it may have been the result of using intraregional deceased as sacred bone bundles for ritual processional transport to Cahokia and, at the same time, a quantitatively lesser contribution of the bones of deceased from the American Bottom resulting, for example, from losing the sacred chunky game a little more often than winning it, the bones being transferred as the rewards to the winners and the penalties the losers suffered.

It is from the background of such bone-transfer practices, therefore, that my postulated Spoon River Mississippian human bone gifting and exchanging would emerge. Therefore, it would not

require any major innovation in postmortem mortuary behaviors to accommodate the need to “export” human bones arising out of the custodial franchising of Cahokian ritual usufruct copyrights. Hence, the mortuary data of the American Bottom and of the Terminal Late Woodland period of west-central Illinois suggest not only the plausibility but the likelihood that mortuary exchange of whole bodies or at least of the major bones of the deceased was a systematic practice among different cult sodality groups. This would account for the highly varied nature of the gene pools that are embodied in mortuary mounds up and down the Central Illinois Valley—that is, both in the interior prairie sector and along the west-central Mississippian Valley region and down into the southern sector, the Sly Bottom. What may have been introduced by the Cahokian custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights was ritual practices that extended the use of these human bone remains, possibly resulting from recruiting the chunky game as a transformative medium to revitalize human bones that were ultimately exchanged and/or gifted in the form of sacred bone bundles to mediate further postmortem ritual sacrifice in the American Bottom. The game, of course, would also count as a sacrificial ritual to the relevant gods.

Empirical Support

According to the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, if the custodial franchising of ritual usufruct practices opened up and extended/intensified the use of human bones as an important reciprocal exchange medium for the performance of the mortuary aspect of these world renewal rituals, then we should find one or more world renewal cult sodality heterarchy CBLs that display several mortuary features and attributes that can be explained in these terms. First, if it is the consequence of the operation of at least a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy

practicing postmortem and even some lethal human sacrifice, then it should be large. This is because it serves the collective mortuary sacrificial needs of an affiliation of several first-order cult sodality heterarchical alliances distributed across the Central Illinois Valley. Any given large CBL should be sectorized into units that would serve as the sacred contexts for the performance of the sacrificial offering aspect of the ritual performances of the *different* and mutually autonomous first-order cult sodality heterarchies and their component cult sodalities. These contexts could be both contemporaneous and sequential. The separate but contemporaneous deposits mark autonomous first-order cult sodality heterarchies performing the obligatory suite of mortuary-mediated rituals and doing this in such a manner that each ensures being perceived by the others and is able to perceive these others as discharging their shared duties as members of a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. Of course, the autonomous groups could also invite each other to contribute to their respective performances. The sequential but separate deposits mark the ongoing sanctity of the complex world renewal cult sodality heterarchical CBL as it accumulates and magnifies its sacred capacity to renew the world. That is, there would be a tendency for the affiliation of alliances of cult sodalities to continue using the same complex CBL even if their actual ceremonial cult sodality lodges were elsewhere. In keeping with Goldstein's (2000, 200-201) suggestion that secondary (and even tertiary) interments may entail considerable transportation, the ritual bearing of sacred bundles, either as whole bodies or bone bundles, by groups of "Soul Keepers" to the second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy CBL from the ceremonial nodal sites of autonomous cult sodalities would be perfectly consistent with the notion of ritual renewal since these processions would be able to stop at important places or ritual "way stations" with their bundles and perform supplementary renewal rituals.

Indeed, this suggests that there would be several series of ceremonial nodal locales that were occupied by individual cult sodalities where preliminary mortuary rites were performed that, however, left *few* explicit mortuary indicators. For example, the mortuary rites performed at these locales might involve only the initial laying-in scaffolding rites of bodies that were then carefully and tightly wrapped in preparation for litter-based processions to the first-order level or even to the second-order level cult sodality heterarchy CBL. Burial of these tightly wrapped bodies could be subsequently disturbed in order to retrieve the bones, particularly the long bones and skulls, in order to wrap them carefully as sacred bundles for the “Soul Keepers” of the visiting cult sodalities to bear away to Cahokia. Only those required would be disturbed and the mortuary pit that was opened would be reused. Hence, we could expect to find many loose bones, particularly loose hand and foot bones, as well as broken pots and other artifacts that were left behind by those retrieving the bones. These might be incidentally found in near association with a discretely laid out extended burial, also displaying tight binding as a means of efficient sacred transport from the original autonomous cult sodality ceremonial nodal site.

I claim that all these attributes have been clearly revealed by the excavations of the Dickson Mounds site. As noted in the previous chapter, it consists of ten mounds. Most are slightly overlapping one or another neighboring mound, suggesting that at any time at least two, possibly three, were in simultaneous cumulative use. The initial burials were placed directly onto the surface of the bluff top, and considerable bone disturbance is indicated, consistent with the above postulated bone retrieval practices. The earliest burials were largely flexed and semiflexed. However, these forms are themselves expression of two ritual steps. Both are typical of the Late and Terminal Late Woodland mortuary program. The semiflexed burial

would manifest primarily funerary and related mourning and individual free soul spirit-release rites. This would suggest a close relation to the clan reproduction and the Path of Souls rite rather than world renewal reproduction, given the minimal postmortem manipulation treatment. This would probably be the result of first a brief period of scaffolding, similar to the Hidatsa practice, marking an initial death separation rite and a brief mourning period. The clan or family would then wrap the body loosely and deposit it in the "cemetery." It is quite possible, however, that subsequent bone retrieval rites were performed, given the extensive disturbances that have been remarked on by Harn (1980, 9, 58-59).

Compared to the semiflexed burial, the flexed burial indicates something akin to advanced body decay through extended scaffolding or maceration caused by temporary burial. This may mark expressions of the cult sodality performing world renewal rituals at their ceremonial nodal site (i.e., "feeding the gods with the flesh of the bodies" and then wrapping the body in a tightly flexed position to carry to the Dickson Mounds site for reburial). Again, subsequent bone retrieval is possible. The most common burial, however, is the extended burial, and despite its fully extended mode, this mode distinctly emerges as the mark of later stages in the *chaîne opératoire* mortuary process. "The arms of extended burials are often at the sides and legs extended, but frequently the body was so tightly wrapped at the time buried that the arms are drawn either across or under the body with hands either over the pelvis or under the hips, the shoulders nearly to the face, and the legs crossed" (Harn 1980, 58). It also correlates with solar alignments, suggesting that one of the important modes of world renewal postmortem sacrifice came to be aligning the body with critical azimuth points, for example, the point where the sun rose or set on winter and summer solstices, or other critical azimuth points, such as north and south marking the

Above World and Beneath World central axes, and so on. I interpret this as an example of making the mortuary offering congruent with the spiritual axes of the cosmos. "Burials seem to be intentionally oriented in four main directions, N-S, E-W, WNW-ESE, NNE-SSW, and two minor directions, NNW-SSE and ENE-WSW It was observed before taking compass readings that many burials would probably cluster around N-S and E-W points and some would be oriented toward the direction of the winter solstice and others at right angles to these The data so far collected at Dickson offer support for this position" (Harn 1980, 62). I have more to say later about this burial alignment practice.

In any case, although the extended burial would seem to minimize postmortem degrees of manipulation, which would suggest minimal world renewal ritual mediation, the above reported description of the particular form and tightness of the binding of the body suggests otherwise. Several purposes may be served by this practice. First, as I just noted, there was a definitely expressed interest in orienting the body in specific directions, usually in alignment with the solar turning points. This might be one reason the body was carefully and tightly wrapped, thereby facilitating "accurate" alignment at burial. Such alignments, therefore, distinctly implicate world renewal ritual dedicated to particular times of the solar cycle. This act of alignment production should not be interpreted in referential terms, as if the burial alignment is intended to refer to the celestial event that it marks. Rather, this burial alignment act should be interpreted expressively as both manifesting the sacrificial intentions of those doing it—that is, we are sacrificing to the deity embodied in the sun—and, simultaneously, eliciting the presence of the celestial "object" (e.g., the immanent sacredness of the summer solstice sun deity) who is the intended recipient of the sacrificial offering. First, the alignments stipulate that the solar deity in its particular solstice

aspect is the intended sacred recipient of this postmortem sacrificial offering, as specified by the representational contents of the collective mortuary intentions of the responsible group performing the ritual.

Second, the fact that this “tightness” is observable in the bone arrangements entails that when the body was bound, the soft tissues were in a significant state of decay, reinforcing the above suggestion that there was a period of scaffolding or bodily exposure, and this implicates the exercise of ritual intentions directed to “feeding the gods” via macerating the flesh exposed to the air and the Above World gods. Finally, not only would bearing these tightly bound linear body-bundles constitute important ritual itself, as suggested above, as distinctive individual litter-borne bodies, they would clearly delineate the contributions of the different cult sodalities to the ritual deposit, thereby ensuring its reputation in the eyes of its alliance partners. Given my above discussion of the possible role of the chunky game in revitalizing the bones of such extended burials, it is also possible that many of these were subsequently disinterred, the bones removed for sacred bundling and ultimate deposition at Cahokia. Therefore, while bundle burials were rather few proportionally at the Dickson Mounds, the overall mortuary patterning indicates significant bone disturbance as well as significant and careful placement of tightly bound extended burials. All this implicates a considerable amount of body and bone collecting and bundling being performed, and as I suggested earlier, the multiple signs of disturbing these depositions is consistent with the above suggested purpose of procuring bones to mediate further ritual to be performed elsewhere, for example, in Cahokia, or in one of the other second-order cult sodality heterarchies of the American Bottom.

Carol Diaz-Granados and her colleagues (2001) have described and analyzed a number of caves and rock shelters bearing the

Birdman motif and related Cahokian iconography distributed in eastern Missouri not too distant from Cahokia, as well as in Tennessee and elsewhere. These are not located on, but around, the American Bottom. They are richly stocked with figurative depictions of the celestial gods—that is, the Thunderbirds (Red Horn, Morning Star, or their equivalents)—as well as with depictions of underworld gods. “The figure is positioned on a diagonally slanting wall facing into the cave just above the entryway into a lower level The antlered Underwater Spirit is located away from the Morning Star figure, the Thunderers, and other upper-world figures” (2001, 486). In a more recent publication, Diaz-Granados (2004, 145-48) has interpreted these caves and rock shelters as shrines, and of course, I would suggest that they would be consistent with the above scenario—that long-distance interaction entailed sacred processions by cult sodality age-sets either bearing bone bundles back to Cahokia or going from Cahokia to more distant allies, in both cases bearing bones that were planned to serve as symbolic pragmatic media of world renewal rituals. Typically, such processions would have a series of ritual stations at which they might make mandatory as well as practical traveling stops to perform appropriate rituals—four is the traditional sacred ritual number in historic Native North American cosmology and ethos. However, for more long-distance processions, multiples of four stations could be possible.

I have postulated that the mortuary sphere is strongly influenced by the state of the clan-cult sodality arm’s-length relation. When the community system is in a bifurcated posture, the way the clans and cult sodalities interact with regard to the deceased can vary according to the degree of perceived pollution in the local region caused by human settlement and subsistence (Byers 2004, 275-76). Each of the social components has important obligations to the deceased, and of course, their interests in mortuary practices can sometimes require

the same human deceased for uses that conflict in some manner. For example, the clans would promote sustaining, to the degree possible, the corporeal integrity of the clan member as a model of the kinship group unity, particularly if the deceased was a senior member. I postulate that the perceived intensity of pollution generated by everyday domestic and subsistence practices, which are primarily the responsibility of the kinship sphere, would largely determine whether the clan-sodality relation was somewhat agonistic or more in harmony (Byers 2006a, 299-302). If intensity of perceived pollution was moderate, clans would offer some resistance to the suggestions of the cult sodalities and tend to retain greater control of the mortuary sphere. If it was high and dire, the clans would be much more amenable and agree that, following initial spirit release and separation rites, the sodality world renewal rites should have priority and postmortem sacrifice would prevail. Variation in terms of perceived pollution would generate a changing complex of clan and world renewal cult sodality CBLs. The latter, in particular, would be structured into several linked CBLs, from initial auxiliary to the main or terminal cult sodality world renewal CBLs. As I noted above, the auxiliary CBLs might have a paucity of actual human remains while being rather rich in mortuary features, such as residue of scaffolding, burial or maceration pits that are empty or display only a few stray bones. These stray bones could easily have been mislaid since the primary purpose of the burial pits was to mediate only part of the postmortem sacrificial process, in this case, macerating and reducing the flesh, thereby freeing up the bones. The maceration process, of course, would itself be interpreted as a renewal ritual. The bones would then be gathered and carried as sacred bundles to mediate major collective postmortem sacrificial rites that involved depositing the accumulation of large numbers of sacred bone bundles. These would probably be done in one of the main cult sodality CBLs, such

as the Powell Mound and the Mound 72 in Cahokia (Byers 2006a, 384-90, 395-96, 400-402).

I postulate that a rather less-than-fully “harmonious” arm’s-length relation would probably be the case for the Central Illinois Valley during the Mississippian period. Hence, the settlement pattern would include a range of CBLs, quite a number maintaining a close approximation to the Late Woodland mound burial practice in which semiflexed and flexed burials prevailed and only a few bone bundle burials occurred. In parallel, however, there would also be some auxiliary cult sodality CBLs with possibly only one or two terminal second-order cult sodality heterarchy CBLs for the whole region, the latter displaying major postmortem manipulation, even as I noted above, clear signs of “mining” of the deceased through their bones being removed and probably bundled for “export.” I consider the Dickson Mounds to be the best known example of the latter type (the Orendorf site mortuary record likely constitutes another major example). I do not think it is necessary to repeat the description of the Dickson Mounds mortuary content I summarized in the previous chapter and above. However, unless read carefully, because the majority of the burials were deposited in an extended, semiflexed, or flexed manner, the impression could be that these burials pretty well exhaust the total mortuary deposits made. This would suggest that the burial number estimation, derived from the actual number of burials excavated, is a close approximation of the total number of burials that were deposited—that is, that Harn’s estimate of 3,000+ burials is a close representation of the actual number, 3,000 given mortuary processing at the Dickson Mounds (Harn 1980, 76). Careful reading, however, can easily reveal that there are abundant data suggesting deliberate bone disturbance, removal, and reuse of the burial pits. Unless we can establish valid estimates of the removal rate of actual extended body bundles, we can only guess at the total

that were processed. The removal rate may relate to matters that were extraneous to the mortuary process itself, for example, relating to the reproduction of the postulated cult sodality heterarchies. Promotion, and the resultant shifting of age-sets from the junior to the senior age-grade level, might result in the closing of a mortuary mound and the beginning of another, thereby sealing the burials that had not been disturbed.

Probably the single clearest set of mortuary data in the Dickson Mounds that can be used to demonstrate that this was a major world

Figure 10.1. The Dickson Four Sacrificial Deposition at the Dickson Mounds Site. Drawings made and copyright permission kindly granted by Alan Harn, curator, Illinois State Museum.

renewal cult sodality heterarchy CBL in which postmortem and, to a lesser but still important degree, lethal human sacrificial offerings were regularly performed is the well-known “Dickson Four” feature, a mortuary deposit that Hall interprets as probably a form of world renewal ritual related to the Busk ritual and the relighting of the sacred fires (Hall 2000, 248). The “Dickson Four” were four males in the prime of life (figure 10.1). They had been deposited together as fully extended headless burials. Prior to burial, a deep pit had been dug and a thick matting placed to cover the bottom. Then the headless bodies were carefully placed. Each had a pot deposited close to where the head should be, almost as if these were replacing the removed heads. The bodies were supine, and the arm of one was linked to the arm of the body beside it. Apparently some organic material, wood or matting, was placed over them and set burning. Then, as the fire continued, the pit was filled, thereby resulting in partially cremating the bodies. This deposit was left in situ while additional mortuary deposits were made. As Conrad described these, there were “several layers of burials totaling at least ten individuals of all ages and both sexes were added over a period of time. With the exception of two extended infants, all were semiflexed. The penultimate interment consisted of the broken long bones of two individuals. Finally, a grave containing the long bones of eight adolescents and young adults, all apparently male, was placed over the pit” (Conrad 1989, 102-103).

Most Mississippian-period archaeologists have noted the similarity of the “Dickson Four” deposit to the four young headless and handless adult male burials in Feature 106 of Mound 72 (Fowler et al. 1999, 177). However, there is at least one important formal difference in that the “Dickson Four” were deposited in a deep pit specially dug and its base prepared while the “Cahokian Four” deposit of Mound 72 was placed directly on the ground located midway

between primary mounds 72Sub1 and 72Sub2 of Mound 72 and then covered with a small primary mound. Immediately to the southeast of this mortuary deposit and with the same southeast axial orientation there was Feature 105, a very large mortuary deposit of 50+ full-bodied extended females, placed in a large shallow pit. This pit had a number of attributes that were similar to the pit in which the “Dickson Four” were deposited: a prepared sand base, a thick deposit of matting material, half of the female bodies were placed on the latter in two parallel rows; then they were covered with another layer of matting, and another double row of female bodies was carefully placed, and another matting was used to cover them. In this case, no fire was lit. Instead, earth was placed directly over the top matting. Importantly, the two side-by-side Cahokian deposits of the four males and the 50+ females must have occurred together or in close sequence since some of the earth used for the primary mound to cover the former had spilled into the pit of the 50+ female burials that was immediately southeast and adjacent to the female burials, suggesting that the large burial pit of the latter was still open when the former deposit was being covered.

The Mound 72 deposits mark one of the more important known Cahokian mortuary events of the Lohmann phase. Therefore, the Eveland phase “Dickson Four” and the subsequent series of burials clearly occurred later (i.e., equivalent to the Stirling phase of the American Bottom). However, the similarity of patterning implies that the same type of ideological mortuary strategy was being implemented in both cases. Most have interpreted the two Mound 72 deposits as lethal human sacrifice, a position that I have endorsed (2006a). In fact, as spectacular as these are, they are only two of a series of similar mass lethal sacrificial burials that make up much of the mortuary content of Mound 72. It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, to apply the same interpretation to the “Dickson Four” and, by extension, to the

subsequent series of burials deposited over them, although the latter appear to have been postmortem rather than lethal sacrifice.

My claim that the “Dickson Four” deposition is quite adequately characterized as the end product of a lethal sacrificial ritual probably accords with the interpretations of most archaeologists who have studied the Dickson Mounds site. Hall has drawn a parallel between this partially cremated mortuary deposit and the Aztec world renewal rites terminating the 52-year Mesoamerican “century.” Conrad also notes these as probably being lethal human sacrificial rituals. However, he draws a parallel with the historically known Natchez mortuary rites for the “Great Sun” or his brother, the “Tattooed Serpent,” in this case, close “companions” of the deceased, referred to by Conrad (and most archaeologists who have drawn on this Natchez analogy) as “retainers” were “sacrificed” to accompany the “Great Sun” or the “Tattooed Serpent” (1991, 128; 1989, 102-103). However, these different Mesoamerican and Southeastern rituals can be used to justify interpreting the “Dickson Four” and the related deposits as world renewal lethal human sacrificial rituals rather than as “retainer” sacrifices. The Natchez “Great Sun” was identified with the Sun deity, and the Aztec lethal sacrifices mediated the rebirth of the cosmos. I have argued that, in fact, not just the two Mound 72 mortuary deposits I noted above, but effectively all of those displaying the same patterning of dual layering, matting, and so on, were the conditions of satisfaction of a collective, ongoing, world renewal lethal sacrificial strategic program and that even the secondary burial deposits constituted an ongoing process of human sacrificial rituals. These were the outcome of sacrificial strategies that were probably directed to the renewal of the sacred solar powers and, to be more precise, may have been tied into the equinoctial and solstitial solar turning points through the complex of alignments that linked Mound 72 to Monks Mound, to its immediate north (2006a, 354-72).

Figure 10.2. The sequence of mortuary depositions made subsequent to and superimposed on the Dickson Four Sacrificial Deposition of the Dickson Mounds Site. Drawings made and copyright permission kindly granted by Alan Harn, curator, Illinois State Museum.

It is not only the “Dickson Four” deposition that is important here. As Conrad points out, and as indicated in figure 10.2, many more mortuary deposits were carried out on top of this initial major event. It is notable that these are extended and semiflexed burials, as well as several separate deposits of sets of long bones, both unbroken and deliberately broken. In my view, none of these mortuary deposits can be adequately characterized in funerary terms. This complex clearly fits what could be expected of a world renewal cult sodality heterarchy CBL. Indeed, as I noted earlier, a detailed overview of the mortuary deposits of the Dickson Mounds site is very consistent with what we could expect of a world renewal CBL that was the recipient of multiple deceased mediating different stages of the process

of postmortem and even lethal human sacrifice. Harn's comments give a good sense of the extent to which postmortem manipulation was carried out in this CBL. For one particular sector of the site, "[s]eventeen groups or bundles of bones are present as well as a single, partially exposed grave containing the piled remains of 10 individuals. The preparators of the bodies often included the bones of more than one person in a secondary burial; so the 26 burial numbers actually represent 31 individuals (This figure does not include the extra burials recently recorded in bundle No. 144). Of those listed as being secondary burials, at least 5 (representing 7 individuals) probably are bones which were disturbed by aboriginal grave-digging and reinterred in the new grave" (Harn 1980, 58-59).

Overview Discussion

While this interpretation, based on the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model and its related Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, clearly argues that the Mississippianization of this region was the result of a series of *cult sodality-unit intrusive events* and not site-unit intrusive events (i.e., "living migration"), it still allows for a type of population mobility that I have referred to as transient migration. Could this type be accommodated to Emerson's migration model? It clearly cannot in terms of the type of social entity that his model claims was responsible for the Mississippian assemblage. Emerson's view claims that it was a hierarchical monistic modular polity, or at least, a breakaway component of Cahokia understood in such terms, and therefore, it would itself embody the same type of social and cultural structures as its source community. My interpretation, of course, claims that the social groups involved would be representatives of only the cult sodality components of the complementary heterarchical community system of the American Bottom and its environs. Furthermore,

since the latter social system would be in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, the specific cult sodality units involved could be from different world renewal cult heterarchies, some from East St. Louis, others from St. Louis or from one of the second-order heterarchies making up the third-order heterarchical ring encircling the Central Precinct of Cahokia, and so on.

These individually could also occupy different levels of the enabling hierarchy of one or the other of the cult sodalities of these alliances. Those at different levels may have been franchising the custodial usufruct copyrights of different renewal rituals and, therefore, could complement each other. Those at the same level, however, might be in competition, each attempting to ally with the same set of equivalent Central Illinois Valley cult sodalities. As such, there might be some competition among these different American Bottom cult sodalities. Furthermore, the material expression of this competition in the Central Illinois Valley could differ in respect to the way the same cult sodalities might compete with each other in their home zone of the American Bottom. In the latter zone, intercult sodality competition might be manifested by regulated contests between the competing cult sodalities, such as conducting the famous chunky game in the great plaza of the Central Precinct. Under the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, these would be part of world renewal rituals, and the chunky game would be the most competitive intercult sodality aspect of these rituals, probably terminated by the second most competitive aspect, such as the collective burial of 175 bone bundles found in the Wilson Mound mortuary deposit (Pauketat 2005b, 202). However, some or even many of these bundles may have been derived from the Central Illinois Valley by the very same cult sodalities that competed in the chunky game, as well as other sacred games (Hall 1989, 243).⁴

Of course, this competition would be tightly regulated by the ideological rules of the game, so actual killing may not have occurred; or if it “accidentally” did, the death may have served only to fuel stronger sodality–sodality competitive encounters “the next time round.” However, the competition among the American Bottom cult socalities may have taken on a more lethal form in the distant region of the Central Illinois Valley. Here, the American Bottom cult sodality components may have harkened back to the lethal sacrificial strategy of the Lohmann (pre-Stirling) phase so forcefully manifested in Mound 72 described above and to which I referred earlier when discussing the state of the autonomist–centralist factional competition during this phase. At that time, it seems that the centralist faction was very influential, supported and promoted by the Woodhenge 72 priestly cult sodality, which likely favored lethal human sacrifice and, as a result, promoted interregional war with distant cult sodality heterarchies and greater defensive centralization of Cahokia. I claimed above that the end of the Lohmann phase and emergence of the Stirling phase, however, marked the emergence of the autonomist faction and its preference for postmortem sacrifice as the prevailing form of human mediated sacrifice.

Hence, in the Central Illinois Valley, lethal sacrifice may have been reemergent, promoted by the same Cahokian groups that earlier suppressed it in their “home turf.” That is, whereas the competition among Stirling phase cult socalities in the American Bottom region was controlled by the dynamic crosscutting of alliances focusing on the grand collective endeavor to reverse the level of sacred pollution such that intersodality feuding was controlled and interregional warfare was avoided, or at least significantly reduced, resulting in the prevalence among the American Bottom cult sodality heterarchies of postmortem human sacrificial rituals with a lower incidence of (but probably still occurring) lethal sacrificial rituals in

the Stirling period, the extraregional expression of these competitive relations—outside the immediate and direct mitigating influence of the Cahokian context—may have led to generating hostilities among the Central Illinois Valley cult sodalities mediated by lethal forms of human sacrifice. Therefore, just as Emerson claims, Cahokian factionalism would have been an important causal factor in the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley. Under my reading, however, the factional feuding was both within and among the cult sodalities, not the complementary heterarchical communities, as such. The expansion of the Stirling phase Cahokian-based cult sodalities into the Central Illinois Valley may have been among the first expressions of this shift in ritual priorities in the ideological strategies of the majority of the cult sodalities under the influence of the autonomist factional perspective, and this would have been promoted by the earlier contacts along these lines that are manifest in the pre-Mississippian period Rensch site.

It may seem ironic, therefore, to suggest that the expansion of the influence of the autonomist factions in competition for reputation—as measured through the capacity to procure sacred symbolic capital of human bones for nonaggressive-generating postmortem human sacrifice, thereby promoting a period of considerable “peaceful” but rapid expansion of Cahokia during the Stirling phase—simultaneously exported aggressive competition among the long-distance cult sodalities that, through becoming franchisees of the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights, allied themselves with these different American Bottom-based cult sodalities. While the latter competed among themselves in the American Bottom in a nonlethal human sacrificial manner, they may have promoted lethal human sacrificial competition among these same Illinoisan allies in order to enhance long-distance procuring of sacred bone bundles, thereby sowing aggression among communities that had previously sustained amicable relations.

Discussion

I do not think that anything I have noted so far actually hinges on whether or not my above claim that the Mississippianism introduced into the Central Illinois Valley, as represented by the Rensch site, actually was one or another type of “regrowing-of-the-earth” ritual. What is important is that some new custodial ritual usufruct copyright, very likely world renewal in nature, was introduced and its proper and felicitous performance not only was dependent on the continual interaction between the American Bottom and the Central Illinois Valley, as well as other neighboring and more distant regions (e.g., the Apple River region of the Mississippi River where a similar Mississippianism emerged about the same time as in the Central Illinois Valley), but that this continuity was the result of a pressing need that the Central Illinois Valley population saw would be satisfied by their performing this ritual. There are two reasons that this latter is important. First, although a number of archaeologists are now prepared to recognize ritual practices as being important in understanding the archaeological record, particularly to understand monumental features, many still assume that ritual does not itself need to be explained. Possibly it is because ritual is thought of as the expression of a primary drive akin to that motivating hunting and gathering. I have tried to show that, in one sense, it is primary, however, not because it satisfies a basic need separate from those needs satisfied by ecological practices, but because both are part of the same set of practices and both are necessarily symbolically constituted. That is, it is an error to treat only ritual practices as symbolic while treating subsistence practices as straightforwardly instrumental and practical and only circumstantially or incidentally symbolic. This symbolic-structural entrainment is part of what I mean by the deontic ecological perspective when applied to a world that is experienced through the medium of an immanentist cosmology and custodial squatter ethos.

Thus, ritual is built into everyday subsistence and settlement practices. I have used the term *midwifery ritual* to refer to this built-in aspect of everyday hunting and gathering and domestic-based settlement in order to emphasize that, to peoples in this type of world, the destructive moment of “living off the land” through hunting its animals, gathering its floral and other resources, inhabiting its locales, and using its paths demands a simultaneous reproductive moment by which the imbalancing of these resources, be they animal or plant, caused by human interventions, as well as the spaces and paths these humans exploit, is warranted, thereby being rectified and re-balanced. Hence, midwifery ritual, on the one hand, and seasonally cyclic sodality-based collective public ritual, on the other, are related by both being world renewal interventions. *Modifications in the objective conditions constraining and enabling the pursuit of community survival require both instrumental and symbolic innovation.* Because this view connects religious ritual and subsistence-settlement practices together, it requires a complementary set of social structural models that can make sense of both the everyday domestic aspect of the archaeological record and the not-so-everyday and often monumental ceremonial aspect.

Second, the world renewal nature of the innovative ritual is an important point because postulating world renewal practices as being tied into ecological and demographic conditions that transcend local regions establishes why custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights could become such an important mechanism of transregional or interregional interaction. The process would be perceived as beneficial by both parties, franchisers and franchisees, because it served equivalent needs and interests of both, such as the need for the cult sodality heterarchies of the American Bottom, as particularly manifested in the complex monumentalism of Cahokia, to procure symbolic pragmatic capital in the form of the bones of “imported”

human deceased, and that this would reduce the pressure of claims by the (waning) centralist faction for the need to go to war in distant regions to procure lethal sacrificial victims. This shift to postmortem human sacrifice may have also reduced hostility from nearer neighbors, such as the Jersey Bluff communities in the Lower Illinois Valley, who may have been actively retaliating against these cult sodalities of the American Bottom during the Lohmann phase for just this reason—that is, retaliating for the cult sodality-based expeditionary forces entering this region in order to procure through warfare warriors of local cult sodalities who served as victims of the lethal sacrifices they performed, for example, on the base of Mound 72. By establishing peaceful relations with the Central Illinois Valley people, this may have prevented or limited cooperation between the latter and their southern Lower Illinois Valley neighbors, who would use alliance with their northern neighbors to mobilize warriors to defend and retaliate against American Bottom–Cahokian incursions. However, the real political benefit of developing and intensifying custodial franchising to cult sodalities of the Central Illinois Valley would be accrued to the autonomist factions of the many American Bottom cult sodalities by their gaining a new source of symbolic pragmatic capital from the Central Illinois Valley cult sodalities in the form of deceased who could be carried back to Cahokia as sacred bone and hair scalp bundles to serve with honor and dignity as symbolic pragmatic media of postmortem world renewal ritual performances at one or more of the American Bottom second-order cult sodality heterarchies and even, possibly, in the context of the fourth-order cult sodality embodied in the Great Precinct of Cahokia itself.

For the same reason, as noted above, the claim that human bones (and likely human hair scalps) were the valued reciprocal gift that these American Bottom cult sodalities received in return for custodial franchising of their ritual usufruct copyrights is not dependent

on this actually being a “regrowing-of-the-earth” ritual. The latter specifically addresses the problem of the experiencing of major oscillations in the land–water balance, in this case, leading to the conclusion that the land was progressively sinking into the waters. The solution, of course, would be to “regrow” or, even, “refloat” the land. Of course, this suggestion could be wrong; but even if this is the case, it simply suggests that some other ritual was actually being performed (e.g., enhancing the fertility of the maize gardens). In any of several possibilities, claiming that human bones were valued as sacrificial offerings would not be inconsistent. I prefer characterizing the type of world renewal ritual as being a “regrowing-of-the-earth” type because the success of cultivation in the floodplain zone was highly sensitive to even minor abnormal fluctuations in the hydrological regime. Also, there is empirical evidence to support this claim. Since Cahokia, East St. Louis, and St. Louis are all built on the floodplain caused by the conjunction of several major rivers, the Missouri, Illinois, and Mississippi, and these locales bracket the rivers that drain them, even minor changes in the amount of precipitation in the hinterlands of these rivers would have great impact on this floodplain. In the case of Cahokia, the Central Precinct and its associated monumental Monks Mound overlook the flood bottom of the Cahokia Creek, and interestingly, it also overlooks the Creek Bottom multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex built on this local floodplain. As I commented earlier, this plaza and set of mounds probably was regularly inundated by spring flooding. Ritual practices would be timed to ensure that the annual flooding of this complex would recede, and of course, the mounds and plaza, representing the Middle Earth or Middle World, initially flooded by the rising river, would be seen as sinking into the water. Then, as the flood receded, these would be seen and experienced as rising back up, as if being refloated, demonstrating that the Middle World component of cosmos was being successfully refloated and rebalanced.

Hence, the American Bottom communities could be particularly confronted with this hydrological problem and also, as I suggested earlier, this may have been the case for the Central Illinois Valley Moundville phase communities, and since the American Bottom social system would bear witness of having been able to practice innovated rituals mediated by the monumental constructions of Cahokia that seemed to work, these ritual practices may have been particularly attractive for emulation by others—particularly if the American Bottom region was widely perceived to be a sort of centralized hydrological “thermostat” for much of the central and northern Mississippian drainage (see note 1). The reputation of American Bottom–Cahokian ritual practices may have and probably did reach even to communities of the Black Warrior River Valley in west-central Alabama. Of course, it is also possible that no major objective change in the flooding and drought cycle was being experienced and the real concern that drove ritual innovation was related to the perception, whether objectively real or simply imaginary, that subsistence and population levels were increasing in intensification and, therefore, must necessarily be generating a greater burden of sacred pollution on the land and that assuaging this burden required intensification and improvement of the world renewal ritual. As I noted above, only further research on the paleotopographical changes in the region of the type recently carried out by Julieann Van Nest for the Middle Woodland period of the Lower Illinois Valley Havana-Hopewell can clarify this possibility (Van Nest 2006, 402; and see also Van Nest et al. 2001).

Another interesting possibility that this human bone postulate opens up is the fact that it may have supplemented a more traditional form of renewal media, human hair. As I noted earlier, procuring hair from the deceased is not going to show up in the archaeological record in quite as obvious a manner as procuring bones. In Hall’s (1997, 26–28) view, there is certainly abundant evidence that many

historic Native American peoples valued hair as a medium of ritual, and of course, the collecting of scalps in warfare was a major method used by warriors in their pursuit of fame. In the mortuary record, probably the only residual indicator of hair procurement would be the striations on the cranium indicating where the scalp skin was cut and the hair removed in one piece. However, I think caution should be exercised by not interpreting all such indicators of scalping as signs of aggressive killing. Just as I suggested that the clear indications of defleshing on the human bones buried at the Liverpool Lake site could be part of a world renewal ritual akin to the Huron practice of defleshing and cremating the soft tissue of a victim of accidental drowning, so scalping may be indicative of a somewhat similar postmortem sacrificial rite. In this case, the scalp would be added to a sacred bundle representing and embodying the soul of the deceased and used later to mediate a spirit-release rite by which the deceased either followed the Path of Souls to the land of the Dead or was reborn in the person of a newborn.

This possibility cannot be ignored, and in fact, Conrad (1991, 130; 1989, 104) points out that one of the Kingston Lake burials—which he interprets as the retainers who were sacrificed to accompany the associated deceased to the land of the Dead—was a preadult displaying signs of scalping. He argued against these scalping signs being the result of warfare death but part of the lethal sacrifice of young person as a “retainer.” He may well be correct in terms of lethal sacrifice, but it is not necessary to assume that this person would have been a “retainer.” Importantly, as I noted earlier, there are many burials in bluff top mounds away from the major sites that display little or no postburial disturbance. This does not mean that these were not used to mediate world or possibly simply social and personal renewal ritual since hair removal can occur without disturbing the scalp so as to create a sacred bundle associated with the deceased

for later use in mediating a spirit-release rite, as discussed by Hall. If this were the case then, combined with the Dickson Mound type bone retrieval sacred bundling, there may have been two forms of “soul keeping” performed, one associated with the cult sodality heterarchy CBL such as the Dickson Mounds site, and one associated with a clan-based cemetery CBL type, possibly like the Morton site.

Having been critically summarized and shown that rather than the Dickson Mounds site being the collective cemetery CBL of a hierarchical chiefdom, it can be much more coherently interpreted and explained as having served as the world renewal ritual CBL of what likely started as a first-order that then emerged as a second-order cult sodality heterarchy. This latter heterarchy likely incorporated the cult sodalities of most of the communities of much of Central Illinois Valley, at least during the early and middle stages of the Mississippian period of this region. It is now incumbent on me to complete the demonstration by showing how this site and its emergence and development as a cult sodality CBL presupposes the emergence and development of a region-wide system of complementary heterarchical communities in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. I turn to this task in the next chapter, thereby completing Part II of this book—namely, the case study of the Mississippianization process in the region north of Cahokia in the American Bottom as exemplified in the development and transformation of the archaeological record of the Central Illinois Valley.

NOTES

1. This view would also explain how Cahokia and the American Bottom, situated at the confluence of the Upper Mississippi, the Illinois, and the Missouri Rivers, became the focus of such monumental earthworks since it stands at a point that, in an important way, might be seen as the “thermostatic” center for governing the hydrological regime of a huge northern region drained by the Mississippian system. “Regrowing-of-the-earth ritual” ceremonialism would also probably be tied into a particular phenomenological experiencing of the nature of floods. We think of and, therefore, perceptually experience land as being fixed and water as flowing, moving, rising, and lowering. Therefore, we perceive floods as the rising of the water level while the land remains unmoved. However, in a social world that conceives of the Middle World as having been formed by the creator gods from mud taken from the bottom of the primordial sea and then set to float or be suspended on the surface of this water, floods might be perceived as the sinking of an unstable earth in a fixed primordial sea. Hence, “regrowing-of-the-earth” would be a rite that would “literally” raise or refloat the sinking land, thereby lowering the water level.

2. This suggestion may be worth pursuing empirically. Julieann Van Nest (2006) has argued that there is strong evidence that the emergence and development of the mortuary mediated ceremonial complex of the lower Illinois Valley Hopewell during the Middle Woodland period is correlated with a possibly extensive series of episodic megafloods. Similar evidence may be available for the Late Prehistoric period of the Illinois River Valley (also see Van Nest et al. 2001). Hence, while Esarey (2000; Esarey et al. 2000) has attributed the flooding of the prehistoric levees of the Central Illinois River to flood control mechanisms developed in the nineteenth century, it is

not implausible that, in fact, during the Terminal Late Woodland period, these levees may have been subjected to cycles of major flooding, possibly megaflooding of the sort that Van Nest has postulated for the Middle Woodland period of the Lower Illinois River Valley. Further research is required to establish this possibility.

3. Of course, extracting DNA from ancient bones is becoming a viable method for cross-validating dispersed population relations (Bolnick and Smith 2007, 640). Also there is excellent potential for testing this claim using strontium isotope analysis of bones (Beehr 2011, 85-86). Although these methods are costly, future research along these lines would be valuable to confirm or disconfirm this claim.

4. Checking out this possibility could be the basis of future research, particularly testing DNA and strontium isotope samples that might be extracted from curated bones (note 3). Also, I would suggest that we not limit the sacred game competitions to the chunky game. This may have been a very important game that possibly highlighted every large aggregation of cult sodalities involved in world renewal rites. But there would also likely be other less specialized ball games involving large teams akin to the historically known lacrosse, as well as person-to-person competitions such as wrestling matches to foot races, as well as games of strength, stamina, skill, and so on. The chunky game iconography could also be used as media of these different forms of competition. Also see my discussion of Ohio Hopewell (Byers 2011, Chapters 10 and 11), in which I argue that the great earthwork embankments were specialized sacred games arenas and that these were played out as a cyclic sequence of world renewal rituals in which human mortuary remains also strongly figured.

PART III.

The Mississippian of the Black Warrior River Region: From Cahokia to Moundville

CHAPTER 11

The Cult Sodality Heterarchy Account of the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley

As I commented in my critique of the direct hierarchical settlement articulation model that Harn has presented and that many archaeologists have recognized, albeit with variable commitment, this model is inadequate because its concepts force the interpreter to lump many sites having quite distinct formal differences under the same site category type and, in other cases, to split between different site categories other sites that shared a broad range of important formal attributes. This chaotic and formally erratic splitting and lumping clearly indicates that the direct hierarchical model has generated an inadequate range of possible site types since this range cannot accommodate the formal variation in sites that is actually manifested in the empirical data. This incapacity clearly signifies, therefore, that the basic theoretical premises of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity or, as I have been calling it, the *Chiefdom Polity model* (different terms but same sense), are inadequate to address and explain the data. In contrast, the theoretical premises grounding the Complementary Heterarchical Community model, along with its associated Ecclesiastic-Communal Cult Sodality and the Cult Sodality Heterarchy models, can be used to generate a range of formal site types that can be used to coherently sort the complexity of the settlement data (which I discuss below). Therefore, it is demonstrably the preferred view in virtue of the coherence, scope, and breadth of the

explanations of these sites it enables compared to anomaly-ridden explanations characteristic of the Chiefdom Polity view. The key structural notion of this theoretical perspective is that it characterizes the communities as complementary heterarchical social formations based on the clan-sodality structure. Therefore, it can postulate that the region-wide settlement pattern will tend to manifest typically one or another or some degree of settlement patterning along the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation continuum. This continuum entails recognizing that a regional set of such communities embodies a significant degree of settlement flexibility in virtue of their constitutive dual clan/sodality structural axes. These ground the relative autonomy of the core complementary component groups, clans and sodalities (kinship-companionship) so that in the bifurcated posture, two formally and spatially distinct settlement-type component spheres will simultaneously exist, one embodying the range of clan- or kinship-based sites of the region-wide communities, and the other, the range of sodality-based sites.

This chapter presents the alternative account of the Mississippian period of the Central Illinois Valley that will be consistent with the interpretation in the previous chapter that the Dickson Mounds site was a major CBL of what may have been initially a first-order and then, with historical development, a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. To do this, I pick up my earlier discussion of the Rensch site of the Terminal Late Woodland period Moundville phase. As I noted in Chapter 7, McConaughy, Martin, and King (1993, 79) could not establish the full spatial and social context of the two dwelling structures and storage pits that they revealed. However, they noted, on the basis of surface indicators, that the site was only a part of a much larger set of activity areas, and therefore, the excavation might have been on the periphery of an integrated village site (it even has Middle Woodland period component representation).

Assuming this is the case, and only further excavation can confirm it, then I postulate that the Rench site would be part of a plaza-periphery integrated complementary heterarchical community village settlement of the type equivalent to those responsible for generating the community plans of the Range site in the Dohack and Range phases of the early American Bottom Terminal Late Woodland period. This would mean that the Rench site would be in that part of the actual village zone dedicated to the ritual activities of the relatively autonomous communal cult sodality(ies), probably on the spatial periphery of the village, thereby being a fairly secluded specialized cult sodality enclave used to perform world renewal rituals, one or more of which were probably originally received from an equivalent Cahokian cult sodality by means of one or possibly a series of custodial franchising events that transferred Cahokian custodial ritual usufruct copyrights.

All this would suggest that the Mossville phase of the Terminal Late Woodland period complementary heterarchical communities of this northern sector of the Central Illinois Valley were initially in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture. Each village would have consisted of two sets of relatively autonomous social formations—clans and sodalities. Each would incorporate clan-based domestic dwellings and sodality-based structures, the latter being represented as the two structures at the Rench site, as well as structures and spaces that were cooperatively shared by the clans and sodalities—for example, a “square” or plaza-like open space. However, as I postulated earlier, the initial transfer through primary custodial franchising of one or more Cahokian ritual usufruct copyrights would likely have initiated a fairly rapid escalation of changes, mediated through secondary and tertiary intraregional franchising. As outlined in Chapter 6, this process would be part of, and would enhance, both the transformation of what were in this initial stage

the *communal cult sodalities* of the community(ies) into becoming *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality congregations*, along with probably a near-simultaneous shift toward a bifurcation of the settlement pattern as the alliances would promote spatial disengaging of the emerging ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities from their integrated village locales which they had, until then, shared with the autonomous clans.

The motive for this would arise from a dual need rooted in the two social groupings. On the one hand, the clans would perceive the benefits of distributing the maize gardens of their constituent families across the region, thereby more equitably distributing the burden and benefits of possibly intensifying levels of maize-based subsistence gardening, particularly by reducing the pollution-burden level per area unit caused by disturbing the sacred natural order as a result of expanding subsistence needs and, at the same time, enhancing the benefits that were perceived to flow back into the land from the sacred powers of maize. On the other hand, the cult sodalities would perceive the benefits that would flow from establishing secluded locales designed to facilitate world renewal ritual, in this case, by specifically focusing on producing the features and facilities that the newly franchised world renewal ritual performances required. Of course, they built these so as to ensure that their main tangible properties were congruent with the sacred structuring of the cosmos (e.g., that the major axes of the settlement plans were aligned with different critical turning points of the solar and/or lunar cycles), that the mortuary depositions mediating spirit-release rites were also properly accumulated and built up cooperatively as well as being aligned and organized to enhance the sanctifying consequences to the local region by the release of these living spirits and their procreative powers back to the land, and so on. Therefore, a major modification in the settlement pattern of the region's complementary heterarchical communities would rapidly occur—from the preexisting plaza-periphery

integrated settlement articulation modal posture into the bifurcated modal posture.¹

I am not ignoring the moiety structure. Indeed, this would probably be more clearly tangibly articulated and manifested when the community was in an integrated posture than when in the bifurcated posture since the former case would promote the distribution of the village's clan components (e.g., extended matrilineal family lodges) into spatially and formally complementary halves structured in terms of rules of exogamy, the lodges of the clans of one moiety located on one side of the plaza and those of the clans of the complementary moiety on the opposing side, and so on. Nevertheless, the cult sodalities would probably also sort themselves according to the moieties; but their moiety structure would not hinge on rules of exogamy but rules of age-grade and age-set seniority (see Chapter 4, note 3). Also, since the sodalities would likely have no more than one or two structures for their meetings (e.g., one for each age-grade) and since they would share the open plaza or square with the total village, these locales could easily be overlooked by nonknowledgeable visitors or simply seen as the locales where the men and/or the bachelors of the community regularly aggregated. Hence, the moiety sodality-aspect would be less visible or noticeable when the community was in the integrated posture.

What I am postulating here is that the moiety structure that is often typical of complementary heterarchical communities is a dual aspect structure in harmony with the dual clan-sodality social structure of the community. While the clan aspect of the moiety organization of the community would be effected in terms of rules of exogamy (i.e., exogamous marriage and unilateral filiation structures), the sodality aspect of the moiety organization would likely follow the junior/senior generational or age-grade structural "fault line." For example, assume that the dual clan/kinship aspect moiety

structure of a community bore the terms *White* and *Red*. Under the clan-aspect of the structure moiety, the rules of exogamy were followed, and a man whose clan was in the White moiety could only marry a woman if her clan was in the Red moiety. Of course, this also meant that marriage did not change one's clan-aspect moiety membership. Therefore, one was under the same clan-aspect of the moiety for life. However, this was not the case under the sodality-aspect since these two categories were based on a senior and junior generation. In this case, the life cycle played a major role since, at a certain point in the life cycle, an individual changed from being identified as belonging to the junior age-grade aspect of the Red moiety to belonging to the senior age-grade aspect of the White moiety. This simply meant that they were promoted from being identified as juniors to being identified as seniors in the community age-grade system. This change of social standing would normally entail a major promotional event constituted by the most senior ranking age-set of the junior age-grade of the Red sodality-aspect moiety undertaking conveyancing rites by the most junior ranking age-set of the senior age-grade transferring their custodial ritual usufruct copyrights to the former. This would, in effect, promote the recipients *into* the White sodality-aspect moiety. Since it is probable that these same Red and White moieties under the sodality aspect sectoried village leadership in terms of seniority, then, because of their maturity, the civic (peace) chiefs and counselors would normally be selected from among senior age-grade leaders of the White moiety (sodality aspect), while war chiefs and war leaders would be selected from among the junior age-grade leaders of the Red moiety (sodality aspect). I will return to this issue of the double-aspect view of the moiety structure later.²

As I noted above, when the regional communities were in the integrated posture, the clan-kinship aspect of the moiety structure

would be rather well manifested in the settlement pattern. In contrast, should the integrated communities of the region shift into the bifurcated posture, as I have postulated was a characteristic first-step of the Mississippianization process in a region, the clan-aspect of the moiety structure would tend to be much less strongly manifested since the lodges of the unilateral families of the clan components would be dispersed across the landscape, while, in contrast, the sodality-aspect of the moiety structure would likely be quite strongly manifested materially since the ceremonial nodal locale of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality would be the most complex component of the settlement pattern, and it would tend to be physically divided into two sectors, junior (Red) and senior (White) age-grades, as well as subdivided into priestly and laity sectors. Later I will examine the implications of this clan/sodality double-aspect moiety organization for understanding the Mississippianization process in the Southeast, and this examination will also serve as the first, but incomplete, step in demonstrating this postulated phenomenon.

As I noted above, it is also likely that the newly emergent autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality would quickly build its own ceremonial nodal locale complex while also pursuing franchising its new custodial ritual usufruct copyright(s) to the cult sodalities of neighboring communities (thereby becoming a secondary custodial franchiser). With success, its original ceremonial nodal locale would probably quickly become enlarged as the new cult sodalities joined it as allied secondary franchisees of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights, thereby constituting this as the locale of a first-order cult sodality heterarchy. At least this is what I postulate the Eveland site became. Since this would be a fairly rapid process, possibly taking no more than a generation, and possibly less, about a 12- to 25-year period, would separate the later Terminal Late Woodland Rench site from early Eveland phase sites, such as the Eveland site itself, and others like it that are currently unknown.³

Importantly, while the shift from an integrated to a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture certainly generated a major transformation in the tangible patterning of the regional settlement, these differences do not mark a fundamental or deep social structural change. Rather, as I noted earlier, this bifurcated patterning would be a result of surface structural changes, effectively a change in the rules and protocols constituting the representational content of the settlement ideological strategy, and this change would leave the deep dual clan-sodality social structural axes intact. However, the major innovation implicated in this bifurcated posture is that it enabled and encouraged the integration of the separate age-set sodalities of a community to form the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality institution. Even this, however, would not modify the deep dual clan-sodality structure, and therefore, it would be more akin to a surface structural transformation—albeit a transformation that enabled even more social structural changes—namely, the emergence of what had previously not existed, the system of ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchies, first-order, second-order, and so on.

This is not to say, however, that a shift to the bifurcated posture has no influence at all on the deep social structures of the community. For those who might assume that the complementary heterarchical community is a structural “dead end” in the sense that its clan-sodality structure is impervious to change, this is not the case. I will argue in Part III that a social structural change very likely did occur during the Mississippian period in Alabama, and possibly elsewhere in the Southeast, and that it was the bifurcated posture that was the primary tangible sociomaterial condition that made this transformation possible—but not necessary. The bifurcated posture is an enabling condition that opens up the possibility that either preexisting or even modified forms of old activities may unwittingly—and to some degree wittingly—transform the deep structures. In fact,

I will argue that the change that likely occurred generated a type of community that, when in an integrated posture, would appear very like what we think a hierarchical monistic modular polity (i.e., a “chiefdom polity”) should look like. However, these appearances would be deceptive since more careful analysis will reveal that the essential deep structural nature of the complementary heterarchical community remained in place and that this structure significantly constrained and limited the community’s hierarchical structure, sustaining it as primarily an enabling hierarchy more than a dominance hierarchy. I elaborate much more on this point when I turn to Part III, the third case study in the next chapter, which initiates my analysis of the Mississippianization of the Southeast.

In any case, a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture is usually a fairly drawn-out episodic period in the history of the communities of a region, and this suggests that it can be a rather stable state of affairs. Of course, it is not immutable. There can be internal contradictions that can promote reversal to the prior integrated posture, or there can be a combination of internal contradictions and changing material conditions in one or more neighboring regions that can promote a reversal toward the integrated pole of the integrated–bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum. If this occurs, it is because the dispersed villages of the complementary heterarchical communities reintegrate; that is, the households of the unilateral clan organizations reengage spatially in a shared central locale along with the sodalities. And, of course, simultaneously these latter would rapidly disaffiliate from their communal–ecclesiastic cult sodality heterarchies and refocus their ritual concerns onto their reemerging integrated villages. The mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies (first-order, second-order, and third-order), and especially fourth-order, therefore, would be abandoned quite quickly, and simultaneously, the integrated villages could equally quickly

reappear in the archaeological record. Such a shift from the bifurcated to integrated settlement articulation modal posture usually is not as peacefully accomplished as was the integrated-to-bifurcated transition, as briefly outlined in the closing discussion of the previous chapter. This is because the conditions promoting the bifurcated-to-integrated shift usually reside in the cult sodality heterarchy itself as factional disagreements over how to address changing conditions are unresolved, meaning that these disagreements result in the previous alliances breaking down and in disaffiliations occurring quite rapidly. Hence, acrimony and bitterness may become high, and communities might actually move from a region rather than contend with residual hostilities from near and medium distant neighbors.

The Bifurcated Settlement Articulation Modal Site Categories

I can now address the question raised at the beginning of this chapter. Given the emergence of the bifurcated settlement articulation mode in the Central Illinois Valley, what kinds of sites could be expected to emerge and develop in the region? First, it is reasonable to suggest that a bifurcated posture would entail a wider range of regional site types than if the system was in an integrated settlement articulation modal posture since the bifurcated mode entails two spatially disengaged mutualistic heterarchies, clan-based and sodality-based. Importantly, this wider range would not necessarily correlate with any change in population. As I noted earlier, the current subsistence data for much of the Central Illinois Valley Terminal Late Woodland period support the view that both maize and native cultigen gardening and foraging were practiced. Therefore, a fairly stable food production system would be in place but one that would also promote seasonal mobility to enable effective wild food foraging and “living lightly on the land,” a characteristic principle of

communities informed by an immanentist cosmology and guided by a squatter ethos. It is likely that in the move toward a bifurcated posture the clan component would generate dispersed homesteads and special subsistence-related task sites (e.g., gardening and hunting stations, and so on). However, some sort of clan-based ceremonial nodal site could be expected where clan-based get-togethers and ceremonial events would occur. Since the domestic and mortuary spheres are traditionally separated in this region, it is not necessarily the case that the clan ceremonial nodal sites would be in spatial association with clan-based CBLs, although this is possible. In any case, it is unlikely that the ceremonial nodal sites of the clans would be any more than several small domestic-like structures with associated storage pits, and when possible, some might be near clan-based CBLs.

As I noted earlier for the Mississippian period of the American Bottom region, ceremonial nodal locales of the different autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of the communities of the region were spatially distinct from the clan nodal locales. However, as discussed fully in previous chapters, given the particular nature of the Central Illinois Valley, which does not have such expansive flood plain lowlands as those that make up the northern expanse of the American Bottom, the Central Illinois valley communities to which the cult sodalities belonged might be rather close to each other with a great deal of sharing of common foraging territories, both upland and river bottoms. Therefore, the autonomous cult sodalities of each community might go directly into close cooperative interaction constituting a local regional cult sodality alliance that resulted in their building a single joint complex ceremonial nodal locale. Since this would be a direct alliance among individual ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, it would constitute a first-order heterarchy. Hence, the initial shift into the bifurcated posture might generate cult sodality

heterarchical alliance nodal locales without platform mounds but marked by major timber structures having ceremonial-related features, a local plaza, and so on, these being the minimum symbolic pragmatic features that the newly franchised ritual usufruct copyrights entailed.

Since the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights that were being franchised derived from the American Bottom, the structures would display the Mississippian period wall-trench norms of that region. These would likely be classed into public structures and dwelling structures. The latter would be used as transient residents by the members of the different and fairly widely dispersed cult sodalities in the alliance during the periods when collective rituals were performed by these groups. I have suggested referring to these permanent dwellings transiently occupied as sodality *hostels* or *barracks*, probably organized by age-set and seniority. Also there would be a cult sodality heterarchy CBL displaying internal patterning manifesting considerable postmortem manipulation and burial loci re-usage, the mark of the mourning→spirit release→renewal ritual mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process as represented by the Dickson Mounds site. Furthermore, since cult sodalities would be in alliance, they could be expected to mobilize age-sets having the duty to procure special food sources necessary for the appropriate type of feasting required during the collective ceremonies being performed at the ceremonial locales. Hence, specialized and somewhat isolated “hunting” hostels (i.e., permanent but transiently occupied locales), and the like, might be found that would be regularly reused for these purposes. Most age-sets would be expected to bring supplies with them, either to consume while carrying out their duties, or to store in anticipation of major ritual events during which they acted as a host alliance for visiting cult sodalities.

Another cult sodality site-type category, or possibly more than one type, would be autonomous age-set and/or age-grade sites. These would be “working” sites where individual age-sets or age-grades would regularly but temporarily aggregate to carry out various collective tasks for their ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, such as preparing regalia for upcoming rituals, sharing hunting and gathering tasks “in the field,” and so on. Some of these could be quite elaborate, such as the M.S.D. 1 site on the Big Creek in the upland zone of the Spoon River drainage. This type might be best treated as an age-grade site, probably used by a number of junior age-grades together and/or in sequence when undertaking collective tasks, both in terms of ritual training and subsistence tasks. But there would also be many lesser sites displaying a rather minor assemblage appropriate to age-set tasks and that, therefore, could make up many of the sites identified under Harn’s model as intermediate sites. In this regard, while those regularly using them would do so in their standing as age-set groups of a local cult sodality, they would be able to use some of the materials resulting from their cooperative labor to discharge subsistence duties they would also individually have toward their several kin groups. That is, age-sets could regularly aggregate and cooperate to perform tasks that contributed products that enabled the participants to discharge sodality and clan duties simultaneously. This type of integration of tasks required by individuals belonging at the same time to both kin and sodality groups would be particularly important so that age-sets and even age-grades of allied cult sodalities could reciprocally “cover” for each other. That is, if one age-set or age-grade needed to be away for a while on long-distance sodality duties, their equivalent or “matching” allied age-set or age-grade could ensure that the tasks they would normally undertake locally would be fulfilled—and these would cover both sodality and clan duties and tasks. Of course, the travelers would reciprocate this assistance when the situation was reversed.

Initially, the first-order heterarchies of a larger region might operate independently while carrying out a process of interheterarchical reciprocal visitation and participation in world renewal rituals. However, it is likely that this interaction over some distance might quite quickly lead to the affiliation of the reciprocally interacting first-order heterarchies into a second-order heterarchy—likely with its own large and internally complex ceremonial nodal locale (e.g., the Orendorf site, as I discuss below). This would lead to the reduction or abandonment of the ceremonial nodal locales of the initial first-order heterarchies, such as the Eveland site, and to their replacement by smaller, less complex ceremonial nodal locales that these first-order heterarchies would use. Thus, two ceremonial nodal sites could emerge and be contemporary: the now less complex first-order heterarchy ceremonial nodal sites and at least one region-wide second-order cult sodality heterarchy locale, the latter type coming to display one or more platform mounds and plazas. And instead of having only a few residential “barracks” or “hostels” for age-sets, there might be numerous “rows and columns” of “hostels” and “barracks” around the central plaza clearly delineating the transient residences of the different cult sodalities of the two or more first-order heterarchies that had affiliated to form this second-order heterarchy. The world renewal CBLs would continue, as would the proliferation of specialized hunting-hostel types of sites, and so on. A complex range of different formal site types would be generated to serve the complementary needs of these two networks—the dispersed clan groups and the cooperating ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities constituting the regional complementary heterarchical community system in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture.

Since all the cult sodality members would also be members of the clans of their individual dispersed complementary heterarchical communities, the total system would be strongly characterized by

transient residency. By this I mean that while the dwelling places, both family homesteads and cult sodality hostel-like structures, would be permanent, the occupancy of these places would be sequential, punctuated by the repertoire of rituals and subsistence tasks, effectively the result of cult sodality members who would be required to return and reside temporarily as transients at one of the cult sodality's locales. Of course, while residing at the latter locale, possibly with their families, depending on the seniority of the age-set of companions, the homestead dwelling places would be unoccupied so that, in effect, both family and sodality dwellings would have transient occupancy. Therefore, the paths linking the sodality locales to each other and to the clan dwellings would be well-used as sodality members traveled from their family homes to their cult sodality ceremonial nodal locales and then to the alliance heterarchy locales. Importantly, as I discuss in more detail later, since the second-order cult sodality heterarchy in a given region would actually be the collective focal center of first-order sodality alliances, the latter could be quite far afield while still being quite closely integrated. This site distribution would make it very risky for the archaeologist to estimate the population of a local region on the basis of the estimated number of structures in a complex settlement since the latter may represent a second-order cult sodality heterarchy that was produced by an affiliation of several first-order cult sodality heterarchies; and the constituent autonomous cult sodalities of the latter may have been widely spaced all along the 160 km stretch making up the focal region of the Central Illinois River Valley. This is the nature of the spatial reach of these focal centers of a heterarchy. As I noted earlier, the centers are akin to magnetic social fields that not only attract participation by components of the widely spaced focal centers of the first-order heterarchies and their affiliated autonomous cult sodalities, but the attraction force of the second-order cult sodality heterarchy

“magnetic field” reaches out well beyond the spatial distribution of its own first-order focal centers to equivalent focal centers in distant places, such as the American Bottom. Of course, this also means that the members of autonomous cult sodalities of first-order heterarchy centers affiliated to the second-order heterarchy might have to travel some distance to attend to the rituals and sacred games held in the latter. However, this would be part of the necessary costs involved in discharging their sacred duties. What it might promote, however, is a process of long-term “round robin” shifting of the second-order focal center so that the local region of those cult sodalities that were distant for several generations becomes the new focal center of the second-order heterarchy. This would explain, for example, the emergence of Orendorf following the Eveland focal center/phase. That is, the same set of autonomous cult sodalities responsible for the latter site continued as affiliates, except that the second-order heterarchy abandoned the Eveland locale and established the Orendorf locale. Same heterarchy, same autonomous sodalities, simply a different location. This also means that the abandonment of Eveland and the founding of Orendorf did not entail population movements or migrations. Rather, it simply meant that, after several generations of cult sodalities up and down the Central Illinois Valley attending the Eveland site and the Dickson Mounds CBL on the bluff top immediately above this site, these same historical sodalities started attending the Orendorf site. Their respective complementary heterarchical communities would likely remain in their traditional custodial inclusive territories since they were the custodians of these territories and had an obligation to care for them, ensuring that their resources were properly used and distributed. Furthermore, abandoning the Eveland site to build and attend to the Orendorf site would not entail abandoning the Dickson Mounds site. I see no social structural constraint that would entail all the mortuary sequences constituting the

second-order cult sodality's postmortem human sacrificial *chaîne opératoire* process being terminated at Orendorf. That is, Orendorf simply extended the process spatially so that the heterarchy's *chaîne opératoire* mortuary sphere became divided into complementary trajectories, one possibly devoted to sacrificial offering to the warm-season aspect of the deities and the other to the cold-season aspect of the deities, and so on. This would equally apply to the founding of the Larson focal center. Orendorf may have been abandoned, but the focal center simply shifted back to the Spoon River junction region and the Dickson Mounds CBL.

With this outline of the range of categories of site types somewhat completed and a clarification of their relations both synchronically and diachronically, I will now reexamine the settlement pattern of the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian period starting with the Eveland phase, moving through the Orendorf phase, and completing my interpretation with the Larson phase.

The Post-Mossville Eveland Phase—Second Stage

Since I am treating the Rench site as representing sites where the initial American Bottom-derived custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyright events occurred, I will speak of the site as representing the *initial or first stage* of the Mississippianization of this region (which would place it contemporary with the later Lohmann phase of the American Bottom, ca. cal. AD 1075-1100). The subsequent Eveland phase (ca. cal. AD 1100-1200), therefore, would actually be represented by the eponymous Eveland site, and this is the more mature *second stage* of the Mississippianization processual episode. Hence, the Eveland site would be the material expression of what was likely a first-order cult sodality heterarchy. According to Conrad (1991, 131), the Eveland site is a nodal center. I will continue to use the term *nodal*, deleting the term *center*, since that implies that the

site is the “center” of a hierarchical monistic modular community; and, as noted above, I will characterize it as the focal locale of a first-order cult sodality heterarchy. Since it lacks any residue of a platform mound, I am proposing that in the Central Illinois Valley the latter feature was late in emerging, first appearing as an addition to the Mississippian assemblage in the Larson phase or late, fourth-stage. Therefore, the Eveland site would represent an alliance of the autonomous cult sodalities of the complementary heterarchical communities of the region. The multiple dispersed hamlets and individual farmsteads in the region would constitute the clan-based component of the local complementary heterarchical communities in the initial bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture that I postulated earlier. Among these latter sites there ought to be several clan-based nodal sites (e.g., each being a small cluster of two or three farmsteads used as the residences of clan-based community leaders) where clan and interclan meetings and rites would be held.

However, I have already noted that, probably, the Eveland site was not the only such site at this time. Other equivalent sites are probably not recognized as such, being embedded in the later sites of Kingston and even, possibly, Orendorf. Further research would be required to confirm this. In any case, I am suggesting here that the second-stage Eveland phase of the Central Illinois Valley would likely be characterized by several dispersed first-order cult sodality heterarchy sites, as represented by the Eveland site. Of course, even these may have been *de facto* if not *de jure*, closely interacting with the first-order heterarchy sodality at the Eveland site. I note this because, up to now, the empirical data would suggest that the Dickson Mound site was the sole major cult sodality heterarchy CBL in the valley and continued to act in this capacity even when the Orendorf site became an important cult sodality CBL, as I noted above. Its Eveland phase content, estimated to be about 1,000 burial deposits, seems to be too

large if these are limited to the Spoon River region, and therefore, many may have been contributed by other postulated first-order heterarchies. This would explain the focus of Eveland phase mortuary deposits at the Dickson Mounds site.

In any case, scarcely more than a generation from the initial custodial franchising ritual usufruct copyright event at the Rench site and the follow-up secondary and tertiary franchising events that probably had been held in other currently unknown but similar sodality locales encapsulated into Terminal Late Woodland period integrated villages dispersed up and down the Central Illinois Valley, at least from the Spoon River junction north, the clans and the cult sodalities of the complementary heterarchical communities of the Eveland phase (Waterford subphase) had rapidly moved through the initial disengagement of their integrated community villages into a fully bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture in that region. As discussed in the previous chapter, this means that the Dickson Mounds site initially emerged as the world renewal ritual CBL of a first-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy that likely was responsible for the Eveland site, which also would likely have actively encouraged participation by other emergent first-order cult sodality heterarchies. As I noted above, they would have cooperated with the Eveland site first-order cult sodality heterarchy to use the latter as their joint cult sodality CBL. The fact that the Dickson Mound site included a small, low platform mound reinforces the likelihood that the several autonomous cult sodalities that allied to form the Eveland site as a first-order heterarchy along with the other postulated but currently unknown sites of dispersed first-order heterarchies were influenced by Cahokian cult sodalities that regularly visited. No doubt, when they were in transient residency as visitors, they would use one of the larger hostel-like buildings, and they would share in the ritual while exchanging exotics necessary

for proper ritual performances, and receiving reciprocal gifts to bear back to Cahokia. As discussed in the preceding analysis of the Dickson Mounds site, among these would be sacred bone bundles derived from the mortuary deposits.

The Orendorf Phase—Third Stage

According to the chronology I am using, the Eveland phase persisted for about a century (ca. cal. AD 1100-1200), at which time the Orendorf site was established. This marks the third stage characterized by a single site serving as a formal second-order heterarchy stage—namely, the Orendorf site, which also gives its name to the Orendorf phase, ca. cal. AD 1200-1300. The Orendorf site (figure 11.1) is about 25 km upstream from the Eveland site (for location, see figure 7.1). Located on the western bluff, it is the earliest known large multi-component Spoon River Mississippian variant settlement site of the Central Illinois Valley. It consists of five apparently sequential settlement plans, referred to as Settlements A, B, B/C, C, and D (Conrad 1991, 132; Santure 1981, 21). The typical settlement plan displays structure basins grouped in rows framing a central plaza. One side usually consisted of public buildings facing the plaza, and the other three sides were framed by small, dwelling-like structures. A given settlement plan usually displayed more than 100 structures, both dwelling and special-purpose public constructions. In terms of the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, it is in the nature of the ritual strategy of these world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities for them to pursue interalliance affiliations, and therefore, when a region is in the bifurcated settlement posture, the Orendorf site is about what could be expected. I postulate that the Orendorf site is the earliest known full-fledged second-order world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy locale of this region, manifesting the cooperative formal affiliation

of several first-order autonomous cult sodality heterarchies. The fact that a Mississippian-like platform mound is absent does not deter me from making this claim. As I noted in Chapter 2, we should not

Figure 11.1. Site Plan of the Orendorf Cult Sodality Heterarchy Site—Early Settlement C. (From Santure, 1981, p. 55, figure 1.27. Used with the kind permission of Lawrence A. Conrad, Western Illinois University.)

be overly rigid by identifying platform mounds and cult heterarchies. A cult sodality heterarchy is bound to generate a range of material indicators, such as major mortuary depositions, plazas, major timber structures, dwelling hostels, and so on, as manifested at the Eveland site when combined with the Dickson Mounds site on the bluff above it. As I describe below, all these attributes but one—a platform mound—are present at Orendorf and can be cited as substantial evidence that Orendorf likely manifests at least a second-order cult sodality heterarchy.

In parallel with this affiliation of alliances, as I noted earlier, the preexisting first-order heterarchies may have abandoned their earlier ceremonial nodal sites, such as the Eveland site, and opened new sites, probably slightly less impressively constructed, given the

labor demands of the emergent second-order heterarchies such as Orendorf. In some cases, the new, possibly more modest, first-order cult sodality heterarchical locales would probably be built near the old ones. Hence, when the Eveland site was abandoned, its founding first-order heterarchy alliance may have established one or more new nodal ceremonial sites on the bluff top overlooking the Eveland site, constituting one of the many poorly known ceremonial nodal-like locales that make up the extensive area on the bluffs around the Dickson Mounds site referred to as the Myer-Dickson site. I will return to this possibility later. In any case, as I suggested above, the formal alliance of two, three, or possibly four such first-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchies would constitute the Orendorf site as the site of a second-order heterarchy, while each first-order heterarchy alliance maintained its own ceremonial nodal locales, one or more upstream near the old Kingston Lake nodal locale, one or more downstream at the Myer-Dickson site area, and one, possibly representing a cult sodality alliance of the La Moine River Mississippian variant, maintaining its earlier Lawrenz Gun Club locale, although this is admittedly speculative since current empirical data in this regard are very ambiguous.

As I discussed earlier, while under his original settlement model, Harn initially recognized the Orendorf site as a “central town,” he later reclassified and downgraded it to the less prestigious category of “primary village,” not because it displayed a less complex plan than previously expected—if anything these plans are even more complex than expected—but because what on surface examination seemed to fit the criteria of what would count as a platform mound turned out not to do so (Harn 1994, 21). Instead, he noted that this was more in the nature of terminal burial mounding covering the burned remains of a charnel-related structure that was itself located on a low oblong platform-like prepared base. This mortuary zone

seems to be most closely associated spatially with the earliest settlement plan, referred to as Community A. Since this area was the focus of mortuary activities, it is likely that it was also used in this manner by the other four subsequent and sequential settlements, referred to as Communities B, B/C, C, and D (figure 11.1). Each settlement was abandoned after a brief period of occupancy, possibly lasting only a generation, and a new settlement laid out, sometimes only partially displaced from and, therefore, partly overlapping the prior one (e.g., Communities B and B/C) or fully displaced by only several hundred meters (e.g., Community D from Community B).

Typically, each settlement had a central plaza framed by rows of structures. At least one side of the plaza had two or more large public buildings, while the other sides were lined by smaller structures. More structures were added to the settlement by being built behind the earlier structures fronting the plaza. In most cases, there is also clear evidence that the structures of a given settlement were systematically modified, usually by the old walls being removed and a new set of wall-trenches and associated walls being built as a frame embracing and enlarging the space that the original set had encompassed. In most cases, the public buildings facing the plaza were not enlarged by this method but by leaving the old walls standing and adding rooms. This modification must have been done every few years since the ceramics across the different settlement plans were unchanged. That is, separate settlement plans usually had the same ceramic styles, indicating that the development of the settlement system modified more quickly than did the ceramic styles (Santure 1981, 50-56, 73).

Descriptive Discussion

Santure's report on the Orendorf excavations is very descriptive and concrete. Therefore, she gives a minimal level of social or cultural

interpretation. Nevertheless, it is clear she is working within the theoretical framework of the Chiefdom Polity model viewpoint. For example, she specifically refers to Community C as the center of a polity: “[T]he central open plaza and the public buildings (usually larger, and sometimes uniquely shaped) which face the plaza . . . [were] the location of public and/or religious ceremonies, the focal point of the *polity*. Thus, the community is viewed as being centered on a plaza; the shift to another location, with the creation of a new plaza, was the basis for differentiating our separate Settlements C and D” (1981, 21, emphasis added). Hence she largely took for granted that Orendorf was a “central town” as specified under Harn’s initial tri-level settlement model. With this as her background assumption, her main goals were to map the settlement plans and to establish a chronology of the settlement series based on three criteria: the partial superimposing of one community plan over another; the ceramic variation across the settlement; and, interestingly, the modification of the length-to-width ratio of structures through the rebuilding cycle. In the latter case, as noted above, each reconstruction of a structure displaying what was a fairly standard Mississippian wall-trench building involved the removal of all four sets of wall posts, the filling of the latter and the digging of a new set of wall trenches spaced away from and around the old wall trenches, and, most interestingly, a greater increase in the front-to-back floor dimensions compared to the side-to-side floor dimensions. The result was a type of sequential series of Chinese-box-like formations of two to three house structures in any given house basin, as well as a progressive “squaring” of the typical rectangular floor plan over the period of occupancy (Santure 1981, 50).

Given the excellent description of the plan, it is clear that there are several attributes of the series of Orendorf settlements that are somewhat anomalous even when seen through the lens of the Chiefdom

Polity model. I will focus on four of these: (1) the plaza and structure solar azimuth alignments, (2) the temporal stability of the ceramic styles, (3) the somewhat unique labor practices that generated the Chinese-box sequential rebuilding plans along with the cumulative enframing of dwelling structures, and (4) the very short-term nature of the occupation of each one of the four community plans. I will first summarize these empirical facts and then use them to critique the basic settlement interpretation that is presupposed by Santure's work. Since the purpose of her paper was not to reconstruct the type of social system that was responsible for what she recorded, this critique is in no way directed at her work—which I consider to have been excellent. Rather, I am recruiting her empirical findings to critique the model that served as her background (i.e., the direct hierarchical settlement model as representing the Chiefdom Polity model of the Mississippianization process in the Central Illinois Valley). I believe that none of these four sets of empirical observations can be adequately explained under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model (Note that at this point I am effectively using this terminology and the Chiefdom Polity model terminology as synonymous). To complete the critique, I will dissolve these anomalies by interpreting the same patterns in terms of the alternative cult sodality heterarchy view.

1. *Settlement Plan Alignments.* Santure observed that a given settlement was laid out such that it had the plaza and the structures that partly framed it oriented to a specific solar azimuth alignment. Typically this alignment was the same for the total layout with the wall-trench structures having their walls oriented so that they were parallel with or 90° to what apparently was the selected solar alignment. For Settlement C, for example, “[w]hether the long or short axis is facing the winter solstice sunrise depends upon the structure location with regards to the plaza. The majority of those structures lying

west of the plaza have their long axis towards the rising sun (average 27° E), while those located on the northeast side of the plaza have their short axis approximately facing the rising sun (average 111° E). The long axis orientation (average 37° E) predominates east of the plaza, though some are oriented 90° from that, facing the winter solstice sunrise (average 119° E)" (1981, 35). As noted earlier, aligning structures, features, and even burials on the different solar azimuths is a common practice throughout the region, and therefore, it is not unusual for this same pattern to appear at Orendorf. However, because Santure was able to excavate several settlement plans in the same site, or significant portions of them, she was able to note the change of azimuth alignments between one abandoned settlement layout and its replacement. For example, Settlement B/C was aligned with the summer solstice (1981, 79), and because Settlement C partially overlapped Settlement B/C, it was by noting the differential winter and summer solstice alignments of these two layouts that she was able to disentangle some of this overlap. "Orientation proved to be a significant factor, leading to the recognition of an earlier settlement [than C] at the site, Settlement B/C. With regard to solstice sunrises, the majority of Settlement C structures are aligned roughly 90° off winter solstice sunrise, while Settlement B/C structure alignments approximate that of summer solstice sunrise and 90° off summer solstice sunrise" (1981, 79).

2. *The Sequential Structure Rebuilding Process.* The mode of reconstruction during the occupational period of any one of these settlement plans is unexpected under the hierarchical monistic modular polity view, particularly with regard to the individual dwellings that served as everyday domestic locales. Given that under the chiefdom polity view these small structures were typical domestic dwellings and, therefore, would have been occupied by families, such families could be expected to grow in size as the parents aged.

Therefore, what might be expected for these would be some selective repair and post replacements occurring prior to the end of a five-year stretch and, then, as the family increased some major enlargement of the structure could be expected, particularly by maintaining most of the original walls and simply extending one or two sides as required or by adding an extra room. However, as noted above, this is not the pattern that Santure's excavations revealed. She specifically noted that the dwelling structures that were enlarged were expanded by means of a series of concentric Chinese-box stages. Surely this complete removal of the old walls and rebuilding by digging new and larger wall trenches on all sides and then building new walls entailed significant costs that would not be justified if these structures were domestic dwellings of families. As Santure noted, this method of reconstruction also was correlated with the length/width ratio progressively shifting so that while the original building was rectangular, the last formed was a near-square. "The attribute of length to width ratio revealed a definite shift from a rectangular to a more nearly square structure form" (1981, 79). In fact, as noted above, she used this progressive shift in the lateral proportions of dwellings for chronological purposes.

3. *The Community Expansion and Abandoning Process.* Another pattern that Santure noted was that overall a settlement plan seemed to be expanded outwards concentrically. That is, given the number of Chinese-box reconstructions, the oldest structures as marked by three or four rebuildings were in the rows fronting the plaza and the subsequent structures, those having only one or two reconstructions, made up the rear rows. As noted above, this series of reconstructions and expansions occurred during a brief period, possibly only one generation. Therefore, this growth pattern cannot be attributed to the cycling of generations as children age, marry, move out and build their own domestic dwellings behind the parents, and

so on. Rather, the pattern of rebuilding as well as adding structures was based on short spans of five years or so, so that after four or five of these short spans in which individual structures expanded in the Chinese-box manner and the overall plan expanded with new rows of structures added on the periphery, the total settlement plan was abandoned, a new one was started, and in most cases, while it replicated the general layout of the older plan, it was oriented on a different solar azimuth.

4. *The Ceramics*. One of the practical methodological problems Santure faced in establishing the chronology among these settlement plans was the ceramics. She specifically comments that the ceramics were of little assistance in this regard. “The ceramic variation appears to be so slight at Settlement C that it speaks of a short time span for the occupation of the Settlement C site” (1981, 78). She found instead that modification in proportional representations of vessel forms was a better relative chronological indicator than any stylistic variation (1981, 66). The fact that the ceramic styles remained relatively constant across the sequential series of building, occupation, and abandonment of the multiple settlements has significance, however, since it suggested to her that a relatively brief period of occupation occurred at any one of them.

Critical Discussion

I will address the first three facts that I consider anomalies—if indeed Orendorf were a “chiefdom polity: the shifting of the axial alignments of the settlements, the Chinese-box expansion, and the rapid succession of abandonment and rebuilding of settlements. I will then close with a comment on the fourth. The reason for this is that the final critique addresses a problem—style—that transcends the question of whether Orendorf was or was not a “chiefdom polity.” With regard to the first three, it is important to note that under the

orthodox view, the core social structure of Orendorf was kinship-based. And in none of these cases would there seem to be an intelligible reason grounded in the needs and interests of such a kinship-based community for either the reorientation of the alignments or for the excessive amount of rebuilding that these data clearly indicate occurred. Even the concentric growth of the settlements, possibly new rows added every five years or so, seems to be an extraordinarily rapid growth and abandonment rate for the domestic residential occupants of a “chiefdom” center. This applies to the alignment reorientation, also. If solar alignments are associated with the legitimacy of a ranking kin group (i.e., the chief’s lineage), then continuity of alignment orientation would be expected. This would particularly apply if the cycling of abandonment and rebuilding marks the process of inheritance in the chiefly line, even if this inheritance process might occur between competing lines. This is because even competitors would share the same “sacred” lineage descent and, therefore, should a collateral line succeed to gain the position of ranking chief, say, on the death of the reigning chief, the winner’s maintaining the same alignment would be the expediently wise thing to do, thereby reinforcing the claim to the traditional rights to rule. Hence, all this rebuilding, both within a settlement and replacing one with another, suggests that the imperatives driving all this surpassed any reasonable needs of a “chiefdom.” In short, when the complex details of the Orendorf settlement layouts are critically examined under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, with the exception of the matter of the ceramics, it raises a series of anomalies that I would suggest cannot be explained in its own terms.

The Cult Sodality Heterarchy View

However, the above anomalies can be easily resolved if Orendorf is interpreted as a world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. That is, the

rebuilding process and its rather rapid cycling and final abandonment during possibly only one generation per settlement plan is consistent with what could be expected if Orendorf was a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. The alliances of the heterarchy would probably be organized according to the four-sided plaza. The major public buildings fronting on one end of the plaza, then, would be ritual locales (i.e., renewal lodges), as well as the council buildings of the affiliated alliances. "In summary, the evolution of the prominent plaza-facing structures (St. 8-13-26-38, St. 7, St. 12-39-40, St. 48) follows a pattern of gradual increase up to a peak (perhaps representing Settlement C's heyday) with an abrupt decrease in size which ends the occupation of the site. The large public buildings (St. 8-13-26-38, St. 19-39, and St. 125) are replaced by smaller structures (St. 7, St. 44, St. 40, and St. 124) which may represent opposing (or at least separate) social groups in the town. The artifact assemblages should shed light on the function and affinity of these structures" (1981, 52). All this is consistent with what we could expect of the historical reproduction and development of a cult sodality heterarchy. Internally, the Chinese-box rebuilding of the regular dwelling-like structures would have occurred every four or five years. If this rebuilding occurred four to five times, then 20 to 25 years would see the occupation, structure-cycling, and then the abandonment of any one of these four settlement plans. This would amount to about a generation per settlement. This would also be consistent with Orendorf being a complex cult sodality heterarchy since the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of the alliances would be internally organized by seniority as enabling hierarchies of age-set companions, each autonomous set having its identity defined and autonomy respected by the set of practical and ritual tasks for which it was responsible (Byers 2006a, 124-29). One of the most important events would probably be conveyancing rites by which the custodial ritual

usufruct copyrights of the senior age-set were transferred to the junior age-set. The initial rows on either side of the plaza would probably consist of the age-set barracks of the cult sodalities constituting the second-order heterarchy (e.g., two to four mutually autonomous first-order heterarchical alliances of two to three cult sodalities each). These would be linearly arranged by relative rank according to the historic franchiser-franchisee order with the three or four structures of the senior ranking cult sodality accorded the most respected position (e.g., nearest to the public buildings at the southwest end of the plaza, the second ranked across from this one, and so on).

Therefore, a newly promoted age-set of companions, having had the requisite custodial ritual usufruct copyrights conveyed to it, and in order to reflect its new responsibilities, would likely rebuild its initial structure by dismantling the older walls, filling the old wall trenches, expanding the floor space in the manner described above by digging new wall trenches, and erecting the requisite walls and roof, effectively creating a new building manifesting their enhanced ranking and responsibilities in their ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy. Newly incorporated junior age-sets of a given sodality, of course, would construct their own structures on the periphery of the more senior age-set sodalities (i.e., behind the latter). In time, they would also be promoted, thereby rebuilding their original structure in the Chinese-box manner. Hence, a heterarchy would progressively expand both with the individual age-sets of the component cult sodalities of a given first-order heterarchy expanding their structures and the addition of more new junior age-sets forming the “back” row structures. Then, after three or four of these promotional cycles, the senior generation age-sets would likely retire en masse, the junior generation would be promoted to the senior, and the whole settlement would be razed and rebuilt anew, in this case by moving 100 m or so laterally. This abandonment of the old

and building of the new would also be an opportunity to refocus the alignment of the plaza and structures, shifting *en masse* from the previous winter solstice to the summer solstice alignment, a move that might be quite important in the effective discharging of the collective duties of the multiple cult sodalities of the heterarchy.

If this reading is only roughly approximate, it would still suggest that apparently a cyclic pattern of this nature occurred at least four and probably five times at Orendorf. If each settlement abandonment was immediately followed by a building and solstitial realignment of a new one, allowing for a 20-25 year generational cycle per settlement, then this site would have been continuously but sequentially used by this second-order world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy for about 100-125 years. The Orendorf phase is also postulated to be about 100 years, ca. cal. AD 1200-1300.

Now, with regard to Santure's noting the stability of the ceramic styles across the total period of the Orendorf occupancy, this is not an anomaly in substantive terms, as I argue below, but it is certainly an indicator supportive of my above cult sodality heterarchy view. My concern is that Santure chooses to treat this stability not as a substantive matter but as a methodological problem. That is, it was a problem for her because it made establishing the chronology difficult. This certainly is the case. However, since ceramic stylistics are so central to relative chronology in archaeology, I am puzzled why she did not raise the question of why they were not useful for this purpose in this case. After all, the premise underwriting usage of ceramic style as a chronological marker just is that it is unstable largely because it is independent of instrumental function; that is, instrumental need sustains stability of form, and style modifies largely arbitrarily. So, why did style not modify over this century or so? This stability is recognized as puzzling to her since she specifically comments that, in one regard, style did vary, but quantitatively.

That is, the only modification in style that occurred was the proportion of vessel types. While vessel form types remained stable, their proportion did vary across these five settlement plans. Of course, I treat the stability of the ceramic styles over five periods of community reconstruction as fully consistent with the symbolic pragmatic perspective, that argues that ceramic styles would be tied to the custodial franchising and conveyancing process. This is because the ceramic styles were the expression of the ritual usufruct copyrights, constituting them as critical pragmatic symbols ensuring that the behavioral streams they were used to mediate were constituted as the types of social activity intended (i.e., some aspect of the world renewal ceremonialism that was the *raison d'être* of Orendorf during its century or so of occupations). This view immediately raises a new possibility concerning the quantitative change in proportion of vessel form types. If these vessels are tied into the performance of different rituals, then it would appear that the demand for these different rituals did wax and wane. If these rituals were, in turn, world renewal in nature, then this might be used as a clue to the changing emphases in the types of rituals, and these might relate to changing population and subsistence practices. Of course, the symbolic pragmatics of ceramics are equally applicable to hierarchical monistic modular polity communities, and therefore, my above critique cannot be treated as a critique of Santure's presuppositions as such. What the above has established is that the anomalies that a critical examination of the chiefdom polity view has generated can be easily dissolved when the same empirical data are examined and explained under the cult sodality heterarchy view.

On a more positive note, now, the mortuary record of Orendorf is fully consistent with the latter view also. Unfortunately, the mortuary component at the Orendorf site has suffered considerable destruction. The mortuary mound was probably associated with the

earliest of the settlements, Settlement A. It is a low one-meter high elongated structure about 65 m long by 25 m wide. Conrad (1991, 139-40) notes that only about 10% of the mound was adequately excavated. However, more than 160 burials were revealed, suggesting that it could contain 10 times this number, possibly 1,600 burials. Given the estimated number of burials, even though it was close to Settlement A, it was likely used by the later settlements for the duration of the occupation of the site. Furthermore, Conrad notes that there were many disturbed bones, suggesting even more unaccounted for burials. While some of these disturbed bones resulted from modern looters, apparently many were disturbed in the normal course of mortuary usage. He notes that those burials exposed were both male and female and all ages and that they were "arranged in distinct cemeteries" (1991, 140). By this I take him to mean that they were clustered into distinct burial groups. Most burials in a group were extended supine "single grave" burials. He also points out, however, that there were many flexed, bundled, and even multiple burials. Hence, it is clear that the pattern that occurred at the earlier Eveland and later Larson phase components of the Dickson Mounds site also occurred at the Orendorf CBL. In fact, he also notes that the Dickson Mounds site had an Orendorf phase component and that the same mixed range of mortuary treatment occurred there (1991, 136). This reinforces my above suggestion that the CBL components of these two sites may have been mediating a split trajectory of world renewal rituals. Even if Orendorf was the primary focal locale of the second-order cult sodality heterarchy, its affiliated first-order heterarchies and their autonomous cult sodality components also continued to use the Dickson Mounds site. In effect, the total range of postmortem burial treatment was manifested, from extended to flexed to bundled, individual and group burials, and multiple signs of disturbed deposits.

Conrad also notes that what he characterized as a charnel house was built on a clay-covered elliptical platform about 40-50 cm high and 6.8 m long by 4.8 m wide. The charnel structure was 5 m long by 3 m wide with sloping log sides at 45°. There were several individuals deposited on the floor, although few details are available because of the extreme damage that had been done. One of these individuals apparently was placed on dual matting. The whole building was burned when abandoned with the floor burials and while the building was burning, it was covered with earth. He also notes that there were five burials recovered within the habitation zones themselves: one in Settlement C, although he notes that this may be a pre-Mississippian burial, and four in Settlement D (1991, 133). Despite these latter burials, it is clear that the major locus of mortuary treatment was in the mortuary mound area. While Conrad treats these as the termination of funerary rites, particularly noting that there was no set of burials that would suggest the funerals of community “leaders,” the record clearly reveals the type of mortuary treatment that I have argued marks the postmortem sacrificial *chaîne opératoire* process.⁴ The disturbed bones also suggest that a form of “bone mining” procurement was practiced. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the mortuary practices mark the mound and its content as a world renewal cult sodality heterarchy CBL.

Further Critical Comments on Patterning

The hermeneutic spiral methodology notes that explanation is the primary, although not the only, criterion by which the validity of competing models is determined (i.e., deduction can serve, if treated comparatively). Investing coherence and intelligibility (i.e., meaning) in the empirical data are critical aspects of a good explanation, and if a model can expand the range of empirical data being explained in terms of coherence and intelligibility, this can also count

as a significant criterion for accepting that model over competing ones. In this regard, there are several sets of data reported by Santure that can be given greater coherence and intelligibility when interpreted under the Ecclesiastic-Communal Cult Sodality Heterarchy model than under the alternative Chiefdom Polity model.

As noted above, Santure and Conrad constantly used such terms as *town* and *community*. Now, it might be argued that these same terms could be used under the world renewal cult sodality heterarchy perspective since, of course, the multiple structures were used for dwelling and, even if the occupants may have been related by companionship, they nevertheless formed a type of community. But I have chosen to avoid using the term *community* when speaking about cult sodality locales. This is because, as it is used in anthropology and archaeology, the term is heavily burdened by the kinship paradigm. That is, *community* is identified with *kinship*, and very quickly the presuppositions we have about kinship come to underwrite and frame our interpretations of what I prefer referring to as *sodality locales*. Complexes of sodalities, therefore, constitute mutualistic heterarchies that sustain autonomous relations with kinship and clan locales. I insist on treating these two types of locales as embodying complementary but socially differentiated entities, and therefore, the cult sodality heterarchy is a very different social system from a settlement system based on groupings in which kinship constitutes the structural core. Of course, in a companionship-based locale, such as a second-order heterarchy, no doubt many of the dwelling structures would be used to house companions who were accompanied by their own families. However, from this fact it does not follow that the social nature of the community was constituted by kinship, even when, for example, the several groups occupying a set of individual structures might well be individual families. While each group occupying one of a "row" of domestic dwellings would

be related by kinship, each kin group would relate to each other in terms of the heads of each family that were related as companions constituting an age-set having a particular standing in one of the autonomous cult sodalities. Other buildings, particularly the larger ones, might be reserved for age-sets of bachelors, all belonging to the different participating cult sodalities. Alternatively, they may have been reserved for visiting cult sodalities or their components traveling from quite some distance. In this type of setup, there would be no clan or extended family buildings, as such. In contrast, for example, Santure notes a moderately large set of structures in the southwest sector of Settlement C, and this set is spatially separate from the main body of the settlement. She interprets them in kinship-based terms: "Since this group is spatially isolated to the Southwest side of the plaza, these structures may have housed a distinct group of people at the site, perhaps a distinct kin-based unit within Settlement C" (1981, 46). The alternative, of course, is to interpret them as hostels for the use of visiting age-sets of cult sodalities from quite distant regions. Other possibilities under the cult sodality heterarchical view could also be suggested, such as hostels for preinitiates of the autonomous cult sodalities making up the alliances, or hostels for senior age-grade members who have retired from active cult sodality duties but are still involved in mentoring the younger age-sets, and so on. A similar arrangement may have been associated with Settlement D. She referred to the slightly isolated sets as the Northeast and the South groups, and although they were spatially associated with Settlement C, their size and orientation suggested to her that they were outliers of Settlement D. Again, in her view, this would constitute them as "perhaps a distinct kin-based unit" of the latter settlement. Under the cult sodality heterarchy view, however, they could also be reserved for the use of age-set companions visiting from a cult sodality alliance. A more precise analysis of the

material contents of these structures might give grounds for choosing one possibility over the other. For example, presence or absence of storage pits might suggest whether these structures were set aside for visiting groups or if the same groups regularly reused the same structures and, therefore, may have constructed pits in order to store the resources they anticipated needing.

Such long-distance interaction is fully consistent with the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model and the notion of a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. Treating Orendorf in these terms would see the building and maintaining of such structures as necessary material components of their affiliation. Since those occupying the site at any given time were based on their companionship relations, while certainly many of their activities would be domestic in nature, the primary activities and the reason they were there would be unrelated to kinship tasks and duties, as such. Hence, the CBL mounding, the plaza, the large public buildings, and so on, would mediate cult sodality activities, primarily but not exclusively world renewal rituals.

While the site would likely be continually occupied, it would fluctuate between being almost abandoned to being “packed,” according to the ritual schedule. This would be a result of the social nature of the site. Age-sets might come and go according to the strategic plans of their respective cult sodalities, which would have their base ceremonial nodal locales possibly twenty or more kilometers away. Therefore, there would usually be no period when some members in transient residency were not at their respective cult sodality quarters or at their clan-based domestic farmsteads. However, several times a year all the cult sodalities constituting the affiliation of alliances that acted as the collective custodians of this world renewal cult sodality heterarchy would attend, these being scheduled times for the major ritual events keyed into the solar calendar: the solstices,

the equinoxes, and possibly even the lunar turning points. It is not surprising then to find that the plazas and the associated structures were oriented in such a manner as to fall on azimuth alignments of the summer and winter solstices, the equinoxes, and so on.

The Azimuth Orientations

Finally, interpreting the Orendorf site as a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy focal locale also explains the changes in the azimuth orientations discussed above. I noted in my above critique that, under the chiefdom view, there would be no reason to modify the azimuth alignment orientations, and in fact, the politically wise strategy would be to sustain the same alignment as the continuity of the legitimacy of the dominant lineage or any successors who achieved dominance. In contrast, as I noted above, the actual abandonment of the old plan and the rebuilding of a new layout would be largely a matter of timing of the promotional cycle, and this would also be an expedient opportunity to shift to one or the other azimuth orientation. After all, each alignment could be associated with a different sacred aspect of the solar cycle. This shift could also be related to refocusing the ritual schedule, explaining the continuity of the ceramic forms while modifying their proportional production and usage. This also raises the possibility that the shift in azimuth alignment marks a shift in factional influence occurring possibly at the same time as the promotional shift. That is, it is quite possible that while solstice-related and equinox-related world renewal rituals would be valued and respected by all the cult sodalities, it is far from being implausible that there were factions that promoted one set and its associated rituals as being more important or more pressing than another. Hence, reorienting the alignment of the new settlement would mark a shift in factional influence, and in fact, there could be some cult sodality alliances that could

refuse to comply with the new orientation. As autonomous entities, this was their prerogative. However, they could continue to participate while building their own set of structures according to the old alignment. This is an alternative or supplementary accounting for the spatial separation of some units as noted above. I will now turn to the fourth stage of the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley, constituted by the Larson phase.

The Larson Phase: AD 1300-1350—Fourth Stage

Not only do I postulate that the Larson phase marks the fourth stage of Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley, I also postulate that the Larson site is structurally equivalent to the Orendorf site. That is, I would treat it also as a second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy, serving as the newly established replacement for the Orendorf site, as I discussed above. In terms of the cult sodality heterarchy model, this fourth stage was marked by a rather minor addition resulting in a major material cultural change in the Mississippian assemblage of this region—namely, the emergence of the platform mound as part of the plaza-based cult sodality heterarchy settlement locale. This is an alternative explanation for the absence of a platform mound, as such, to that given by Harn who, as I noted earlier, “demoted” the Orendorf site from being a “central town” to a “primary village.” Notably, this “demotion” cannot serve as an explanation. Rather, it was an artifact of his modified classification system, and it simultaneously has been treated as an explanation — while, in fact, leaving both the complexities of that site and the absence of a platform mound quite unexplained. For example, while he explicitly claims that the Larson site was the *first* central town in that it was organized around a mound-and-plaza complex, and such a locale necessarily has a platform mound, and this was a central, identifying feature of Mississippianism, his demoting Orendorf has

not explained how Mississippianization could have prevailed in the region for 200 years without this key feature. However, he has made some other very important suggestions concerning Orendorf. He has argued that the population responsible for the Orendorf site was the same population, or the immediate ancestors of the same population, that *moved south to the Larson area to occupy the Larson site* (1978, 246-47). He also suggests that some of the community may have moved north to found the Hildemeyer site, and even some may have reoccupied the Kingston Lake site. Now, since he is characterizing the Larson site as a central town of the Larson social system, thereby construing it as a kinship-based community, this means that the abandonment of Orendorf and the founding of Larson and, possibly, of Hildemeyer and reestablishing of Kingston Lake were coincident with a major population reshuffling in the Central Illinois Valley. Under this orthodox view, therefore, when Orendorf was abandoned then presumably most of the surrounding region would be evacuated since, under his model, this region would include many intermediate and subsidiary sites.

In strong contrast, of course, and as I detailed above, the cult sodality heterarchy view would treat the abandonment of Orendorf and the establishing of Larson and possibly Hildemeyer and Kingston Lake as simply the resorting of cult sodality alliances. The dispersed complementary heterarchical communities from which the autonomous cult sodalities came that constituted these alliances could very well have remained in place since, of course, the model postulates a high degree of transient residency for sodality participants who would be mobile in this regard. Hence, continuity of settlement of a dispersed complementary heterarchical community in one locale or subregion would be the rule so that cult sodality abandonment would not entail emptying of the hinterland of the site. This does not mean that I am claiming that the lands and hinterlands around

Orendorf continued to be occupied during the Larson phase as during the Orendorf phase. Rather it means that this is a possibility, and of course, it requires further empirical research to establish. Hence, it can stand as a hypothesis that could be used to test these alternatives. If intense surveying of the region establishes the absence of Larson phase settlement sites, while this finding would not falsify the orthodox model, it would also not demonstrate its truth status. However, if the same survey demonstrates significant settlement sites in the Orendorf region dated to the Larson phase (i.e., hamlets and farmsteads), in the absence of a site in the same region replicating the form and makeup of either the Larson or the previous Orendorf site, these findings would be anomalous under the orthodox model while being consistent under the cult sodality model, thereby warranting that it should be accepted while the former should be set aside.

Since the Larson site not only conforms more closely to the standard Mississippian-type settlement, despite its late Spoon River Mississippian period appearance, the mound is quite substantial. "The Larson site was a fortified town of approximately ten hectares with a sixty-meter-square, five-meter-high, ramped platform mound fronting on the plaza . . . It seems there were several dispersed villages in the vicinity of Larson, and at least one very large council house measuring 14.6 meters by 14.7 meters" (Conrad 1989, 109). Importantly, similar to Orendorf, as Harn pointed out, it had a plaza framed with rows of structures; its axis was oriented in terms of the winter solstice sunrise; and in fact, some structures were built oriented to the cardinal directions. "Later, the village plan was altered in both orientation and size. Structural orientations were shifted from positions essentially corresponding to sunrise at the time of winter solstice (about 121° east of true north) to positions paralleling cardinal directions with east-west longitudinal axes . . . [and] at least two east-west oriented structures are conspicuous in aerial photographs of the

residential areas to the south of the plaza. Whether orientation of all rows were similarly shifted is not known” (Harn 1994, 51). However, it also displayed other attributes that made it formally more like the overall Orendorf layout as well as echoing attributes of the American Bottom mound locales. In this case, as I noted earlier, it had at least three spatially separate sets of structures, essentially elaborating on the pattern noted above for Orendorf. That is, while certainly these separate sets were part of the overall Larson plateau settlement zone, they were not part of the “core” site since they were outside the palisade that surrounded or at least partly surrounded it. In fact, Harn claims that the thirty east-west structures were probably among the last constructions in the zone of the site prior to its being abandoned. “Aerial photography reveals some 30 east-west oriented houses on the blufftop to the west of the town . . . but contemporaneity between those structures and similarly oriented houses in the primary center presently cannot be demonstrated” (1994, 51). He suggests that if they were contemporaneous with the main core, then his estimate of the numbers occupying these 30 kin dwellings (i.e., assuming the average of five individuals for each “family”) would be about 150. This number would have to be added to his estimated numbers occupying the core settlement area, which he estimated to be about 600, or 120 family structures. This would give a total “central town” population of about 750 (600+150) in its closing days. He considers 750 residents to be rather small since he estimates that at its height, Larson may have incorporated about 1,175 residents (1994, 53, table 5).

The problem with these estimates is that he does not clarify exactly what is included. As noted above, he adds the estimated population related to the 30 east-west structures. However, he also comments that there are two further “probable segments of the town . . . [that] extended along bluff fingers angling northward toward East Creek, 200 to 600 meters northwest of the primary residential area

... [but] no “excavations have been undertaken These two areas amount to at least 10 hectares of additional site occupation.” (1994, 51) These more distant aggregations, as well as the fact that there were two zones of midden surrounding the core that were differentially concentrated (suggesting temporary occupation), required him to be very broad in declaring the areal size of the site. Depending on how one draws the boundary, he notes the site ranges in size between six and fifty hectares (1994, 53, table 5).

This spatial distancing of components, as well as large midden areas without any structures as such but having clear representation of ceramics and other material cultural items generated by occupation, are not well accounted for under the notion of the Larson site as a central town. However, there is an attribute underwriting this pattern that parallels the Cahokian attribute of spatially separated settlement plan complexes. Of course, in Cahokia these are among the second-order cult sodality heterarchies (e.g., the single mound Wilson Mound complex and Powell Mound complex) and the set of twelve or so large second-order multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes forming the two concentric rings constituting the third-order heterarchy which encircles the Central Precinct of Cahokia and its great plaza fronted by Monks Mound on its north side and the two linear ranks of lesser western and eastern platform mounds. This Central Precinct component, as I argued earlier, embodied the constituent cult sodality alliances of the American Bottom ceremonial zone making up Cahokia as a fourth-order cult sodality heterarchy—and immanently embodied in this Central Precinct, of course, might be representation of the second-order cult sodality heterarchy of Larson itself.

It is particularly germane to note that, although on a smaller scale, a similar patterning shows up at the Larson site, and to a lesser degree, at Orendorf. I would suggest that the three above noted spatially

separate structure complexes dispersed to the west and north and northwest of the Larson platform-and-plaza complex site manifest on a smaller scale a similar spatial relation to the way the Central Precinct of Cahokia relates to the dispersed multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes described above. If so, Larson “core” would be most coherently interpreted as embodying a second-order heterarchy, and the three nearby sets of structures would embody first-order heterarchies. But it does not stop there. There are at least two other Larson phase sites in the immediate region that could be reasonably interpreted as first-order heterarchies: the Buckeye Bend site (figure 7.1) and the Myer-Dickson site. Because they lack platform mounds, they are both classed as primary villages under Harn’s classification scheme. In fact, Harn suggests that the former had a short period of occupancy as a “primary village.” However, more interestingly, in many ways, these display the same patterning as Orendorf. The Buckeye site is located about 6 km southwest of Larson on a south bank terrace of the Spoon River, and notably, it also lacks a platform mound. But it could serve as the first-order cult sodality focal locale of several dispersed autonomous cult sodalities of the Spoon River region. While little detail is known of its contents, it mirrors Orendorf in that it has a plaza and linear housing. It also has a low number of associated burials.

I suggest the same possibility applies to at least part of the extensive Myer-Dickson site on a next-door-neighbor finger bluff ridge overlooking the juncture of the Spoon River and Illinois River—namely, that it was also a Larson phase first-order cult sodality heterarchy. Alternatively, and certainly not mutually exclusively, it could have been an extension of the nearby Dickson Mounds site, initiated in the early Eveland phase and continuously used up to and during the Larson phase to mediate the terminal world renewal mortuary practices of the Larson site second-order heterarchy, only about 2

km southwest of the Dickson Mounds site. Indeed, while lacking a platform mound incorporated into the plaza component, the overall layout of the Myer-Dickson site suggests that it was a major player in the region's settlement system. "Although the Myer-Dickson site may have experienced Larson-phase occupation in one form or another over a period of many more years, its large plaza, grandiose temple structure, and central clustering of houses may have denoted its position as a sociopolitical center for a period as brief as one decade" (Harn 1994, 54). Of course, under the bifurcated view, the part of the site associated with the "large plaza" and "grandiose temple structure," including the 17 row-oriented structures that Harn has classed as a "primary village," would be recharacterized as either an extension of the Larson site second-order heterarchy specialized for the performance of the terminal world renewal ritual of the associated Larson phase Dickson Mounds site, as I suggested above, or, also noted above, as a preplatform mound first-order cult sodality heterarchy that was occupied prior to the Larson site. In fact, it is the latter case that I think is most likely.

Seen overall then, there are six distinct structure clusters that can be quite distinctly differentially sorted according to whether Harn's direct hierarchical settlement system or the complementary heterarchical community scheme is applied. Under the former, there are two "primary villages," Buckeye Bend and Myer-Dickson, and one "central town," the Larson site. As Harn defines it, the Larson site consists of several "related" components: the core "central town" and the three sets of structures noted above that share the same finger bluff. I have noted that these are anomalous under this model. That is, under the direct hierarchical settlement articulation pattern scheme there is really no valid accounting of these "peripheral" sets nor of the large midden area. He treats them as part of the "central town," and yet they are distinctly spatially separate and do not "fit"

into the view of this type of settlement as an integrated platform-and-plaza complex with rows of structures organized geometrically around the plaza. That is, they ought to be integrated spatially into the Larson site proper. Since they are not, then there are only two other categories they could plausibly be: either “primary villages” or “intermediate” sites. But if they are the former, then this contradicts this model since its rationale argues that the size, makeup, and location of “primary villages” are such so that they serve as second-level centers serving to mediate or link the intermediate sites to the “central town.” The fact that they are basically contemporary with Larson means that their spatial closeness precludes their serving this auxiliary function. Of course, in terms of size and location, they seem to be quite inappropriately treated as “intermediate sites.”

However, under the complementary heterarchical community view, in particular, its auxiliary cult sodality heterarchy view, the same six are quite comfortably consistent with being treated as a structured set of first-order heterarchies related to Larson as a second-order heterarchy. This relation is parallel with the structural nature of Cahokia itself, albeit on a smaller geographical scale. In these terms, then, the Buckeye Bend and Myer-Dickson sites, as well as the three clusters that share the finger bluff on which the Larson site is located constitute five autonomous first-order cult sodalities, and they all stand in arm’s-length relation to the Larson site proper that, with its platform mound, constitutes the second-order heterarchy that the other five first-order heterarchies jointly constituted (along with other currently unknown first-order locales). Since first-order cult sodalities consist of several (four or five) autonomous ecclesiastic cult sodalities, the component cult sodalities constituting the Buckeye Bend and the Myer-Dickson sites might have their respective complementary heterarchical communities dispersed in the Spoon River region and the region south of the Orendorf site,

respectively. The three postulated first-order heterarchies sharing the Larson finger-bluff zone would be constituted by autonomous cult sodalities whose complementary heterarchical communities were located in the reaches north of the Orendorf site. Being derived from cult sodalities of complementary heterarchical communities in these more distant regions would explain their location on the same finger bluff as occupied by Larson while maintaining arm's-length spatial relations with it. This would be consistent with their recognizing that they, along with the local first-order heterarchies of Buckeye Bend and Myer-Dickson, were joint collective custodians of the Larson site. This would constitute the latter as the embodiment of at least five first-order cult sodality heterarchies affiliated to build and occupy the Larson site.

Therefore, as an overview summary interpretation, somewhat limited in empirical detail, largely because there are insufficient chronological data, I will suggest that what is displayed in these five site clusters, those at arm's-length relation with Larson proper, is a pattern that is a variant of the five settlement plans of the Orendorf site, where a rather rapid cycling of settlement plan occupations occurred that, as I suggested above, was likely keyed into the generational promotional cycle of cult sodalities. But rather than each being occupied for only one generation, these five postulated first-order heterarchies were probably occupied for more than a generation, although further research is required to confirm this possibility. In fact, there is evidence that Larson may have been used for two generations and the complexity of Myer-Dickson as sketched out above suggests that it also had an occupation period of more than one generation. Of course, another difference with Orendorf is that the multiple community layouts of the site indicate that as a second-order heterarchy, the first-order heterarchies that constituted it were jointly embodied in the same site of the same bluff top. In contrast,

the first-order cult sodalities that constituted Larson as a second-order sodality occupied distinctly separate but fairly contiguous spaces. While the Buckeye Bend and Myer-Dickson sites are separate from each other, nevertheless, both are within rather easy 2 to 6 km walking distance of the finger bluff occupied by the Larson site with its three nearby site clusters. In fact, because of the rather dispersed nature of the Myer-Dickson site, this may represent one first-order cult sodality heterarchy that was mobile, each generation abandoning one settlement plan to move laterally to build a new settlement plan. Indeed, as I noted above, according to Harn's description, it is possible the Larson site itself embodies possibly two community settlement plans, although there was considerable reconstruction of individual structures, up to seven times, in some cases.

In support of the multiple first-order heterarchy proposal is Harn's observation that the ceramics of all these sites, including those of the Larson proper site, are so similar that they cannot be used to argue for a sequential settlement pattern. That is, this repeats the patterning that Santure noted at the multiple settlement plans of the Orendorf site, except that the Buckeye Bend, for example, may embody two generations of the same first-order heterarchy. Therefore, assuming that, in fact, both Larson and Orendorf were second-order cult sodality heterarchies related sequentially with Orendorf as the "ancestral" second-order heterarchy to Larson as a second-order heterarchy, it is reasonable to suggest that each would generate the same process of intergenerational settlement plan transiency as a result of a series of promotion-based cycles of the constituent cult sodality alliances. It is even possible that these alliances were slightly out of phase so that one or two alliances moved into a promotion turnabout, thereby encouraging these alliances to remain in the old heterarchy locale rather than starting a new one with a generational promotional cycle. Various combinations of this nature could easily account for the

existence of at least six similar multiple-structure site locales in the Larson region while the ceramic styles remained constant.

Reinforcing this possibility is the fact that only one of them, the Larson site, had a platform mound. This would suggest that the Larson site founding was itself the result of an important custodial franchising event that transferred a usufruct ritual copyright that, until this event, had been resisted—namely the platform mound building copyright itself. Hence, the abandonment of the Orendorf site and the construction of the Larson site might be the immediate result of the historical development of the mound-building ideological strategy, and this introduced a new level of labor demand that promoted a greater investment of labor from all the participating cult sodalities. This might account for the Larson variation on the Orendorf pattern (i.e., the addition of the platform mound), while the rest of the pattern—plaza and associated linear structures—remained constant. That is, as I suggested earlier, the platform mound feature appears to be a late addition in the Central Illinois Valley Mississippian period, probably as a result of local resistance to the desirability of building a specialized mound. The mound building tradition in the region was ancient—but largely anchored to the mortuary sphere directly. Building a platform mound that did not itself incorporate burials but served as the platform for mortuary ritual terminated elsewhere (e.g., in the neighboring Dickson Mounds site) would be accepted only if the major degree of material intervention into the sacred natural order it required could be convincingly made to all the factions of the cult sodality heterarchies constituting the second-order Larson heterarchy. As I noted above, this may also have motivated the abandonment of the Orendorf site and the construction of the Larson site.

However, this still leaves a number of actual sites unaccounted for. Is it possible, as I noted earlier, that autonomous cult sodalities

continued to construct their individual ceremonial nodal sites as I suggested was the basis for the initial establishment of the Eveland site? The latter rapidly evolved to become a first-order heterarchy. But the cult sodalities that constituted it could well have sustained their own ceremonial nodal locales, in the same manner as those of the American Bottom that I discussed in Chapter 2, such as the Lohmann- and Stirling-phase Range nodal locale sites. If so, one or more of the Morton mounds with associated structures might fit this pattern. In fact, Harn notes that on the Morton site, only about 2 km northeast of the Myer-Dickson site on a neighboring bluff top ridge, there is one burial, presumably in one of the many mortuary mounds, that was associated with a “single trailed decorative motif” on the shoulder of a Dickson Trailed jar that displays “a combination horizontal line and diagonal ladder line design . . . in keeping with the developing early Larson-phase ceramic tradition of employing both curvilinear and rectilinear design elements” (1994, 55-56). From this, and the fact that “[s]everal nearby subsidiary sites also suggest occupational contemporaneity with the Morton site,” he concludes the possibility “that Morton could have functioned as the initial Larson-phase center in the Spoon River core area before the Larson site itself rose to prominence” (1994, 56). However, I find this suggestion unlikely. In fact, I find it a bit surprising since, as noted earlier, he made the suggestion that Morton might be “Larson-phase center” four years *after* a report of an intensive survey and selected excavation of the Morton and related sites had been published in which no evidence was reported that would support Harn’s view. The authors of the report, one of whom was Harn, pointed out that because of his earlier assessment of Morton as a “primary village” (at that time, he termed the “primary village” a *hamlet*), he and his colleagues were expecting to expose concentrations of Larson phase houses and pits. However, as I noted earlier, the opposite was the

case. "Now, following several years of cultivation and artifact collection, Oneota Bold Counselor Phase artifacts greatly outnumber the Larson Phase artifacts from the site. Although Larson Phase domestic structures and features occur within the area of Oneota occupation, as well as across the surrounding bluff top, the exact nature of the Larson Phase occupation has not been clarified by present investigations" (Santure et al. 1990, 7). Indeed, as I also mentioned earlier, I found their conclusion equivocal since their reference to "domestic structures and features" amounted to several dispersed *subsidiary sites*, to use Harn's terminology. "The remains of five structures and related features are attributed to a Spoon River Mississippian component. The structures are situated on a heavily dissected section of the Illinois River valley bluff. One of the structures was reconstructed twice, the remains of another were buried by construction of the Oneota cemetery mound, and the fifth building was represented by a single corner segment. Valuable information was accumulated about construction and the organization of interior space. However, an analysis of settlement type is inconclusive due to the restricted spatial perspective and the small artifact assemblage" (1990, 30). They went on to comment further by noting that "[t]he Spoon River Mississippian structures at the Morton site and the Norris Farms 36 represent either houses on the periphery of the primary village, a dispersed settlement, or isolated homesteads. Two complete house sites with burned structural elements, in situ artifacts, and 12 related pit features, were excavated. Similarities in pottery types suggest that the houses may have been contemporaneous. A variety of early Larson Phase ceramics was recovered; including both plain and cord-marked jars, plain plates and plates incised with line-filled triangles, and in lesser quantities, bowls, bottles and pinchpots" (1990, 46).

It may be that in terms of actual excavation and surface survey their work was constrained by a "restricted spatial perspective";

however, as I noted earlier, the fact that there was also a small, rather than an extensive, Larson-phase artifact assemblage would suggest that the area was not on the periphery of a “primary village,” but in fact, it was an area of “isolated homesteads.” If they were isolated homesteads, then they would actually constitute components of a dispersed village as I have defined it. Farmstead (or homestead) sites, of course, constitute a category of the kinship-based aspect sites of a region’s complementary heterarchical communities in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. For this reason, because of the spatial association with the Morton mounds, it is also possible that one or more of these dwelling structures may have been clan ceremonial nodal sites acting as an integrating node of the clan components of the local dispersed village. Now, the bulk of the sites that Harn has used to outline the Larson settlement system fall under his category of “subsidiary sites.” I suggest that these can be reclassified into farmsteads (i.e., dwelling-like sites specific to the primary kinship structures, e.g., nuclear families), and these can be the components of a higher order subclan category constituted of small clusters of individual farmsteads generally separated from each other by between 50 m to 100 m plus. The actual distribution of these two, the primary (family) and first-order (joint) kinship types, seems to be fairly continuous across the landscape, including being found in the periphery zone of the Larson site. Associated with these would be nearby dispersed special-purpose sites, small stations used to perform various tasks related to everyday life in the farmsteads. These would be excellent candidates, then, as elements of the clan-based component of the typical dispersed village of a complementary heterarchical community in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. As I said above, because of the association of the Morton mounds, one or more of them may have also had piggy-backed on it the function of serving as a clan ceremonial nodal site.

However, as I noted earlier, these spatially associated special-purpose sites may be more correctly assessed as compound sites, serving both as kinship and sodality special-task sites. This is possible since I see no difficulty recognizing that companions making up the equivalently ranked age-sets of neighboring autonomous cult sodalities constituting the local first-order sodality heterarchy would actively cooperate and share their labor to procure and produce usable materials that they would allocate between those required by their respective sodalities and those required by their companions in their capacities as kin members of their various families. These resources would be distributed accordingly, each of the cooperating age-sets pooling the materials they produced and earmarked for their sodalities' use and, as individual members, each returning his/her share to their kin group habitation sites to discharge their kinship duties and obligation. Hence, what Harn refers to as *subsidiary sites* can be redescribed as domestic clan-based dwelling farmsteads and age-set sodality-based special-task sites; and what he refers to as *central towns* and *primary villages* can be reconfigured under a single category as world renewal cult sodality heterarchies, either first-order or second-order, as discussed above. The two categories of sites, kinship and sodality, would be realized as spatially separate and autonomous site types, except at the lowest level, the special-purpose or special-task site level.

However, this still does not account for certain sites that Harn classified under his "catch-all" "intermediate settlement site." He specifies three sites in these terms: Fouts, Keeler, and M.S.D. 1. I described Fouts earlier as a set of fifteen dwelling-like structures. Although they are mostly within view of each other, their distribution is strongly accommodated to the ridge and gully topography of the site. Four of these are rather closely located to each other on one side of a gully. They were all excavated and revealed a strong domestic

bias. The other eleven are scattered over the ridge zone they share with the other four. "Examination of the settlement plan at Fouts . . . reveals there is no apparent internal site structuring with regard to plazas or house rows. Rather, houses are randomly distributed on opposing ridgetops around a ravine head. The absence of structure superposition and small number of storage pits suggest a short-term occupation for the site. Internal hearths apparently were present in all four excavated houses" (Harn 1994, 38). Given the particular topographical constraints of the ridge zone, I would interpret this pattern as fitting what we could expect of the clan-based component of a dispersed village and the above four spatially associated structures comfortably fits under the above clan nodal site. There are even nearby mortuary mounds that may have been associated clan-based cemetery CBLs, suggesting that Fouts incorporated and expressed an important ceremonial component. The Keeler site might be characterized in similar terms, although little can be definitively stated about it since modern farming has subjected it to major damage.

In contrast to these two latter site clusters, I have already discussed briefly the M.S.D. 1 site, located on the Big Creek in the upland zone. This manifests a distinctly nucleated layout, and it cannot be comfortably placed under the clan-kinship category, particularly because of its location—away from gardening land. Of course, it is too large and complex to be a first-order clan-based type. This is because the site is located on a rather steep talus zone overlooking the creek and consists of at least 12 and possibly 19 structure basins that are fairly tightly aggregated (Harn 1994, 38). Harn has suggested that these are unique in that their location may have been selected to place the occupants near deer and elk hunting territory. I certainly have no problem with that. But it still does not characterize their social nature. Too large and nucleated to be either an autonomous cult sodality ceremonial nodal site (it lacks any ceremonial features,

as such) or a first-order clan-based cluster of farmstead types and too isolated and, besides, lacking ceremonial features, it is too small to be a first-order cult sodality heterarchy. However, it is important to note that one of the major activities of the age-sets constituting the junior age-grade sector of a cult sodality alliance would be to regularly hunt for the collective needs of the alliance.⁵ Using this substantial M.S.D. 1 site would also be ideal to combine instrumental tasks with the cult sodality tasks of learning special ritual usufruct practices as well as being taught the complex of sacred stories relating hunters to the spiritual powers of the forest. Indeed, as I suggested earlier but failed to elaborate on, the components of the sodalities, both the junior and senior age-grades, would likely require such locales as represented by the M.S.D. 1 site to combine both instrumental activities by which to discharge their sodality-based duties as well as serving as places of retreat where esoteric rituals could be performed—for example, the conveyancing rites by which custodial ritual usufruct copyrights were transferred permanently from a senior age-set to its immediately junior age-set. This would be an important ritual to ensure the continuity of the sodality's repertoire of ritual practices; but it would also require isolation since the copyrights were exclusive and the learning of the know-how had to be kept secret.

In sum, the very same Central Illinois Mississippian Valley settlement data that have been interpreted in terms of the chiefdom polity view and its postulated direct hierarchical settlement articulation model (i.e., the central town→primary village→intermediate settlement→subsidiary site hierarchy) can be easily and far more coherently reinterpreted as manifesting a complementary heterarchical community system in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. I believe that the latter interpretation explains these settlement data in a more comprehensive and less chaotic manner than does the former. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the previous

chapter, it is able to relate the mortuary component to the rest of the settlement system more coherently than does the funerary paradigm relate the mortuary data to the direct hierarchical settlement articulation model.

Conclusion

To confirm this judgment, an interesting and unresolved debate among proponents of the Chiefdom Polity model concerns the seasonality of occupation of these sites, specifically, in Harn's terms, the *central towns* and its subordinate *primary village*, and *intermediate* and *subsidiary* site locales. I noted this earlier. The accumulation of occupational data has established that both major sites, such as Orendorf and Larson, as well as lesser sites, such as Fouts and the Norris Farms sites, display a mixed bag of seasonal occupation evidence. Data supporting warm-season rather than cold-season occupation (e.g., presence/absence of hearths, winter killed/summer killed deer and other fauna, and so on), are found in all these categories. This certainly suggests that some structures were used only in warm-season times and others only in cold-season times. But this division cuts across the different site types, whether these are classed under Harn's scheme or my own. Since the direct hierarchical settlement model presumes kinship groups were the constituent resident groups, then accounting for this pattern entails either Harn's seasonal mobility view with most families having two dwellings, a warm-season and a cold-season dwelling, or Conrad's view, that the community was sedentary and permanent. Neither view, however, accounts for the occupational data.

In contrast, as I noted earlier, the complementary heterarchical community in the bifurcated posture would require considerable transient mobility and this would entail cold- and warm-season transiency. As members of both components, active adults would

have differential complementary obligations to the family homestead and the cult sodality contexts. Therefore, an individual's annual cycle of tasks would be the outcome of this dual imperative of scheduled tasks. The subsistence schedule of the domestic sphere would be tightly tied to the imperatives of the seasonal cycle and the ritual schedule of the cult sodality sphere, of course, would also be partly governed by seasonality. But it is more likely that the solstitial and other celestial cycles would establish the primary ritual imperatives since much of the world renewal process would be tied into the azimuth or horizon events, the turning points of the lunar cycle, the solstitial turning points, the equinoxes, and so on. Of course, there is a rough correspondence between the seasonal and solar cycles that would probably allow for some interplay in the dual schedules. However, the two would also mean that important rituals might be out of phase with significant subsistence scheduling, and this would allow for periods when adult males and females would be able to travel away from home to their respective cult sodality locales where they might reside for several weeks at a time in preparation for, and then the performance of, key world renewal rituals.

Also, the age-set status of individuals would be important enabling components since bachelor status males might be able to leave for significant periods, occupying the major world renewal cult sodality heterarchies, while the older generations carried out the domestic sphere tasks. Hence, young males might be transients at the Larson site during the spring time where they would conduct hunting expeditions in the surrounding zone, bringing in deer for the feasts that were necessarily part of the spring-related world renewal rituals (Emerson 1981, 179). Other, more senior age-sets might occupy the same structures for a significant period of the winter, focusing on winter solstice rites that required their bringing supplies of corn and dried meat with them from their farmsteads. Of course,

they might bring their families with them, thereby leaving their farmsteads unoccupied for the winter. Hence, the complementary heterarchical community view can easily account for this mixed bag of warm- and cold-season occupational data

This completes my characterization of the unfolding of the Mississippianization episode in the Central Illinois River Valley. This also terminates Part II of this book. The next chapter initiates Part III by shifting to the southeastern sector of the Eastern Woodlands in my characterization of the Mississippianization process there. The main focus of Part III is Moundville—the premier Mississippian site of this region.

NOTES

1. In fact, it is quite possible, given that the Mossville phase communities apparently were abandoning the lower levee zone while favoring the higher flood plain terraces, that at this time the Rench site was actually more akin to the George Reeves and Lindemann phase settlements of the Range site (Kelly 1990a, 1990b). As I noted in Chapter 7, Esarey and his colleagues (2000, 229-30) recognized the early Terminal Late Woodland Liverpool site was roughly equivalent in settlement plan to the Dohack and Range phases of the Range site. In that chapter, using my complementary heterarchical terminology, I redescribed these as *plaza-periphery integrated complementary heterarchical communities* villages. But I then went on to argue that the settlement plans of the subsequent George Reeves and Lindeman phases may best be interpreted as manifesting an integrated *mutualistic heterarchical community* village consisting of two or more autonomous complementary heterarchical communities. If the Mossville community types, such as the Rench site, had modified in moving to the higher terraces, then they may have actually taken

on the George Reeves integrated *mutualistic heterarchical community* village settlement articulation modal posture, indicating the type of settlement that immediately preceded the Mississippianization of the American Bottom. Of course, without further fieldwork and excavation, this needs to remain simply a possibility for now. But it would mean that a very small incremental change, such as the custodial franchising of a key world renewal ritual usufruct copyright, would be required to instigate the emergence of the bifurcated posture in this region, a change that might actually be recorded in the Rench site itself. For example, the burning of Houses #1 and #2 might actually index a ritual abandonment marking the disengagement of the alliances constituting the here postulated mutualistic complementary community of Rench.

2. I consider the singularly kinship-based treatment of the moiety structure to be symptomatic of the Monistic Modular Polity view—whether “egalitarian” or “nonegalitarian.” Hence, to the outsider informed by this view, since kinship is the core social structure organizing the community, and the moiety structure governs who you may or may not marry, it also follows that the contrasting social meanings of the moiety structure are monopolistically applied to the clan/kinship structures so that White and Red moieties are also related in terms of female powers/civil order/peace and male powers/external order/war and alliance respectively (Knight 1990). In short, *White* means submission and *Red* means dominance. I suggest that this is a serious error, endemic to the monistic modular polity view.

3. As I noted earlier (Chapter 7, note 3), it is Duane Esarey’s view that the Mossville phase was relatively brief. I suggested then that ca. cal. AD 1050-1100 might be a reasonable estimate. Therefore, this suggestion that only 25 years would separate this postulated early custodial franchising event at the Rench site from the emergence of the

Eveland phase at the Eveland site marking a first-order cult sodality heterarchy would seem to be reasonable.

4. The absence of “ranked burials” within one of the most complex settlement plans of what Conrad and other archaeologists have taken to be a hierarchical rank-order community system surely should give the archaeologists reason to pause and reflect on the adequacy of the model that characterizes Orendorf as a “chiefdom polity” community.

5. As I noted above, when on hunting and gathering expeditions, the junior age-sets of companions could easily treat these tasks as both clan-related and sodality-related duties, without contradiction. In fact, the sodalities would be effective organizing units for mobilizing such domestic and sodality subsistence, while the individual families living in a dispersed set of farmsteads would likely have difficulty mobilizing sufficiently large hunting and gathering task groups from among themselves. However, as noted earlier, these family members would also be participants in the different age-sets of the local sodality, which would also be in alliance with other more distant but also local sodalities, and it would be as companions that they would organize probably gender-specific collective hunting and gathering and collective planting and harvesting task groups. Then the group of companions would divide the game and the harvest among themselves, setting aside the amount needed to support the sodality rituals, and return with their equitably-divided shares to their individual farmsteads.

CHAPTER 12

A Theoretical Critique of the Southeastern Mississippian Chiefdom Model

Up until now, I have not addressed the primary historical data by which many archaeologists working with and interpreting the archaeological record of the Mississippian period have anchored the validity of the claim that it is the expression of social system of regional communities that can be characterized as variously scaled dominance-based chiefdoms—that is, as types of communities that are properly and adequately characterized under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity or the Chiefdom Polity model. These historical data are in the form of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and early eighteenth-century European documentation, some of the most important of which is in the form of personal chronicles, while others are official government, missionary, and commercial company records and reports (Galloway 1997a, 1997b). Some of the most referenced chronicles were written by the actual persons who were involved in some of the initial, critical, often violent, sometimes peaceful, engagements between indigenous North American communities and European interlopers, the latter ranging from being military forces that came to invade and conquer, groupings of merchant-adventurers determined to make their fortunes, and different groups of Christian missionaries devoted to “saving the Native.” The sixteenth-century documentation is primarily related to the Spanish and French incursions in the Southeast, both military invasions and missionary

interventions, while the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century documentation consists largely of English and French records, these tending to be distributed between missionary and entrepreneurial endeavors, both individual and corporate company-based, and most of which led to encouraging follow-up European colonial expansion (Milanich 1994, 1998).

Of this written evidence, there is little doubt in my view that the most important historical documentation influencing the current Mississippian archaeological models of the Midwest and Southeast relates to the Iberian incursions, and particularly to the reports and Spanish government documentation of the Hernando De Soto expeditionary invasion of the Southeast, usually referred to in the literature as the *Soto entrada* of AD 1539-1543. It is particularly pertinent because the descriptions in these reports were of the living communities that the Iberians encountered, and they are taken to characterize these societies in their “pristine” state—that is, as they were prior to the great biological and social upheavals that these early and subsequent European interventions instigated. Hence, they have been heavily used and cited by anthropologists, historians, ethnohistorians, and, of course, archaeologists. Treated as factual reports of what the Europeans took themselves to be seeing and doing with regard to the Native North Americans of these regions, the documentation has come to serve as validating and projecting this reported way of life back to the “beginning” of the Mississippian period, ca. AD 1000.

The primary characterization derived from this documentation is that these historical Southeastern communities were rather well-organized dominance-based hierarchical or chiefdom polities not too different from the multiple and factious Italian and German principalities with which those same European interlopers and adventurers were quite familiar; and this characterization has been, and to a great deal still is, widely shared among Mississippian archaeologists

(Hudson 1997, 1-7, 14-17).¹ Of course, archaeologists recognize that, in comparison to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European principalities, these Native North American dominance-based hierarchical chiefdom polity communities were “simpler and more primitive” (i.e., technologically less developed and socially less complex) than the European polities. Consequently these assessments have been “modernized” and “anthropologized,” primarily reduced to being complex structures of kinship-based groups, thereby being transformed into the view that the Spaniards encountered centrally administered, modular territorial polities governed by *caciques* (i.e., “chiefs” and their *principales*, i.e., “subchiefs”) and other lesser elite persons, who for the most part inherited their powerful kinship lineage-based positions. A primary material feature supporting this claim is that, as noted in most of this documentation, many of the highest ranking “chiefs” of these “centralized kinship lineage-based polities” had embellished their administrative seats or “capitals” with large platform mounds and plazas that were similar to the types that define the earlier or prehistoric Mississippian system. Similar perspectives—although not always in accord with the Spanish documentation—have been derived from the documentation generated by the French and English missionaries, travelers, traders, explorers, and colonial officers who followed the Spaniards in the late 1600s and early 1700s. The lack of complete concordance with the Spanish records is also notable since, while most of the French reports of the Southeast, focusing on the communities of the lower Mississippi valley and the Atlantic coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and northeast Florida, largely replicate the chiefdom polity view, particularly noting that the Natchez had a “Sun Chief” with a “royal” retinue, the English records of the midsouthern region of the Southeast describe what is a more “egalitarian” tribal-like community system (Galloway 1997a, 288, 290; 1997b, 11-15; 1995, 2-25 and passim; Hudson 1976,

210, 233-34; 1997, 21, 31, 188; King 2006, 180, 194-95; Muller 1997, 60-63; Pluckhahn et al. 2006, 17-18).

Since this chapter initiates Part III by shifting my examination of the Mississippianization process as it unfolded in the Midwest to how it unfolded in the Southeast, using the Black Warrior River Valley as my case study, and since no historical communities encountered by Europeans in the Midwest have ever been reported to be like those reported by the Spaniards in the Southeast (i.e., the historical communities in the Midwest encountered by Europeans are generically treated as “egalitarian polities,” i.e., as “tribal polities”), it is important that I now critically address this view that claims the historically known Southeastern social systems that the early European interlopers encountered were dominance-based chiefdom polities. While starting with the above premise that the Southeastern communities encountered were like European principalities, this view has been bolstered by drawing on the modern anthropological theory of chiefdoms as polities. Much of this theory has been formulated through careful analysis of the ethnographically known dominance-based chiefdoms of the Old World, particularly in parts of Africa, and those in the South Pacific, such as Polynesia. I note this because I want to stress that I do not deny the validity of the chiefdom concept and social theory that embodies it—although I do question the commonly accepted archaeological position that situates this theory within the neoevolutionary framework, treating the chiefdom as a social organizational adaptive response to objective changes in the natural and human demographic environment (Pauketat 2007).

I have made it clear that the concept of chiefdom may very well be appropriate for characterizing many preindustrial social systems, such as the Mapuche, and any other preindustrial social systems having centralized descent-based kinship systems and holding the principle of the exclusive control of territory, whether this control is

effected as outright proprietorial-type ownership or, as I defined it earlier for the Mapuche, as exclusive territorial custodial usufruct. However, just as I do not accept that it is appropriate to apply the concept of chiefdom *defined in this way* to the Midwestern sector of the Mississippian archaeological record of the Eastern Woodlands, as discussed in Parts I and II, I equally do not accept it as an appropriate characterization of the community system responsible for the Mississippian archaeological record of the Southeastern sector. However, at the same time, I want to reiterate the point I made in Chapter 2 that I recognize social ranking—defined as differentiation and grading of social positions organized in a principle-based hierarchical form—to be an intrinsic part of the social structure of most, if not all, of these historic Southeastern communities (as well as the rest of the Eastern Woodlands, for that matter). For this reason, I am even convinced that some of these Southeastern communities initially encountered by Europeans could easily be interpreted by them as being much like their own communities, only being more “primitive” versions of dominance-based “principalities” governed by “caciques” controlling exclusive territories, particularly since these outsiders’ own societies can be characterized as factious, feudal-like states and principalities as exemplified by the sixteenth-century Italian and German principalities. However, the core claim that I would make here is that the tangible material forms of these Southeastern communities only *mimicked* the formal social attributes of such dominance-based hierarchical feudal societies. Or, to put it more adequately, while the hierarchies that, no doubt, structured the communities of the indigenous peoples of the Southeast promoted the building of material features that could be interpreted as very much like what one would expect to be displayed by centralized dominance-based chiefdoms, the social powers and their distribution that constituted these latter indigenous hierarchies were

substantively different from the type of social powers that constituted the former. Much of the rest of this book, Part III, is directed to demonstrating this claim.

The first step to this end clarifies why I can agree with the current view that many of the traditional historic Southeastern communities initially encountered by Europeans were rank-ordered social systems while, at the same time, I can deny that they were chiefdom polities in the above dominance-based orthodox sense. This is not too difficult since I have already noted in Chapters 2 and 3 that social hierarchies can embody both dominance and enabling tendencies and that when the latter tendency prevails, the rank ordering is constituted as an *enabling hierarchy*; when the former tendency prevails, it is constituted as a *dominance hierarchy*. Not surprisingly, it is this latter type of hierarchy—the dominance hierarchy—that informs the orthodox chiefdom perspective. I say “not surprisingly” because, of course, the factious polities of Europe are classic examples of communities based firmly on the notion that social powers are *powers-over the actions of others*, and this entails the formation of dominance hierarchies. Indeed, these were likely the only types explicitly known and experienced by the Spanish invaders, and of course, their own spheres of social activities were governed by precisely this type of organization. Hence, it would be a wonder if they had not projected this familiar social structure of their own sociality onto the communities that they encountered.

The question this raises is what kind of social property can generate a hierarchy in which dominance relations prevail, and enabling powers are largely subsumed; and inversely, what kind of social property can generate a hierarchy in which differential enabling powers prevail, and dominance powers are subsumed and contingent? I have already suggested that the difference hinges on the particular deontic principle that forms the core of the ethos of the cultural

traditions of a social system, and I have postulated diametrically contradictory principles: autonomy and dominance. Nevertheless, given the importance of these notions for my purposes, I think that what is required at this time is further elucidation and articulation of these two types of hierarchies, as well as a further elaboration of the implications that flow from these two real (as contrasted with “imaginary”) social types. Following this, I present an in-depth critique of one of the more sophisticated theoretical elucidations of the prehistoric and historic communities of the Southeast as dominance-based hierarchical chiefdom polities. It has been presented by Vernon James Knight Jr. (1990). My critique will include recognition that his paper made very important contributions to the understanding by archaeologists of Native North American social structure, in particular his forefronting of filiation and unilateral kinship structures as an alternative to the lineal view of understanding kinship systems of Native North American peoples, a view that, unfortunately, still prevails among North American archaeologists.² Furthermore, his theory enables me to build and present my alternative view of ranking that can be nicely accommodated to the general view of communities as heterarchies based on multiple social structural axes, as expressed in the Complementary Heterarchical Community model, while recognizing some attributes exist that have been identified, up until now, with dominance-based chiefdoms. Picking up on the terminology of the former model, I will postulate a type of rank-ordered complementary heterarchical community that, if it developed, would superficially *mimic* (in the eyes of European foreigners, at least) a dominance-based chiefdom community polity of the type Knight claims actually was characteristic of the Southeast. In my view, however, I consider it to be significantly different structurally. For convenience sake, I will call this type of social formation a *complementary heterarchical chiefdom*. I will then model how

such a community formation could emerge. I will complete the book with an empirical demonstration that such a process is likely to have occurred in the Southeast and is manifested in its prehistoric archaeological record, and I will use the Moundville mortuary record as my primary data set for this demonstration.

Before proceeding, however, I want to make it very clear now that I do not claim that Moundville was a “chiefdom” of this postulated complementary heterarchical community type. In fact, I will argue that it never was a chiefdom, no matter how the latter is characterized. Instead, from its initial establishment, it was a cult sodality heterarchy of the type I have already argued was the case for Cahokia of the American Bottom and for Larson and Orendorf of the Central Illinois Valley region, and by extension for the many other Mississippian-type social systems distributed cross the Midwest and the Southeast during the Late Prehistoric period. In these terms, if and when the complementary heterarchical chiefdom-type emerged, it was an unwitting historical by-product and outcome of the Mississippianization process itself. Therefore, from its initial settlement, the Moundville locale and its immediate environs likely emerged as several regional but arm’s-length first-order cult sodality heterarchies, and these subsequently affiliated and developed into being the sole second-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchy of the region (possibly even achieving third-order standing). However, if representative societies of the postulated complementary heterarchical chiefdom did emerge (and this is only a hypothesis at this point), it would be because the major cult sodality heterarchy of Moundville figured as being the primary sociomaterial condition that could have promoted the transformation (and likely did—although unwittingly) of one or more of the complementary heterarchical communities of this region into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms—likely shortly prior to the Soto entrada of AD 1539-1543. The

ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities of these few emergent complementary heterarchical chiefdoms, if they did emerge, would likely have been among the original autonomous cult sodalities that had affiliated to form this second-order heterarchy that was responsible for the building and using of the Moundville site. Hence, at the time of Moundville's founding, the communities of these autonomous cult sodalities likely conformed structurally to all the other complementary heterarchical communities of the region, what I will refer to as complementary heterarchical tribal communities.

Of course, the purpose of this book is to account for the Mississippianization process, as such. Therefore, it might be legitimately asked why I should undertake recritiquing the dominance-based chiefdom view. My answer is straightforward. The emergence of the dominance-based chiefdom from a preexisting egalitarian tribal or band-type social formation just is the orthodox account of the Mississippianization process.³ Therefore, even though I consider the Mississippianization process as the emergence and development of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy system that left the dual clan-sodality social structural axes (i.e., the deep social structure) of the preexisting complementary heterarchical communities of a region largely unchanged, I recognize that some of the proto-historical and historical empirical patterning of the Southeastern social systems that was on display when the Europeans intervened does require an extra explanation. As noted above, I believe that some of these social systems were already changed or in the process of changing when the Europeans started appearing and that, in effect, the cult sodality heterarchies that were responsible for the great multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes were largely already dissolved or about to dissolve, a point that I make clear in this third case study (and a similar process may have been at work in the Central Mississippi Valley). Therefore, this will stand as a critique of

the account of the Mississippianization process as the outcome of the emergence and proliferation of dominance-based chiefdom polities. I consider the following discussion as more fully refining the earlier distinction I made in Chapters 2 and 3 contrasting dominance and enabling hierarchies (also see Byers 2006a, 124-31).

Social Hierarchies: Dominance and Enabling

The term *hierarchical* as initially used in the title of the *Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model* expressed the standard sense of a differential ranking based on the deontics of dominance and subordination (asymmetrical but reciprocal rights/privileges and duties/obligations). These relations are the basis of a type of social power that is often characterized in *power-over* terms. As such, the agent occupying the higher-ranking position controls, has dominance over—that is, has “power-over” the actions and activities of the agent(s) occupying the lower or subordinate position(s). Of course, typically the agent(s) occupying the dominant position(s) also has(have) control over disproportionately greater material wealth and prestige, as well as the total range of symbolic pragmatic devices (i.e., action warrants) necessary to mediate this greater power, wealth, and prestige in comparison to the subordinate agent(s). This would seem an unproblematic characterization of social power since it is typically defined in these *powers-over* terms (Searle 2010, 145-73). Hence, presupposing this notion of power-over as characteristic of hierarchy is the fundamental core sociocultural constitutive principle of *dominance*, often operating not simply as a collective deontic value but as the *ideal* deontic property for agents and groups to either achieve or inherit, and if possible magnify, while actively avoiding reducing or losing it. And this active valuing and entrenching of dominance often is taken to stimulate strategies by which to counter others from achieving it, thereby sustaining their subordination. Therefore, two

or more agents, or groups, related in these social *power-over* terms constitute a ranked power-over hierarchy; or, as I will now call it, a *dominance hierarchy*. Of course, such dominance hierarchies can be refined and differentiated in terms of particular social spheres of relevance (e.g., political, religious, economic, and so on).

It might be asked, however, if the term *dominance hierarchy* is not simply redundant. After all, it would seem that the term *hierarchy* has the sense of dominance built into it. And indeed, this question of redundancy arises because, typically, social power just is *identified* with power-over. And this is the crux of the matter I want to address. The basic premise underwriting the usage of the term *hierarchy* is that the terms *social power* and *power-over* are essentially synonymous and, therefore, what will be considered primary and natural in hierarchical communities is that social power is valued and respected because it is “power-over” the actions of others, and by extension, “power-over” things and ideas. What else could social power be?

I will argue that, in fact, rather than this being a natural or universal characterization of social power, from a deep cultural historical perspective, it applies to only some types of human societies. This does not deny, therefore, that social power can be actualized as power-over; and in fact, I would argue that it is probably the prevalent deontic characteristic of many current human societies worldwide. But this state of affairs may be a relatively recent condition in the history of the human social world. For example, the principle of agentive dominance, both individual and group, is a critically important cultural value of Euro-American social systems. I will extend this characterization of social power as “power-over” to include many nonmodern social systems, such as the traditional chiefdom systems of West Africa and Polynesia. I will go even further and note that many extant preindustrial societies that anthropologists often refer to as *egalitarian* have dominance “social power-over” as their

core ethos value, and therefore, the social power at the core of these “egalitarian” societies is also power-over. Indeed, as I will argue below in some detail, the primary characteristic of these latter societies and the difference they have with “nonegalitarian” societies is not the absence of dominance at all. Rather, in “egalitarian” societies, the participants and their groupings have active strategies whereby they attempt through leveling mechanisms to balance and roughly equalize the distribution of these dominance-based social powers. For example, families can be “equal”—that is, no family has dominance over another family, but the family structure is constituted as a dominance hierarchy of parents–children, male–females, senior siblings–junior siblings, and so on.

Dominance-based communities, in which social power is identified as and with “powers-over-the-actions-of-others,” are widespread, and I believe that this generalization is noncontentious. However, just because social power as dominance power is a central characteristic of a widespread set of historically known human communities does not mean that social power is to be identified with powers-over. Indeed, despite this current prevalence, I claim that powers-over are not primary but derived social powers. The primary social powers, I will argue, are the powers or capacities of the agent (or group) to act (i.e., simply to transform their intentional behaviors so that they count as the performance of social actions of the different types that they intend). I will term these *primary social powers* simply as *powers-to-act*, and they contrast with the *derived social powers* I have termed *powers-over*, the latter being derived from the former. I consider this “powers-to-act” capacity to be the hallmark of the autonomous social agent or social group, and as such, it is an enabling power. That is, it is a social property that enables the agent/group to behave in such a manner as to constitute that behavior as the type of social action the agent/group intended, and through exercising that

power, bringing about the conditions by which the intentions of the agents are fulfilled and satisfied (and these conditions include any material modifications specified by the representational contents of the intentions governing the form of the behavior), although such achievements are always contingent when they do occur.

What is presupposed here is the emergent behavior/action duality. As I have insisted several times, I take social actions to be emergent phenomena that are generated and constituted by means of symbolic media that manifest the intentions of the agents and the social positions that they occupy when performing them. These symbolic media operate as the sincerity conditions of the agent and/or group. The core of this powers-to-act/powers-over dual claim, then, entails the emergent behavior/action duality. This means that at least two and, more correctly stated, probably at least three categories of powers are in play here, each rooted in and emergent from the other: the neurophysiological powers by which behavioral movements of human agents are possible, the mental powers of intentionality by which the former powers are intentionally instantiated/expressed in behavioral form, and the social powers by which the social action nature of the intentional behavioral form is *constituted*. Social powers, therefore, are constitutive powers manifested in and through symbolic expression—often mediated by material cultural stylistics (i.e., warranting devices). And what these warranting devices as sincerity conditions symbolically express, manifest, and presence are both the relevant social positions (i.e., social structural context and medium) and the relevant action intentions (i.e., the cultural know-how *and* deontic responsibilities) of the agent. Critically important here is to clearly distinguish between social powers and material powers. Material powers are the capacity to make physical changes, and of course, humans have such efficient causal material powers. But social powers are abstract and intangible. They are deontic in

nature and they endow their possessors with rights and duties vis-à-vis things, ideas, and people. Having or not having certain deontic powers makes a real difference in social affairs, but these differences are realized only in our collective understanding. To try to treat social power in terms of material power is extremely reductionist. This is not to claim that social power has no material transformative consequence. It simply says that this consequence is always mediated by our symbolic capacity to express our intentions and social positions and, via expressing our rights over the actions of X, we can get X to act and make, via his/her efficient causal powers, material changes to the tangible world that X would otherwise not have done. I am saying that having such control over the actions of others is an attribute specific to the social structure of dominance-based societies.

Therefore, the key difference between enabling social powers (i.e., powers-to-act) and dominance social powers (i.e., powers-over the acts of others), is not whether one is a material power and the other a social power, since both are social powers, but whether the intentional exercising of the neurophysiological or efficient material powers is carried out by an autonomous social agent (i.e., one who has discretionary responsibility for the actions he/she performs) or by a subordinate social agent (i.e., one who does not have discretionary responsibility for the social actions he/she performs but does have discretionary responsibility for intentionally exercising his/her neurophysiological material powers by way of performing the social actions). That is, how the difference between these two social powers works is that the autonomous agent maintains discretionary control over exercising his/her powers-to-act as these are a constitutive part of the autonomous position that he/she occupies, while in strong contrast, the subordinate agent does not have discretionary control over these powers-to-act. Rather, he/she/they must receive, derive, or “borrow” them from the dominant agent to whom he/she/

they are responsible. It is because the latter agent has discretionary control of the powers-to-act that the former, subordinate agent(s) must “borrow” that constitutes their subordination, a “borrowing” that is usually effected through the occupant of the dominant position ordering the occupant(s) of the subordinate position to act. Finally, since powers-to-act are the primary social powers, they can exist independently of powers-over. However, since powers-over are derived social powers, they are parasitic on powers-to-act. That is, “powers-over” cannot exist independently of “powers-to-act.” Since we are speaking of social powers, it follows that there can be existent societies in which only powers-to-act exist (i.e., powers-over do not exist), and I have termed these *autonomist societies*. But all existent dominance societies also include powers-to-act as the primary social powers since, without these powers-to-act, the occupants in dominance positions cannot exercise this power-over except through the expressive medium of speech acts, and all these are performed in virtue of the occupants having powers-to-act. Of course, as I also noted earlier, even these powers-to-act require sincerity conditions, in the form of material cultural warranting devices, to make their speech utterances count as orders, directives, commands, commissives, and declaratives. This warranting imperative is the basis of material cultural style, as I argued in previous chapters.

Illustrative Example

Dominance Hierarchy. It might be useful first to specify how a dominance hierarchy is actually articulated in a dominance-based social system and then contrast it with how an enabling hierarchy is articulated in an autonomy-based or, as I will call it, an *autonomist society*. How does a dominance hierarchy work? Imagine that the social context is a traditional English “landed-estate,” a classic example of a dominance-based social system. The local estate owner,

the landlord, is planning for a large banquet of invited guests, the local gentry, and he hires a person who is locally reputed to be a skillful “killer of game animals” in order to kill some animals to serve at the banquet. The landlord might know him personally as “Jim the Poacher.” However, he may hire him anyway because Jim is locally notorious as the “best poacher” (i.e., as the most skilled game animal tracker, trapper, and killer)—albeit, everyone knows he does all this without hunting warrants or licences. The landlord—pressed because of the upcoming banquet and his own gamekeeper steward’s illness—hires him, despite his unsavory social status, for his skills in animal or game predation. In this instance, the hiring event constitutes a social relation—a deontic relation of asymmetrical rights and duties, in which the landlord occupies the dominant position of landlord-employer, and “Jim the Poacher” acts in his capacity as employee (temporary). Therefore, the landlord, as the legal owner of the estate and the employer, has the discretionary right to direct (i.e., command) the hired agent to exercise his well-known predatory behavioral competencies. In exercising these competencies under the direction of the landlord, Jim “the Poacher” actually counts as Jim “the (temporary) Gamekeeper.” More accurately, the animal predation that Jim intentionally performs counts as a hunting, and not as a poaching, event. This is so because the landlord has discretionary control of the powers-to-act that the hired man needs to legitimately exercise his predatory intentions. If this same person, Jim, were not in a state of being hired while doing the same predatory behavior, the social nature of his behavior would be that of poaching, and Jim would be a poacher (i.e., doing what poachers do). It is notable that the landlord does not have control over Jim’s natural capacity to perform the intentional behavior. That is, Jim has discretionary responsibility for his predatory behavior and the competence that he is exercising in doing this since he does it intentionally. But the landlord

has discretionary control over the exercise of the powers-to-act that constitute such predatory behaviors as hunting. Of course, he also has exclusive control over the animals and their properties that the temporary gamekeeper procured. That is, Jim, as the hired man, is dependent on, subordinate to, the landlord's *orders* so that he can legitimately exercise his predatory know-how skills and competency, thereby transforming this behavior into the social act of hunting. Hence, being the dependent, he is the subordinate in this sphere of activity. The landlord, having discretionary control over the powers-to-act that Jim requires, is dominant in this sphere of activity—a sphere that includes all the predatory behavior that is carried out on the landlord's exclusive territories, his estate.

The above dominance/subordinate relation is the core of the dominance hierarchy. This type of hierarchy is constituted by a systematic structural bifurcation of the relevant deontic rights and duties of action—that is, the social powers-to-act—such that the rights and privileges are permanently allocated to the higher social position while the structural residue, the duties and obligations, remain as the deontic contents of the lower or subordinate social position. Hence, the two positions are asymmetrically locked into a structural relation in which the occupant of the higher position is dominant, and only when this superior exercises these deontic rights and privileges, for example, by ordering or giving permission to the subordinate to act, can the subordinate then behave so as to fulfill his/her duties. This dominance hierarchy can be thought of as the upward displacement of the social warranting powers-to-act. As illustrated above, since the landlord is the “superior” in virtue of occupying this dominant position and, thereby having ownership-based *discretionary control* of these warranting powers-to-act, the gamekeeper (whether the permanent steward or the temporary employee) is the subordinate since he/she is dependent on the orders of the former

to exercise his/her competency with regard to hunting and thereby fulfill his/her socially constituted duties.

Enabling Hierarchy. Now it becomes fairly easy to characterize an enabling hierarchy since an enabling hierarchy mimics a dominance hierarchy in being a set of interrelated positions that differ in terms of social powers; but these are integrated or nonbifurcated positions at every level. By this I mean that the occupant of each ranked social position retains discretionary control over the powers-to-act appropriate to and constitutive of that ranked position. What is important, therefore, is that each level consists of powers-to-act that, however, are substantively differentiated in that each set of social powers constitutes different types of actions. These are specialized positions. The occupants of each ranked position are responsible to perform the actions particular to that position. This is basically how I have defined autonomy. Since discretionary control of the power-to-act, the warranting right, is fused with the position, and this position normally has no displaced social powers, the agent occupying the position has all the relevant social powers-to-act necessary to perform at his/her discretion the set of activities proper to that position—but also he/she has *no* social powers-over the actions of others. However, there is one important proviso. As I noted when outlining the relative autonomy of the clan-sodality duality, I noted that each autonomous group respected the autonomy of the other but that both groups had responsibility to the community as a totality to activate their exclusive rights and obligations. This is because not to do so would entail abrogating their responsibility by intervening in the autonomy of the community and its members, reducing their ability to live a fully autonomous life. For this reason, as I noted earlier, the autonomy of a sodality must not be identified with the notion of independence. Even when the major context of a sodality's activities might be in a heterarchy locale that could be miles from

the territorial zone where its community acted as the primary custodian, the sodality would generally behave in a manner that would not endanger the autonomy of its community; that is, it would not act in a manner that would be against the interest of its community.

In effect, the enabling hierarchy is a vertical structuring of differential and usually specialized types of powers-to-act, and the *raison d'être* of an enabling hierarchy is to structure the specialized tasks of each level that need to be integrated for a collective activity to occur. The warrior's exercising the social powers enabling him to attack enemy warriors hinges on the war chief's social powers to *declare and thereby constitute the sincerity conditions* enabling engagement in battle activity to occur so that the warriors can then, at their own discretion, exercise their powers-to-act and engage in battle. The deaths that occur are the result of courageous lethal sacrifices and not cowardly murders, even though both actions actually have the same objective conditions of satisfaction (i.e., the killing of the enemy). And even though the outcome of this engagement can be very deadly, the enemy warriors do not stand in social dominant/subordinate relations to each other. That is, each warrior is responsible for his actions and, in fact, the winning warrior does not achieve this status by simply physically overpowering the other warrior but by doing so in accordance with the warrior's constitutive code of battle. In this code, the winner may derive the greatest reward by choosing to eschew killing the warrior he has physically bested, and instead, he retreats or releases the defeated warrior and effectively challenges the loser to rescue his own reputation and demonstrate his autonomy by seeking revenge.

Critical Discussion

It is noticeable in the above narration of the war chief's action that I have carefully used the word *declare* and not *order* when

characterizing the form of speech act performed by the war chief in order to instigate the battle, while I used the word *order* and not *declare* when characterizing the landlord's form of speech to instigate the hired man's game killing. An order is a form of speech act that is "at home" in a dominance-based community since as a directive it entails that a subordinate, this being the person or agent to whom the order is directed, in hearing/receiving the order, is now authorized and obligated to perform the requisite behavior (i.e., he/she has the obligation imposed on her/him to obey). And, of course, in virtue of behaving on a superior's order, his/her behavior counts as the social action so ordered and he/she can be described as an obedient soldier—even a brave soldier if he/she exceeds traditional expectations. That is, we could say that the soldier as a subordinate is "obeying the order," and the responsibility for the success or failure of the event so ordered (e.g., killing other humans) rests on the person in authority—the general.

However, none of this description could be properly given in characterizing, for example, the oral communication that a war chief performs with regard to the group of warriors he leads. This is because these two parties relate in an enabling hierarchy; that is, the war party is a heterarchy structured as an enabling hierarchy. Hence, there is a real social difference between soldiers and warriors, and this difference constitutes the two social systems, an army and a war party, as diametrically different in the way the social powers-to-act are structurally distributed. In the case of the warrior-war chief structural relation of the war party, the ranking chief makes an oral declaration that constitutes the sincerity condition or context that specifies that there is a warranted state of aggression that the party of warriors is now in vis-à-vis the opposite party of warriors. And this declaration enables the party to go to battle—that is, they undertake a collective activity or engagement termed

a *battle*—and the deaths that ensue are battle deaths or sacrifices, not murders. Since this declaration (not order) of battle constitutes the state it describes, it warrants the warriors as autonomous agents to exercise their discretionary powers-to-act-as-warriors. Some of them may choose not to exercise their discretionary powers-to-act as warriors; and if so, they could not be characterized as “disobeying” since these discretionary powers-to-act are retained by the hearers-of-the-declaration.

That is, in enabling hierarchies, acting is always at the discretion of the autonomous agent. One may be faulted for not acting when the conditions were declared, but this faulting is quite different from the faulting of the soldier who does not act when ordered. The warrior might lose esteem and be shamed, although he normally would be able to give very sound reasons for not acting (e.g., he had a dream of danger the night before and his custodial guardian warned him to withdraw from the battle), but the soldier would likely be accused of mutiny. This preservation of an integrated system of powers-to-act is why the collective practices of autonomist heterarchies require consensual decision making. Consensus establishes the collective agreement such that when the leader performs the declaration, all those who consented recognize that this declaration generates the warranting social context (i.e., the sincerity conditions) by which they, as autonomous agents, are enabled (not ordered) to exercise their social powers, their position-intrinsic powers-to-act. The leader does not order; the warriors do not obey. Rather, they act together in accordance with a prior consensual (collective) agreement. Of course, once autonomous parties of a heterarchy structured as an enabling hierarchy have committed to a given collective task through the process of consensual agreement, the group goes into the tactical mode and its chosen leadership can communicate down the enabling hierarchy in a manner that *appears like or mimics* the

chain-of-command manner of a dominance hierarchy. However, this is only surface appearance. Its real purpose and effect is to coordinate and focus the efforts of multiple individuals so as to enable them to achieve their collective goal.

In dominance hierarchies, in contrast, discretionary power-over resides permanently with the position of “commander,” and the communicative acts that the latter performs as “commander” are *orders*, *commands*, *directives*, and the like, and these directive speech acts constitute the symbolic pragmatic framework, the sincerity condition, that transforms the behaviors of the speaker into orders. The recipients of the orders recognize these as their obligations to perform the types of behaviors that the agent occupying the dominant position ordered, and in obeying the order, the subordinates transform their killing behaviors into the social actions we term *military battle*. Both the formation of the social action intentions and the exercise of these intentions in the issuing of the orders are pretty well at the sole discretion of the commander, and the recipients of the commands are obligated thereby to act on them—whether or not they personally want to do so. That is, in acting, they are always obeying the commander (i.e., it is their duty to do so), and as I noted above, if they do not act in accordance with the command, then they are performing another type of social action—a mutiny. In an enabling hierarchy, however, the communicative acts are enabling acts, such as declarative announcements, suggestions, “revealings-of-the-truth,” agreements, promises, and so on, generated in order to coordinate the previously and consensually agreed-upon action plans of the collective autonomous agents (M. E. Smith 1983, 37-38). Hence, the participants still retain the discretionary responsibility for the social action nature of their behaviors.

The Egalitarian/Nonegalitarian Distinction

Rather than contrasting individual standings in social systems, whether modern, historic, or prehistoric, in terms of dominance and autonomy, as I have just done, archaeologists usually contrast them in terms of inequality and equality or, when applied to total social systems, nonegalitarian (e.g., chiefdom polities) as contrasted to egalitarian (e.g., tribes and bands). Since, typically, nonegalitarian communities are identified with dominance powers, and egalitarian communities are not (i.e., “equality” and being “egalitarian” are assumed to be the core value and, therefore, no one has powers-over others), the result is not simply to identify hierarchy with nonegalitarian societies but to deny that hierarchy is even possible in egalitarian societies. However, when it is shown that even the most typical “egalitarian” society has differential ranking of some sort (e.g., age seniority, gender differentiation, expertise ranking, and so on) and this equates with powers-over or dominance, it usually is admitted that the notions “egalitarian” and “nonegalitarian” do not refer to mutually exclusive social entities but simply to social entities that differentiate in terms of a distribution of dominance-based social powers. Hence, these different “types” of societies are not really qualitatively distinct but simply differentiated in the distribution of dominance such that nonegalitarian social systems have a relatively concentrated, small number of ranking positions monopolizing powers-over, and egalitarian social systems have the same powers-over distributed across a relatively large number of positions that stand to each other as a relatively balanced (i.e., equal) system of powers-over positions.

Now the recognition that communities that display attributes of “equality” still have differential ranking and the assumption that all ranking is simply vertically differentiated social powers-over leads to the conclusion that there is no difference in kind between

Mississippian social systems, as conceptualized under the orthodox “chiefdom polity” model and the historic communities of the Eastern Woodland that are typically treated as the epitome of “egalitarianism,” such as the Iroquois in the Northeast and the Creek in the Southeast. For example, Adam King (2006, 180) quite clearly expresses this perspective when he claims that ultimately the Mississippian “chiefdom” social systems were essentially of the same order as the historic Creek and Chickasaw communities and that, as he sees them, they constituted the structural continuity of the Mississippian chiefdom, simply manifesting a change in political strategy from the “network” person-to-person political strategy to the “corporate” group-to-group political strategy. Hence, the difference between the two was superficial while the core structure remained the same. “If we separate the means used to create and justify Native southeastern social formations from the basic organizational elements of these formations . . . Mississippian and historic Indian groups were connected by more than time” (2006, 195). I believe that he expresses here a view that pervades the interpretation of the Mississippian assemblage. In this view, social power just is dominance power, and the only differences between the Mississippian and the later historic social systems were nonessential (i.e., merely surface differences), a matter of shifts in political and social strategies. Needless to say, I quite disagree with this view, and this discussion on enabling and dominance hierarchies as essentially different types grounds my disagreement.

That is, as the above quotation of King’s comment on the continuity of southeastern prehistoric chiefdoms and southeastern historic “tribes” has nicely illustrated, communities or societies assessed in terms of being egalitarian or nonegalitarian, or somewhere between, can be taken to share a common social power attribute—dominance—and they are differentially defined not in

terms of a dichotomy ($\uparrow$) of inequality (or nonegalitarianism) and equality (or egalitarianism) but in terms of a continuum ($\leftrightarrow$). Indeed, the intelligibility underwriting this continuum model just is the assumption that social powers are powers-over. Hence, I would suggest that the orthodox chiefdom model presupposes just this type of differentially distributed dominance-based social formation; and this means that, for Mississippianists, there is, in fact, no significant qualitative difference as such between chiefdoms and tribes defined in such dominance power terms. Indeed, this also means that all these social systems, whether “egalitarian” or “nonegalitarian” are treated as polities, each having its exclusive territory that it must actively defend. There is only a graded difference of how dominance powers are distributed, and this distribution can be quite unstable such that today’s “egalitarian tribe” might well become tomorrow’s “nonegalitarian chiefdom.”⁴ However, this is not a reciprocating social formation. That is, while today’s “tribe” (egalitarian) might become tomorrow’s “chiefdom” (nonegalitarian), once the centralized powers-over distribution emerges to form the latter, it is unlikely that a reverse will occur such that “egalitarian” tribes reemerge. Instead, a new form of cyclic instability occurs, one in which today’s great chiefdom becomes transformatively fractured into tomorrow’s many small chiefdoms. This fractured state will then likely transform through conquest by the exercise of powers-over so that the many small chiefdoms once more become contingently fused into a large unstable chiefdom, and so on.

But this immediately raises an important question—namely, what is the mechanism that governs the distribution of dominance power such that its distribution, not its existence—its existence being a reproduced and permanent structural characteristic of these societies—can be modified possibly from one extreme where its concentration is manifested across the institutional structures of a society to

the other where it appears to be (almost) nonexistent? Typically, the mechanism is not treated as a single phenomenon but several, and in the anthropological literature they are referred to categorically as *leveling mechanisms*. However, what is central here is that, in fact, the core social property that the existence of leveling mechanisms presupposes just is the cultural recognition of dominance power in the relevant social context. That is, what is being leveled or failing to be leveled is dominance or powers-over; and being leveled or redistributed, the social reality of “powers-over” dominance is constantly reproduced.

Now it should be clear from my earlier discussion that I consider the Mapuche to have a dominance-based social system, despite their practicing an immanentist cosmology with an ethos that recognizes a form of custodial land usufruct. But I also noted that this was an exclusive and not inclusive custodial land or territorial usufruct; and I argued that the critical factor here was the emergence of dominance in the discretionary control of the distribution of marriageable females from other exogamous lineages among the males of the junior generation of the patrilineage, and this control was effected exclusively by the senior generation males of an *exogamous patrilineage*. This generated an exogamous patrilineal social system based on polygyny that was dominated by the senior males, and this dominance often translated into a monopolization of marriageable females by the older men—at the cost, of course, to both women and men of the junior age-grade. At the same time, I noted that, although any given region was dominated by a patrilineage that controlled the custodial land usufruct so as to largely prevent unwanted interlopers (i.e., squatters), the notion of custodial land usufruct was very much alive and practiced so that a man had the discretion to become the custodian of land usufruct if there was any land not being used by others. This social fact, of course, would be

a leveling mechanism countering the dominance structuring of the community. Nevertheless, this discretion (i.e., a sort of autonomy) was severely constrained since the junior males and females lacked autonomy in regard to marriage. Hence, once discretionary control over powers-to-act becomes displaced as described above, we can say that (1) the total society shifts into being a *categorically different type of social system*, a dominance-based social system, and (2) it is qualitatively different from a social system in which discretionary control over powers-to-act is integrated with the range of social positions that generate the social relations that constitute the community.

In short, while the nonegalitarian/egalitarian distinction is a legitimate basis for classifying many social systems (i.e., dominance-based social systems), it does not constitute a dichotomy (↑) but a continuum (↔); and what it is a continuum of is dominance power ranging between balanced (dispersed) to radically imbalanced (concentrated). Hence, an egalitarian community is one in which the principle of dominance is very much alive and sustained there by constraining or absenting the principle of autonomy; but it is in a state of relative balance, and this means that groups in a community maintain a relative balance of their respective powers-over (e.g., families are equal but every family is structured by age/gender dominance). The major component groups of the social system, therefore, achieve a contingent or unstable autonomy by balancing the powers-over they have with respect to each other. This is a contingent state of affairs since all parties actively attempt to enhance and expand their powers-over and, if some are successful, then the balance is broken; and when this occurs, quite rigid dominance hierarchies can quickly emerge and prevail.

What I am suggesting, of course, is that there is a very real and essential qualitative difference between dominance-based and autonomy-based societies, and I will now call the latter *autonomist*

societies. The two types stand to each other as dichotomously and not continuously differentiated. In social systems where complementary heterarchical communities and mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies are characteristic, intracommunity/heterarchy relations are based on autonomy—rather than gravity-well social fields impelling obedience and subordination, magnetic social fields of attraction enabling autonomy prevail. Of course, dominance can emerge; but this is always a contingent and strategic state of affairs since, as I noted above, it is normally the result of consensus among autonomous parties and serves their collective interests as a *tactical posture* by which to enhance success of a collective endeavor through cooperative coordination. When the project is completed, the contingently strategic state of dominance, which can be more correctly characterized as the conditional and limited absencing of autonomy, is dissolved, and the reemergence and representing of autonomy occurs.

Hence, treating dominance and autonomy as contrasting properties constitutes a real dichotomy. Either a community is autonomy-based in nature or it is dominance-based in nature. Of course, a basic position of this book has been the claim that traditional Native North American communities, historic and prehistoric, are and were autonomist in nature—at least those that occupied the Eastern Woodlands and, also, in all likelihood, the whole zone north of Mexico and east of the Rockies. It is a mistake then to characterize and analyze these communities in terms of the premises underwriting the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum. Rather they should be treated as existing independently of this continuum—that is, as autonomist communities, those based on the core deontic principle of autonomy in the sense that to be autonomous is to have discretionary responsibility for one's actions and to be socially recognized as having such discretionary responsibility. I have also argued that, in this context, autonomy and ranking are not contradictory since,

as I noted above, while ranking would be expected in any moderately complex social system, in virtue of autonomy as the key core collective value, the ranking of social positions that necessarily emerges does not translate into relations of dominance.

This discussion of enabling and dominance hierarchies, and the real distinction between the egalitarian↔nonegalitarian continuum and the dominance ↑ autonomist dichotomy, the former being the characteristic position of the proponents of the Chiefdom Polity model, while the latter underwrites my alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models, has now prepared the theoretical background for me to summarize and critique the Chiefdom Polity model (i.e., the chiefdom view) as it has been applied to the Southeast Mississippian social systems, and retrospectively, to the rest of the social systems referred to as Mississippian in nature, including and particularly Cahokia itself.

The Exogamous Ranked Clan Chiefdom Model

This theoretical model of the Late Prehistoric and Proto-Historic period communities of the Southeast that characterizes these as nonegalitarian, dominance-based chiefdom polities has been ably presented by Vernon James Knight Jr. (1990, 3). I believe that most archaeologists interested in the Mississippian social system have to one degree or another accepted this theory as the framework for their interpretations of the particular regional Mississippian centers and their associated settlement patterns that they have addressed. Knight uses the Timucua social system of northern Florida to serve as his analogical source for his purpose of characterizing a “paramount chiefdom” system. He extends this theoretical interpretation to the historic Natchez system of the lower Mississippi Valley, as well as several others; and, most importantly for my purposes, he has extended this overall framework to interpret Moundville as

a “paramount chiefdom” (Knight 1998, 59-60; 1997, 229-32, 235-38, 243; Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 14, 17-18). There can be little doubt that his 1990 paper construing the nature of the Mississippian social systems (both prehistoric and historic) marked a significant and widely influential theoretical milestone.⁵ I can agree with an important part of the foundational position that Knight has explicated in this paper. He specifically denies the relevance of using standard models of chiefdoms, such as those based on the Polynesian ramage or endogamous conical clan system, to analogically ground his notion of the Southeastern chiefdoms. Following Paul Kirchhoff (1959, 262) in this regard, he claims that “nowhere east of the Rocky Mountains is there to be found an ethnographic example of a society organized by non-exogamous corporate cognatic descent groups showing the developed, genealogically based internal ranking pattern of ramage. Nor, for that matter, is there anything resembling Sahlin’s contrasting descent-line type” (Knight 1990, 5). Instead, his theoretical construction postulates what he calls a system of *exogamous ranked clans* (1990, 3). This argues that the Southeastern communities were organized as exogamous ranked *unilateral*—not unilineal—clans grouped into moieties that were also ranked, and by retrofitting this view, it applies to the prehistoric communities of the region as well. This ranking was based on the collective recognition, even if only implicitly realized, that one moiety was dominant over or was treated as superior to the other.

Therefore, his model is particularly grounded on both treating social power as dominance power and the kinship-based filiation↕descent dichotomy. While the former “dominance power” notion is taken for granted, the latter filiation↕descent dichotomy, and why it is a dichotomy, is carefully specified. By kinship filiation he means living kin linked as consanguines into residential kin groups of different scales (e.g., nuclear to extended families) that were further

affiliated into clans. He specifically adds that, for Native North American communities east of the Rockies, consanguineal filiation was unilateral. Hence, if ties of living filiation were through females (i.e., the mother) then the units were matrilaterally related, and the clan system of the community was constituted as an exogamous matrilateral clan system; if related through the father, it was a patrilateral clan system. As he put it, unilateral clans “were not descent groups; descent was absent in the ordinary sense of recognizing relationship by genealogical ties to an ancestor No such ancestors were recognized as essential to the clan organization. Consequently, genealogies were unnecessary and were unelaborated except on the limited scale of the egocentric, bilateral reckoning of near kin” (1990, 5).

I take Knight to be saying that kinship filiation occurs when people emphasize kin relations traced through the living and still-remembered deceased and not the (unknown) dead. If this is the case, I think that it is very germane to note that while many archaeologists cite Knight’s 1990 paper, they seem to ignore this central point that he is making—namely, the difference between unilateral and unilineal kinship. This is strange since in his model the emergence of the Southeastern chiefdom, as such, resulted from the chiefly families, and these families alone, abandoning *unilateral filiation* and exclusively embracing and tracing *unilineal descent relations* to their own apical ancestors, while the rest of the community continued the traditional kinship principle and practice of unilateral filiation. I will return to this point later.

The Hidatsa would be a good historical illustration of the cultural practice of unilateral filiation since these groupings were based on filiation through the mother, thereby constituting the community as matrilateral and the matriclans as exogamous. Indeed, the Hidatsa would appear to conform and illustrate Kirchhoff’s (1959, 261-62, 269) view of the typical system of exogamous clans based on filiation

since he also defined the social nature of these communities as *equalitarian*, which is the term he favored and used to speak of this basic or core property of these exogamous clan-based communities. But their “equalitarian” nature is precisely where Knight takes strong issue with Kirchhoff. For Knight the essential principle underwriting this exogamous clan system was not “equalitarian” but *inequality*. That is, while he agrees with Kirchhoff—namely, that most or likely all, historic communities east of the Rockies were constituted as exogamous unilateral clan/moiety systems (and he projected this claim into prehistory to argue that the emergence of the prehistoric Mississippian chiefdom just was the abandonment of filiation by the leading unilateral family and its embracing of unilineal descent i.e., constituting chiefly *unilineages*), he disagrees with Kirchhoff’s further claim that they had an “equalitarian” nature. Instead, Knight insists that they were the opposite (i.e., “nonequalitarian,” or as he termed it, *nonegalitarian*). This was because these unilateral exogamous clan/moiety social systems were based on *ranked moieties* (i.e., dominance-based ranking). It is his claim that under appropriate conditions, this intrinsic inequality of moieties was the basis for generating hierarchies of ranked clans and, since he specifically claims these stood to each other in terms of superiority–inferiority, then these would be dominance hierarchies as I have defined this notion.

One division was believed to be superior to the other, and we find this feature even in the most egalitarian of the societies under review. Such a ranking was naturally transposed to the clans constituting the dual division, so that frequently these two were accorded definite ranks, forming a graded *hierarchy of clans*. Moreover, the notion of marked oppositions in character among the exogamous groups—the one warlike, the other peaceful, the one superior, the other inferior—extending, as among

the Chickasaw, to ideas about specific customs, lifeways, and mannerisms of the different clans, is the very antithesis of an egalitarian ethic. It is the spirit of caste.” (1990, 6, emphasis added)

Since moieties stand to each other as “nonequal,” this stance ramifies as ranking of the clans grouped under each moiety. Thus, the highest ranking clan of the dominant moiety becomes what he refers to as the *royal clan*. He then postulates the critical principled transformation that generated the Southeastern chiefdom. This was when the extended consanguineal *unilateral* family of the chief of the ranking clan came to be encapsulated as a *descent group* within its unilateral clan through successfully appropriating the principle of *descent* exclusively for itself. Since this transformation is critical to his theorizing the emergence of the chiefdom characteristic of the Southeast and of the Mississippian period in general, it calls for an extended quotation.

The ranking clan now became a royal clan, its leading family a royal family. Head chiefship crystallized in a semideified *hereditary line*, and nobility was created on the principle of genealogical proximity to that line. There was formed the well-known cone-shaped genealogy but here *restricted to a few stipulated degrees of genealogical proximity from the paramount*. This genealogy was specifically and only an aristocratic organization that provided a framework for the inheritance of noble statuses; beyond its limited purposes the [unilateral] clan system was in full effect as the dominant organization. The nobles, having emerged through the exaltation of exogamous totemic groups, retained their exogamy even though that institution compelled their marriage with commoners and, for the noble males disinherited their

children. It would therefore seem remarkable that the hereditary elite did not eventually shed this burden and become endogamous. (1990, 18, emphasis added)

Hence, a unilineal descent system emerged, but it was strictly contained or encapsulated. The ranking chiefly family of the “royal clan” along with four bilateral collateral *lines* constituted the singular lineage component of the total community, while the rest of the community retained its unilateral/filiation kinship structure.

This strikes me as a very crucial claim. That is, this controlled transformation that constituted the new social reality required not only that all the other ranked and “nonroyal” clans retain the principle of filiation and continue as unilateral social units but also that the rest of the families of the “royal clan” retain this principle of unilateral filiation. Therefore, the “royal” family and its four collateral lineal families exclusively monopolized the genealogical principle of unilineal descent, thereby generating “specifically and only an aristocratic organization that provided a framework for the inheritance of noble statuses,” and “beyond its limited purposes” the unilateral clan system was in full effect as the primary organization. He claims that this encapsulation of the chiefly family and its collaterals made “the emergence of social stratification” possible, resulting “in a common pattern of hereditary chiefship incorporated within the ancient indigenous exogamous clan system” (Knight 1990, 3). He adds that, if he is correct in his claim, then he has established the existence of “an organizational path to complexity that is at the moment undocumented in general ethnology.”

Critical Discussion

If he is right, then indeed he has established a theory of how social complexity emerged that is currently undocumented, and given the multiple citations of this paper in the Mississippian archaeological

literature, many archaeologists would appear to agree. However, I think that the theory of this model is seriously flawed, and in a sense, the rest of this book is directed to grounding my claim and presenting an alternative that can be treated as auxiliary to the Complementary Heterarchical Community model and its associated Cult Sodality Heterarchy model.

Why do I think it is flawed? There are two specific criticisms that I will make. The first, or what I term the *Nonegalitarian–Egalitarian Critique*, is the more basic in that it addresses the validity of anchoring the model on the notion that dominance was the deep structural nature of the exogamous unilateral clan/moiety system. The second, or what I call the *Chiefly Lineage Critique*, is more of an internal but equally important critique and critically assesses the plausibility of the above theoretical claim that a *unilateral* ranked exogamous clan system was able to encapsulate a “chiefly lineage” within the wider unilateral “royal clan” while retaining its traditional unilateral structure. Notice, in this construal, when the unilateral chiefly family plus its immediate collaterals eschew filiation and embrace descent, thereby transforming into the “royal” chiefly and aristocratic lineages, not only do the other “nonroyal” clans of the community retain their social character as exogamous unilateral clans—now dominated by the chiefly lineage and its aristocratic collateral lineages—but the “nonchiefly” or “nonaristocratic” families of the “royal clan” also remain unilateral and are no less dominated by their own “royal kin” as are the rest of the non-“royal” clans. That is, the kin-by-filiation/kin-by-descent division crosscuts the “royal clan” itself. This is indeed a unique social structural division, and, as I elaborate below, I find it radically implausible.

1. *The Nonegalitarian–Egalitarian Critique.* Knight targets Kirchhoff’s commitment to the egalitarian-like ethos of the unilateral clan/moiety system, or as Kirchhoff refers to it, the *equalitarian* ethos.

This is because Knight sees it as creating a significant problem for reconstructing the prehistory of the Southeastern sector of Eastern North America. If left unchallenged, such “equalitarianism” constitutes the unilateral clan system as an “evolutionary blind alley”; that is, it would make the evolution of complexity impossible (1990, 5). Of course, he takes for granted that this “equalitarianism” could not have been the case since, based on the current knowledge extrapolated from the historic documents discussed earlier and given these historical facts that dominance-based chiefdoms were present when the Europeans arrived, the emergence of overt or centralized dominance must have occurred in this region well before their arrival. This is because the evidence of such an emergence is patently all around. The 500-year depth of the Mississippian archaeological record just is that evidence. In effect, it displays most of the empirical patterning that, based on the historical documentation, he claims was intrinsic to the communities when the Spaniards encountered them and which they witnessed as being dominance-based chiefdom polities of the standard sort as recognized in the anthropological literature.

Now, it is very germane to note that this “evolutionary blind alley” view is precisely Kirchhoff’s primary point in his seminal 1959 essay. That is, Kirchhoff also believed that the exogamous “equalitarian” unilateral clan system was an evolutionary “dead end,” just as Knight purports it to be. Therefore, they agree on this. Indeed, the point of Kirchhoff’s paper was, in fact, to claim that “equalitarianism” would necessarily have to be overcome, subsumed, permanently absented if, in general evolutionary terms, the human community was to evolve to greater complexity and “ultimately” achieve the standing of a state system, a civilization. This is why Kirchhoff pushes on and analyzes the contrasting conical clan system—which he sees as manifesting the type of dominance structure (i.e., “nonequalitarianism”) that he

believes the evolution of social complexity requires. For him social complexity entails inequality (i.e., dominance-based relations); and communities in which kinship plays a central role can achieve this break from the “equalitarian” roots *only if* the principle of genealogical descent emerges (i.e., relative dominance determined by genealogical distance from an apical ancestor).

Therefore, Knight and Kirchhoff are in agreement that “equalitarianism” constitutes an evolutionary “dead end.” But, while accepting that Kirchhoff was correct to argue that filiation was the kinship principle of the exogamous unilateral clan systems east of the Rockies, Knight claims that Kirchhoff’s additional claim that it was “equalitarian” must be wrong. Given the “dead end” nature of *equalitarianism* (in Kirchhoff’s terms) or *egalitarianism* (in Knight’s terms), there would be no time for an exogamous unilateral clan system to break from this dead-end evolutionary trajectory to suddenly emerge as a dominance-based nonegalitarian system unless, as Knight asserts, it must be that the recognized differential valuation of the moieties as one being “superior” to the other, which he claimed was intrinsic even when in an “equalitarian” status, was the equivalent to differential distribution of dominance powers. Therefore, the empirical patterning of economic equality of the typical historical Native North American exogamous unilateral clan/moiety community, which Kirchhoff claimed was an important condition expressing this “equalitarianism,” simply masked a deep structural condition of intermoiety dominance/subordination and, by extension, interclan dominance (i.e., nonegalitarianism). Hence, for Knight, under some conditions, this deep structural nonegalitarianism—largely suppressed by superficial means—could *rapidly* emerge and overwhelm the apparent or *surface equality* of the community, thereby transforming it from an “equalitarian” into a ranked chiefdom polity having despotic powers endowed on what was now an

inherited chief. This deep structural precondition of dominant/subordinate moiety ranking is specified by Knight when, as quoted above, he notes that the people themselves treated one moiety as “superior to the other, and we find this feature even in the most egalitarian of the societies under review. . . . [such that] the clans constituting the dual division . . . were accorded definite ranks, forming a graded hierarchy of clans. . . . [with] the one warlike, the other peaceful, the one superior, the other inferior—extending . . . to ideas about specific customs, lifeways, and mannerisms of the different clans” (1990, 6).

However, Knight’s alternative claim that “inequality,” or structural dominance, in my terms, is fundamental to the exogamous ranked clan system is highly problematic. In support of his claim, he first addressed the “apparent” state of relative economic equality among the historically known Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, and other Southeastern communities, in this case, by claiming that this state of economic egalitarianism was merely a surface manifestation masking fundamental inequality and that it arose from the catastrophic encounters these historical communities had with the European adventurers, soldiers, and missionaries, particularly the massive impact of the European-introduced disease and other disabling conditions that the communities suffered. “[I]n the interior [of the Southeast], unobserved to history, the decimations of epidemic disease were irreversibly altering the last of the Mississippian chiefdoms” (1990, 9). But these dislocations are treated by him as being economic and not political leveling mechanisms. That is, because of *dire* economic, demographic, and material conditions, such as massive human population kill-offs, and because of community-wide impoverishment, it became manifestly equally impoverished (i.e., economically “egalitarian”) and continued that way for a considerable period, while remaining politically dominance-based and nonegalitarian. Hence, this material state of “equality” was merely a surface appearance (i.e.,

what he termed a *conceptual* equality) since the conditions that disabled the traditional economic distribution that had supported an elite chiefly class did not dissolve the real social structure of ranked inequality. It only suppressed its economic expression in these dire circumstances. The contingent nature of this condition is clearly expressed by Knight when he claims that when these dire conditions of material stress were alleviated, “increasing contrasts in wealth and power [return and] . . . deference and substantial obligation follow” (1990, 20).

Critical Commentary

I do not question the empirical evidence of the early historical circumstances of economic leveling and impoverishment that many of the communities of the Southeast suffered; but I take issue with this interpretation since, in fact, it inverts the relation between dominance-based social power and economic surplus. If this surplus exists as the realization of dominance power, as Knight claims was the case in the pre-Columbian times, then should community-wide economic wealth regress, rather than the dominance-based powers Knight claims would have been in place being used by the elite to reduce economic inequality, these elite would simply exercise these powers-over and transfer an even greater economic burden onto the subordinate classes (or castes, as he hints), thereby retaining their dominance-based social powers and economic surplus, even if the latter was less than previous. That is, while hard times in dominance-based societies may generate the strategy of resource rationing, there is systematic inequality of rationing—or what can be termed *inequitable* distribution of hardship and benefit. In contrast, in an autonomy-based rank-ordered community, there would be *equitable* rationing, and given the degree of economic stress, this can generate not only a leveling of material distribution, it could even generate an

inversion with the higher ranked receiving significantly and proportionally less than the lower ranked. Hence, I disagree with Knight's claim. It is not that the economic leveling historically did not occur in the Southeast. That I do not question. I disagree with the implication of his claim—namely, that this leveling emerged in the Southeast as the result of the dominance-based “ruling chiefs” alleviating the exercise of their dominance powers and enabling the temporary emergence of “equality of economic impoverishment” while maintaining the dominance structure in place through emphasizing it in terms of the ritual priorities and privileges that the elite had. If these social systems were the type he emphasizes they were (i.e., dominance-based chiefdoms), this economic leveling simply would not happen in this way, and of course, the privileges of the elite to dominate ritual performances would be simply more entrenched.

Of course, it is appropriate to ask that if actual economic leveling occurred, and if this could not be the result of dominance-based chiefs self-suppressing their dominant economic rights, then what is the social nature of this economic leveling? I would suggest that it is the manifestation of the principle of equitability being exercised in societies that were (1) based on enabling hierarchies, and (2) were suffering dire circumstances. That is, equitability of distribution is a process that can and normally will generate unequal economic distribution; but since its empirical manifestation is a state of affairs that operates in social systems based on autonomy in which enabling hierarchies prevail, then this *unequal* distribution cannot be *inequitable* distribution. That is, ranked autonomist societies recognize inequalities of all sorts. The point is, in virtue of the principle of autonomy, these cannot be the basis for dominance. Therefore, unequal economic distribution is characteristic in both dominance and autonomist societies. But the differential economic distribution in autonomist societies only mimics empirically, and certainly cannot

match quantitatively, the differential economic distribution that is characteristic of dominance-based communities, particularly those in which leveling mechanisms have failed to maintain some degree of balancing of dominance powers, and this is because it is the result of the principle of inequity. That is, equal distribution is not the same as equitable distribution. In autonomist societies, equity of distribution expresses the principle of proportionality relative to the nature of the agentive responsibilities as defined by the social positions that agents occupy and in respect to the given circumstances. Therefore, in autonomist societies, even in dire circumstances when rationing would need to go into effect, the occupants in lower-ranked positions could not have *inequitable* material conditions imposed on them, as would be necessarily the case in a dominance-based society. This is because inequitably distributing material resources in autonomist communities would make it impossible for some autonomous agents to act responsibly while others could. Furthermore, such inequitable distribution would need to be the result of the actions of those in higher-ranked positions. If they clearly tolerated this inequity—effectively because they would have to have been responsible for it—this would mean that they were reneging on their duties and systematically transgressing the principle of agentive autonomy—except with regard to themselves. In most cases, this situation would not institutionalize into a permanent dominance-based system, but instead, the social system would rapidly dissolve. Hence, while I am certainly in accord with Knight's recognition of the dire material conditions that Southeast communities were confronting and were being confronted with as a result of their historical encounters with Europeans, the fact that these social systems were stable structurally in these dire circumstances suggests that, indeed, the economic distribution manifested mechanisms of equitable rather than inequitable rationing, both in terms of production and distribution.

The above construal of traditional Native North American communities as being based on the principle of agentive autonomy and enabling hierarchies has effectively dissolved the problem that Knight pinpointed as being central to Kirchhoff's thesis—namely, that “equalitarian” exogamous clan systems are evolutionary “dead ends” so that only dominance hierarchies are able to develop higher levels of social complexity. However, this effectively says that both Knight and Kirchhoff were wrong because they were, in any case, working within an inadequate conceptual framework, treating the nonegalitarian/egalitarian distinction as if it were a qualitative dichotomy instead of a continuum. At least, Knight certainly assumes that Kirchhoff is treating this distinction as a dichotomy since, in contrast, he claims that the prehistoric and historic exogamous clan-based social systems east of the Rocky Mountains were, in fact, dominance-based communities. And using the above discussion I made of the egalitarian/nonegalitarian distinction, he is basically claiming that because of their “equalitarian” nature, they should be treated as being located at the egalitarian extreme of *nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum*. This must be the case since Knight specifically claims that Kirchhoff ignores the point that the moieties of these communities were ranked and that this ranking translated into dominant/subordinate relations. Therefore, according to Knight, Kirchhoff got it wrong when he emphasized that these communities were characterized as being “equalitarian” at heart.

By treating the egalitarian/nonegalitarian distinction as defining a continuum “↔” of dominance-based communities, Knight is effectively arguing that what Kirchhoff identifies as “equalitarian” was, in fact, a contingent state of dominance-powers-in-balance; that is, they were simply egalitarian communities having a dispersed or balanced distribution of dominance powers. Therefore, if the proper conditions developed, these mechanisms can be dismantled; and in

this case, according to Knight, the dismantling is accomplished by the head of the ranking family of the “royal clan” (i.e., the chief and his extended unilateral family) appropriating the principle of genealogical descent exclusively for his immediately related filial families up to four generations and transforming their filiation relations into genealogical descent relations.

However, both Knight and I may be misinterpreting or mistranslating Kirchhoff’s use of the terms *equality* and *equalitarian* in his characterization of the exogamous clan system. Kirchhoff wrote before the terms *egalitarian* and *nonegalitarian* were commonplace in anthropology. I and Knight may have mischaracterized Kirchhoff’s sense of these terms by simply assuming that his terms *equality* and *equalitarian* are synonymous with the current term *egalitarian* and, therefore, stand at the opposite pole in the egalitarian↔nonegalitarian continuum. But it seems to me that Kirchhoff is not treating the distinction between the “equalitarian” exogamous clan/moiety system and the conical clan system in terms of a continuum since, in fact, he recognizes that these two systems are mutually exclusive. This must be the case since for him, (1) while the “equalitarian” unilateral exogamous clan/moiety system is an evolutionary dead end—a point that both he and Knight agree upon—(2) a descent-based conical clan or ranked social system is the necessary condition for evolving social complexity. Hence, it seems clear that to Kirchhoff the descent-based and the filiation-based clan systems are not simply extremes of a continuum but two mutually exclusive social formations; that is, they represent a radical and contrasting *dichotomy of social types*: one, the descent-based—that has evolutionary potential—and the other, the filiation-based—that is a “dead end” in this regard.

What all this suggests to me is that Kirchhoff’s terms *equality* and *equalitarianism* express the same sense I have been expressing in

using the term *autonomy*. That is, an equalitarian community just is an autonomist community, one based on the core principle of agentive/group autonomy, and of course, this type of community is the antithesis of a dominance-based society. Where I differ with Kirchhoff, of course, is that he saw “equalitarianism” as an impediment to developing social complexity. I see it differently, as encouraging and promoting social complexity capable of developing social systems sustaining monumental architecture and sophisticated material expression and action complexity—but by following a different historical trajectory than typically followed by dominance societies.

If this is the case, then Kirchhoff makes a strong case arguing that it would not be an easy matter for these exogamous “equalitarian” clans based on filiation to become “nonequalitarian” because this transformation entailed the emergence of dominance, a principle that did not exist in these societies except in contingent cases. Therefore, a community transforming from “equalitarianism” to “nonequalitarianism” (i.e., from autonomy to dominance) would require deep social and cultural structural changes (i.e., shifting from filiation to genealogically traced/recorded descent or, in my terms, abandoning *agentive autonomy* and embracing *dominance/subordination*). In effect, the unlikelihood of such a change occurring in such communities is the evolutionary dead end that Kirchhoff detects; and to break it down would entail an abrupt revolutionary transformation that once made would be irreversible because, of course, the emergent community is now not only a nonegalitarian one that embodies the principle of dominance in the context of minimal leveling mechanisms but one in which centralized distribution of dominance powers-over prevails (i.e., Knight’s chiefdom polity), a classic case of a gravity-well social field. In such a community, social powers are powers-over, and the institutionally entrenched holders of powers-over actively prevent conditions from reversing. Hence,

by treating Kirchhoff's "equalitarianism" as synonymous with his notion of "egalitarianism," Knight has transformed Kirchhoff's basically dichotomous treatment of the exogamous unilateral clan/moiety system and the endogamous descent-based clan system into an egalitarian↔nonegalitarian continuum. By treating them in these terms, Knight can characterize the former (i.e., Kirchhoff's exogamous clan/moiety system) as simply contingently balanced dominance societies, albeit masked by "*conceptual* egalitarianism," to use the term Knight favors for Kirchhoff's "equalitarianism" (1990, 20).

Thus, the sudden emergence of ranked chiefdoms is not a real puzzle for Knight; and presumably, while he sees this as an authentic evolution, it is simply a "surfacing" of dominance powers that pre-existed their material manifestation. As Knight puts it, "I suggest that Kirchhoff overlooked the latent aspects of hierarchy that appear among unilateral, exogamous clan systems, and that consequently he erred in his denial of their evolutionary potential. These systems are, I believe, adaptable to increasing status differentiation even while preserving the essential structure of the exogamous hereditary groups" (1990, 7). In conclusion, I must firmly disagree with his claim.

2. *The Chiefly Lineage Critique.* I consider the following to be an internal critique of Knight's model. An internal critique assesses the claims of the model in its own theoretical terms. In this case, as I noted above, I find very problematic Knight's assertion that a political and social elite could emerge based on unilineal inheritance so as to monopolize dominance power while the rest of the community persisted in practicing the principle of unilateral filiation (and agentive autonomy). I find this claim radically implausible. If balanced dominance power prevailed in these rather small-scale communities, as Knight claims was the case, and if these principles of descent and filiation are mutually exclusive, as he also recognizes,

then determining standing in a dominance-based social system requires that everyone trace relative genealogical proximity/distance to the senior apical ancestor. In the conditions that he claims existed of unilateral filiation and “suppressed” dominance powers, should the chiefly “family” become structured by descent, this structuring could not be contained and balanced across the society while being focused on the highest ranking family of the “royal clan.” This is radically contradictory. The whole clan system should become pervaded by lineal descent-based ranked and graded dominance power.

Again, Kirchhoff is probably correct here. He postulated conical clans would be based on dominance power, and the character of conical clans is that everyone in the community is differentially positioned. Therefore, in Knight’s model, the emergence of a *unilineal* chiefly family—if somehow it were to occur—would mean filiation would be rapidly abandoned community-wide and social relations would be pervasively structured by descent (i.e., dominance/subordination). This structuring could not be constrained since the powers-over that the chief has are dependent on all the members of the community being able to locate themselves within the hierarchical descent structure. Hence, this emerging principle of unilineal descent could not be constrained to isolate and encapsulate a few select families. Alternatively stated, in a kinship-based social system having structures of dominance, with the recognition of the principle of lineal descent, all the clans would necessarily situate themselves in the lineal descent system, and this means all the families of each clan would also, and so on. Of course, groups would dispute their rank and claim to be “equal” (i.e., have the same type and amount of dominance power) or to be superior to other groups; that is, some leveling mechanisms would come into play. But these would simply entrench the escalation of dominance differentiation. Knight, however, specifically denies that this escalation would occur. “This

genealogy was *specifically and only* an aristocratic organization that provided a framework for the inheritance of noble statuses; beyond its limited purposes the [unilateral] clan system was in full effect as the dominant organization” (1990, 18, emphasis added).

Therefore, I am quite unconvinced that, given the structural nature of dominance-based unilineal ranking as he outlines it, a conical and collaterally limited “unilineal royal family” could come to be encapsulated within its unilateral “royal clan” framework while this community, both the rest of the “royal clan” and the other clans, retained the principle of unilateral filiation. This is not theoretically plausible. This is not to deny the claim that, for example, as in the case of the historic Natchez, the deceased chief was typically succeeded by the “senior” (often eldest) son of his “senior” sister (i.e., his senior matrilineal nephew). Rather, it is to claim that this succession only mimicked the unilineal descent-based ranking system characteristic of conical clan systems—or of the royal and aristocratic lineage systems of Europe. In positive terms, however, based on my construal of an enabling hierarchy, I have no difficulty accepting that unilateral clan systems can manifest ranking, in this case, by recognizing that a given clan has exclusive traditional custodial usufruct copyright over certain sacred bundles that endow their holders in that clan with ranking chiefly positions of the community and that the transfer of these sacred bundles was quite strictly a custodial conveyancing process from one generation to another of the specific unilateral clan. Importantly, this position would be embodied in an *enabling hierarchy* of ranked clans; and therefore, all decision-making contexts presided over by the custodial holder of the ranking chiefly sacred bundle position would be consensus-based, and this chief would have severely limited but important discretionary powers-to-act, primarily declarative and only contingently directive. By the latter, as I noted earlier, I mean that the chief could be consensually endowed

by the community with discretionary powers-over in regard to specifically defined tasks and circumstances (e.g., military confrontation against an enemy or leadership of a collective community bison hunt, and the like), the proviso being that this was a tactical posture in that when these circumstances were successfully addressed, then these “powers-over” would be automatically rescinded.

With this understood, I will argue that rather than a conical chiefly lineage with four junior collateral lines emerging while being encapsulated in a ranking unilateral clan, as Knight argues was the case (e.g., for the Timucua), a very different and important transformation may have occurred. In this case, the transformation would be in the traditional mode of *custodial conveyancing of the ritual usufruct copyright of the sacred chiefly bundle* to the next member of the clan who would, thereby, occupy the chiefly position. This transformation did not entail modifying the sacred chiefly bundle and its associated ritual usufruct copyrights or the custodial conveyancing rite itself. Instead, it would have entailed modifying the scope of *eligible persons* among whom the recipient of the sacred bundle could be chosen, and this person would attend to the chiefly sacred bundle custodial conveyancing event by which he/she was installed as the new custodian. In a unilateral system based on autonomy, the scope or range of eligible participants would likely be large—for example, all adult male members of the clan. But in some cases, this broad range could be progressively reduced from a plurality until only one candidate became the norm. I will call this end-point condition *singular candidature*. However, I argue below that if and when singular candidature did come about in a particular complementary heterarchical community, which would likely be a rare region-wide occurrence, it would occur not as a result of reducing eligibility through imposing a type of primogeniture inheritance rule, as would be the case for inherited chiefly position in a descent-based dominance

hierarchy. Rather, it would come about by the traditional *selection process* being modified such that, at the time required for the custodial conveyancing rite to be performed, only one candidate—that is, the singular candidate—was available to be approached and “selected” to be the next sacred bundle chief. In effect, this would be a nominal, preconditioned candidature selection.

Now it is important to note that the key claim of the Chieftdom Polity model is not that there is only one ranking chief but that this singular position is filled by inheritance through unilineal descent. Therefore, as in the above case, the recipient of the sacred bundle at the conveyancing rite is known in advance. That is, the key issue in explaining the chieftdom, whether a polity or nonpolity type, is not how a singular candidature position, that of the chief, would emerge since this position would preexist in both cases. Rather, I am postulating the possibility of two different types of singular candidature, depending on the social nature of the community: a chieftdom polity community or a complementary heterarchical community. Hence, the issue is how the traditional selection method would change. Knight’s explanation is to claim that the chief used his position to change the rules of selection and did so by transforming his/her extended unilateral family into a limited but still extended *unilineal* family entrenching its monopolization of the dominance powers of the chiefly position that were already immanent in the ranked ordering of the moieties. Knight’s view can be called the *inherited singular candidature mode*. Inherited singular candidature results from modifying the rules that narrow the range of men who are eligible to be candidates—for example, in the case of patrilineality, reducing the eligibility criteria from all sons of the former chief to the firstborn son of the deceased chief (primogeniture). My approach also claims a narrowing of the range of eligible candidates, and I will call this alternative the *selective singular candidature mode*. But

the selective singular candidature mode maintains the same eligibility criteria for becoming chief while it comes about by the career trajectories of eligible candidates being systematically modified such that while the eligibility criteria remain constant in principle, there are progressively fewer and fewer eligible candidates who are able to pursue careers that fit them to be available for selection when the time comes. Hence, in time, only one of the total range of traditionally eligible candidates is recognized in each generation as having acquired the preferred or even prescribed *experience and reputation* to be seen as worthy to be selected to have the chiefly sacred bundle. Hence, the social position that it embodies is exclusively conveyed to her/him.

While either mode would generate the same observable outcome—a singular candidate for the chiefly position—and therefore, both could be termed *singular chiefs*, the way these two processes would unfold would be quite different. The former, entailed by Knight's model, would require new rules of eligibility to be innovated and imposed (i.e., modifying of *inheritance rules*); and these would entail the type of encapsulating of the chiefly kin group that he argues for, except that this would be an encapsulating of a lineal unit within a preexisting unilateral unit. Along with that process would be the emergence of inherited dominance-based chiefdoms; and these would be unique to North America since, unlike those characteristic of Polynesia, West Africa, and possibly pre-Roman Europe, only the chiefly kinship component was structured by unilineal descent and was encapsulated within the wider unilateral kinship structures constituting the community. My above theoretical critique specifies why I think such encapsulation would not and could not occur in the type of exogamous unilateral clan system that Kirchhoff claims prevailed in the prehistoric Eastern Woodlands, a claim that Knight seconds. In contrast, the selective singular candidature mode retains

the traditional *selection process*, but entails systematically manipulating the career trajectories of the plurality of those traditionally eligible for a chiefly position when it becomes available and/or vacant, and this manipulation proceeds in such a manner that from a plurality of worthy eligible candidates there comes to be usually only a few and then finally only one eligible candidate who is available to be selected as sufficiently worthy to have the sacred bundle of the vacated chiefly position (whether vacated by death or otherwise) conveyed to him or her.

But the possibility of manipulating career trajectories in this manner could be effected only if several conditions were in place. First, it would require the condition of deep relatively autonomous clan and sodality social structural axes as constituting the community, a condition that I have argued throughout this book was basic to most traditional Native North American communities. Second, it would normally require a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation posture. Third, it would require a specific, limited, but generationally repeated *transgression* of the principle of autonomy that sustained the arm's-length relations between the clans and the socalities. That is, as I fully discuss in the following chapter, I postulate that it would be by systematically manipulating the *cult sodality process of peer leadership selection* that the singular candidature for the ranking chiefly position of a given complementary heterarchical community would emerge. I further postulate that this transformation could occur only if this manipulation effectively transgressed the principle of clan-sodality autonomy; that is, it was carried out by persons in their clan and not through sodality postures transgressing this principle by deliberately intervening into the affairs of the sodality. Therefore, such a transformation would emerge only in the community in which this particular type of transgressing of the clan-sodality autonomy occurred. For this same reason, it is likely

that the emergence of selective singular candidature in any complementary heterarchical community would be a rather rare occurrence within any given region. Even so, since the transgression—if it occurred—would be done during an episode when the regional communities were in the bifurcated settlement articulation posture (i.e., the second condition noted above), this means that transgressing this principle in other areas of social life of the community would likely not escalate; and therefore, the community traditions in general would remain in place, including and particularly the ongoing collective commitment of the community to the principle of autonomy. Still, this transgressing would likely lead to considerable stress among the autonomous cult sodality components of the heterarchy in which the sodality(ies) of the transgressing community(ies) participated. Therefore, it would endanger the continuity of the heterarchy as disagreements and tensions among the sodalities developed.

I pursue how all this could have unfolded in the next chapter, and I empirically ground it in my discussion of the mortuary sphere of Moundville. All this means that, since a critique can only be completed when an alternative and better explanation is presented, I am not finished with my critique of the Exogamous Ranked Clan Chiefdom model. In the next chapter, I present the explanation of how this alternative noninherited type of singular candidature (i.e., what I am terming *selective singular candidature*) might emerge, thereby transforming the complementary heterarchical *tribal* community in which the transgression occurred into what I referred to above as a complementary heterarchical *chiefdom* community. Along with the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model that I have already elucidated, this will complete the theoretical framework that I will apply to understanding the Mississippianization process of the Black Warrior River Valley region of west-central Alabama, focusing on Moundville.

NOTES

1. I note that this assessment is made only for the communities of the Southeast, not the Midwest. It is generally assumed by Mississippian archaeologists that the prehistoric Mississippian chiefdom polity communities of the Midwest had dissolved shortly prior to historic times (including Cahokia, Angel, and so on), possibly many of these shifting back to a more “egalitarian” posture, while others that retained dominance-based hierarchies migrated to the southeastern region and were still in existence when Soto encountered them below Memphis (Pauketat 2007, 128). Indeed, the termination of the Mississippian system in the Midwest is largely attributed to a massive abandonment of much of the central Mississippian valley. This is termed the *Vacant Quarter thesis*.

2. I suspect that some readers might be annoyed at my apparent “fussiness” and ask if it really makes any difference whether we characterize kinship systems in *unilateral* or *unilineal* terms. After all, they both focus on only one parent-child link, either the male or female parent. Is this not the critical property? I would strongly disagree. Structural properties may not be tangible to our perceptions, but they make significant differences in human activity. Knight’s recognizing this significance highlights the value of his contribution to the archaeological literature.

3. I make this assertion despite Pauketat’s (2007, 13-14) recent claim that Mississippianism was not generated by the chiefdom, as such, but by transcendent process that was initiated following the Big Bang in the American Bottom (ca. AD 1050). This process, he argues, was instigated by large-scale emigration of multiple ethnic groups from different sectors of the Central Mississippian Valley. They apparently voluntarily converged on Cahokia and provided the massive labor and residential population necessary for this monumental construction. I

have already presented a very different characterization of Cahokia and will not repeat it here (Chapter 2), but I plan to give a more careful critical analysis of Pauketat's massive emigration thesis and contrast it to my own cult sodality heterarchy thesis—but in another book.

4. Some might note that there appears to be a very significant qualitative difference in that leadership in “egalitarian” tribal communities is usually by means of achievement while in “nonegalitarian” chiefdom communities it is by means of ascription, usually descent-based inheritance. This is a legitimate point that I address in considerable detail shortly.

5. His paramount chiefdom view of Moundville is presented in his 1997 and 1998 publications. It is firmly anchored to his Exogamous Ranked Clan Chiefdom Model as presented in his 1990 paper and summarized here. However, he has now downgraded Moundville from having “paramount chiefdom” status to having a less centralized configuration of dominance-based social powers, at least for the later part of its historical existence. To my knowledge, hints that he was moving to this modified interpretation first appeared in his interpretation of Mounds Q and G (Knight 2004), and these hints have now been fully explicated in his most recent publication on Moundville (Knight 2010). Despite his demoting Moundville from being a major paramount chiefdom to a sort of “confederation” of simple chiefdoms, the same principle of dominance-based ranking that he postulated in his 1990 paper applies. Since it is the latter paper that has influenced many Mississippian archaeologists in their characterizing of the Mississippianization process (and clearly the thesis of that paper still influences Knight's view), I am focusing my critique on it. Later, I critically address his reconstruing of Moundville in terms articulated in his 2010 book.

CHAPTER 13

Types of Complementary Heterarchical Communities

I have been very critical of the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model since I believe that its premises entail types of social structures that contradict the basic social structural nature that traditional Native North American communities actually had and, to a significant degree, still have—according to my own theoretical orientation. However, given my discussion of hierarchies in the preceding chapter, my critical stance does not relate to denying the applicability of the notion of hierarchy to these communities. Rather, it relates to the assumption that hierarchical social organization necessarily equates with dominance and, therefore, entails recognizing dominance as the core cultural principle pervading their social organizational structure. Given my characterization of dominance and enabling hierarchies, perhaps it would be preferable to rename this model by adding the term *dominance* and name it the *Dominance-Based Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model*. However, I will abstain since it would require renaming the alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community model that I have proposed, and all this might simply be confusing. Therefore, I will retain the two terminologies, the *Complementary Heterarchical Community model* and the *Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity*, or *Chiefdom Polity model*, with the understanding that, in the latter, the term *hierarchical* is used in accordance with the widely accepted assumption of its being a structure of dominance-based social powers (i.e., powers-over).

Importantly, what my theorizing two varieties of hierarchies clarifies is why I can accept Knight's conclusion that the likely ubiquitous exogamous unilateral clan/moiety systems of the historic and prehistoric Plains and Eastern Woodlands peoples may have had some degree of built-in ranking (i.e., socially constituted differentiation), while it also clarifies why I cannot accept his substantive identifying of rank with dominance. Clearly, Knight's treatment is not unique since what he has done is simply to make explicit the operating model that widely pervades North American archaeology—namely, that traditional Native North American social systems were essentially dominance-based in nature while being differentially characterized according to where each might most reasonably be fitted along the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum. Following Knight in this regard, many archaeologists fit the Mississippian social systems, both in the Midwest and in the Southeast, near the extreme nonegalitarian pole, of course, while fitting the rest of the Eastern Woodlands regional social system of the Late Prehistoric period toward the egalitarian pole (King 2006; Muller 1998; Pauketat 2007, 2001; Emerson 1997a, 1997b; Milner, 1998, to note only a few). Knight's 1990 paper has made this operating model explicit. As he put it, "The widespread distribution of ranked clan and dual divisional organization in the Plains and Eastern Woodlands of North America prepares us to acknowledge this as also the historically dominant type in the area. The recognition that hierarchy and social differentiation loom large behind an apparent egalitarianism in these systems eliminates any theoretical reason to deny their potential for the development of stratification" (1990, 19-20).

Since I agree with the claim of the widespread prevalence of the exogamous unilateral clan/moiety system, while I firmly disagree with the claim that it was dominance-based in nature, it is incumbent on me to present my alternative autonomist view. Possibly

the most effective way to present this alternative view is simply to modify the second sentence of the above quotation by adding the phrase *an enabling to hierarchy* and replacing the terms *an apparent egalitarianism* with *an equitable differential distribution of integrated powers-to-act*. These changes, however, also require changing the characterization of the causal dynamics expressed in the phrase *loom large behind*. Clearly, this is more appropriately applied with regard to discussing a dominance-based social system in terms of its positioning on the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum. In short, the phrase *loom large behind* conveys a sense that a real state of affairs—social dominance and inequality—existed that was suppressed and hidden from the discursive awareness of the responsible agents involved. Therefore, it was ready to emerge and swamp the state of balanced dominance powers termed *egalitarian*. This is precisely what I would not want to convey in regard to the Native North American social system, and I suggest replacing “loom large behind” with the terms *underwrite and sustain*.

Of course, because the realization of the principle of agentive autonomy would be pervasive in the lives of those responsible for these social systems, they would likely have primarily practical rather than explicit awareness of this principle—a case of the fish-in-the-water not noting the water. However, I would also suggest that this practical awareness would not amount to a suppressed self-consciousness since, as Charles Taylor (1985) notes, cultural conceptual schemes that are partly constitutive of the social nature of communities must be expressed at appropriate times or else this nature would dissipate and/or transform into another state. That is, a sense of agentive autonomy and, from time to time, the deliberate expression and declaration of this autonomy, are entailed in order for the community to maintain and effectively reproduce its core principles.¹ Therefore, concepts expressed by key symbols are realized in key collective

activities that these symbols, as warrants of powers-to-act, make possible to perform (i.e., these are critically important in the constitution and reproduction of human social systems), and for this reason, archaeology cannot ignore the possible emic or “folk” meaning of the material media of activities that leave their traces in the archaeological record, such as the sacred chunky game. These games probably were part of the expressive realization of the principle of agentive autonomy that was a core constituent value of this social world.

Also, a very critical structural component of the Plains and Eastern Woodlands communities of North America must be added to this characterization of exogamous unilateral clan/moiety systems. This is because juxtaposed to the kinship principle underwriting the “widespread distribution of ranked clan and dual divisional organization” is the equally widespread and simultaneous distribution of the principle of companionship underwriting autonomous clan and sodality structures and constituting the traditional communities as complementary heterarchical communities having a doubly dual social structure: the dual clan-sodality structure and the dual clan-moiety organization. In fact, I suggested earlier in Chapter 4 (note 3) and Chapter 11 (note 2) that it is very reasonable to assume that the moiety structure of a complementary heterarchical community would likely be a double-aspect structure in that it would apply to both kinship and companionship domains. Just as clans were allocated to moieties that recognized complementary kinship principles (e.g., rules of exogamy), so the sodalities were identified with one or the other moiety-based companionship principles (e.g., same-age/same-sex and generation). The moiety structure, therefore, would be a double-aspect structure, kinship-clan and companionship-sodality. For example, as I noted in Chapter 4, note 3, assuming that the community is structured into the White and Red moieties, being complementary and opposing in their “nature,” the White moiety

might be associated with civil or internal social order, peace, gardening, and the female powers of regeneration (fecundity). The complementary Red moiety, therefore, would be associated with external social order, war, alliance, hunting, and the male powers of regeneration (fertility). These were permanent associations of these two moieties. Hence, all individuals in their kinship positions belonging to the clans of the Red moiety and all those belonging to the clans of the White moiety remained for life in these two moieties, even when they married, of course, since the exogamous nature of the clans meant that one married a spouse from outside one's clan and in the opposite moiety. The legitimacy of marriages, therefore, depended on the spouses' retaining their respective moiety (clan-aspect) identity. However, this lifelong permanency of clan/moiety identification for an individual was not the case for the individual under the sodality aspect of the moiety structure since a person would change moieties as they aged. Hence, as a member of a given junior age-grade sodality, an individual would be identified with the Red moiety (sodality aspect), but with the promotion of his/her sodality to the senior age-grade, he/she became identified with the White moiety (sodality aspect). Since the junior age-grade male sodalities would constitute the sodality-aspect of the Red moiety, they would be particularly identified and associated with external alliance and war, aggression, and the like. When they became senior age-grade sodalities, however, they would shift to the White moiety (sodality-aspect), thereby being associated with the arts of peace and civil order, female powers, and so on. All this means, of course, that individuals would experience their life biographies as structured into *two complementary moiety aspects*, each aspect governing different and mutually autonomous spheres of activities, one organizing their clan-based social participation and interaction and one their sodality-based social participation and interaction.

I also suggested in Chapter 11 that the identification of the moiety structure as strictly applying to the kinship-organizational system is symptomatic of the monistic modular polity view, which treats kinship relations as the core social structural axis of the unitary community. Indeed, it is likely that limiting the moiety structure to the singular kinship aspect in this way has probably contributed to our being oblivious to the role of the sodality in the operation and continuity of the Native North American community. I also argued that this complementary double-aspect (companionship-kinship) moiety structure would likely be differentially manifested according to the prevailing settlement articulation modal posture of the complementary heterarchical communities of a region. When the community was in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture, the material impact of the operation of the sodality might not be as noticeable as when the bifurcated posture prevailed since the integrated settlement plan arrangement would highlight the dwellings and layout of the clan-based groups (i.e., domestic housing, and their relative spatial relations), while the material components marking the sodality-based group activities (e.g., clubhouses, plazas, age-set campsites—probably no hostels, as such), would tend to be assimilated to the larger pattern. For example, the central plaza of the integrated village where sodality rituals would typically be performed could simply be interpreted by an outsider—one who would have only incomplete or superficial social knowledge of the community—as the place where “community-wide” rituals were performed. That is, this outsider would likely be oblivious to the fact that careful organizational scheduling and sequencing was involved as some rituals were performed by those only in their capacity as clan members and others, often performed by the same people, but now only in their capacity as sodality members. Even the sodality “club” houses, as I noted earlier, often set in the periphery and slightly apart from

the dwellings, would be viewed by these outsiders as simply the place where the husbands and/or bachelors of the community aggregated—and these persons would be perceived by these outsiders as members of the community only in virtue of their kinship standing, either consanguines or affines.

Since the identification of the clans with moieties was permanent while for the sodalities it was keyed to generation, visiting strangers might well come to identify only the single clan-aspect of the moiety structure, noting that this correlates with the White/Peace/Female Powers and the Red/War/Alliance/Male Powers distinction, while not at all noting that these associations operated more importantly with the sodalities than the clans. If so, then it may be from this that Knight has derived the notion that clans were *ranked in terms of the superior/inferior moiety distinction*—that is, Red=War=Male Power (dominance) in contrast to White=Peace=Female Power (subordination)—a notion that “eliminates any theoretical reason to deny [the exogamous unilateral clan/moiety communities] their potential . . . for the development of stratification.” By being assimilated in this way, this apparent “egalitarianism” becomes presupposed by the “fact” that clans of the Red/War/Male Power moiety sector are dominant to clans in the White/Peace/Female Power moiety sector. This misconstrual and misinterpretation, having become entrenched in some of the anthropological literature, might be an artifact generated by the anthropologist who studied communities in the historic Eastern Woodlands in which the integrated settlement articulation posture largely prevailed.

However, I also noted earlier that when regional communities were in the bifurcated posture, the opposite would occur. Since the residential dwellings of the clan-based components were dispersed, the material expression of the moiety structure under the kinship-aspect operating to structure their relative positioning would be

materially obscured, while in the collective cult sodality locale, the senior and junior age-grade components of the sodality-aspect moiety structure might be quite obviously manifested in the overall plan. I will not pursue the empirical grounds for this suggestion and its implications, although I believe they are worth further consideration and research. That is, I believe that they are important and, if further elaborated, would undermine the claim that clans, as such, would be ranked, even in enabling terms. This is because the ranking that Knight claims to perceive may be more a consequence of the sodality-aspect of what is likely a double-aspect moiety structure, and this ranking would be irrelevant to the kinship-aspect of the moiety structure underwriting the exogamous moiety (clan-aspect) structure. Hence, the “ranking” he attributes to the community organization would, in fact, consist strictly of the ranking of the senior and junior age-grades under the sodality-aspect of the moiety structure—and this would not be a dominance but an enabling hierarchical structure. Of course, as I noted earlier, all this must stand as a hypothesis for now, and it requires further empirical research and grounding. However, as a hypothesis, it explains what is otherwise a major puzzle raised and not resolved by Knight’s model—namely, how could an “egalitarian” social system, one that would have entrenched leveling mechanisms in place, transform so rapidly into a “nonegalitarian” social system? Instead of a puzzle, this differential ranking of the moieties occurs only under the companionship or sodality aspect, and given the centrality of the principle of autonomy, this ranking would likely apply only among the sodalities, organizing them as an enabling hierarchy that would still entail consensus-based governance (i.e., constitute ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities).

In any case, in order to advance my analysis, I will postulate a double-aspect moiety structure as central to the complementary

heterarchical community system. Therefore, instead of referring to the moiety structure as simply a “dual divisional organization,” as Knight notes in the above quotation, I will redescribe this as a “dual clan-sodality double-aspect moiety organization.” As I noted above, while ranking would be built in with regard to the sodality-aspect moiety structure, it is problematic that ranking would apply to the clans, although this is possible. In any case, reexamination of earlier historical reports in the light of this hypothesized dual clan-sodality double-aspect moiety concept might bring to light the meanings and significance of observations related to the moiety structure that are currently obscure. In terms of this working hypothesis, it is likely that, as strongly implicated in Bowers’ (1965, 2004) studies of the Hidatsa and Mandan, the moiety structure of the Midwest and Plains regions limited the relevance of ranking largely to the age-grades while the clans stood to each other simply in enabling and constraining terms; that is, in order to marry, couples had to be members of clans from opposing moieties.² In possible contrast, complementary heterarchical communities in the Southeast and trans-Mississippian sectors of the Eastern Woodlands may have applied ranking in both cases. If this distinction existed between the Midwest-Plains and the Southeast/Trans-Mississippian sectors, enabling hierarchies would apply only to the age-grades in the former case while they would apply to both clans and age-grades in the latter case. In sum, while I can tentatively endorse Knight’s claim of ranked clans, to make all this fully acceptable, my theoretical perspective would entail a significant rewriting of his characterization of the community systems of the Plains and Eastern Woodlands as expressed in the above quotation. I present this rewrite below with the above substitutes, changes, and additions in *italics*:

The widespread distribution of a *dual clan-sodality double-aspect moiety organization* in the Plains and Eastern

Woodlands of North America prepares us to acknowledge this was also the historically dominant type in the area. The recognition that *an enabling hierarchy and social differentiation were seen to underwrite and sustain an equitably differential distribution of integrated powers-to-act* in these systems eliminates any theoretical reason to deny their potential for the development of stratification.

This now takes on some unfortunate redundancy since “*enabling hierarchy and social differentiation*” just is a form of “stratification,” albeit one that sustained mutual but complementary differentiation of enabling powers and absented dominance. In economic terms, this is manifested as equitable distribution based on the social as well as reproductive needs of the different components. That is, the relatively autonomous clans and sodality organizations will differentially manifest enabling hierarchies, and each can become stabilized from generation to generation. Of course, all this is not what Knight means by the ranked clan system as having the “potential for the development of stratification.” He is strongly committed to identifying social powers as powers-over; and of course, the possibility that a double-aspect moiety system was in place is definitely not part of his theorization, while sodalities are subsumed to clans. By the “potential for the development of stratification,” as discussed fully in the previous chapter, he is likely thinking of the encapsulation of the exogamous chiefly extended family as a *lineage*, a state of affairs out of which, in my earlier terms, *inherited singular candidature* for chiefly position emerges and is institutionalized and, simultaneously, the explicit dominance-based hierarchical division of the community emerges: (1) a small set of dominant inherited and collateral elite (i.e., the chiefly lineage and its collateral aristocratic lineages) claiming exclusive descent from the apical ranking chiefly ancestor; and (2) a

large set of dominated “commoners,” which includes even those who were born into the ranking unilateral “chiefly clan” but who were outside the “royal lineage” and its small set of collateral lines, *per se*.

The Chieftdom and Tribal Terminology

When speaking in terms of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model, I have avoided using the term *chieftdom* because its standard meaning presupposes (1) dominance and inequality as core cultural principles rather than autonomy and equitability, (2) dominance hierarchies rather than enabling hierarchies, (3) exclusive proprietorial domain rather than inclusive custodial usufruct domain, and (4) the unitary direct hierarchical settlement articulation modal posture rather than the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum. Added to this would be the assumption, given Knight’s model, that the imposition of inherited singular candidature was the only way that a chieftdom could emerge and be sustained. However, if agentive autonomy, inclusive custodial usufruct domain, enabling hierarchies, the double-aspect moiety structure, and the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum are taken as applicable to characterizing a “chieftdom,” in the sense of a community having *selective singular candidature* for its leadership, then I have no problem using the term *chieftdom*, but always modified with the terms *complementary heterarchical* in order to add the important properties of custodial usufruct domain, enabling hierarchies, the dual clan-sodality structural axis, the double-aspect (clan-sodality) moiety structure, and so on. Therefore, a community based on selective singular candidature, along with the other important properties, could be termed a *complementary heterarchical chieftdom*. Once the organizational structure is institutionalized through several generations, selective singular candidature can come to *mimic* inherited singular

candidature, as I describe below; and it is important to note that such institutionalization is not a foregone conclusion (i.e., the community could reverse course and eliminate the selective singular candidature mode). I say that it would mimic inheritance since I maintain that as long as a form of exclusive territorialism does not emerge, dominance and lineal inheritance of modules of land would not emerge. And each generational replacement of the chief would be performed by a routinized ritual conveyancing of the sacred bundle of chiefly prerogatives to the selective singular candidate (i.e., the person who is also the ranking “senior” chief of the community’s autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality, as I discuss fully below) by a traditional council of electors or an institution of this type. Therefore, my modifying the term *chiefdom* by the addition of the terms *complementary heterarchical* is done to contrast with the Chiefdom Polity community type postulated under the Hierarchical Monistic Modular Polity model, which I will term from now on a *monistic chiefdom polity*, and the chiefly leaders will be termed *monistic chiefs* (i.e., chiefly positions based on inherited singular candidacy) to contrast with *singular chiefs* (i.e., chiefly positions based on selective singular candidature) (see table 13.1).

Some readers may have also noticed that I have avoided using the term *tribe*. I have done so for much the same reason since, in my view, under the monistic modular polity view, the only relevant difference in the concepts that the terms *chiefdom* and *tribe* express is that “tribes” are treated as being egalitarian, in the sense of sustaining a contingent balancing of powers-over, while “chiefdom” sustains and is sustained by a concentration and centralization of dominance powers-over. Therefore, “tribes” have a deeply embedded dominance structure that is constantly being suppressed by ongoing counterbalancing social mechanisms. It is only because these two terms—*chiefdoms* and *tribes*—are so familiar in the archaeological

literature that I have decided to continue to use them to speak about these contrasting forms of complementary heterarchical communities. Since I am now using the modified term *complementary heterarchical chieftdom* to refer to those communities having selective singular candidature of chiefly leadership, I will follow the same practice with regard to those communities having multiple selective candidature of chiefly leadership, referring to them as *complementary heterarchical tribes* or *complementary heterarchical tribal communities*, thereby being consistent when speaking of the different types of complementary heterarchical communities. Since complementary heterarchical tribes are also based on the principle of autonomy, I have no difficulty recognizing that they will manifest hierarchies of various sorts, but of course, these will be enabling hierarchies. That is, I am making it clear that hierarchy is not what makes the difference between these two social formations since they are both complementary heterarchical community types with enabling hierarchies. The primary distinction is in their contrasting modes of incumbency of leadership position. The complementary heterarchical tribal type is based on *selective multiple candidature*, and the complementary heterarchical chieftdom type is based on *selective singular candidature*. This also means that the difference is not in terms of the nature of these leadership positions and particularly not in the nature of the powers with which they endow their occupants since, in virtue of their sharing the notion of agentive autonomy, the social powers are of the same order—namely, powers-to-act. That is, neither is characterized in terms of “powers-over” in the sense I articulated earlier of being upwardly displaced powers-to-act—except in the limited case of tactical application outlined in the previous chapter.

Table 13.1. Complementary Heterarchical Community Structure Types

Community Types	Candidature Types	Leadership Types
complementary heterarchical tribe	multiple selective candidature	a. tribal chiefs b. sodality chiefs c. clan chiefs d. etc.
complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom	dual selective candidature	a. singular chiefs b. singular clan chiefs c. singular sodality chiefs d. etc.
complementary heterarchical chiefdom	singular selective candidature	a. singular chiefs b. singular clan chiefs c. singular sodality chiefs d. etc.

I will refer to the leaders of a complementary heterarchical tribal community as *complementary heterarchical tribal chiefs*, or simply *tribal chiefs*. This means that, while respecting the relative autonomy of the sodalities, these tribal chiefs have responsibility for matters concerning the total community. Of course, specialized leadership is also recognized, such as sodality chiefs, war chiefs, winter camp chiefs, and so on. All the occupants of these chiefly positions of complementary heterarchical tribal communities, of course, achieve the position by the fact that they are subjected to a multiple selective candidature process, contrasting therefore with the chiefly positions of a complementary heterarchical chiefdom. These latter positions are occupied on the basis of a selective singular candidature process. I will refer to these latter leadership occupants as *singular chiefs*, and this term can be modified where necessary to discriminate between the ranking of the singular chiefs as required (i.e., primary singular chief, secondary singular chief, and so on), as well as to distinguish between community-wide singular chiefs and the sodality-specific leadership, the latter effectively being singular sodality chiefs. Of course, the term *singular chief* contrasts with *monistic chief*, which, as I noted above, would be a person occupying a chiefly leadership

position based on the inherited singular candidature process (i.e., monistic chiefdom polities). Because primary, secondary, and tertiary singular chiefs constitute the complementary heterarchical chiefdom hierarchy, singular chiefs would likely be characteristic of some of the sodalities also, since as I argue below, the emergence of singular candidature for the ranking chiefly position of the complementary heterarchical community is likely possible only because of the prior development of selective singular candidature for some of the peer-based *sodality* leadership positions.

There can be complementary heterarchical communities in which a dual process of selective singular candidature might be practiced. For example, a community might have two complementary leadership positions of the same rank—that is, two singular chiefs, one for each moiety (clan aspect), each having custodial care of the sacred bundles of complementary leadership positions (e.g., the Osage). Thus, two singular chiefly positions would need to be conveyed by means of selective singular candidature. It might be useful to speak of this type as a *complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom* (table 13.1).

I have outlined but not tabulated the terminology of the above monistic tribal and monistic chiefdom polity community types simply to ensure a symmetry of terminology in referencing the alternative views. My focus, however, is the nature of complementary heterarchical communities, and so I will now theorize how a complementary heterarchical tribal community could transform into a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community, noting that such a transformation does not entail a change in the powers of the leadership positions—these remain positions integrated with their relevant powers-to-act—but simply a change in the way the positions come to be occupied, from selective multiple candidature to selective singular candidature. Also, as I comment shortly, in historical developmental terms, this transformation from a complementary

heterarchical tribal to a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community—should it occur—might go through the intermediate complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom stage, although this could actually be a very stable formation in its own right (e.g., the Osage would probably fit this type), and the total process would require special conditions (Bailey 1995, 41-42). I suggested at the end of the last chapter that these conditions would entail both that (1) the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of a region be in a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture, and (2) that this bifurcation would entail having in place a system of ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy locales. These two related conditions would play the critical role in making possible this change from a complementary heterarchical tribal to a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community. However, as I also noted earlier, there was a third condition that was required for such a transformation to occur, and this was not entailed in virtue of the first two conditions. Rather, it was a contingent condition, and therefore, it would emerge at the strategic or tactical level. This would be the development by some leading families in a given community of systematically transgressing the principle of relative autonomy maintaining the arm's-length relations between clans and sodalities. Therefore, since this would be a contingent possibility, even should the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of a region shift into a bifurcated settlement posture such that autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchies form distinctive locales, for complementary heterarchical chiefdoms to emerge in one or more of these communities there would then have to be systematic (and usually surreptitious) transgression of the principle of clan and sodality autonomy. Therefore, the process leading to the emergence of selective singular candidature would occur only in those communities where such transgressions were occurring. Of course,

since these transgressions required a willful breaking of a strong normative value, it is likely to have been a rather rare, drawn-out, and possibly erratic process, one that would be paralleled by rising discord, not necessarily within the communities where the transgressions were occurring, although this is very possible, but among the cult sodalities affiliated within the first-order and second-order cult sodality heterarchies to which the cult sodalities of these transgressing communities belonged.

Another important difference between complementary heterarchical tribal and complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities is that usually (not always) the occupancy of the tribal chief positions is constrained to a limited time period or some other limiting condition, such as a special situation, seasonal leadership, and so on. Therefore, there is often a built-in incumbency period, following which the occupant resigns and a new person is chosen by consensus from among the several eligible candidates. A specific incumbency period, however, does not justify treating the position as ephemeral or simply as an extension of a given agent's personal skills since the agent selected as a tribal peace chief or a war chief or a winter chief is always selected for this position, albeit usually in virtue of demonstrated competency relevant to the practical requirements of the position. Therefore, this position, the eligibility criteria, and the selection process always preexist and are prior to the person who becomes the occupant (Archer 1995, 1996; Bhaskar 1978, 1979). The position of singular chief in a complementary heterarchical chiefdom, however, is usually based on incumbency-until-death, although there might also be many particular cases where this lifetime seating was qualified, although this would make no essential difference to the powers of the position.

As suggested above, as complementary heterarchical communities based on the relatively autonomous nature of the clan and

sodality organizations, the settlement articulation modal posture of a region could historically modify along the integrated↔bifurcated continuum. For example, I have characterized the Hidatsa villages of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries based on mixed maize gardening and foraging with seasonal bison hunting as a system of complementary heterarchical tribal communities in an integrated village settlement articulation modal posture that was seasonally structured (Bowers 1965, 11-13, 26-29, 35). The villages were located in traditional inclusive custodial usufruct territories and sustained a loose spatially-expressed arm's-length alliance with each other. The age-set sodalities of each village retained their mutual autonomy in that while equivalent age-sets participated in intervillage *irakúu* sodality alliances through custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights, they did not normally allow crossover membership.³ Furthermore, as an autonomous group, an age-set sodality was free to establish the same type of alliance with equivalent sodalities of non-Hidatsa communities. All this was largely independent of the village council (Bowers 1965, 32-33) or of other sodalities, senior or junior, who, of course, respected the former's autonomy. Nevertheless, each age-set sodality retained its own integrated village as its primary base locale so the intercommunity alliance of age-set sodalities did not normally establish separate and autonomous specialized sodality locales that were spatially distant from their village locales.⁴

One more important point I want to stress about the leadership positions of a cult sodality is that the principle of autonomy, as I noted earlier, would specify that the companions who made up an age-set practiced peer-based leadership selection with the companions of an age-set selecting one or more from among themselves as peer-group leaders. This person or these persons would be formally recognized by the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality as the leader or leaders of their age-set, thereby respecting age-set autonomy. I postulate that

this would be a *fundamental practice* intrinsic to the nature of the age-set group of companions. Then, as these age-sets were promoted up the enabling hierarchy of their respective ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities and moved to more senior levels, the age-sets would probably retain their initial peer leaders (although this would not be mandatory). As the established leaders of their peers, these men or women would come to be recognized by all the cult sodality heterarchy as being primary among the sodality chiefs. Since complementary heterarchical tribal chiefly positions are based on broad eligibility rules (e.g., all senior males of the clans are eligible to tribal chiefly position), the death or simply the resignation of a tribal chief would not necessarily motivate a senior sodality chief who was eligible for that tribal chiefly position to retire in order to compete for the vacated position (retirement from sodality chiefly position would be normal for this purpose in order to respect the principle of clan-sodality autonomy). Instead, the sodality chief might decide to continue with his/her companions and pass up on the opportunity while other equally eligible tribal members competed.

Finally, in the previous chapter, my second critique of Knight's characterization of the Southeastern monistic chiefdom entailed rejecting his core theoretical claim—namely, that the ranking chief and his/her extended family could become encapsulated as a conical unilineal descent group within the chiefly unilateral clan. However, even though I take issue with this basic claim, which is itself subsumed to the primary claim with which I take issue—namely, that the Mississippian system was a set of dominance-based monistic chiefdom polities, I can agree that complementary heterarchical chiefdoms might emerge in a few cases, and a form of encapsulation of the extended family of the ranking chief could be effected—but it would do so without weakening *either its unilateral or exogamous character*. This encapsulation is possible since, as I argue shortly,

it would most likely be effected by the development of preferential cross-cousin marriage emerging out of modification of selection criteria for future chiefs, and this would entail generating sets of affinally related families of separate clans that sustained de facto endogamous practices among themselves while respecting the primary de jure principle of clan exogamy. But more on this shortly, following the modeling of how a complementary heterarchical chiefdom could emerge.

How a Complementary Heterarchical Chiefdom Could Emerge

The hermeneutic spiral method now requires that I present an alternative to Knight's theorization of the emergence of the Southeastern monistic chiefdom polity system. Of course, he sees this emergence as, in fact, the Mississippianization process; that is, monistic chiefdoms of various sorts emerged out of the preexisting Late Woodland period nonchiefdom egalitarian (i.e., monistic tribal) community systems. My claim, of course, denies that such egalitarian community systems existed and that, instead, prehistoric and traditional Native North American communities were complementary heterarchical communities (i.e., based on the core principle of agentive autonomy rather than agentive dominance/subordination, and inclusive territorialism with filiation-based and not descent-based kinship). Therefore, the Mississippianization process was the outcome of the emergence and expansion of systems of mutualistic cult sodality heterarchies that simultaneously promoted the clans and sodalities of the communities of a region to spatially disengage and move into the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Once this posture emerged and stabilized, it became the settlement condition that would enable, but certainly not determine, the emergence of complementary heterarchical chiefdoms.

So if some complementary heterarchical tribal communities did become complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities, how could this have occurred? Besides clarifying how some communities could transform into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms, this modeling also prepares the basis for raising new questions, thereby suggesting new directions of research, although these will have to be left for another book. For example, when Soto and his private army, under a commission from the Spanish crown to invade “Florida,” were contending with the social reality embodied in Etowah and its immediate and more widespread region of Georgia, were they confronting the dominance powers of a major “paramount chiefdom,” a position that is widely taken to be the case among Southeastern prehistorians and historians, or were they, in fact, engaging with one of the few remaining major cult sodality heterarchies of this wider region, one that was possibly already suffering significant degrees of disaffiliation? Or is it possible Etowah had already transformed from being an earlier second-order cult sodality heterarchy into being the ongoing second-order cult sodality heterarchy of a second-order complementary heterarchical chiefdom? I believe that this type of question might be helpfully answered by looking at the late pre-Columbian archaeological record of the Apalachee “province” of northwest Florida. My reading of John Scarry’s interpretation of this community system as it was at the time, initially being invaded by the Spanish conquistadors in the early 1500s, would suggest that the communities of this region of Northwest Florida would nicely fit the attribution of being complementary heterarchical chiefdoms. As Scarry very insightfully notes, the hegemonic power or, as he calls it, the *social ascendancy* of the chiefdom system was definitively not based on dominance hierarchies but on what I have been calling *enabling hierarchies*, and these are based on the principle of agentive and group autonomy. This is clear when he notes that the “elite had

no monopoly on coercive power, and they lacked the ability to exercise effective economic control over other Apalachee” (2001, 39). Therefore, it is quite possible that this system of singular chiefdoms emerged shortly prior to and was in place on the arrival of the Spaniards. However, I will leave further exploration of these questions unpursued, since they go beyond the scope of this book. Besides, they require further theoretical characterization of what a “second-order complementary heterarchical chiefdom” would be like and what type of empirical evidence would be required to demonstrate it, and so on. In any case, the transformation model I now present raises the possibility of future research on these types of questions.

Of course, I have no significant issue with Knight’s claim that the unilateral exogamous ranked clan system was ubiquitous in the historic Southeast. In fact, above I endorsed it, although I qualified that overall claim considerably. Therefore, I also have no problem with his claim that the unilateral (probably matrilineal) clans of the complementary heterarchical tribal communities in Alabama of the Terminal or Late Woodland period West Jefferson phase (i.e., pre-Mississippian) may have been hierarchically organized according to the recognized rank of the sacred bundles embodying the authority of the community-wide tribal chiefly positions. For any given community, the occupants of these positions would be recognized as the presiding heads of the community council in which public decisions were made relating to the total community. Since the community would be based on the traditional principle of agentive autonomy, the decisions in community-wide councils would be made by consensus, and the representatives of all the clan segments would likely have seats in the council session that manifested the rank order of the clans—assuming that these were ranked. This seating arrangement would constitute an operating enabling hierarchy.

The above characterization of a Southeastern complementary heterarchical tribal community would also apply to a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community, if it emerged, except that the essential difference would be manifested in the process of singular candidature for the ranking singular chiefly position. Now the establishment of this ranking singular chief was also Knight's claim for the emergence of monistic chiefdoms. However, as I noted in my discussion of his 1990 paper, I interpret him as arguing that what I am calling singular candidature emerged by encapsulating the chiefly lineage, thereby narrowing the eligibility rules for chiefship via what I have called *inherited singular candidature*. Under the alternative complementary heterarchical community view, I have postulated the emergence of a selective singular candidature; and, given that the emergence of a complementary heterarchical chiefdom would occur out of the prior condition of a complementary heterarchical tribe (or possibly a complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom), the most plausible process that I can postulate that could generate such a state of affairs would be via a modification of the above noted peer-based leadership selection practice of the sodalities. This modification would have had to occur in such a manner that while the range of eligible candidates for the complementary heterarchical tribal chiefly position would remain constant (i.e., in principle there would be multiple selective candidature), in fact, progressively fewer and fewer candidates would come to be considered sufficiently experienced and worthy enough to be selected to replace the incumbent community tribal chief of the ranking clan on his/her death or resignation. The important assumption here is that, in communities based on agentive autonomy, the primary criteria for selecting who should be offered the leadership position from among all the eligible candidates would be their experience and reputation as worthy persons,

reputations that, I suggest, individuals would normally build largely, although not exhaustively, through their cult sodality careers. Therefore, this sodality career trajectory is postulated as the primary link between sodality and tribal community chiefly selection.

Let me elaborate on this postulated linkage. Whether the communities of a region were in the integrated or bifurcated settlement articulation posture, the reputation for leadership in complementary heterarchical tribal communities would be forged in both the domestic and nondomestic career trajectories that individuals pursued (i.e., both as clan and sodality participants). However, a different weighting of these two achievement-constitutive trajectories would likely occur in each of the above postures. Typically, when the community was in the integrated posture, while the sodality-based career trajectory would play an important role for leadership selection, it is likely that the kinship-based career trajectory would figure rather strongly. This is because of the intensity of face-to-face spatial closeness and interaction of daily life that the community village sustained in its integrated settlement posture. However, it is likely that the reverse weighting would be the case when the communities of a region were in the bifurcated posture. Since the family units of the clans would be spatially dispersed, it was in the sodality contexts that the highest aggregation of face-to-face interaction would occur and where assessment of character would weigh most heavily. This is one reason that I suggested earlier that if a trend toward the emergence of selective singular candidature were to develop, it would most likely occur when the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of a region were in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture since not only would this emphasize the arm's-length relation between the clans and sodalities of a given community, it would also shift the primary arena for reputation-building to the cult sodality contexts. Under these conditions, therefore, most

individuals would be caught up in the sodality career trajectory, even those who were less “political” and more inclined to develop toward being artisans, specialists in dancing, and other skills, including religious and shamanic.

However, an asymmetry exists between achieving leadership positions within the sodality and within the community. In the sodality context, the arm’s-length relation between kinship and companionship groups normally ensures each age-set is responsible for its own affairs, including and particularly the peer-based selection of the group’s own leaders. However, the reverse would not be the case in the community context since typically a community council would be attended by senior males from all the clans, and in many cases, these senior males would also be members of the major socalities, often themselves sodality chiefs, or else these sodality chiefs were always consulted on matters that affected the total community. Therefore, there would be a rather direct but asymmetrical tie between the sodality career and becoming a complementary heterarchical tribal chief on the council since, in virtue of the principle of autonomy, sodality peer leadership selection was largely *immune* from kinship and clan influence while community chiefly selection was strongly influenced by the candidate’s normally achieved standing in his sodality. Of course, this asymmetry does not transgress or breach clan–sodality autonomy. That is, the socalities are not interfering in the complementary heterarchical tribal chiefly selection process since the selection group (e.g., an electoral college) is simply using the publicly-known sodality-based reputations of the candidates as the information base for their deliberations. However, if the reverse were to occur (e.g., if the family of a young man were to try to influence his age-set companions to select him as their age-set peer leader, who might then go on to become a senior sodality chief), this would be a serious breach of clan–sodality autonomy.⁵

In fact, I propose that the key mechanism by which selective singular candidature came to emerge, if and when it did, was by ambitious relatives deliberately *transgressing* or breaching the principle of clan-sodality autonomy by some such scenario as surreptitiously intervening in the peer leadership selection process of their young kin's age-set. The most likely type of intervention would be through the ambitious family's gifting and feasting the age-set of their young relative for reasons supposedly related to the normal practices and rituals of the age-set while using this opportunity to encourage the age-set to choose their young relative as its peer leader. What this means is that, while eligibility and selection rules and practices for community chiefly positions remained untouched, sodality selection practices of leaders *were* changed by (usually) surreptitious but deliberate kinship-derived intervening. If such transgressing was to be repeated by this family or one or two competitive families, peer leadership selection could tend to become systematically influenced by the social standing of those few transgressing families who pursued influencing the selection of their kin as age-set leaders so as to enhance their chances of becoming the tribal chiefs in the future. The impact of this interference on the steering or controlling of the actual candidates available for succeeding to the community-wide chiefly positions would likely take time, and its social structural effect would likely have been unforeseen, first generating a complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom community and then, from this context, a full-fledged complementary heterarchical chiefdom.

Why breaching the autonomy of the sodality was important follows from the traditional selection process among candidates for succeeding to chiefly position—namely, by assessing their reputations as established through their sodality careers. A successful sodality career correlated with being repeatedly chosen by one's companions as peer leader with each age-set's promotion. Each age-set

promotion also increased the rank of the peer leader in the larger cult sodality heterarchy and, therefore, the reputation of the individual in the community. Hence, becoming a ranking community chief was usually contingent on becoming a senior sodality leader/chief. Putting it in counterfactual terms, it is quite easy to imagine that, of several candidates for one of the ranking tribal chiefly positions on the complementary heterarchical tribal community council, each being eligible for this position in virtue of being an adult member of his clan, those who “failed” to achieve senior sodality chiefly status would probably *not* be consensually favored by the community council—in its traditional posture as an electoral college for chiefly positions on the tribal council—so that in their selecting who they would present to the community for its consensus, this or these persons among the set of eligible candidates would not be recommended. If two or more eligible candidates for the same position had achieved equivalent leadership levels and reputations in the community’s ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality via the above stated surreptitious mode of intervention, clearly the electors would have to innovate and might informally add a criterion that would be sufficiently respected among themselves and the community so as to gain community-wide consensus. I suggest that, at this point, closeness of unilateral relation to the deceased ranking council chief might swing the decision, particularly if the latter had been considered a “good” chief. Hence, if one of these two candidates was also a member of the deceased chief’s extended (e.g., matrilateral) family, say the direct nephew through his senior sister, this relation might be sufficient for the electoral college to favor him over the “equally reputable” others and recommend him to the community.

It is important to stress that recommending this person would not be seen as transgressing any community-wide selection rules or appear to display undue nepotism since the surreptitious nature of

promoting the nephew by his family would have generated a reputation presumably built on the progressive assessment of his peers, even though not truly “achieved” because of the surreptitious history of bribing the age-set by the family. That is, the community would generally assume, unless demonstrated otherwise by clearly observed inadequacies in the candidate’s activities, that the nephew’s standing in the sodality was a valid measure of his character and reputation. Therefore, his skills and competencies would be already “demonstrated” by his sodality leadership standing independently of his deceased matrilineal uncle’s standing as the presiding tribal chief of the complementary heterarchical tribal council. Hence, this consensual acceptance by the community would establish a precedent that could transform into a practice, particularly if the next round of selection replicated this pattern—namely, of the two or more candidates who had apparently equivalent sodality leadership-based reputation, only one was a direct nephew of the deceased chief. What had been an expedient criterion of selection to effect a consensus can become treated as a precedent. In this case, should opposition arise to this chiefly nephew, rather than the electors and/or council having to cite the precedent to justify their favoring the nephew of the deceased chief, those opposed would have to justify why this precedent should *not* be acted upon. And, if the opposition arises from the family or families of the candidates who were dropped, their opposition might well be taken as jealousy and nepotism favoring their own direct matrilineal male relative.

Of course, such a situation would likely not emerge if sodality autonomy was respected. For example, if the senior nephew of the presiding chief had not been selected by his peers as their age-set leader as he matured in his sodality career, it would be because his interactions among his peers were such as to convince them that while he was a “good friend” and “dependable,” they did not assess him as

having the competency or character of leadership, and so they would have passed over him when selecting their peer leader. Therefore, he would not have been promoted to a position of sodality chiefly leadership. This means that when his matrilineal uncle died, not only would this senior nephew not be a significant force in the sodality, possibly none of the deceased tribal chief's nephews would be. The chiefly office would go to a candidate from another extended family whose male relative had been authentically successful in achieving high standing among his peers.

However, even should direct family nepotism of the above sort not occur, there are two other related forms that could encourage the breaching of the principle of autonomy when the condition of the bifurcated posture emerged. One condition was the structural articulation of the age-sets when they became integrated into an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. The second would be the enhancement of boon companionship between the sons and nephews of those who became chiefs or among those families sufficiently ambitious to pursue this goal. In the former case, while each age-set retained its autonomy, it would also be linked into the enabling hierarchy of the cult sodality so that the least senior of the age-sets was linked to the next more senior age-set and so on, to the most senior (remember, the companions of an age-set differed in median age by only a few years, so the median ages of the senior and junior age-sets would differ by only possibly 5-8 years). Using the Hidatsa as an example, each age-set would consist of a set of *irakúu* brothers from across the matriclans, and the transfer of the sacred bundles representing the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights of the age-set sodality (and the direct custodians of these bundles would probably be the peer-selected leaders) was done by the immediately senior *irakúu* age-set conveying these to its immediately junior age-set, thereby constituting the two age-sets as "*irakúu* fathers-*irakúu* sons." However, this

was not a one-shot deal since each promotion of an age-set up the hierarchy entailed the same conveyancing process, reproducing the “*irakúu* father–*irakúu* son” relation. Hence, the most senior chiefly sodality leaders will be senior “*irakúu* fathers” of an age-ranked chain of junior “*irakúu* sons.” Given his reputation arising from being a senior sodality chief, one of these senior “*irakúu* fathers” will probably become one of the next presiding tribal chiefs of his community. This means that, if the process has developed sufficiently in that community to already establish a single clan holding the premier sacred custodial bundle of the presiding chief of the council, then one of these senior “*irakúu* fathers” would be the direct senior nephew of the presiding tribal chief from the chiefly clan. In this structural context, while the clan–sodality arm’s-length relation can remain strong, the junior-senior age-sets and/or junior-senior age-grade autonomy can become compromised and breached in that the junior age-sets may be encouraged by their “*irakúu* fathers” of the age-sets of the senior age-grade, particularly the boon companions of one of the sodality chiefs whose direct matrilineal uncle is the current chief, to favor choosing as their peer leader a close unilateral relative of their boon companion (e.g., this relative being the direct nephew of a senior age-grade sodality chief), who in turn was the senior nephew of the ranking presiding tribal chief of their complementary heterarchical tribal or tribal-chiefdom community.

This breaching of the autonomy between junior and senior age-sets or age-grades would probably not occur in most cases, and in a given heterarchy, should influence of this sort be attempted, considerable resistance would be raised. When it did occur initially, it would probably be interpreted as simply circumstantial, coincidental. For example, the argument might be that the young senior nephew of a senior age-set sodality leader (i.e., a sodality chief), was chosen by this nephew’s junior age-set as its peer leader strictly on merit.

However, the autonomy has been breached in these circumstances—whether admitted or not. Hence, a competitive situation is set up. This situation might then promote a more deliberate breaching of the clan-sodality autonomy that I noted above—namely, an ambitious family might be motivated to encourage the age-set companions of their own young nephew “to look carefully” at their companion as their possible peer leader. This same ambitious family might continue breaching the clan-sodality autonomy in each promotional step in order to enhance the likelihood that their young male relative would be promoted as a sodality leader in step with the promotion of his age-set in the sodality hierarchy and, finally, as one who had “achieved” the status of a senior sodality chief, be favored to be selected to be the presiding chief of the complementary heterarchical tribal community.

Hence, several linked practices of favoritism could become established. While certainly this favoritism entailed breaching the clan-sodality autonomy, as well as senior-junior age-grade autonomy, interestingly, this systematic breaching would not formally reduce the eligibility requirements for the tribal chiefly position nor modify the community practice of selecting a candidate for this position on the grounds of the reputation forged by this person in pursuing sodality careers and possible leadership. However, it would tend to ensure that the primary mode of acquiring a reputation through the “achievement” of becoming a senior sodality chief was limited to fewer and fewer families. Breaching autonomy at the initial point of entry into the cult sodality could lead to one or two families competing back and forth by monopolizing between themselves the peer-based selection in favor of their young nephews. If one of these families came to present a successful sequence of senior sodality chiefs through this complex breaching of sodality autonomy, this might squeeze out the competing family, and a closed circle would be formed. The process

would be institutionalized as each new cycle of junior age-sets would start to take as the *principled norm* their choosing a senior nephew of the senior sodality chief as among their age-set peer leaders—should persons of this standing be among them, despite the possibility that they lacked the requisite character of a good leader. As a given age-set is promoted, the peer leader takes on more important sodality leadership. When the community chief dies, his senior nephew, now the senior sodality chief, retires from the sodality, and as the singular candidate, he is selected by the community council “on his merit” to be the successor of his deceased uncle. He fulfills the traditional eligibility criteria, being a senior male of the matrilineal clan holding the custodial sacred bundle of the presiding chiefly position, and he is selected in the traditional manner, on the basis of “reputation” established by his achievements outside the kinship sphere. Hence, it is still *de jure* necessary to be a member of the chiefly clan in order to be eligible to become a candidate for chief, and it is also still *de facto* necessary to achieve a reputation for leadership via becoming a leading senior sodality chief. But what has happened is that it has become the *de jure* principled sodality rule that the companions constituting the junior age-set that have the senior nephew of the senior sodality chief as one of themselves selects this person as their peer leader, who, in turn, pursues his sodality career as the likely future singular chief of his complementary heterarchical community. At this point, since selective singular candidature has emerged and become institutionalized, the community from whom this person comes can be characterized as a *complementary heterarchical chiefdom*, and the chiefly position can be referred to as a singular chief.

What has happened historically? A matrilineal extended family has emerged from within the total set of extended families constituting the chiefly matriclan, and this family has monopolized the senior sodality chiefly position that largely determines who will be selected

“on merit” to be the next community chief. At this point, occupying the community’s presiding chiefly position is based on selective singular candidature without any change to the community’s eligibility or kinship rules (e.g., without requiring encapsulating the chiefly extended family by its monopolizing the right to a descent line so as to constitute itself as a singular *matrilineage* within the matrilateral chiefly clan). As a result the community has unwittingly transformed into a fully fledged complementary heterarchical chiefdom. Therefore, this selective singular candidature only mimics descent-based inheritance since, in fact, the kinship principle remains matrilinear filiation and since selection of the chief is by “achievement.”

But this account still lacks an important factor, and this is the role of the *boon companion* since, as I argue below, the boon companion relation is what enables a type of encapsulation of the chiefly family within the complementary heterarchical chiefdom while fully respecting the traditional exogamous unilateral clan structure. In fact, by elucidating the role of boon companionship, I demonstrate this modeling of the possible emergence of selective singular candidature by showing how other anomalies in the social ranking system that Knight has illuminated, but left unresolved, can be accounted for through arguing that, typically, as the effect of systematic breaching of sodality autonomy occurs in a given community, an alliance emerges between the family of the chief and the family of his boon companion via reciprocal preferential cross-cousin marriage mediated by boon companionship.

Demonstrating the Selective Singular Candidature Modal Process

As I noted earlier in Chapter 12, while a real shift from a filiation-based matrilateral to a descent-based matrilineal system is possible, it could not occur in a piecemeal or selected manner such that a

family becomes encapsulated as a ruling lineage while the rest of the community, including the families making up the rest of the clan of the “ruling lineage,” remains in a state of unilateral filiation. Any real shift would be global, ramifying across the system. However, in the examples of chiefdom communities, the Natchez and the Timucua (treated in conformity with the monistic chiefdom polity model), Knight claims that only the chiefly extended family and immediate collateral relatives adopted lineal descent while the clans in general retained unilateral filiation. The collateral relatives, he claims, became the “aristocracy.” But these collateral lineages were only counted for four generations, and relatives affiliated beyond this were excluded, thereby being simply “commoners.” This means that while a woman whose great-grandmother was the direct sister of the chief of her generation would herself be a member of the aristocracy, her own daughter, the great-great-granddaughter, would not, although, of course, her daughter would still be a member of the chiefly unilateral matriclan. This truncation may have neatly encapsulated the chiefly extended family in a moving time capsule, but I contend that it also means this mother-daughter filial chain sequence (and mother-son, also) was not a real descent line. I claim this because the fifth generation+ of daughters (and sons) would not have chiefly rank, nor could they, or else there would be no truncation of this sort. Some rule or combination of factors other than descent must have been at work. In fact, as I suggest below, there likely were. Before discussing this matter, however, I will note that Knight also points out that another apparent “lineal” descent was practiced, and also limited to four generations. In this case, it was traced through the chief’s sons only (not his daughters). In a matrilateral system, this “line” is referred to by Knight as the agnatic “line” of the chief; and it passes from the chief to his sons, and their sons, and their sons, who would be the great-grandsons of the former chief. Again it is terminated by the fourth generation.

Thus two contrasting cognatic and agnatic parent-child filial chains were institutionalized, each truncated at the fourth generation, and while the cognatic chain delineating “aristocratic” status through the sisters of the singular chief incorporated both nephews and nieces of the chief, the agnatic “aristocratic” chain delineating status incorporated only the sons and not the daughters of this chief. The fact that the agnatic and not the cognatic chain of filiation is restricted to sons (i.e., excludes the chiefly daughters) is puzzling and, again, suggests that, as in the cognatic case, the filial chain from parent to child is not a lineal descent line, as such. I suggest that its gender-specificity—sons only—is grounds to postulate that what is being manifested here is a chaining not of kin but of companions who were affiliated to the same senior age-grade relative, the chief as father of his son and uncle of his nephew, and this affiliation was replicated through the generations. Therefore, as a chaining of companions, linked by a common senior age-grade relative, the father of one and the uncle of the other, this is as much the outcome of a cult sodality organization as a kinship filiation system. That is, these intergenerational chains appear to combine several factors whereby the extended matrilineal chiefly family, once established, persists through time, giving the appearance of a lineal inheritance process while, in fact, the unilateral filiation rules are intact. How would this work?

As I noted in my earlier discussion of companion or *irakúu* relations of the matrilineal Hidatsa, typically an *irakúu* age-set had members from more than one of the matrilineal clans of a community. But it would also have some companions who would be agnates. They were agnates because their fathers were of the same matrilineal clan. So while a given age-set might consist mostly of *irakúu* companions from different matrilineal clans, an age-set would not uncommonly have one or more subgroups of agnatically related *irakúu*. I also noted that

the Hidatsa recognized that the agnatic matriclan of the deceased (i.e., the matriclan of the deceased's father, and not the deceased's cognatic matriclan), constituted the main mourners who were responsible to organize and manage the mortuary rituals (Bowers 1965, 75-76). Hence, the chief mourners of a deceased male would be agnates, and among them would be some who were also his *irakúu* or companions. Now, whenever possible, an individual Hidatsa man made clear who among his companions were to receive his prized possessions when he died, and these were typically his closest friends (i.e., his closest *irakúu*). Earlier I suggested using the term *boon companion* to refer to such *irakúu*, and it would likely be that agnatically linked *irakúu* would also be boon companions. Furthermore, as noted earlier, a given age-set sodality was the collective recipient of the rituals conveyed to it from its immediately senior age-set, and both senior and junior age-sets would have agnatically-related subsets. Each of these was trained in the ritual usufruct copyright by an agnatic "*irakúu*-father" of the senior age-set, and this "master-apprentice" relation was spoken of as the "*irakúu* father-*irakúu* son" relation. This same arrangement was repeated with each subsequent age-set ritual conveyancing event. Therefore, I have suggested that these "apprentices" constituted a subgroup of companions within their age-set that could be appropriately termed in English *boon companions*. Hence, all this means that the boon companions of a deceased would be active in his mortuary rituals both as agnates and as *irakúu*.

In structural terms, the above Hidatsa pattern by which postulated boon companions came about roughly parallels the Natchez and Timucua pattern with regard to the sons of the deceased chief having special or preferential recognition. This would apply particularly to the senior son but, by extension, it would apply to all the deceased chief's sons. That is, I postulate that the critical position

that the senior son of a singular chief, in particular, filled when his father died and that gave him the preferential recognition that Knight speaks of as an agnatic “aristocrat” was based both on being the son of the chief and, in particular, the “boon-companion” of the next chief.⁶ As the senior son of the deceased chief and, in virtue of his standing as an agnate through his father to the chiefly matrilineal family of his father’s sister, he had a special relation with his male cross-cousin, the senior nephew of his deceased father—that is, the senior son of his deceased father’s senior sister. Hence, his patrilineal cross-cousin would become the new chief. I suggest that this dual *irakúu*/agnatic relation binding these two men constituted them as standing in a type of boon-companionship relation. Indeed, this relation would likely have been developed when both young “cousins” were starting on their age-set sodality careers, and of course, they would probably have been in the same age-set. Given the emergence of the process postulated above of favoring selecting the chief’s senior nephew as the next singular chief in virtue of having “achieved” senior sodality chiefly leadership, it is likely that there would have been a parallel process in which this senior nephew reciprocally favored his patrilineal cross-cousin, the senior son of his uncle—the singular chief—as his first, or boon, companion in his sodality career. Thus, when the nephew became the new singular chief, his boon companion—namely, the senior son of the deceased singular chief—would accompany him as the “boon-companion-of-the-chief,” probably to become his special advisor or speaker.

Of course, this boon-companion relationship binding these males who were also cross-cousins, the chief’s senior son and senior nephew, is not identical to the Hidatsa boon-companion relationship since the latter were agnatic parallel cousins as well as *irakúu* while the former were agnatic cross-cousins. However, the cross-cousin relation linking the chief’s son and nephew could be and likely would

be easily reinforced to form a special type of boon companionship that would parallel the Hidatsa boon companionship if, in fact, their respective fathers had married each other's sisters. That is, if the chief married the (classificatory or direct) sister of the man who married his own sister, this would be a form of reciprocal cross-cousin marriage and, therefore, would respect the rule of matrilineal exogamy. And this means that the matrilineal of the deceased chief's son would be the matrilineal of the father of the new chief. In fact, this man, the deceased chief's brother-in-law/boon companion, would probably be the head of the matrilineal of the son of the deceased chief, the matrilineal of his mother. This also means, of course, that his mother and the father of the new chief were probably cross-siblings. Hence, the new chief and the deceased chief's son would be doubly related, the son of the deceased chief being the cognatic nephew of the father of the new chief, and the new chief, of course, being the cognatic nephew of the deceased chief through his mother's being the latter's (probably) senior sister. Indeed, the father of the new chief, as the husband of the deceased chief's sister and the brother of the deceased chief's wife, would likely have been the boon companion of the deceased chief. Since the new chief and the son of the deceased chief were also related as "boon companions," this mutual standing would promote their repeating the same exchange of sisters that their fathers are here postulated to have undertaken, thereby reproducing a close and special relation between the two matrilineal extended families of their two respective exogamous matrilineals.

Thus, what likely started as a reciprocal sister exchange between boon companions would emerge and become entrenched as a preferential cross-cousin marriage practice by which both families in the two matrilineals could discharge their mutual obligations. This would mean that it became obligatory for the senior son and the senior nephew of the singular chief to become boon companions in

the same age-set sodality so that this interfamily obligation could be discharged. In fact, preferential cross-cousin marriage could be generally practiced even when the community was a complementary heterarchical tribal community quite independently of the sodality formation, so its being entrenched as a preferential practice, in this case, would not be a major kinship or companionship innovation. The only innovations that would occur would be in the age-set practice of the companions of the age-set of the chief's nephew regularly choosing him as their peer leader and, of course, along with him, recognizing the special status of his boon companion and their companion, the son of the chief. And in marriage, what was simply a reciprocal sister-exchange between boon companions would become entrenched as a strong preferential, possibly prescriptive, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage practice.

A number of points that Knight (1990, 12) makes concerning the Timucua confirm the likelihood that the chiefly families practiced such preferential cross-cousin marriage. He lists the Timucua terms for what he refers to as the *agnatic lineage* and what I would call the chain of *chiefly boon-companion* positions (i.e., sons of the chief). According to Knight, the position of *ibitano* is filled by sons of the chief. He ranks this position of chiefly agnatic councilor as equivalent with the position of *inihana*, the chiefly cognatic councilors, whom he refers to as those who *lead the chief by the hand*. In effect, these would be the cognatic brothers of the new chief, who was referred to (and addressed?) as (the) *paracousi*. But his figure 1, (Knight 1990, 13) is not clear since it looks like *ibitano* and *inihana* positions are one generation below the chiefly position. However, since he refers to these as councilors of the chief, I find it unlikely that this would be the case, and I suggest that they were of the same generation so that the *ibitano* of the new chief were the sons of the deceased chief and the *inihana* of the new chief were his male siblings (i.e.,

the other matrilineal nephews of the deceased chief and also male cross-cousins of the deceased chief's sons). With respect to this generation, therefore, the sons of the new chief constitute the *toponole* and the *anacotima* constitute the nephews and nieces of the new chief. This can be extended to the next two descending generations, the *ibichara* and "second" *anacotima*, respectively, constituting the third generation following the deceased chief, and the *amalachini* and *afetima*, respectively, constituting the fourth generation. The fifth and final term in his list is *itorimitono*, which Knight translates as "not nobles or aristocrats," and it used to refer to both fifth generation agnates and cognates of the deceased chief. Hence, if the chief and his brother-in-law are related as matrilineal cross-cousins, then, according to my above analysis, through their joint sodality experiences, they would also stand to each other as boon companions. If this relation is replicated in the next generation, then the senior son of the deceased chief would be the boon companion of the new chief who, of course, is the deceased chief's nephew while his mother's husband (i.e., his father) would have been the boon companion of the deceased chief. In this reading, therefore, the above terms take on the following meanings. The *inihana* are positions that are occupied by the chief's cognatic siblings—that is, his own brothers and sisters (likely direct, since classificatory siblings would fall outside the extended family and within the chiefly clan, which Knight emphasized sustained matrilineal filiation); the *anacotima* are the sons and daughters of his sisters. In the above terms, although occupied by agnatic relatives of the chief, the *ibitano* and *toponole* positions—that is, the chief's sons and their sons, respectively—are not kinship but companionship positions. That is, the *ibitano* is the councilor or speaker position that the new chief's boon companion occupies when the old chief dies; and this boon companion/*ibitano*, of course, is also the son of the deceased chief. The *ibitano*'s own matrilineal

uncle would be the husband of the senior sister of his deceased father/chief; and she, in turn, was the mother of the new chief. If the position of boon companion/*ibitano* with respect to the new chief is occupied by the son of the deceased chief, then the position of *toponole* would be the term used in reference to the boon companion of the senior nephew of the new chief, and the person occupying this boon companion/*toponole* position, of course, would be the son of the new chief. Hence, among the principal councilors of the current chief of the community would be these agnatic boon-companions-of-chiefs, and the variations in the terms served primarily to specify the generation of chiefly-related boon-companionship. This means that rather than *itorimitono*, the fifth term, meaning, according to Knight (1990, 11-12) “non-noble or non-aristocrat,” it would generally be used to characterize and refer to all those members of the matriclan(s) to which the “chiefly boon-companions” and the “chiefly cognatic filiates” belonged but who were not eligible to be among these principal councilors (agnatic or cognatic) of the current chief.

Since according to my model, the boon companion relation of the chief's senior son↔senior-nephew-of-the-chief was an unwitting “down-the-generation-line” consequence of the initial preference of the community council to select as the next chief the senior sodality chief who was also the senior nephew of the chief, the boon-companion-of-the-chief position would be a position that was (probably) an unforeseen consequence of this emergent singular chiefly position. Therefore, this position is not a change in the matrilinear kinship rules but a change in the companionship rules and practices—namely, a change in the way companions were to select their peer leaders, and this was a specific change to the sodality leadership selection rules applicable to age-sets that included direct cognatic relatives (nephews) of the incumbent singular chief. The rule would be quite specific—namely, if one of the companions was the senior nephew of the chief,

he should be selected by his peers, one of whom would likely be the senior son of the chief, as age-set peer leader. In the course of time, as the age-set was promoted, this person would become a senior sodality chief and the only “worthy candidate” available for selection to occupy his uncle’s position when he died. This is a radical change in sodality selection rules caused by the transgression of the principle of clan-sodality autonomy, one that, if it were to occur, would likely do so only if the prior conditions were in place—namely, a bifurcated settlement articulation mode resulting from new ways of performing world renewal rituals, probably introduced by means of custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights, itself occurring in order to respond to perceived rising pollution of the immanently sacred environment caused by intensified subsistence practices.

Knight unwittingly reinforces this claim that the boon-companion-of-the-chief position correlates with selective singular candidature and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (initially reciprocal and then preferential or even prescriptive) when he points out that, according to the available French colonial records, the chief *preferred* that his brothers and cognatic male parallel cousins marry women from his wife’s matriclan. “Probably . . . the ascending statuses in this [chiefly agnatic] line were conferred by generations, perhaps asymmetrically to males only. In that case, the graded statuses would be applied to the sons, agnatic grandsons, and agnatic great-grandsons of chiefs. It is perhaps significant that the daughters of these agnatic nobles would have been commoners and would therefore have constituted a likely pool of eligible spouses for male matrilineal nobles. Such might indeed account for Le Moyne’s statement . . . that the paramount chief selected a wife ‘from among the daughters of his principal men’—a statement that would otherwise appear to contradict . . . [the claim of] noble exogamy” (1990, 12-13). What Knight does not mention is that it is also likely that the chief’s own sons and

their matrilineal cousins, cognates of the matriline of their mother, the wife of the chief, would be preferred spouses for the chief's nieces, just as his own father (i.e., his mother's husband) was from his wife's matriline, and probably the head of this matriline.

As I read it, this means that among the chief's "principal men" were *boon companions* of the current and previous chiefs, and indeed, the puzzle that Knight expressed earlier of why an emerging aristocratic elite would not eliminate the rule of exogamy is also answered. As he expressed this puzzle, "The nobles, having emerged through the exaltation of exogamous totemic groups, retained their exogamy even though that institution compelled their marriage with commoners and, for the noble males disinherited their children. It would therefore seem remarkable that the *hereditary elite did not eventually shed this burden and become endogamous*" (Knight 1990, 18, emphasis added). According to my analysis, however, eliminating exogamy or imposing endogamy was not required since preferential matrilineal cross-cousin marriage would serve the same purpose of generating a type of singular-chiefly-family encapsulation—preferential cross-cousin marriage between the same exogamous matrilineal extended families—without any formal qualitative modification of the kinship and marriage rules. Also, interestingly, this analysis suggests that, while the singular chiefly title *paracousi* would be a real community-wide title historically derived from the complementary heterarchical tribal days, the terminology used to delineate the positions related to at least the agnates (possibly also the cognates) of the singular chief were not originally community-wide terms but were, instead, terms used in the cult sodality heterarchy context. Hence, when a community that had emerged as a complementary heterarchical chiefdom moved back into the integrated posture, these titled agnatic and possibly cognatic positions would be exclusively appropriated by the two extended matrilineal families linked by this preferential matrilineal cross-cousin marriage alliance.

However, all this raises another issue. As noted above and in the previous chapter, according to Knight, the Timucua “descent” system was skewed in that only the sons of the chief traced “descent” for four generations, not the daughters, on the one hand, while both the nephews and nieces of the chief traced “descent” from him also for four generations. In both cases, the fifth generation descendants were not counted as “aristocrats.” As noted above, Knight suggests that the term *itorimitono* was used to refer to them as “non-nobles or non-aristocrats” (1990, 11-12). I suggested, in contrast, it would be generally used to refer to all those who were members of the clans of the “chiefly boon-companions” and the “chiefly cognatic filiates” but who were not eligible to be among these principal councilors (agnatic or cognatic) of the current chief. However, there is an even more plausible explanation of this term and why it was applied only to the fifth generation descendants. Since the typical Timucua chief “preferred” that his brothers and cognatic male cousins marry women from his wife’s matriline, and as I further suggested, given the likelihood under my model that the chief’s senior son and senior nephew were boon-companions, this preferential treatment would also be applied to his own sons and their matrilineal cousins, cognates of the matriline of the chief’s wife, so that they would be preferred spouses for his nieces. This is a logical entailment given the above discussion. Now, although direct-sister exchange between boon companions may have been the most preferred way of discharging obligations and reproducing and sustaining the boon companion relation, classificatory sisters of the same generation as the boon companions would also be plausible tokens of boon-companionship. How does this translate into the skewed “descent” lines? I suggest that these are not kinship structures as such but simply the result of preferential sister-exchange practices. The sister of the chief’s son is the preferred spouse for the chief’s son’s boon companion, the chief’s nephew.

And, of course, the sister of the nephew of the chief is the preferred spouse for the chief's son. The son's title does not translate as the "deceased chief's son" but as the "new chief's boon-companion." The sister or sisters of the deceased chief's son, of course, are simply sisters of the "new chief's boon-companion," and, as such, they have no title other than being preferred spouses for the nephews of their father. This would explain why only the sons of the chief, not the daughters, are given the recognition of a title, and this title has nothing to do with kinship relations as such, but of sodality/companionship relations. Of course, if the sister of the son of the deceased chief does marry the new chief, her brother's boon-companion, she will benefit from bearing the title of wife of the new chief—if there is such a title. With regard to the chief's nephews and nieces, they are cognates and, therefore, are equally recognized as such. And since the preferred spouses of the nephews are the sisters of their cross-cousins, the sons of the deceased chief, their own sisters are the preferred spouses of their deceased father's sons.

Now I suspect that generational distinction is drawn here in order to set priorities of preference. As noted above, although direct sister exchange is preferred, classificatory sisters are possible. And in many cases, direct sisters may not be available, particularly since the sisters of chief's sons and the nieces of chiefs were autonomous agents. They would have to consent to any such marriage. Therefore, as a matter of respect, some formal rule by which to prioritize among classificatory sisters (i.e., female parallel cousins) would be traditional in such communities, since as I noted earlier, preferential marriages of this nature would not be limited to emergent complementary heterarchical chiefdoms but would be standard in such communities, even at the tribal level. Hence, the sister of a chiefly son who can point to her deceased grandfather as well as his deceased father as chiefs becomes a highly preferred spouse to marry the new chief over other

“sisters,” her parallel cousins whose own mothers were not wives of chiefs. This would equally apply to the chiefly family, of course. In effect, the fifth generation does not demarcate the termination of descent relations but the maximization of spousal preference in a matrilateral cross-cousin spousal exchange system. If so, then this would clearly eliminate any idea that the singular chief-to-son chain of filiation and the dual chief-to-nephew/niece chain of filiation were descent lines that just happened to be systematically truncated, as if “descent” can be simply denied after four generations. They would be more adequately characterized as modes for determining priority of preference among classificatory sisters/cousins by which two important families could maintain appropriate marriage alliance exchange, particularly in autonomist societies in which all arrangements, such as marriage, must be by consensus among all the relevant parties. As such, these chains of filiation were not the result of kinship structures, but simply the recruiting of kinship structures to establish equitable modes of sister-exchange between important exogamous families of a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community.

As I noted above, however, if this postulated time-traversing scenario were to occur at all, it would likely do so only when the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of a region had shifted into a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Since change in the sodality peer leader selection rules would have been the outcome of an initial transgression of the principle of autonomy between clans and sodalities, then probably only some—not all—of the cult sodalities of the regional complementary heterarchical communities would be subjected to the breaching of this principle. Therefore, the bifurcated posture is only an enabling/constraining condition for the emergence of selective singular candidature, an opportunity that might never be “seized.” Of course, if it was seized

then those participating sodalities that respected the arm's-length relation would come to perceive those sodalities whose community members transgressed it as highly problematic. Still, since sodalities also respected one another's autonomy, at first there would likely be only moderate, if any, overt disapproval expressed by those that upheld the arm's-length tradition in their own peer-based leadership selection. Nevertheless, the transgression would be noted, and if it continued, this could lead to intersodality and intra- and interheterarchy friction and the formation of factions, with possible splintering and disaffiliation leveraged by some factions. Hence, under the appropriate objective conditions, should this transgression of the traditional autonomist posture occur, it might be sufficient to instigate a final and abrupt fracturing of the heterarchy with either those cult sodalities that were upholding the traditional principle of clan-sodality autonomy (i.e., those whose communities retained the standing as complementary heterarchical tribes or at least the complementary heterarchical tribal chiefdom structure) abandoning the world renewal cult sodality heterarchy or else their remaining while being abandoned by those cult sodalities of the complementary heterarchical chiefdoms that historically accepted and now practiced this transgression as "normal," as deeply institutionalized.

Conclusion

Implicated in the substantive theoretical elucidation and analytical interpretation in this and the previous chapter is the hermeneutic spiral method. In this case, I have summarized Knight's notion of the exogamous ranked clan system that he has proposed as the template of his deemed Southeastern chiefdom polities, both historic and prehistoric. He used this model to interpret and explain the social structure of several historically known Southeastern communities, the Timucua, Natchez, Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, and other

communities. While I have agreed with parts of it, particularly his filiation/descent or unilateral/unilineal distinction, and his claim that only filiation was the primary rule east of the Rocky Mountains, I have had to critique this model in other particulars, showing where and why I disagree with it. It might be obvious that one of my primary concerns is that it is presented in ahistorical terms, as if the current knowledge we have of the structure of the historic Natchez, Timucua, and Coosa can be unproblematically projected into the precontact Mississippian era. Instead, I have argued that not only are the structures of these historical communities misconstrued, since, if my above modeling is adequate, some of these would have been more appropriately termed *complementary heterarchical chiefdoms* rather than *monistic chiefdom polities*, but also this structural formation would have been the “end state” of in situ transformational processes that were initiated well before the Spaniards arrived.

For a critique to be complete, however, it must not only point out problems and present an alternative theorization to the model being criticized, as I have done above, it must also ground this alternative in the same data sets, showing where the interpretation under the former is inadequate, and resolve these inadequacies through applying the alternative. All this calls for further testing by applying both models to the Southeastern Mississippian period archaeological record to show if equivalent contrasting results obtain. If so, this will demonstrate the greater explanatory adequacy of this alternative view and, of course, suggest reexamining the currently available data of both prehistoric and historic Southeastern communities. In the subsequent chapters, I apply the above two contrasting alternative readings to Moundville. The first or orthodox reading, of course, is that Moundville was a monistic chiefdom polity. The second, and the one I propose, is that this premier Mississippian period multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex of the Black Warrior River

Valley was initially a cluster of first-order world renewal cult sodality heterarchies that affiliated into a second-order heterarchy (and possibly achieved a third-order inclusive level). The question I want to explore and answer, therefore, is whether Moundville emerged and evolved as a monistic chiefdom polity or as a cult sodality heterarchy. The rest of Part III is devoted to this project, and I start in the next chapter by presenting and critiquing the monistic chiefdom view of Moundville.

NOTES

1. Taylor (1985, 275-77) specifically notes this in his discussion of the classical Greek polis, emphasizing that, in the social world of ancient Athens, the self-description these Greek communities used in referring to themselves as *equals* was not simply an objective description of their social world but was part of their ongoing constitution of this social system. As Taylor has put it, "A term like 'equals' had to be articulated in the polis, because it carried this sense of mutually non-subordinated agents who are nevertheless part of the same society, who owe allegiance to the same laws and must defend them together. Equals, likes (*isoī, homoioi*), we are bound together, and yet also not hierarchically. Equals is the right term; and it had to be *articulated* in the society, because this kind of society, based on pride in this kind of ideal, could only exist if it was seen as an achievement, the avoidance of an alternative to which lesser peoples fell prey—the Persians in one context; in Pericles' exaltation of Athens, the comparison is with the Spartans. This is why there is no such society without some term like 'equals'" (1985, 277). Of course, our overall understanding of the social structure of Athens would lead us to categorizing it as a dominance-based social system having a mixed set of leveling mechanisms applied largely only to the political sphere.

Athenians—unless slaves—were equal in this sphere (i.e., the principle of equality was manifested as the distribution across the adult citizenry of balanced dominance, at least for the males).

2. Since agentive autonomy was the prevailing principle, individuals could not have marriage imposed on them; and while reciprocal exchange of spouses across families was likely, it would be preferential and not prescriptive in nature. For example, Bowers (1965, 461-62) notes that the Hidatsa did not recognize asymmetrical or power-over relations between men and women—and this clearly included husband-wife relations (there were no Hidatsa terms for *husband* and *wife*). While it was firmly believed that a man was able to acquire great sacred power from an older man with whom he conditionally shared his wife's sexual powers, this was always done only with the full consent of the female spouse. "Ceremonial sexual license was not limited solely to performances of this [Painted Red Stick buffalo calling ceremony] and age-grade transfers but was individually practiced on the initiative both of young ambitious men and old widowers. A young man desirous to undertake a military expedition far from home to avenge the death of a brother or other clansman, with the consent of his wife, often sought supernatural powers to supplement his own" (1965, 462).

3. It was possible, however, for individuals from allied cult sodalities of different villages to effect fictive kinship relations by becoming adopted brothers, thereby likely also becoming "boon companions."

4. It is possible that, in some cases, among the Plains communities, groups of age-mates who were disaffected and frustrated by reluctance of their "*irakúu* fathers" to convey their ritual usufruct prerogatives to their "*irakúu* sons" would be provoked to separate from the village as a group and set up their own "camp," along with their families and those other relatives who were in sympathy. A number of cases of

“camps” or “gangs” of young men and their wives, children, and elderly dependents are reported in the various missionary and trader’s journals, and these may have been disaffected sodalities that were able to attract enough of their close kin so as to set up their own communities. In fact, there was a historical case of this sort among the Hidatsa; and it was only the imposition of the reservation system by the American Federal Government that forced this separate village, founded by a disaffected sodality, to “rejoin” the village. Thus, the establishment of new integrated villages may not be the result of kinship-group fissioning but the separation of ranked sodality groups. A given group of a certain seniority would likely have enough married members with families so as to incorporate representatives of all or most of clans and, therefore, would be able to sustain autonomy while participating in the network of integrated villages of the regional social system of complementary heterarchical communities.

5. While a father, for example, would likely strongly desire to see his son’s, or if in a matrilineal system, as an uncle, see his nephew’s standing in the community advance as he grew and matured, he would normally not translate this into a strategy of intervening in his son’s (nephew’s) age-set since that would be a breach of the principle of autonomy. Desires do not translate directly into intentions; and a person’s sense of duties, which are second-order values of the community and are embodied in the ethical structures of autonomous agents, will lead her/him often to override personal desires and wants.

6. This would apply to all the sons of the chief, of course, who would be “paired” with their equivalent agnatic cousins as companions in their respective age-sets.

CHAPTER 14

Moundville as a Paramount Monistic Chiefdom Polity and Cemetery CBL

Moundville is among the largest of the Mississippian period multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza site complexes in the Southeast (figure 14.1). It is located on the bluff edge of the 14 to 15 m high Hemphill Bend terrace overlooking the Black Warrior River Valley about 24 km downstream from the Fall Line at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In overall size and number of mounds, it is actually fourth or fifth in size among all the known Mississippian period multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza site complexes. The most recent and exhaustive overview of the Moundville site now places the total known number of mounds at 32 (Knight 2010, 1-2). However, most Moundville architectural analyses and interpretations focus on the primary mounds, which number between 23 or 24, and these are further subcategorized into the major and the lesser mounds. Traditionally, these have been postulated to function as “elite” residential locales and mortuary mounds. Knight observes, “In my reading of this phenomenon, each elite residential mound is paired with at least one adjacent mound showing a mortuary use. This suggests that the basic building block of the Moundville mound group, so often repeated throughout the Mississippian sphere, is the functional pairing of a noble residence with an ancestral mortuary temple. It seems reasonable to suppose that each such pair at Moundville is an architectural manifestation of one of the primary corporate segments of the Moundville community” (1998, 51-52).¹

Of course, Cahokia in the northern expanse of the American Bottom is the largest known Mississippian locale, and I have already noted it as consisting of 100+ mounds and multiple plazas, characterizing it as embodying both a third-order and a fourth-order cult sodality heterarchy. The fourth-order heterarchy is manifested in the Central Precinct with its large open-sided U-shaped palisade embracing the Grand Plaza and its associated multiple mounds, including the monumental Monks Mound, the largest known North American earthwork north of Mexico; and the third-order heterarchy is manifested in the dual concentric set of twelve or so second-order heterarchies encircling the Central Precinct. I have also argued that the East St. Louis site, ranking second in overall size to Cahokia

Figure 14.1. Schematic Layout of the Moundville Site. (From Knight and Steponaitis 1998, p. 3, figure 1.1. Used with the kind permission of Vernon James Knight, Jr. and Vincas P. Steponaitis.)

proper, having an estimated 40 to 45 mounds (it may also have several auxiliary plazas) constitutes a major second-order heterarchy (or possibly another third-order heterarchy) that was itself affiliated with the fourth-order Cahokian Central Precinct heterarchy. The St. Louis site built on the west bank of the Mississippi opposite the East St. Louis site was likely the third in overall size of these great multiple-mounded mound-and-complex sites, having approximately 24 to 25 mounds (Pauketat ed. 2005a). As I suggested in Chapter 2, it was another second-order heterarchy that, along with the East St. Louis site, was affiliated with the great fourth-order (or possibly fifth-order) Cahokian Central Precinct heterarchy with its monumental Monks Mound.² In fact, in overall size, the postulated second-order cult sodality of St. Louis probably ties with the two Yazoo Basin Mississippian period sites of Winterville and Lake George (Brain 1991, 96; 1989, 10-18; Williams and Brain 1983, 2-4).

Given this comparative context, while clearly not matching Cahokia in size or complexity, Moundville would nevertheless rank about fourth in overall size (in terms of mounds and plaza), and therefore, I postulate that it probably embodied a second-order or possibly a third-order cult sodality heterarchy. Furthermore, there is no question that in terms of the number of major mounds as well as the known nonmound components, Moundville was the outstanding or premier Mississippian period multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex in its sector of the Southeast—that is, in eastern Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida. Its central plaza is about 32 ha and, very like the Cahokian Central Precinct, it had a large C-shaped or U-shaped palisade with regularly spaced bastions surrounding it on its southern, eastern, and western sides. (There has been no timber wall reported as being built on the northern side of the terrace overlooking the Black Warrior River.) There are about a dozen other known small mound-and-plaza site complexes located

in the Black Warrior River Valley, most on the upper terraces of the valley bottom, as well as a few located slightly away from the bluff tops overlooking the valley (figure 14.2). These are found along the river both to the northeast and the southwest of Moundville. However, it is now known that these latter sites, or at least most of them, have only a single mound each and were constructed and used later in and following the period when Moundville reached its zenith, which was about AD 1250-1300 (Welch 1998).

The Tombigbee River Valley should not be ignored. The Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers juncture southwest of the Moundville site. A series of single mound-and-plaza sites on the Tombigbee upstream from this juncture apparently largely replicates the known single mound-and-plaza site complexes on the Black Warrior River. The best known in terms of on-site excavation and surface surveying is Lubbug Creek, a Mississippian single mound-and-plaza site complex located on a large west-bank horseshoe bend opposite the mouth of Lubbug Creek, about 50-60 km west of Moundville (Blitz 1993, 50; 1983, 198-200). Upstream and downstream from Lubbug Creek are several other single-mounded mound-and-plaza site complexes. There has been considerable discussion in the literature about the relations between the groups responsible for the Tombigbee and Black Warrior sites, a discussion largely conducted with the shared assumption that mound-and-plaza complexes equate with monistic chiefdom polities (Blitz 1993, 50; 1983, 198-200). I will not be able to reexamine this relation in the opposing terms—namely, that these were first-order cult sodality heterarchies that may have been affiliated with Moundville as part of constituting the latter as a second-order or possibly third-order heterarchy. However, it would be worthwhile to do so.

Figure 14.2. Mound-and Plaza Site Complexes of the Mississippian Period of the Black Warrior River Valley. (Welch 1998, p. 137, figure 7.1. Used with the kind permission of Vernon James Knight, Jr. and Vincas P. Steponaitis.)

In the introductory chapter of an overview of Moundville and its region, Knight and Steponaitis (1998, 7) presented the definitive uncalibrated radiocarbon chronology (table 14.1). It was based on the

seriation of the ceramics of the Moundville site, which Steponaitis accomplished in his classic study of the Moundville ceramic record (1983, 88-91), combined with uncalibrated radiocarbon dates. However, recently Steponaitis and Knight (2004, 180, note 4) have pre-

	Ceramic Phase (Subphase)	Developmental Stage
AD 1600	Moundville IV	Collapse and Reorganization
AD 1500	(late) Moundville III (early)	
AD 1400	(late) Moundville II (early)	The Paramountcy Entrenched
AD 1300		Regional Consolidation
AD 1200	(late) Moundville I (early)	Initial Centralization
AD 1100		
AD 1000	(late) West Jefferson (early)	Intensification of Local Production
AD 900		

Table 14.1. Uncalibrated Chronology and Developmental Stages of the Black Warrior River Valley Mississippian Period. (From Knight and Steponaitis 1998, p.8, figure 1.2. Used with the kind permission of Vernon James Knight, Jr. and Vincas P. Steponaitis.)

sented an updated calibrated chronology. I have summarized both in table 14.2. They commented briefly that the major differences between the two chronologies occur with the West Jefferson and Moundville I phases, while the calibrated dates of the Moundville

II, III, and IV phases remain largely unchanged from the earlier uncalibrated dates. “In effect, the two earliest phases [West Jefferson and Moundville I] have been shortened and their starting dates have been moved about a century later than previously estimated, while the three latest phases have been left more or less the same” (2004, 180). Later, I will address the differences they note for the Late Woodland period West Jefferson phase and the subsequent Mississippian period Moundville I phase, since these differences raise some important issues.

	1998 (uncalibrated)	2004 (calibrated)
Late Woodland Period		
West Jefferson phase	900-1050	1020-1120
Mississippian Period		
Moundville I phase	1050-1250	1120-1260
Moundville II phase	1250-1400	1260-1400
Moundville III phase	1400-1550	1400-1520
Moundville IV phase	1550-1650	1520-1650

Table 14.2. Uncalibrated and Calibrated Chronologies of Moundville and Region. (Derived from Knight and Steponaitis 1998, figure 1.2, p. 8; Steponaitis and Knight, 2004, 180, note 4.)

While the Mississippian period of this region is divided into four phases, Moundville I, II, III, and IV, the main focus here will be on the first three phases. The final phase, Moundville IV, ca. AD 1520–1650, was previously referred to as the protohistoric Alabama River phase and its cultural complex was termed the *Burial Urn Culture* (Sheldon 1974, 30). The latter part of this phase is now usually treated as incorporating the early period of the European intervention, actually initiated prior the Soto entrada of 1539-43 and extending to about AD 1600-1650. In fact, the period 1600-1700 is often referred to as the “lost century.” As I noted in Chapter 12, Knight (1990, 9) pointed

out that there is effectively little or no recorded information about what must have been very critical events and processes that unfolded in this inland region of the Southeast. It was a profoundly important period, and it has raised many controversies among archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnohistorians, and historians concerning the possible social and cultural effects of the large-scale destruction of the indigenous population by introduced European diseases, major population movements, the reemergence in most areas of the nucleated, or what I term the *integrated village system*, and so on (Galloway 1995, 2, 5-6, 28-30, 139-43; Knight 1990; King 2006, 180; Muller 1998, 186). However, the period and its social and material dynamics go beyond the temporal or thematic scope of this book and therefore will not be discussed in any detail here.

The Monistic Chieftdom View of Moundville

I will continue to use the term *paramount chieftdom* in speaking of the social nature of Moundville under the Chieftdom Polity model, even though in his most recent overview and analysis, Knight (2010, 360-65) has stopped referring to it in these terms. While he still speaks of Moundville as a chieftdom and treats it as a polity that incorporated the Black Warrior Valley below the Fall Line, he now speaks of it as consisting of a set of individually ranked communities, apparently simple chieftdom polities, that were “egalitarian” among themselves but collectively were responsible for the Moundville site per se. I comment in more detail on this view later. For my immediate purposes, I will address the claim that Moundville was a paramount chieftdom.

As noted above, Knight recognizes 32 mounds, and possibly several other mounds that are currently unrecognized, as making up the major earthwork constructions of the Moundville site on the bluff of the large Hemphill Bend terrace with the Black Warrior

River flowing at its base (figure 14.1). In terms of the current orthodox model, 19 or 20 of these are major platform mounds having their sides oriented to the cardinal points and being distributed in a roughly rectangular manner framing the 32 ha plaza. The C-shaped or U-shaped palisade that delineated and embraced the total 75 ha of the site and its multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex was actually initiated in the late Moundville I phase and it apparently was maintained and used until the end of the early Moundville II phase. This period—the late Moundville I phase and possibly into and/or toward the end of the early Moundville II phase (ca. cal. AD 1200 to ca. cal. AD 1300)—is now characterized as initiated by a local “big bang” of construction, ca. cal. 1200-1250) during which most of the mounds, the plaza, and the palisade were built (parts of the plaza required leveling and filling), accompanied by an intensification of sedentary occupation of the site (although in the most recent characterization of this “big bang,” this has also been modified, as I discuss later). The termination of the period has been characterized, under this view, as marked by a rapid reversal of occupation as the majority of the permanent sedentary population emigrated and took up residence in farmsteads and hamlets dispersed across the Black Warrior Valley countryside.³ However, according to this scenario, while the number of permanent occupants dropped dramatically, Moundville continued to be very actively used over most of the Moundville II and III phases as a valley-wide mass cemetery—or, as Knight and Steponaitis have termed it, as the sacred *necropolis* of the region (1998, 14-17; Wilson 2008, 24-25). By the early Moundville IV phase, even this use dropped off very rapidly (Steponaitis 1998, 40).

The major mounds have been labeled in alphabetical order with Mounds A and B being the two largest earthworks. Mound A is located in the center of the plaza. However, its main N-S axis actually is oriented a bit east of north while the N-S axis of the plaza is

oriented slightly west of north (figure 14.1). There are 15 other major mounds that compose the roughly rectangular frame of the plaza. Mound B is usually treated as the second largest mound, roughly centered toward the northern end of the plaza (and it includes an adjacent attached platform referred to as Mound V). Then there are Mounds C and D, the two northernmost major mounds. “North of the plaza-periphery group, isolated on ridges formed by deep ravines, are mounds C and D, both flat-topped earthworks known to contain high-status burials” (Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 5). The 15 or so other mounds that compose the roughly rectangular frame of the plaza are referred to as the plaza-periphery group. Since Mound C and Mound D are the two northernmost major earthworks and stand somewhat isolated from the plaza-periphery set by being on peninsular-like areas immediately overlooking the terrace bluff edge, this positioning would seem to separate them from the plaza-periphery group. However, Knight (1998) speaks of these as being a formal part of the total group of mounds, which he treats as intrinsically manifesting the dominance-based hierarchical relations structuring the associated social groups responsible for their construction and use. “The larger mounds of the plaza-periphery group are found in the northern section of the site. High-status burials also tend to be found in the northern section. Nonmounded architecture is documented near the northeast and northwest margins of the plaza, and the two mounds yielding the most richly endowed burials, C and D, are also the northernmost mounds at the site” (1998, 51). Knight adds the important comment that this north-to-south larger-to-smaller grading of mound sizes has been assessed by Christopher Peebles as manifesting rank ordering of the different corporate groups responsible for these mounds. “Peebles summarizes this as a structured utilization of ‘status space . . .’, generally degrading from north to south” (1998, 50-51).

The multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex can be further formally sectoried into a series of grouped mounds, usually one large mound paired with one or two smaller but still major mounds (Knight 1998, 50-52; 2010, 361-63). As noted above, since no burials were found on or in the large mounds (at least, until recently), while burials, if not common, were found in the paired smaller mound or mounds, the larger platform mound in each group has been interpreted as serving as the foundation for the residence or residences of the elite leader(s) (chiefs) of the corporate group responsible for it, while the smaller mound or mounds served as mortuary locales, characterized by most archaeologists as elite cemeteries.⁴ However, burials have also been found quite prolifically to the north and east of the main mound-and-plaza complex, as well as in the zones between the multiple mounds. These have been claimed to be major cemeteries. For example, there is a fairly dense concentration of burials south of Mounds E and G. Also cemetery CBL zones with numerous burials have been reported and excavated in the northwest sector of the Moundville site, surrounding Mound R (Peebles 1979, 659-72). Burials have also been identified in direct association with small structures constituting what are typically interpreted to be the households of the kinship-based groups that made up the majority of the sedentary population of the site, at least during the Moundville I and early Moundville II phases. These are claimed to have been formed as spatially distinct clusters dispersed around the periphery of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex. It is also claimed that some of the dwelling-like structures making up these clusters were recruited as cemetery CBLs, but according to Gregory Wilson (2008, 50-65) only following the Moundville I phase. That is, the Moundville I phase is interpreted by him as a period of these being used as domestic kinship residential dwellings only.

The residue of what is now referred to as Mound X has been located on the far eastern side of the Moundville site (Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 5-6; also see figure 14.1). In fact, the prehistoric builders partially dismantled this mound, apparently so that the palisade could be built across it in order to define and establish the eastern, southern, and western sides of the site. This palisade was subsequently rebuilt several times. Its initial construction apparently occurred when the total multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex was laid out and constructed, starting at the end of the early Moundville I phase, ca. cal. AD 1200 (table 14.2; also see Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 15; Knight 1998, 52). Based on ceramic data, Steponaitis (1992, 10) has argued that Mound O also likely predated the palisade and possibly was at least partly or fully contemporary with Mound X, since he identified the associated ceramics as early Moundville I phase types. He has also noted that it is quite possible that the lower levels of several other mounds of the plaza-periphery group were contemporary with Mounds O and X. According to Paul Welch (1998, 162), this is a very real possibility.

In their 1998 chapter, using the ceramic data primarily derived from Moore's limited 1905 and 1906 excavations of the summits of the mounds, which also were fairly shallow and, therefore, did not penetrate anywhere near to the bases of the mounds, Knight and Steponaitis had this to say about the chronology of the mounds: "Working with the curated collections from the 1930s, we have recognized that every mound for which we have sherd data has a strong [late] Moundville I phase component. This suggests, contrary to previous scenarios . . . that construction of all the major mounds was begun at roughly the same time, between about AD 1200 and 1250 . . . [and] it was during this time that the basic plan of the center was established, including the layout of the central plaza and the positioning of central and peripheral mounds. Built into this configuration

was an east-west bilateral symmetry, a pairing of residential mounds with mortuary temple mounds, and a ranking of social space” (1998, 14-15). However, more can now be said. I have noted that following this 1998 volume, Knight undertook a decade-long major project of excavating several key mounds and was able to clarify the chronology considerably. In fact, he made some adjustments to the assessment he and Steponaitis made in 1998, but for the most part the above summarized framework has been confirmed. That is, Knight maintains that about AD 1200 the “political consolidation . . . that marks the emergence of the Moundville chiefdom” was initiated, “with Moundville as the capital town.” Nevertheless, he has pushed forward the latter part of the major construction activity and claims “that the decades following AD 1250 saw large-scale building initiatives” (2010, 361). That is, it was in the second half of the thirteenth century following ca. AD 1250 that “most residential areas within the community were abandoned and were replaced over time by a number of corporate cemeteries that were used by people who lived elsewhere in the Moundville domain but who claimed ancestral ties to specific spaces within the center’s landscape” (2010, 361). Now under this view, during what he now refers to as the middle Moundville II phase, between AD 1250-1300, Moundville was already abandoned by the great majority of its population, and interestingly, according to this scenario some of the most intense construction work was still to come, from 1300 to 1350, the last portion of Moundville II phase.⁵

Extensive excavations in 1939-1940 along the planned route for the Moundville park roadway revealed discrete clusters of dwelling-like structures, many with associated burials. Wilson (2008, 30) has noted that, unfortunately, there was no systematic recording of the stratigraphy of these excavations. Only the plans and the horizontal positioning of artifacts and features were recorded. In some cases, fortunately, burials were noted and recorded so that Wilson was able

to work out their relative vertical positioning and, for this reason, he has recognized that a number superimposed each other, and a few also superimposed the wall trenches of the structures with which they were spatially associated (Wilson 2008, 85-86). Interestingly, however, the large majority of the burials found in association with these dwellings—and not all dwellings were found with burials—were positioned within the floor area of the structures (see Chapter 18, figure 18.1). However, Wilson also comments that some groups had clusters of burials in a space that was surrounded by a number of structures, as if the space were a courtyard, and some of these burials also superimposed the framing structures (see Chapter 18, figure 18.2). Now while Wilson asserts that most if not pretty well all these burials were carried out in the Moundville II and III phases, I will argue later that the total set of burials can be reasonably and proportionally distributed rather evenly across the initial Moundville I and early Moundville II phase times through to the abandonment of the site, which probably was largely effected by the end of the Moundville III phase.

I know some readers will find this a very contentious statement. As I noted above, Wilson has recently argued that the burials demonstrate that these “residential” structures were abandoned many years prior to the addition of the burials. He puts it this way: “Indeed, not a single burial from the Roadway is superimposed by a wall-trench or single-post building foundation. Moreover, Steponaitis’s (1983, 1998) analysis of mortuary vessels at Moundville has revealed that only one of the 34 datable Roadway burials (SK2884) positively dates to the Moundville I phase.” He concludes: “During the Moundville II and III phases, Moundville was transformed into a necropolis in which the rural populace of the Black Warrior Valley interred their dead” (2008, 85-86). I take issue with this claim, and I critically address it in considerable depth and detail in Chapter 18.

Since the earliest Mississippian period occupation of Moundville is now dated ca. cal. AD 1120, with the later half or Late Moundville I phase starting ca. cal. AD 1200 and extending to ca. AD 1260, it is likely that Mound O, Mound X, and possibly one or two other small mounds were the only mound constructions at the site prior to ca. cal. AD 1200. By themselves, these would not be particularly impressive features compared to the later mounds, such as Mound A and Mound B, the latter being among the largest known earthen constructions in the region south of Cahokia. Steponaitis also notes that the Asphalt Plant Mound site (1Tu50), located less than 1 km to the northeast of the plaza (figure 14.2), displays ceramics that suggest it is largely contemporary with Mound X and Mound O. He concludes that these three known mounds, as well as any other currently unknown mounds of this time, were probably the individually separated ceremonial sites of a single but dispersed community of hamlets and farmsteads. "A broader examination of settlement data suggests that 1Tu50 may have been part of a dispersed community of farmsteads and hamlets, interspersed with small civic-ceremonial mounds, that covered the terrace on which Moundville is located. Indeed, most of the known Mississippian sheet-midden deposits in Moundville's vicinity date to the Moundville I phase and may largely predate the construction of Moundville's massive earthworks and plaza. If abundance of midden can be taken as an index of residential density, the observed pattern suggests that Moundville's resident population peaked in the first two centuries of its existence as a civic-ceremonial center, perhaps even *prior* to its emergence as a major regional center" (1992, 11, emphasis in original).⁶ He particularly emphasizes the nature of the artifact assemblage of the Asphalt Plant Mound site (1Tu50), pointing out that the ceramics were all shell-tempered, in contrast to the grog-tempered ceramics typical of the preceding West Jefferson phase of the Late Woodland period of this region, and

that the lithics were exotic, including tools of Mill Creek chert from southwest Illinois, as well as exotic chert from Tennessee, and shell artifacts made of Gulf Coast marine shell. Given the mound construction and an associated timber structure with wall trenches, he concludes that this site, as well as the sites which consisted of Mound O and Mound X and other possible mound sites in the immediate region, are the earliest of the known “civic-ceremonial center” locales in the Black Warrior Valley (Steponaitis 1992, 10-11).

As I noted above, other associated excavated materials in Moundville include structures displaying single-post walls, structures having a hybrid combination of both single-post and single-post/wall-trench walls, as well as structures displaying a full set of wall trenches. Margaret Scarry (1998, 100-101) excavated two tracts that Wilson (2008) refers to as the Riverside tracts, these being the Picnic Area (PA) tract and the East Conference Building (ECB) tract. She interprets all these structures as domestic dwellings. The PA structures and only some of the ECB structures are dated to the early Moundville I phase. Following Steponaitis (1992, 10) in this regard, she interprets these as farmstead groups participating in a dispersed community of sedentary farmsteads in association with several small ceremonial centers (i.e., Mounds X, O, and the Asphalt Plant Mound).

Since Steponaitis was writing about the occupation of the Moundville site prior to the construction of the palisade—that is, during the *early* Moundville I phase, ca. cal. AD 1120-1200—it is hard to estimate the population, particularly if he is right in saying that the area stretching from at least 100 m west of Mound O to the Asphalt Plant Mound, almost 1 km northeast and also near the bluff line, was occupied by this community or communities of dispersed hamlets, farmsteads, and small single mound ceremonial nodal locales. Furthermore, in Wilson’s (2008, 59, 74-75) recent systematic analysis

of the Roadway excavations noted above, he has discerned ten clusters averaging between 10 and 20 structures each. Lumping the two Riverside excavations with these, he has characterized all of them as clan-based residential communities, each of which included what he assessed to be one or two early Moundville I phase structures, while the rest he assessed for the most part to be late Moundville I structures (ca. cal. AD 1200-1260). Based on his analysis, he suggests that there are probably still more (unknown) early Moundville I phase “farmstead” structures than previously thought, albeit still many fewer than late Moundville I structures (Wilson 2008, 77, 131).

Steponaitis and Knight suggest that the households of this same farmstead-based early Moundville I phase population dispersed across this extensive Hemphill Bend terrace (i.e., ca. cal. AD 1120 to AD 1200) would have been the first to occupy the area that came to be embraced by the palisade and the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex when they were built in the late early Moundville I phase. “With its construction, people began to move in large numbers inside the palisade walls, and thereafter virtually all domestic activity took place within its confines. The presence and maintenance of this elaborate work is strong testimony to a concern for military security during this period” (Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 15). Therefore, these people would have been responsible for the deep midden that was deposited and that defined the period of Moundville’s maximum occupancy density, ca. cal. AD 1200 to 1260. They calculate that this would have been “somewhat less than 1,000 people. Most of the sheet midden around the plaza dates to this time In off-mound areas between the plaza and palisade there were compact arrangements of square wattle-and-daub houses with wall trench construction. Houses averaged about 19 square meters in floor area, which suggests they were inhabited by nuclear families. Cylindrical or bell-shaped storage pits were no longer used, which suggests that

foodstuffs were stored above ground” (1998, 15). If so, then the previous early Moundville I phase dispersed villages would have totaled “somewhat less than 1,000 people.”⁷ In any case, whether 1,000 or 2,000, treated in sedentary terms, this certainly is not a particularly large population for such a major site complex. Of course, given that this estimate is presented by archaeologists who treat this site as a monistic chiefdom polity of a sedentary population consisting mostly of commoner farmers, residency would be permanent and year round rather than seasonal and transient.

Prior and Current Views of Moundville as a Monistic Chiefdom

This view of Moundville as initially a set of separate small mound sites and their associated villages of dispersed farmsteads is quite different from the view that prevailed during the 1980s. Earlier survey and data collection indicated that only one mound existed at the Moundville site during the early Moundville I phase (probably Mound O), and it was claimed that possibly three other contemporaneous single mound-and-plaza site complexes existed dispersed along the Black Warrior River Valley. Therefore, the view that emerged from these early data was that initially Moundville was only one of possibly four simple monistic chiefdoms constituting a system of several, probably independent, polities on the Black Warrior River below the Fall Line. It was argued, however, that a rather rapid coalescence of these simple monistic chiefdoms occurred with the Moundville chiefdom taking the lead, marked by the building of several mounds at Moundville by the end of the Moundville I phase, possibly four in total. Hence, Moundville became a complex monistic chiefdom polity by ca. AD 1200, complex being measured in terms of a moderately large site consisting of several mounds with an associated plaza. Accordingly, this meant that either the other

single mound-and-plaza site complexes continued to be occupied, becoming subordinate components of the complex monistic chiefdom of Moundville, or else they were abandoned and replaced by nearby subordinate single mound-and-plaza site complexes during the Moundville II phase. Therefore, in terms of this early model, the complex monistic chiefdom of Moundville emerged from this initial dispersed set of independent simple monistic chiefdoms and then, during the Moundville II phase, the Moundville site emerged as the seat of the dominant paramount monistic chiefdom of the total region—a sort of typical view characteristic of the Chiefdom Polity model that treats this exclusive territorial-based social system as an expanding and dominating social field of gravity dragging lesser gravity-well social fields into its orbit.

Accordingly, under this view, the paramount monistic chiefdom polity continued to develop to about the middle of the Moundville III phase, ca. AD 1300, at which time occupation densities started to reduce.⁸ This was thought to have likely been because new but subordinate simple monistic chiefdoms, as marked by single mound-and-plaza site complexes, were constructed, particularly downriver from Moundville. Then rather abruptly, marking the end of the Moundville III phase, Moundville and these lesser subordinate chiefdom sites were largely abandoned, and the Moundville IV phase emerged. This was shortly followed with a major depopulation of the valley as many people moved southward into the lower Alabama River and reconstituted themselves into “nucleated” villages of what has been called the *Burial Urn culture*. No mounds have been associated with these Moundville IV phase village sites. The ceramics are reported as being distinctly different in design, although derived from Moundville styles; mortuary patterns indicated a disappearance of the typical Mississippian mortuary furniture, and in general, as many have argued, a cultural “devolution” occurred as the Mississippian period

in the Black Warrior River Valley terminated (Sheldon 1974, 88-89; Welch 1991, 31).

Paul Welch has recently referred to this earlier interpretation as the “four-became-one” model and, even though he was one of the strong proponents of this view, he no longer accepts it as tenable (1998, 162). Research during the 1990s and the expansion of the empirical data made it clear that a new model was required. This reinterpretation started to emerge, and it has formed the basis of the collection of papers edited by Knight and Steponaitis (1998) that I have been citing above. In this volume, Welch (1998, 150-60) reanalyzed the single mound-and-plaza complex sites distributed along the Black Warrior River Valley and noted that for the most part, they date from the Moundville II and into the Moundville III phases, although some may have been occupied during the late Moundville I phase, one or two decades prior to ca. AD 1250 (figure 14.2). Under this new interpretation, with the exception of Mound O, Mound X, and the Asphalt Plant mound, the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza Moundville complex, including the palisade, was laid out and constructed according to a single master plan and marked the late Moundville I phase, or ca. AD 1200-1250. Therefore, it is likely that most of the other single mound-and-plaza site complexes on the Black Warrior River Valley below the Fall Line were constructed *following* the initiation of the construction and use of the Moundville multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex. In Welch’s opinion, “at about the same time that Moundville was being redesigned and the Asphalt Plant mound abandoned, three new secondary mound centers were built north of Moundville. These were the Jones Ferry, Poellnitz, and Hog Pen sites, each of which date to late Moundville I. The three sites were not necessarily built at the same time; Jones Ferry may date a few decades earlier than Hog Pen, and the Poellnitz mound may actually have been no earlier than early Moundville II.

What is important, however, is that Moundville was already the political center of the valley decades before there were any secondary centers” (1998, 162-63; see above figure 14.2). In another and earlier publication, Welch also noted that, besides Moundville, the only other early Mississippian site in the Black Warrior River Valley that had mounds was the Bessemer site on the Village River, a tributary of the Black Warrior River above the Fall Line, and that its three mounds were built late in its occupancy history, ca. cal. AD 1200, the same time period when Moundville went into its late Moundville I phase expansion phase. Bessemer was probably effectively abandoned by ca. cal. AD 1250, near the end of the late Moundville I phase (Welch 1994, 12-13, 25). Thus, despite the limitations of the ceramic data, it seems quite clear that, for the most part, the single mound-and-plaza site complexes below the Fall Line post-date the ca. cal. AD 1200-1250/60 collective construction and initial occupation of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza Moundville complex.

Importantly, this 1998 modeling of Moundville as a paramount monistic chiefdom replacing the “four-became-one” model emerged out of new field research, both specifically in Moundville and, equally importantly, across the Black Warrior Valley region. The empirical findings required a significant retooling of some basic and previously untested assumptions, in particular, those concerning the history and nature of the occupation and mortuary usage of Moundville. In the early 1990s, based on his earlier 1983 ceramic chronology, Steponaitis reviewed the occupational and mortuary data by phase at the Moundville site, and he came up with a model of the growth patterns that was the reverse of the assumptions of the older “four-became-one” model. As noted above, under that older model, it was assumed that the aggregate growth of the Moundville sedentary population would be directly mapped in the material extension of the layout (mounds, plaza, structures, and so on) and by

the corresponding expansion of the mortuary component. Presupposed here is the funerary view so that the mortuary population per phase would expand in tandem with the expansion in the overall size of the population of this sedentary settlement. Of course, it was also assumed that correlated with and part of the material consequence of this population growth would be the development of a broader and deeper occupational midden. Another assumption would be an increasing display of burial wealth indicating the widening gap between “elite” and “commoner” correlated with the complexity and entrenchment of the hierarchical monistic modular polity system (Steponaitis 1983, 156-60).

While Steponaitis sees no evidence to reject the “widening gap” claim (i.e., according to the indicators in the mortuary data measuring “elite” standing, their numbers and symbols of superiority expanded in tandem with the phases), he now has noted that the new data that he has discerned and used to measure the occupational density status, this being basically the distribution and quantity of the sheet midden by phase, implicates reversing the above assumption of steady and corresponding growth in population. He has now determined that about two-thirds of the sheet midden distributed across most of the Moundville site was primarily associated with the Moundville I phase and most of the rest, or about one-third, was associated with the Moundville II and III phases (1998, 32). Therefore, he has concluded that the major, or densest, occupation of Moundville occurred not during Moundville II and III times, as was assumed under the older model, but during the earlier times—that is, during the Moundville I phase (ca. cal. AD 1120-1250/60). Furthermore, in the same analysis, he established that the level and intensity of usage of most of the mounds constituting the southern sector of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex significantly dropped off following ca. AD 1300. This reduction was not a

complete abandonment of the use of these mounds, but the drop-off certainly indicates a considerable reduction in usage compared to that of the northern sector of mounds.

These are surprising findings in themselves, but Steponaitis noted an even more surprising pattern: the midden and mortuary histories appear to contradict each other in that when the intensity of occupation was at the highest during the Moundville I phase, as marked by the midden build up, the number of burial events was at the lowest, as marked by the ceramic-based seriation data. In contrast, during the Moundville II and III phases, when the level and intensity of occupation was at its nadir, as marked by the significant drop-off in the midden buildup, burial numbers radically escalated. “The vast majority of burials at Moundville—something in the order of 90 percent—date to the Moundville II and III phases Correcting for differences in phase duration . . . we see that the rate at which burials were deposited increased 670 percent between Moundville I and Moundville II and another 40 percent between Moundville II and Moundville III, after which it declined precipitously” (Steponaitis 1998, 38). He estimated the proportion of burials per phase over the history of the site can be attributed in the following percentages: 7% to the Moundville I phase, 38% to the Moundville II phase, 53% to the Moundville III phase, and less than 2% to the Moundville IV phase. He then stressed that Moundville II and III phases together account for over 90% of this burial estimate. In sum, according to his analysis of these new midden and mortuary data, while the number of burial events radically increased in *post-Moundville I times*, the residential occupation densities simultaneously *significantly dropped* so that by the Moundville II phase, occupation intensity was possibly a quarter of its previous level. He concludes by noting that “[t]he simplest and most plausible explanation for the midden pattern is that Moundville’s resident population peaked early in the sequence,

during the Moundville I phase, and declined substantially thereafter. Recent data suggest that most of the mounds were constructed during the late Moundville I or early Moundville II phase (AD 1200-1300) The decline in population seems to have occurred just after this period of mound construction, when Moundville established itself as a major regional center” (Steponaitis 1998, 39).

Critical Discussion

What is most curious is that, while the inversion of the mortuary and sheet midden data largely contradict the expectations warranted under the earlier “four-became-one” model, nevertheless, the same core social premises are maintained in both models—namely, Moundville was a simple and then a paramount monistic chiefdom whose monistic chiefs remained in and even expanded political control during all this time, even when other single mound-and-plaza site complexes were being built while, at the same time, Moundville’s population precipitously fell. It is taken that these data simply mark successful continuity of dominance power, and indeed, only late in its history, ca. AD 1450 and on, did Moundville seem finally to pass its power zenith, as indicated by some of these outlying single mound-and-plaza locales being expanded.

Many of the outlying mound centers . . . continued to see further occupation and episodes of mound construction extending into the sixteenth century. The largest of the outlying mounds, Snows Bend, reached a height of 3.5 meters. At White site . . . there is considerable evidence for the provisioning of the local elite at this late date. At the same time, cemeteries began to be established at some of the outlying secondary mound centers Snows Bend and White sites . . . Also, nucleated village-sized settlements began to reappear for the first time

in the Black Warrior Valley since West Jefferson times (discounting the special case of Moundville), both in the case of White and separately as in the case of the Power site [pointing] to increasing independence and self-sufficiency among the outlying communities during AD 1450-1550, at the expense of the center. (Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 21-22)

Affirmation of this centralized polity position has been given by Knight in his most recent remodeling when he specifically emphasizes that “our current conception of the Moundville site is that of a classic vacant ceremonial center and regional necropolis, with only a small caretaker population consisting almost entirely of elite households. But, although the majority of the ordinary houses and surrounding palisade had been removed prior to this time, Moundville was still very much the capital of a politically consolidated region. Outlying communities of farmsteads with local leaders residing at scattered single-mound sites remained subordinate to elites at Moundville” (2010, 352).⁹

Now, this overall reinterpretation of the Black Warrior Valley archaeological record stimulated by the new empirical data could stand as a falsification of the original “four-became-one” model. Indeed, Welch has made it clear that this latter model is no longer tenable, and therefore, he treats it as being falsified. However, as clarified in the above quotes, what has not been questioned is the adequacy of the fundamental premises of the “four-became-one” model to characterize this regional archaeological record since these are the same premises of both the paramount monistic and simple monistic chiefdom federation models. That is, these premises have remained firmly in place. This demonstrates the degree of commitment to the Chiefdom Polity view that there is among Mississippian archaeologists, constituting it possibly as a uniquely resilient model.

I attribute this resilience to the taken-for-granted assumption that there simply could be no other possibility for explaining Moundville (or Cahokia, or Larson, or Etowah, and so on) except by invoking dominance hierarchies. After all, so the prevailing thought goes, monumental earthworks built by preindustrial peoples must be the result of coercive control over the majority of the population by a minority of the population since such “power-over” is the only way that the scale of labor required for these constructions could be mobilized and directed.

I have already stressed the importance under the hermeneutic spiral methodology of using retroductive inference to construct plausible models of prehistoric social systems, along with the preference of this method to demonstrate the validity of these postulated models by means of critically using them to comparatively interpret and explain the relevant empirical data that they share. This method is valid for open systems. In contrast, the hypothetico-deductive method is only applicable to demonstrating models when the researcher is dealing with closed systems, and this requires controlling causal conditions through experimentation in which the scientist is a material-cognitive-causal part of the process. Now, since human social systems are open systems, finding new data can invalidate old models, as in the above case of the “four-became-one” model. However, models of open social systems may be rather easily corrected by simple modification—for example, by showing that if some intervening causal factor not known in the original model was incorporated (e.g., tied to the new data), it would explain this failure. Therefore, modifying the model by postulating one or more causal factors that explains these new data rescues the model. But this rescue is valid only as long as the new causal factor or factors introduced to explain the new data do not contradict the premises of the original model. This model modification method is consistent with the hermeneutic

spiral method. Indeed, the point of this theory↔data dialectic is to refine the premises of the model in the light of anomalous data so that it can be used to interpret and explain the data of empirical research more coherently than under the original model. If the changes to the model do this, then the model is rescued, and it now counts as an advance in knowledge.

The critical proviso that this hermeneutic spiral methodological process insists on, of course, is that the basic premises of the model—these being causal premises—cannot be contradicted by the causal modifications that are made in order to accommodate and explain the new data. Should contradiction between the original premises and the new premises occur, the model fails to be rescued, and this failure counts as falsifying the basic model and warrants working retroductively to construct a new model. In the above case of explaining the new data by modifying the original model while rescuing its basic premises, the claim is made that occupation levels precipitously dropped as a result of the ruling elite causing Moundville to be transformed into a sacred capital. While this claim may be consistent with the type of dominance-power that such elite would have under this monistic chiefdom model, I definitely do not accept the further claim that this sacralization was marked by a radical increase in mortuary events. This is inconsistent with the purposes of the elite excluding the population. That is, if the sanctity of the site as the seat of the “sacred ruler” entailed moving the living “commoners” to the countryside, why should these lowly commoners be permitted to pollute this sanctity by being allowed to be buried there in death?

A more serious contradiction however, addresses the intelligibility of the elite to create a sanctified political center by forcing the population into isolation from it. Certainly, sanctifying the site may be an ideological ploy by which to entrench the dominance power

of the elite, but it does not follow that these same elite would be so unwise as to go about achieving this state by spatially isolating the living commoners since this would radically reduce the effective surveillance of their activities by the ruling elite. I would suggest that isolation in this manner is counterproductive to the purposes of the elite. Finally, at a more empirical level, this sacralization claim still does not explain where all those commoners were buried who permanently lived in Moundville during the Moundville I phase. If it was appropriate for the vast majority of the commoners living a sedentary existence at Moundville during the early Moundville I phase to be buried somewhere other than where they lived, and if their being permanently displaced to live in the countryside was part of the process of sanctifying this sacred elite locale, then why would a new mortuary strategy be put in place that would seem to contradict the very logic of sacralization by means of displacing the commoners to the rural regions, particularly if, for the most part, these commoners had always been buried outside the boundaries of the Moundville site? That is, according to the combination of the midden and burial data, when occupancy was at its zenith, very few sedentary residents during the Moundville I phase actually were buried there. It was only after their postulated displacement while alive, apparently in order to sanctify the center and maintain its “sacred purity” for the ruling elite, that the burial population rapidly escalated. To me, this necropolis argument is profoundly contradictory, not to mention that it still leaves unanswered the question of where all the permanent and sedentary occupants of Moundville I phase were buried during the Moundville I phase if they were not buried at Moundville itself.

In short, since the modifications and new scenarios presented to explain the new data contradict these basic premises of the model being rescued, then they must be reconsidered and changed. But this

means more than simply asserting certain occurrences, particularly when these assertions contradict the original premises. What is required is to generate a new model by retroductively postulating new premises and testing this model by showing how it can more coherently explain both the older and newer data while simultaneously dissolving the above anomalies. I believe that these inconsistencies in the explanation of the data outlined above demonstrates that this is the case for the monistic chiefdom view as it has been applied to the Moundville archaeological record—in all its versions. To demonstrate this critical assertion, I first present below a summary and critique of the “diagrammatic ceremonial center” view that Knight has presented to strengthen the paramount monistic chiefdom model version that replaced the “four-became-one” model. Of course, critiquing extant models by revealing anomalies in the explanations they purport does not complete the hermeneutic spiral method. What I will then need to do is present a comprehensive alternative modeling of these data—namely, the cult sodality heterarchy perspective—and use this model to interpret and explain the above data such that the anomalies I claim were generated by the orthodox model are dissolved and a more adequate understanding of the social nature of Moundville is achieved. This will count as the falsification of the sacralization view and its associated chiefdom polity claim.

Moundville as a Monumental Sociocosmogram

Knight (1998, 44) has taken a politico-symbolic approach to interpreting and accounting for the formal layout of this monumental complex. He has focused on the number and positioning of mounds, their contents, and so on, to characterize Moundville as the “diagrammatic ceremonial center” of a paramount monistic chiefdom. Knight (1998, 59-60) specifically uses the term *paramount chief* in this case, and I have stressed this term because the following is a

summary and critical discussion of the “diagrammatic ceremonial center” view as used by him to explain the Moundville layout in these terms—namely, as the sort of monumental construction program that would be consistent with the way that the “political elite” (i.e., the inherited “rulers”) of a paramount monistic chiefdom would act. Using this latter model, he retroductively postulated the conditions that must have existed for the mounds and their layout, as currently observed, to have come about. Therefore, for the most part, my summary description and subsequent critique is directed to this treatment of Moundville as a paramount monistic chiefdom polity. I will subsequently modify this critique to show how it applies equally to his most recent modification of Moundville as the center of a type of simple monistic chiefdom federation.

Figure 14.3. Schematic Layout of the Multiple-Mounded Mound-and-Plaza Complex of Moundville as a Cosmogram. (From Knight and Steponaitis, 1998, p. 53, figure 3.4. Used with the kind permission of Vernon James Knight, Jr. and Vincas P. Steponaitis.)

He expressed his position in this regard in the following way: "Diagrammatic ceremonial centers . . . are centers in which public architecture is deliberately arranged in such a manner as to evoke and reinforce key social distinctions. The center itself constitutes a map of these distinctions, a sociogram. Commonly, the pattern also incorporates a cosmological reference, investing the social dimension with a timeless and divine aspect. A functionalist argument would see diagrammatic ceremonial centers, particularly monumental ones, as devices for stabilizing societal relationships over generations" (Knight 1998, 60). Leading up to this summary, he characterizes the layout of these centers as being the outcome of an ideological strategy by which the ruling elite recruited and apparently modified to some degree traditional religious beliefs in order to achieve explicit political goals that were beneficial to their interests. Hence, they are the expression of an elite ideological strategy. As Knight puts it, the new layout (figure 14.3) materially displayed the "important social distinctions, perhaps grafted to a cosmological plan," and he postulates a generalization that such displays were strategically necessary for central places in traditional societies "in which the layout of public architecture or monuments calls deliberate attention to key social and cosmological distinctions, in a maplike manner. A key word here is 'deliberate', for this is a special case, apparently neglected in the theoretical literature on the built environment, where social relations are not merely imprinted on the landscape but where *political forces* actively create the site plan on monumental scales" (1998, 45, emphasis added).

This layout is explained under his paramount monistic chiefdom model as being explicitly built to express, reproduce, and expand two conditions beneficial to entrenching the social powers-over of the ruling elite. First, this construction was intended to enhance the commoners' commitment to the fundamental "cosmological

distinctions" (i.e., to the way the world was according to the world beliefs of the people), and second, to piggyback on this enhanced commitment to the sacred structures of the cosmos the key dominance-based social structures or, as he terms them, the *social distinctions* that the elite deliberately identified with these constructions. In sum, he explains this radically new layout of Moundville's multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex as the major collective action mode by which the elite planned/plotted to achieve the success of their political strategy. "If we decide . . . that spatial representations of social forms can be consciously exploited, then it seems fair to suggest that the creation of diagrammatic ceremonial centers is, in part, a political effort to insure the intergenerational stability of a particular, arbitrary vision of social reality. The dimensions of that reality—its hierarchies, levels, oppositions, contrasts, and polarities—once designated and monumentalized in public architecture, from that point onward contribute to the recreation of the reality, as people participate in the center as a part of their social environment" (1998, 46-47).

Hence, he specifically notes that the primary reason for constructing this multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex in this particular layout and format was more important as a political than as a religious strategy in that the elite recruited and subsumed the religious beliefs of the people by *naturalizing and making acceptable* the fundamental contradiction between the new social reality that served the interests of an emergent dominant elite and the traditional "egalitarian" social reality. This "naturalization" was to be effected by grafting the primary monumental expression of a social structure of dominance, Mound B, the largest of the earthworks, onto the lesser monumental expressions of the traditional, more balanced dominance-based social structures (i.e., the mounds on the periphery of the plaza) and identify this new, more aggressive material

expression of centralized powers-over with the fundamental sacred structures of the cosmos. Hence, the explosive period of construction of Moundville in the late Moundville I phase (and, according to his most recent assessment into the first half of the fourteenth century to ca. AD 1350) was carried out specifically to effect a new sociocosmogramatic medium by which the elite suppressed the traditional leveling mechanisms and entrenched their emergent centralized dominance powers over the commoners.

Knight empirically supported this claim by noting that Mound B, postulated as the paramount monistic chief's mound, is both symmetrically and asymmetrically positioned in the complex. It is symmetrical by being on the central axis, but it is asymmetrical by being the largest (figure 14.3). This was deliberate, he claims, in order to separate it tangibly from the others and thereby constitute it as the residence of a person occupying a unique and sacred position, this being the paramount monistic chiefly position, that, as expressed in the monumentalism and its layout, could not be subsumed to other community leadership positions, where presumably traditional leveling mechanisms would be at work to sustain the historically accepted degrees of balancing of dominance powers. Hence, the relative positions and graded sizes of the other mounds (apparently) respected the traditional core principle of bilateral symmetry such that they formed a balanced framing of the plaza, and they are neatly graded in size from north to south. Because of this graded bilateral symmetry, he suggests that they probably represented the traditional ranked clans, while the north-south axis dividing the plaza into symmetrical east-west divisions probably represented the dual moieties—differentially ranked, of course—of this postulated paramount monistic chiefdom. Only Mound B stands out in opposition. Mound B “has . . . been taken out of the binary system entirely and moved over to a position on the central axis. I think it is reasonable

to suggest that Mound B, the largest and the tallest of Moundville's mounds, was the residence of the paramount and that this shift to a central position is in effect a statement setting up a diametric relationship between the paramount and the rest of the community. It can therefore be read as an inaugural substitution of a class relation, symbolically at least, for a rank relation" (1998, 59). He continues by characterizing this positioning as a statement of class opposition that "conveys the impression of a subtle strategy to merge a class distinction into an old, culturally familiar order. Indeed, the entire remainder of the imposed structures is not a denial but instead an affirmation of kin-based organic solidarity and reciprocity, the very antithesis of class."

Therefore, the construction and positioning of Mound B distorts the balanced and reciprocal nature of the traditional social system. He claims that this was the expression of essentially a new form of class-based elitism, one that distinguished and separated the monistic chiefly *matrilineage* from the traditional ranked *matrilateral clans*, recalling these distinctions he emphasized in his 1990 paper, in effect manifesting and participating in enhancing an elite-class/commoner-clan separation (although in his 1990 paper he treated this elite/commoner relation as more caste-like than class-like). The purpose for building this deliberate asymmetry, Knight claims, was to effect and ensure the political goals and interests of the emergent elite by superseding the interests of the majority of the population through modifying traditional collective beliefs so as to make the perception of the powers-over positions of the elite as being directly received from the gods, thereby privileging the elite at the cost of the commoners. This is what I take Knight to mean when he goes on to claim that it "says something . . . about the creative strategies that emergent elites are obliged to pursue as they extol, on the one hand, the powers of a divine chief and semidivine nobles but at the same

time are forced to come to accommodation with deeply rooted cultural structures governed by principles of reciprocity and balance” (1998, 59-60).

I take all this to be a clear expression that Knight is operating within the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum view which, as I argued in Chapter 12, identifies social power as being powers-over-the-actions of others (i.e., dominance-based powers). Hence, the traditional clans were situated further from the nonegalitarian and nearer to the egalitarian pole of the continuum, the latter being where the contingent balancing of dominance powers prevailed, while the emergent elite honored and embraced the nonegalitarian pole and were surreptitiously using the construction of Moundville to impose this new vision on the commoners, a vision that would enhance the interests of the elite over those of the commoners. This seems clear when Knight concludes by suggesting

that Moundville is a *diagrammatic ceremonial center*, in which pairs of mounds around the periphery of the plaza represent a fixed rank ordering of local kin groups and in which the placement of Mound B on the central axis reveals the paramountcy as symbolically transcending a reciprocal dual organization. By my reconstruction, at least for the brief time during which the formal plan was at the full, Moundville’s planners effectively legislated the relative rank of kin segments (which formerly may well have been negotiated) by monumentalizing that ranking in a ceremonial space. It was an attempt by an emergent nobility to make a newly transformed social order tangible, inviolable, immovable, sacred. (1998, 60, emphasis added)

Critical Discussion

Steponaitis and Knight have marshaled important data and have presented very important arguments in support of characterizing Moundville as a paramount monistic chiefdom. While recently modifying the characterization to interpret Moundville as the seat of a federation of simple monistic chiefdoms, Knight (2010) has retained the same commitments in regard to the essential monistic modular polity view. Therefore, I must direct considerable effort in giving a critical analysis of their views as summarized above. Accordingly, I find it important to be fairly comprehensive by presenting five major critiques. The first is what I call the *Diagrammatic Theoretical Critique*, directly addressing the above “diagrammatic ceremonial center” model. The second is the *Mortuary/Midden Critique*. This addresses the claim that Steponaitis and Knight make that the rapid reduction of the Moundville sedentary population was the result of its becoming the sanctified seat of the paramount monistic chief and the location of a region-wide sacred necropolis. The third is what I call the *Surveillance Critique*, and it supplements the second critique. This challenges the notion that a monistic chiefdom, whether simple, complex, paramount, or even a federation type, could survive if the ruling elite isolated itself in the manner postulated by Steponaitis and Knight. I consider this view of splendid sacred isolationism to be an invalid assumption that contradicts the basic rationale of the “diagrammatic ceremonial center” view. Given the dominance-based nature of these communities, I consider social isolation of this nature not to be possible, much less plausible. In dominance-based communities, factionalism is chronic, and the dispute is not over the truth of the sacred beliefs but over who best fulfills the position of leader by which the beliefs will be most fully realized in the community. The premise of the “diagrammatic ceremonial center” view is

that monumental constructions will work only if constant and consistent interaction among all the factious parties is maintained. Isolating the power elite from those they rule contradicts this presupposition. The fourth is the *Empirical Critique*, which addresses a series of new data and data interpretations that have been marshaled since Knight and Steponaitis put forward these above monistic chiefdom claims. In my view, these new data strongly contradict the claim that Moundville was a monistic chiefdom, whatever version is favored. The fifth critique is the *Elite Artisan Critique*. This is actually an extension of the fourth critique since it takes a close and critical look at Knight's most recent reports on his excavations of the multiple mounds of Moundville (2010). The completion of these five critiques then prepares the grounds for initiating my alternative account and demonstrating it by showing how it resolves this multiplicity of anomalies and contradictions generated by the monistic chiefdom view while expanding our understanding of this major site.

1. *Diagrammatic Theoretical Critique*. In Chapter 6, I argued that it is a mistake to characterize the symbolic meaning of material cultural features as monumental devices for referencing or designating the substantive beliefs of a people and/or the objects of these beliefs and that doing so is what I have called the *referential fallacy* of the meaning of material culture. In terms of my symbolic pragmatic meaning view of material culture, Moundville would not be referencing the cosmology or the cosmos, but expressing the relevant cosmological beliefs of those building and using it. They would take their construction and use to be eliciting the presence of the properties of the deities that the monuments represented, and thereby becoming monumental warranting devices by which to constitute the complex behavioral streams that they collectively performed in its contexts as the complex ritual actions and activity that these users/builders intended them to be. It is the action meaning and not the

semantic meaning that is relevant in interpreting what Moundville was and why it was built in the form we recognize it to have.

In my initial assessment of Knight's diagrammatic model, I was inclined to conclude that he was claiming that Moundville was built in the form and layout as he described it so as to enable the builders to refer to both the social structural relations that constituted the community and to the sacred objects of the cosmos that these earthworks represented. If he was making this claim, then it would amount to explaining that Moundville was built and used as a monumental referencing device, and therefore this would be committing the referential fallacy. To do so would eliminate our possible understanding of what Moundville was and why it was built since, after all, if we reduce monumental architecture to being simply another way of making references to or "speaking" about the orders of the social and/or the natural world, and given that speech is cheap and certainly very effective for expressing beliefs and describing the world, then it would make no sense to claim that a community would choose to expend such energy and resources by means of heavy and laborious scraping, carrying, and piling earth, and cutting, dragging and raising timber structures and walls, and so on, simply to "say" the same thing they could actually say more effectively and more cheaply with words.

After more careful consideration, however, I have decided that in fact and despite his choice of words that suggest he has a tendency to lean toward referentialism, Knight effectively avoids it. Looked at carefully and overall, his interpretation can be seen as expressing the *symbolic pragmatic perspective* that I have promoted, although he does not use these terms. This seems clear in his above summary when he says that diagrammatic ceremonial centers "*evoke and reinforce* key social distinctions" and the "center itself constitutes a map of these distinctions, a sociogram . . . [that] incorporates a *cosmological*

reference, investing the social dimension with a timeless and divine aspect” (emphasis added). I added the emphasis here to point out that while his choice of vocabulary is still influenced by referentialism (e.g., *cosmological reference*), he also said that these monumental centers *evoke and reinforce*, and *invest* (by which I take him to mean endow) the earthworks with what they are about—and this presupposes an expressive perspective. His ideological interpretation of Moundville overall presupposes that the builders took the earthworks and their layout as iconic monumental warrants of action presencing the powers of the cosmos and, at the same time, doing this so as to identify these powers as endowed on the elite as power holders, and that the intelligibility of doing this is that, these would serve “as devices for stabilizing societal relationships over generations.” Here he specifically invokes my symbolic pragmatic view in which I treat material cultural objects as warranting devices constitutive of the actions they are used to mediate. Of course, in constituting the intended actions, they also reproduce (i.e., stabilize) the social relations that make both the building of these monuments and the performance of the action possible. If this were not the case, and we assume that, in fact, they were building *monumental referencing devices*, then there really would be no way that the necessary motivation could be mobilized to carry out these tasks since any attempt by “leaders” to encourage others to do so would be taken by them as the expressions of “madmen.”

Hence, I believe that Knight intends to say that, in the experience of the builders, these cosmic powers and properties were being “evoked” by means of the monumental construction features and, thereby, “presenced” as properties immanent in Moundville itself. I think that, on balance, Knight’s interpretation is basically a symbolic pragmatic one. Therefore, I have no problem construing the properties of symmetry/asymmetry, pairing, and directional orientation

that Knight highlights as being the result of an ideological strategy whereby the builders constituted Moundville as a sacred iconic monumental center, possibly representing and participating in the *axis mundi*, or structural core of the cosmos, in order to both constitute and enhance their world renewal ritual. However, I still take strong issue with his claim that Moundville was the realization of a strategy of a dominance-based elite that recruited the religious beliefs and sensibilities of the population so as to enhance their (elite) control over the actions of the ordinary commoners. This is the primary thrust of Knight's argument—namely, that the “real” purpose of the monumental architecture of Moundville, and of Mississippian centers in general, was to convince the commoners that, in fact, the elite *ought* to have such dominance power. However, this “ought” can be taken in one of two ways. Either it could be that (1) the elite already had such powers and wanted to gain moral approval from the commoners for possessing and exercising them (i.e., they wanted to enhance their legitimacy); or (2) they did not have dominance powers but wanted to convince the nonelite that they should have them.

Now if (1) was the case—that is, if the ruling elite already controlled the commoners via the fact that the community was already constituted as a dominance hierarchy—then this symbolic pragmatic reading presents a problem for Knight's model since it weakens the necessity of the ideological strategy that he claims must have been realized through this construction. This is because if dominance was already the prevailing state of affairs, then the elite must already be well entrenched in this regard prior to the construction program, thereby making the building of Moundville—in the form we now know it—to have been unnecessary and, possibly, profoundly wasteful and irrational in terms of this claimed political strategy. Indeed, if the purpose was simply to enhance the legitimacy of holding dominance powers, then building Mound B alone, embodying the *axis*

mundi and serving as the seat of the powerful monistic chief, was surely all that was necessary. The rest of the construction program would have been counterproductive in terms of the elite-gear ed ideology, since it would recognize the legitimacy of the commoners' clans, and such legitimization would counter the already existing powers-over of the elite. Hence, it would be a very foolish strategy. However, if (2) was the purpose (i.e., if the construction program was designed by the elite to bring about the dominance power that they did not have prior to the building), then this means that Moundville would need to be characterized as the monumental expression of an "egalitarian" community of the traditional prechiefdom sort, one that embodied the principle of dominance but in the state of having the powers-over contingently balanced, or as Knight put it, "deeply rooted cultural structures governed by principles of reciprocity and balance." If so, then this would be a community located toward the egalitarian pole of the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum. But this would mean that the leveling mechanisms that manifest these "principles of reciprocity and balance" would make the construction of Mound B impossible to perform since its construction would contradict the prevailing moderate egalitarianism of the traditional community. If this was the traditional structuring of the community, as Knight notes above, then only the peripheral mounds and the large plaza should have been built as a place for the "egalitarian" component units of the community to gather and operate. And of course, given that these components exist, then Knight would have to agree that such a "traditional" community could very well mobilize the requisite labor to build the overall symmetrical component of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza of Moundville. But its being built would actively prevent such a moderately ranked egalitarian community from building the massive Mound B in the asymmetrical manner as described by Knight since, as he notes, this

manifests the dominance power of a paramount monistic chief, a power that, under (2) he/she has not as yet attained. "Mound B, has . . . been taken out of the binary system entirely and moved over to a position on the central axis. I think it is reasonable to suggest that Mound B, the largest and the tallest of Moundville's mounds, was the residence of the paramount and that this shift to a central position is in effect a statement setting up a diametric relationship between the paramount and the rest of the community" (1998, 59).¹⁰

While I am not denying the empirical fact that, indeed, Mound B does stand out in this manner, and in fact, the peripheral mounds *are* organized in the balanced and symmetrical but graded-size manner described, what I am saying is that in terms of Knight's own theoretical view, Mound B, as such, could exist *only if* the highly asymmetrical dominance-based social structure of Moundville was already in place, thereby enabling its construction, and of course, assuming that the community treated material things as icons of what they represented, building Mound B as the seat of the paramount monistic chief would simply enhance his/her power and legitimacy. But, if this were the case—that is, if Moundville already embodied a dominance-based hierarchy (case 1)—then while the strategy would explain the construction of Mound B, it would *not* explain the simultaneous building of the rest of the monumental mounds. That is, it would be irrational for the ruling elite to construct the rest of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex since, in fact, under scenario (1), Moundville was already a paramount monistic chiefdom, and while building Mound B would simply be the exercising and reproducing of the dominance powers it expressively embodied, to also build the other mounds in the way we recognize them to be would undermine this dominance-based hierarchy, thereby affording to the "subordinate" groups their own dominance powers. Therefore, if the monistic chief was already supreme in

dominance power, then beyond the monistic chief having his/her own central mound built, the most rational construction strategy for such a centralized dominance-based polity to carry out would be to build defensive installations and sustain tight surveillance of the population, particularly the lesser monistic chiefs themselves who, as I discuss below, would be a major source of political danger to the continuity of the paramount monistic chief, and so on.

In short, Knight's account is internally contradictory. It can explain either the peripheral set of paired mounds framing the plaza (i.e., manifesting a moderately ranked egalitarian community, one that is located slightly off-centered toward the egalitarian pole of the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum), or it can explain the very large and asymmetrically oriented Mound B (i.e., manifesting a paramount monistic chiefdom); but it cannot explain the existence of both—which patently do exist.¹¹

These ambiguities ground a more fundamental criticism that I can make, this being the largely unquestioned assumption of this model that preindustrial monumental construction entails a dominance-based hierarchy. Indeed, Knight's argument is an example of affirming the consequent. I have claimed that equating collective monumental construction with dominance is not necessarily the case, either substantively—that is, I do not accept the assumption that dominance was a core cultural principle of this social world—nor pragmatically—that is, collective intentionality based on the cultural principle of autonomy can serve quite adequately to achieve the same and even more elaborate material outcomes as those achieved by dominance-based societies, as I demonstrate in the subsequent chapters. My earlier theorization of social hierarchies as coming in two forms, dominance and enabling, therefore, presents a rational and plausible alternative possibility—namely, that Moundville was built and used by a major cult sodality heterarchy organized as a

second-order or possibly a third-order affiliation of individual autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities internally structured as enabling hierarchies. The symbolic pragmatic point of their constructing Moundville—that is, the ideological strategy its construction realized—then, was to collectively and cooperatively produce a monumental symbolic pragmatic device of a sort that, given the labor imperatives that such a project entailed, no single cult sodality could do alone. Through the mediation of this monumental iconic symbol, the sodalities experienced transforming their collective formal behaviors regularly performed in its context into the suite of world renewal rituals that they intended. Importantly, this means that I endorse Knight’s view that Moundville was a monumental “diagrammatic center,” or as I would describe it, a monumental iconic warrant of primarily, but not exclusively, postmortem human sacrifice. However, I deny that it was built in accordance with and as the realization of a dominance-based elite ideological strategy, as Knight would have it.

Finally, it might be worthwhile to note that Knight accounts for the shortness of the construction and occupation zenith of Moundville not to any failure of the elite ideological strategy but to its outstanding success. This success eliminated the need to sustain control of the population by means of tight spatial constraints, surveillance, and the exercise or threat to exercise coercive powers-over. Hence, as I noted above, this postulating of Moundville as becoming a sacred necropolis entails that the paramount monistic chiefs must have used their dominance powers to exclude the commoners from Moundville. Even so, Knight and Steponaitis comment “paradoxically . . . more people than before came to have access to, or at least contact with, the esoteric religious symbolism of chiefship via the designs engraved on common service pottery” (1998, 20). All this truly does seem paradoxical, even contradictory. If the construction

and layout of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex really was “an attempt by an emergent nobility to make a newly transformed social order tangible, inviolable, immovable, sacred,” rather than the next two centuries of reduced occupation and intensifying mortuary practices by the “commoners” registering a splendid success, it would seem that the elite strategy was a signal failure. If the point of building a monumental sacred center was to convince the population that elite dominance was beneficial to the social as well as the sacred world (i.e., case 1, above) and indeed, that the elite enhanced the balance and order of both the community and the cosmos, then rather than the elite promoting a sort of splendid isolation, the opposite should be the case. We should expect the continuity of the population density postulated for the Moundville I phase, the ongoing rather than dropping usage of all the mounds, and generally improved economic conditions for the elite and very seriously reduced circumstances for the commoners. Indeed, such a material form of success is clearly implicated in the “four-became-one” version of the monistic chiefdom model that was originally developed and promoted by Christopher Peebles and that prevailed until the Steponaitis-Knight version summarized above was presented to account for the surprising inversion of the midden and mortuary empirical data.

2. *Mortuary/Midden Critique.* This puzzle, of course, highlights the current interpretation of the occupation and burial data of Moundville that Steponaitis has elaborated. As I noted above, he has concluded that the greatest population density occurred during the Moundville I phase, from AD 1120 to 1250/60, after which a rapid fall off to about 25% of the former maximum occurred, and, as the complementary opposite (i.e., during the same post-Moundville I phase times), a radical increase of burial events occurred. “The vast majority of burials at Moundville—something in the order 90

percent—date to the Moundville II and III phases Correcting for differences in phase duration . . . we see that the rate at which burials were deposited increased 670 percent between Moundville I and Moundville II and another 40 percent between Moundville II and Moundville III, after which it declined precipitously” (Steponaitis 1998, 38). He is surprised by his findings, but he addresses them firmly with the following conclusion: “Yet if middens are the best index of Moundville’s population, then how do we interpret the great increase in burials that occurred during Moundville II and III, when the number of residents declined? The only good explanation is that most of the people interred at Moundville after AD 1300 did not actually live there” (1998, 40; also see 1991, 200-201).

From one perspective, this is a very logical conclusion. However, he is also aware that it flies in the face of prior commitments built into the monistic chiefdom polity view—namely, that a site like Moundville is primarily a political center and only secondarily a ceremonial center, and therefore, its size is the result of having a major population from which the ranking elite can draw ongoing tribute and corvée labor. Here is where the greatest wealth, population and, of course, the major defensive organization, and so on, should be concentrated. Therefore, his conclusion in a sense begs the question of why Moundville, having the largest set of monumental constructions in the region, should turn out to have the disproportionately smallest permanent residency level and the largest mortuary population, one that was derived from those who apparently never lived there following ca. AD 1250. His answer is to play the religious card. “Moundville was, after all, not only a political capital but also a ritual center. In this light, it is not at all difficult to imagine that people from outlying communities may have been brought to Moundville for burial. Indeed, the *cemeteries of Moundville are the only ones known in the Black Warrior Valley for the period between*

AD 1050 and 1450. The two other cemeteries that have thus far been discovered in the valley date to the Moundville III phase, close to the time when Moundville was abandoned” (1998, 40, emphasis added).

Steponaitis claims that as a “ritual center . . . it is not at all difficult to imagine that people from outlying communities may have been brought to Moundville for burial.” To the contrary, under the orthodox monistic chiefdom polity view, given the overall size of Moundville, I find it very difficult to imagine; indeed, I think that this claim is simply imaginary. As I noted above, there is the obverse to this claim. Presumably, the many deceased who had lived in and built Moundville are absent in the Moundville I phase times not simply because they were buried elsewhere but because they were not permitted to be buried there. But if this were the case, then when the commoners, or most of them, came to be excluded from occupying what were up to this time, their permanent, sedentary homes in Moundville and presumably forced into the countryside, then why would they be permitted to be buried there? Or, to put it in less contentious terms, if the population of Moundville was large from the beginning and reached its maximum at the end of Moundville I, and if the Moundville I phase burials, in particular, are radically disproportionately low in numbers compared to the degree of intensity of this occupation, then, under the monistic chiefdom perspective (at least), it must be the case that most of the large number of people who occupied Moundville during the Moundville I phase were buried somewhere else, even though this contradicts the high level of “sedentary” occupation during this phase. Furthermore, as Steponaitis points out, Moundville is the only known “cemetery” in the Black Warrior River Valley during Moundville I through to the end of Moundville III. In sum, I do not accept this explanation of the mortuary/occupational data inversion as valid. Importantly, I am not denying the validity of the midden and mortuary data themselves.

Rather, I am questioning the explanation this sacralization thesis affords. Therefore, there are two puzzles that the sacralization of Moundville explanation does not explain: (1) the underrepresentation of deceased during the Moundville I phase, given the heavy midden buildup, and (2) the overrepresentation of deceased during the post-Moundville I times, given the minimal midden buildup.

However, a further critical comment can be added here as a result of Knight's most recent revision of Moundville's social nature. The above critique of the sacralization argument, specifically treating Moundville as a paramount monistic chiefdom polity, claims that the abandonment and transformation into a necropolis occurred only *following* the completion of most of the major mounds. Under Knight's most recent federation of simple monistic chiefdoms view, although he has retained the claim that the out-migration was effectively completed by AD 1300, he has now recognized that only a portion of the major construction was completed when this out-migration of the sedentary commoner population occurred. Specifically, he has advanced the completion of this major construction program by at least half a century to ca. AD 1350. First, he specifies that "[m]ost residential areas within the community were abandoned and were replaced over time by a number of corporate cemeteries used by people who lived elsewhere in the Moundville domain but who claimed ancestral ties to specific spaces within the center's landscape." Then he adds, "*if our evidence of dating is accurate, much of the mound building that brought the center to a semblance of its final form was accomplished by nonresidents*, after the departure of most of the town's resident labor" (2010, 361-62, emphasis added). Therefore, for much of this major construction period (i.e., ca. AD 1300-1350) Moundville was already "abandoned" by those who nevertheless continued attending in order to do the labor. I read this as saying that if much of the labor expended between ca. AD 1300-1350 to

construct Moundville's multiple mounds and central plaza was transient, then there is no valid basis to deny my basic claim that, in fact, starting from the beginning, effectively all the labor expended in building Moundville was transient. The transient occupancy nature of Mississippian sites is a major point that I have been stressing all along under the cult sodality heterarchy perspective. It also means Knight effectively recognizes that there is no necessity entailing sedentary residency and major monumental Mississippian architecture, or expressed differently, major Mississippian architecture could easily be the result of transient labor.

3. *The Surveillance Critique.* I have already suggested above one of the reasons I find this sacralization-of-Moundville scenario a curious contradiction of what we could plausibly expect if, indeed, Moundville was the sacred seat of a paramount monistic chiefdom. The fact is this type of dominance power is always the source of challenge since the dominance hierarchy entails that each level has power-over the level below. This means that the main prize for each level of power holders is to gain the position of the person who has power over him/her/them, and claiming that an ideological strategy that sanctifies the elite will serve to stabilize this dominance power structure is not credible since we are here speaking of the intralite dominance structure, not the elite-commoner structure. All the elite power-holders could claim to be sanctified (i.e., to possess the same kind of sacredly warranted dominance power), and therefore, lower-ranked elite could well claim to be just as or, based on self-claimed greater competence, even more eligible for higher position than those to whom they were subordinate. The upshot of this reliance on sacralization to enshrine dominance power is that the supreme power holder needs to maintain tight surveillance over the activities of subordinate power holders. In such structural conditions, elaborate systems of elite residency typically emerge, often entailing that

lesser monistic chiefs be required (i.e., ordered) to maintain establishments in the paramount center so that the paramount monistic chief can tightly monitor their activities. These lesser monistic chiefs, in turn, require many of their subchiefs and followers also to be in at least transient residency. Therefore, the elite residents in the “capital” should swell in numbers and, along with their own retainers, the total population should expand and not diminish and, along with this increase in intensity of occupation and numbers of occupants, the midden and mortuary practices would also expand—which is precisely what the midden evidence contradicts.

This need for the highest ranking members of a dominance-based hierarchical elite to monitor the lesser elite is at the root of Hally’s (1993) elaborate analysis of the spacing of Mississippian mound sites in northern Georgia. His purpose was to establish and account for the size of simple, complex, and paramount monistic chiefdom polities. He clearly grounds his interpretation on the premise that these were monistic chiefdoms based on dominance hierarchies since spacing was a matter of ensuring adequate surveillance and control from the political center. “The spatial distribution of [chiefdom] mound sites . . . should be determined to some degree by the political and economic nature of these polities, especially their internal organizational structure and their external competitive relationships. To the extent that this is true, the spatial distribution of Mississippian mound sites should reflect a number of characteristics of chiefdoms, including their size, spacing, and relative level of political complexity” (1993, 159). Based on these premises, he concludes that the monistic chief of a simple or complex monistic chiefdom polity must be able to physically survey his territory easily by walking a one-day round trip from his center to the perimeter or to the subcenter of his most distant subchief. “Given a moderately fast walking speed of 5 km per hour, distances of up to 20 km could have been handled in

this manner [This distance is] small enough to permit travelers to make a round trip and conduct their business in a single day” (1993, 163). He adds that this “would have been highly cost effective.” Thus, if 20 km is an easy half-day walk, then the simple monistic chiefdom should have its furthest subvillage(s) no more than about this distance from its main center. In fact, he establishes that “[a]mong the Mississippian chiefdoms in northern Georgia and the Valley and Ridge Province of eastern Alabama and Tennessee, distances between mound center and habitation site and between primary and secondary centers seldom exceed 20 km. This suggests that the ability to travel round-trip between administrative center and subordinate community in a single day was critical to the *long-term survival of these polities* and may have been the major factor limiting their spatial size” (1993, 163, emphasis added).

Now, it is interesting that the same 20 km distance could just as easily be explained by the fact that these mound sites manifest minimally first-order and, in some cases, second-order cult sodality heterarchies. This distance would easily enable cult sodalities of dispersed complementary heterarchical communities to cooperate through sharing the performance of mutually beneficial world renewal rituals in a commonly built and shared sacred center. The paths that connected them, therefore, would generate the sacred networks by which the beneficial outcome of ritual performances in one heterarchy would be experienced as being widely dispersed across the landscape. Indeed, treating them in these terms would also allow resolving his puzzlement over larger multiple mound sites, such as Moundville. “Only in the cases of the large, complex chiefdoms of Moundville, Etowah, and perhaps 9EB1 do distances equal or exceed 20 km. These chiefdoms were exceptional in regard to amount of public construction, elaborateness of elite burials, and probably population size. *For reasons that are not yet clear*, their leaders were

apparently able to achieve and maintain a somewhat greater degree of political control over subordinate communities and as a result were able to increase the spatial limits of that control” (1993, 163, emphasis added).

There are several problems I see with Hally’s account and puzzles that he raises that recursively act back on Knight and Steponaitis’s sacralization account of Moundville. First, Hally’s account can be critiqued on the grounds that it commits the logical fallacy of affirming the consequent. He gives no alternative account, even though he specifically recognizes the anomalous nature of Moundville and Etowah under his own account. That is, in my view, his saying “[f]or reasons that are not yet clear” is a clear recognition and admission by Hally that something is amiss since he is admitting that the basic premises with which he is operating are contradicted by the empirical evidence of the most important of these mound sites. This failure of the argument to apply to the largest and most impressive of these mound locales cannot be attributed as simply stochastic “noise,” and therefore, to simply acknowledge this and not attempt to resolve what is basically a major anomaly of his own argument seems strange to me. However, Hally is not the only colleague to do this. I have already noted that Knight, for example, acknowledges that a major portion of Moundville was constructed by transient labor. But Knight does not raise the question that, if this is true, what grounds are there to support the assumption that the occupation of Moundville was necessarily sedentary? Hence, this failure is a puzzle that undermines his overall explanation and definitely throws it into serious question, particularly since treating Moundville as a cult sodality heterarchy can easily account for all the data that his model only partially explains and can also dissolve the anomalies that his model raises and does not explain—as I demonstrate later.

Second, I want to question the assumption that Hally makes that this 20 km limit would be used to allow the superior chief to travel to the inferior subchief's locale. Surveillance can be done either way, by the superordinate doing the "grand tour" or by the subordinate maintaining an expensive household in the center where he or close relatives must reside and, effectively, remain as hostages of their chiefly relative—or both. Indeed, the likely chiefly preference would be for his/her subordinates to travel to the superordinate since this would operate very effectively to reproduce the dominance relation in favor of the superordinate. And therefore, it would also centralize the dispersed monistic subchiefs under the efficient surveillance of the dominant monistic chief. Given Knight's view that these multiple mounds served as the foundations for the monistic chiefly elite, it would be reasonable to assume that the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex of Moundville would express this strategy since, beyond the ideological claims that Knight makes, this layout would enable the paramount monistic chief to establish a form of permanent surveillance of his lesser or subchiefs. These would be responsible for maintaining full households, and they would also require commoner households from their respective subchiefdoms, and so on. However, as I noted above, this need for strategies of surveillance of the lesser elite in dominance-based hierarchical systems is contradicted by the emergence of the claimed splendid isolation of the paramount monistic chief and his more immediate relatives and their retainers following ca. cal. AD 1300 and by the effective abandonment by ca. AD 1350 of the smaller mounds embracing the southern sector of the plaza. That is, this is precisely what should not have happened in the type of social world that Knight and Steponaitis postulate for Moundville.

4. *Empirical Critique.* An interesting twist to all this is that Wilson has recently argued that the conclusions arising from his analyses of

the Roadway excavations actually eliminate the relevance of most of the empirical data that have been marshaled to support this paramount monistic chiefdom interpretation. For example, Welch (1996, 85-89), a major proponent of the chiefdom polity view, has claimed that the monistic paramount chief of the Moundville polity (and his elite supporters) emerged as dominant as a result of his entrepreneurial success in gaining exclusive control of several craft manufacturing systems, in particular deer hide preparation, greenstone axe production, and marine shell bead production. However, arising from their reanalyses of the relevant data that Welch cites, Wilson (2008, 24-30) and his colleagues (Wilson, Marcoux, and Koldehoff 2006, 57-61) have noted that the relevant empirical data do not support these claims. For example, the greenstone data found in Moundville are not production residue but simply broken greenstone tools. Wilson concludes that rather than being produced in Moundville under the strict and watchful eye of the chiefly elite, and then “grandly” distributed to the lowly farmers who needed these tools to work, they were probably regularly made in the greenstone quarries by those who used them, the “commoners.” Now there is little doubt, apparently, that these greenstone axe tools were important instruments for clearing the forest to open up maize fields, but under the symbolic pragmatic view, they would also be warrants of action by which the users were able to perform specialized ritual built into the subsistence practice of farming. As I noted much earlier, I have termed this “built-in” aspect of subsistence practices *mid-wifery ritual*. In this case, opening the land to cultivation would not be a morally or ethically neutral event and would necessarily have to incorporate a form of ritual since intervening into the sacred natural order required having the sacred authority and warrant to do so, and these axes—or the special stone from which they were made—may have been interpreted in just such terms.

Wilson also carefully analyzed the ceramic distribution of the roadway excavations and noted that the pattern of fine ware did not correlate with the “ranked” distribution of the mounds. As noted above, Knight interprets the relative position and size of these mounds as mapping the relative rank, power, and wealth of the different clans. Therefore, it has been assumed that the distribution of such “prestige” goods should reflect the power and prestige of those responsible for the differentially sized and spaced mounds of this mound-and-plaza complex. However, Wilson (2008, 127-31) specifically notes that the fine ware, for example, was in very limited quantities and, interestingly, it was distributed pretty well evenly across the 10 to 12 residential clusters that he analyzed. His conclusion is that this distribution manifests a basic and strong “egalitarianism” among these groups, one sustained by strong “leveling mechanisms.” This “egalitarian” distribution of fine ware, by the way, is paralleled, he claims, by the “egalitarian” distribution of dwelling structures since none of these residential clusters displays a material differentiation that would suggest a grading of economic wealth or rank differentiation implicated in Knight’s dominance-based hierarchical “diagrammatic ceremonial center” view, all of them having effectively the same range of small and medium structures with the latter representing, in his estimation, “public buildings” for local ritual activities and the former representing nuclear family residences.

Jon Marcoux (2007) reexamined the variety, quantity, and distribution of the “ceremonial” data, and his analyses were also endorsed by Wilson. Marcoux’s work basically critiques Welch’s claim that the Moundville chiefs controlled the Black Warrior Valley through controlling extraregional sources of exotics and intraregional production of both ceremonial and nonceremonial goods. He recognizes that very few in the way of finished nonlocal or exotic goods were brought into Moundville, although a considerable variety in the way

of nonlocal resources, such as copper, mica, shell, and so on, was brought in. However, overall the amounts of exotic resources and the quantity of artifacts produced were rather minor, and neither the quantity nor the distribution suggests that institutions of centralized control figured critically in the organization and maintenance of the site as a dominance-based hierarchical community. Marcoux (2007, 242) concludes that what this assemblage may manifest is the use and distribution of ceremonial materials that were important for the performance of ritual and not for the sustaining of political control.

However, the resilience of this dominance-based “chiefdom model” is again manifested since neither Wilson and his colleagues nor Marcoux actually suggest an alternative view that would be consistent with their new data and their reinterpretations of the old data. For example, while Wilson concluded that the empirical evidence manifests “egalitarianism” rather than ranking, he reconfirms his support of the position that, indeed, Moundville was a monistic chiefdom polity. He recognizes the misfit between the apparent “egalitarianism” and the notion of a monistic chiefdom but believes that the monumental architecture is sufficient evidence in itself to warrant his ignoring this misfit. “Generally, early Moundville appears to have been a community in which differences in status and wealth were downplayed in everyday life. A strong ethos of equality apparently structures the socioeconomic relationships among most residential groups during this era. I am not suggesting there were no socioeconomic differences at Moundville. The large-scale construction of earthen mounds around the perimeter of Moundville’s central plaza is strong evidence that a *political elite* established itself during the late Moundville I phase” (2008, 129, emphasis added). As I noted above, citing the monumentalism of Moundville to warrant this conclusion of a centralized dominance-based power is of little help since monumentalism can indicate the operation of enabling

hierarchies and, in some cases, the monumentality of projects generated by social systems based on enabling hierarchies and agentive autonomy may far surpass in size, variety, and magnitude those monumental projects produced through the organizational structure of dominance hierarchies, even when the labor capacity of the two contrasting types are broadly equal, as illustrated in my earlier analysis of the traditional Mapuche monistic chiefdom system. Yes, this latter system produced monumental public structures, but given the population size of the typical *trokinche* monistic patrilineal chiefdom—which was within the same range as the estimated population size supporting Moundville (Knight and Steponaitis 1998)—the magnitude, variety, and complexity of the architecture and artifactual content did not nearly match that of Moundville itself.

5. *The Elite Artisan Critique.* As I noted earlier, this fifth critique could actually be incorporated into the above empirical critique since it addresses new data recently published. But its particular focus, the monumental nature of Moundville, is so relevant that I critique it separately here. In 2004, Knight reported the results and presented a limited interpretation of the excavations that he conducted on Mound Q and Mound G. This report further illustrates the entrenched and resilient nature of this monistic chiefdom polity model, even in the face of data that I believe falsify the latter. He initially noted that Mound Q was traditionally categorized to be among the burial mounds of the elite who used the neighboring platform mounds as their residential platform locales. However, he noted that the data that he uncovered do not support this burial mound interpretation. What he exposed was the material residue marking a rather complex structure having several rooms, large support posts, as well as a rich residue of craft production using both exotic and local resources. The only mortuary residue he found was one juvenile burial and an oblong “grave” containing a fine-ware bottle and

a fragment of a possible copper-covered ear disk. He also reported finding highly fractured human bones mixed in the upper midden and the feature fills as well as in the midden on the mound flanks. These fractured bones originally consisted primarily of cranial, leg, and arm bones, suggesting a selective use of skeletal materials to perform mortuary-mediated rituals. His comments are interesting.

In sum, as soon as we try to put a finger on an activity profile for the Mound Q remains, we find that it defies reduction to any simple formula. The behaviors represented at Mound Q are diverse . . . [given] the unusually wide variety in the shape and size of pottery vessels that were broken and discarded in middens and feature fills . . . Domestic food preparation and consumption took the form of repetitive, minor events extending over many decades. Corn, shelled and cooked on site, was the preeminent staple of mound-related activities, but there was also a distinctive pattern of high-quality meat procurement, consistent with the regular acquisition of meat as tribute. The characteristics of the tools and tool fragments scattered through the middens and feature fills make it abundantly clear that the small multiroom summit buildings were not austere temples or shrines. They were instead the bustling residences of elites prominently engaged in the skilled crafting of goods. (2004, 311)

What is interesting in his summation is his recognition that Mound Q was the “home” of elite who were, simultaneously, artisans. I find this intriguing since it is a position with which he is not fully comfortable. This discomfort is indicated in his specifically defending this interpretation by emphasizing that he sees no problem with this conclusion, even though it contradicts the standard patron-client relational assumption that underpins the monistic chiefdom

polity view, this being that artisans were subordinate clients of the political and religious elites. Under this model, while artisans may not be laborers, they were still commoners. "Regarding the craft activity, moreover, I see no need to postulate 'attached specialists,' particularly as the distinctive foodways of both mound contexts were almost identical. It appears that the elites themselves were doing the crafting" (2004, 318-19). Now the context of this defensive stance is the contrast between the "elite" Mound G data and the "elite" Mound Q data. In the latter, as noted above, there was a rich residue of craft production, while the former was largely characterized by the absence of such material residue. And yet, as he notes, the indicators of the dietary practices were the same in both cases. By identifying certain dietary practices as the distinctive mark of "elite," and recognizing Mound G as the residential mound of a politically elite person or persons, he is "forced" by the empirical data to conclude that those using and occupying Mound Q, despite their clear empirical identification with artisan production, must also be "elite." The result is that he must accept a position that contradicts the commitments he had to the social nature of Moundville prior to revealing these new data—namely, that part of what constituted the political elite was that they had a range of subordinates to perform tasks for which the elite took credit and gained prestige, and among these subordinates would be the specialized artisans who were dependent on the material as well as structural and political support of their elite patrons, the "chiefs."

It is clear to me that his interpretation of the data as indicating "elite artisans" is an attempt to rescue the original model in the light of data that contradict expectations derived from it. I think it fails to rescue the model, and therefore, what is required is a fundamental change of some of the premises of the monistic chiefdom polity model, a change or changes that, in fact, would constitute a new

and perspicuously contrasting model. To this end, I will suggest that these same data, including those presented and interpreted by both Wilson and Marcoux, be reinterpreted under the premise that they manifest the operation of a complex, second-order or possibly third-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy. The simplest way to do this is to rewrite Knight's summation above, showing that the puzzles that his interpretation of Mound Q raises are largely dissolved when the same data are seen in the context of the alternative model. As in Chapter 13 when I used this method, I indicate below the required changes and additions by using *italics*:

In sum, as soon as we try to put a finger on an activity profile for the Mound Q remains, we find that *it most comfortably embraces a specific formula—cult sodality ritual practices. Seen under the umbrella of the cult sodality heterarchy perspective*, the behaviors represented at Mound Q are diverse *but share a basic action-meaning, or symbolic pragmatic meaning . . . as indicated by the* unusually wide variety in the shape and size of pottery vessels that were broken and discarded in middens and feature fills. . . . *As in domestic contexts, [d]omestic-like food preparation and consumption took the form of repetitive ritual and comestible events extending over many decades. Corn, shelled and cooked on site, probably in accordance with ritual rules that specified the preparation of food starting with the full cobs—and not simply kernalled corn—as a constitutive part of the ritual*, was the preeminent *ritual meal* staple of mound-related activities, but there was also a distinctive pattern of *using* high-quality meat procurement, consistent with the regular acquisition of meat *by young sodality members as part of their regular specialized right to ensure the felicitous performance of ritual, particularly the meals that would have*

been partly constitutive of the overall ritual process. The characteristics of the tools and tool fragments scattered through the middens and feature fills make it abundantly clear that the small multiroom summit buildings were not the type of austere temples or shrines characteristic in modern Euro-American communities. They were instead the bustling places where trained priestly ritual craft artisans transiently resided while they prominently engaged in the skilled crafting of goods, a process that was itself an important ritual.

Importantly, in my summary redescription, I have emphasized that the range of activities performed on the summit of Mound Q as indicated by the empirical data can be quite coherently interpreted by a *specific* formula or “characterization”—namely, that these data are consistent with the activities of a particular sector of an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality system—the clergy-priests, in particular, those trained as specialized ritual artisans who would be in transient residence while exercising their exclusive rights to manufacturing religious ritual warrants. That is, these data are consistent with the material demands and needs that such a complexly structured cult sodality has in virtue of its self-appointed sacred duty to perform world renewal rituals mediated with human postmortem remains. I have consistently argued that the meaning of material objects is best characterized in symbolic pragmatic terms, and this symbolic pragmatic premise applies as much to the production of these portable items as it does to their active use since a production trajectory is a behavioral process that is constituted as a production process by being governed according to the symbolic pragmatic rules particular to it. Among these rules would be that ritual items must be produced in ritual contexts or, to put it slightly differently, in material settings that count as the proper ritual contexts.

Also, of course, according to the premises underwriting the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, those carrying out the production process must have the custodial rights and prerogatives to do so; that is, they must be publicly recognized as the legitimate custodial artisans of the positions they occupy, and these positions are as much ritual as instrumental positions. Of course, many such production steps would probably be governed by fairly constrained schedules. If so, the custodial artisans, probably belonging to senior age-sets of their sodalities, may have regularly shared the ritual production labor, and they were likely required to go into some degree of seclusion while cooperatively participating in these processes—thereby secluding themselves while performing these sacred *chaîne opératoire* processes. During these periods of ritual seclusion, their diet might be limited to especially potent foods that would not pollute them or the *chaîne opératoire* production processes. Hence, even the preparation of everyday meals would be strongly constrained, possibly requiring foods in special forms, such as maize-on-the-cob, so that it could bekerneled freshly as needed in order to produce what were as much ritual as “domestic” meals, and so on.

To confirm this critical assessment, Knight (2010) reported the further evidence that he revealed through the excavations of several other mounds, as well as reviewing the curated evidence found on others. In total, he reported the empirical patternings on 12 mounds and concluded that these mounds must now be considered as incorporating a replication of the *same range and mix* of activities as those revealed by his excavations on Mounds Q and G (2010, 357). Most importantly, he argued that the quantity and distribution of the empirical data, including the range of exotic residues of production and usage of this ritual material (e.g., galena, copper, mica, “eccentric” bowls, and so on) “do not support a view of unified, centralized

economic power. Instead, elite extraction of resources, skilled production, and consumption of skilled crafts were diffuse, situated within a structure of competition and reciprocal exchange among many social segments. When there was social differentiation and extraction of resources from the hands of primary producers, it mostly played out internally *within* segmentary kin structures that retained a strong hold on economic power” (2010, 360, emphasis in original). What he means by saying that “social differentiation and extraction of resources . . . mostly played out internally *within* segmentary kin structures that retained a strong hold on economic power” is that the dominance power that he insists existed must be understood as being displaced to the “segmentary kin structures” and, as I note below, that during post-Moundville I times, these persisted in the countryside.

In short, I do not think that I am being unreasonable to claim that, while this statement effectively rejects his earlier paramount monistic chiefdom polity model, it also preserves the core notion of Moundville as being based on a structure of dominance hierarchies, and therefore, I also consider this modification to be a failed attempt to rescue the basic model. This is because, while the interpretive move that the data invite him to undertake is to postulate a new range of activities not contemplated under the old paramount monistic chiefdom polity view, this interpretation holds true to the original premises, in this case, by his postulating a downward displacement of dominance power from Moundville to the lesser single mound-and-plaza complexes, and what emerges are several further contradictions and anomalies. These “countryside” complexes are treated by him as simple monistic chiefdoms governed by chiefs of their respective ranking “lineages.” At the same time, however, these monistic chiefs also constitute the Moundville “elites-in-residence.” However, given the empirical data, he claims that the nature of their

residency position at Moundville was not as monistic chiefs but as “elite artisans.” Hence, he is forced to postulate a radical bifurcation of the nature of eliteness that was nevertheless held by the same persons, depending on their place of residency. On the one hand, these persons were elite artisan producers while resident in Moundville, and on the other, they were monistic chiefs while in residence or possibly “on tour” at their countryside simple monistic chiefdom polity locales.

Immediately, what comes crashing down is the political strategy of dominance-based leadership needing to closely monitor the activities of the subelite that I theorized above—but in reverse. Now, it is the in-resident “elite artisans” as absentee monistic chiefs who would have to travel regularly to their simple monistic chiefdoms for this purpose, since the empirical data at Moundville indicate that those living there did not occupy it in their capacity as monistic chiefs. To use Knight’s favored term, they were *elite leaders*. Second, this modified model also reveals a fundamental inconsistency in the postulated structure of dominance. Why? For the sake of argument, I can contingently accept that, as autonomous polities, simple monistic chiefdoms can certainly ally and form compound political locales where all the ruling elite live in a state of relative egalitarian balance, or, as restated, in a state of contingent mutual autonomy, this autonomy hinging on each monistic chief maintaining the dominance powers of his/her own chiefdom so as to counter any threatened imbalance between him/herself and the other chiefly peers at Moundville. But doing this requires that they mutually relate as monistic chiefs, not as elite artisans. And part of this relationship entails ensuring that they live in the same chiefly splendor and style and, furthermore, that their counselors regularly travel and sustain lesser households there. In short, a dominance-based political system operates in dominance terms at every level of the hierarchy, and even when the top

level is internally structured in egalitarian terms, it must still manifest dominance-based power, albeit the display of this power will be more-or-less-balanced among the “mutually equal” participants. Now this structural necessity does not preclude a particular monistic chief from being able to also become a skilled artisan. However, while his/her competency in this regard might earn him some admiration from his/her monistic chiefly peers, it would not count as part of the dominance powers that sustained him/her in a balancing-of-dominance-powers among his/her monistic chiefly peers. Rather, he/she would still be required to be a patron of such artisans since it is in the role of patron that he/she displays dominance power; the more and the more competent artisans he/she can patronize, the more and better will this chiefly patron count as being among the major chiefly players of this dominance-based political game.

It is clear that this interpretation, being his most recent treatment of the Moundville layout, is in considerable disaccord with his own earlier model of Moundville as a paramount monistic chiefdom polity. It was this model that underwrote his original elucidation of the above “diagrammatic ceremonial center” interpretation (Knight 1998). However, despite reformulating the social nature of Moundville as a federation of simple monistic chiefdom polities, he retains commitment to the basic notion of the monistic chiefdom as a dominance hierarchy of the “kinship segmentary” components of the chiefdom. He does this despite recognizing that, if the graded-in-size series of mounds and their symmetry is a valid reflection of the social structure of the “kinship segmentary” components, then it is a very remarkable architectural program indeed. “If it is correct that mounds around the plaza periphery were sponsored by corporate kin segments, what is remarkable about this arrangement is its imposition of a *fixed system of rank relationships among kinship segments*” (2010, 365, emphasis added). That is, this layout is now even more

remarkable to him than it was in his 1998 chapter because, in his most current view, these mounds represent lineages whose “monistic chiefs” not only treated each other as peers but recognized that they were in an ongoing competition via “elite” artisan production for esteem. Presumably this would mean that at any given time, while formally all were equal, informally there was recognition of different degrees of esteem measured in terms of how well a given lineage did in the competition for recognition. Hence, he appears himself to be surprised that there was a time—ca. AD 1200-1300—when these competitive and factious simple monistic chiefly lineages, formally equal in peer standings, could agree to produce a mound set that publicly displayed and effectively “froze” their standings *at that time* as being unequal.¹²

His noting that this is one of the most remarkable facts about the Moundville layout implies that, according to his current “political heterarchy” model, this layout should not exist in this form. Instead, competing “egalitarian” dominance-based groups should never commit themselves to casting into permanent architecture what each believes to be a temporary state of imbalanced dominance powers. To do so would contradict their claimed peer standing. If this is the case, then, wittingly or not, he has raised another anomaly that his most recent model has generated and left unresolved. However, rather than his asking if this might mean that the new model is in some way inadequate with respect to approximating the real social structural nature of Moundville, he defends it by projecting its inadequacy onto the responsible communities themselves. He neatly does this by commenting that only with the passage of time did the builders come to see that their prior construction of these mounds in this layout (i.e., as having graded sizes) was a strategic mistake, and therefore, this mistake came to be the source of factious argument and discontent leading to abandonment of the Moundville site.

For example, this is how he explains why the lesser mounds in the southern sector were abandoned early. “The practice of placing elite graves in the summit of the smaller plaza-periphery mounds ceased. *Conflict among participating segments was perhaps the inevitable result of casting their ranks as fixed in the monumentality of the center itself.* Eventually, the reciprocal features of production and exchange among mound-based kin segments . . . failed in their purpose to buffer divisive competition. About AD 1450, all further mound building stopped” (2010, 365, emphasis added).¹³

Therefore, it is as if the elite and their followers finally self-discovered that Moundville as a “diagrammatic ceremonial center” was a monumental lie on their part—or, possibly, it was only too true. Therefore, they strategically chose to abandon and avoid it “very much as though Moundville had become a negative symbol” (2010, 365). He even suggests that the nonexistence of its original name in any known Southeastern community was the result of the perceived necessity of wiping it from collective memory. An alternative way of interpreting these closing comments, however, is to treat them as a classic case of projecting. Rather than attributing shortsightedness to the builders, it might be more reasonable to attribute it to the Chiefdom Polity model, as I will further argue in the following chapter.

NOTES

1. Interestingly, based on his subsequent excavations of several of these mounds, Knight (2010, 364-65) has recently challenged this, his own view. He has concluded that this is an untenable thesis, and he now proposes a rather different one, in which he argues that, while these mounds were used by the elite, they did so in their capacity as artisans of ritual (and some nonritual) artifacts. I discuss both these views later.

2. As second-order heterarchies, if these two multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex sites located on opposing banks of the Mississippi River were themselves affiliated, then they would constitute a third-order heterarchy equivalent to the dual concentric rings of second-order heterarchies encircling the Central Precinct. However, this possibility is something that requires further research.

3. Although I have used the terms *sedentary* and *permanent*, this is not because I accept these characterizations as realistic in describing Moundville's residency pattern, which clearly I do not, but because I am summarizing the current characterization as presented by Knight and Steponaitis and generally assumed by most Moundville archaeologists (Hally 1993; Knight 2010; Marcoux 2007; Markin 2007; Peebles 1983, 1987; C. M. Scarry 1998; Welch 1998, 1996, 1991; Wilson 2008, among others).

4. In his most recent excavations and interpretations of Mound Q and Mound G, while these two mounds did not constitute a paired set, each was paired with a complementary smaller mound. Mound Q represents the smaller of its paired-mound complex, and supposedly would have been a mortuary mound, while Mound G was a large platform mound, supposedly representative of a monistic sub-chief's residential mound. Knight (2004, 319) has now modified this earlier claim, and I discuss these modifications more fully below.

5. Knight (2010) notes that, despite having more control on the chronology, the lowest levels of the mounds are still largely unknown chronologically, and therefore, the precise timing of the initial mound constructions is still problematic.

6. Steponaitis wrote this prior to the calibrated chronology that he and Knight established (table 14.2). If the latter is accepted, since this dating has now contracted the temporal scope of the Moundville I phase by 70 years, instead of writing “in the first two centuries” it would need to be written as “in the first century of its existence.” Furthermore, he has now revised his estimate of the time when the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex was built. In this quotation, it was built *following* the early Moundville I phase, even though the early Moundville I phase displays the thickest midden, indicating that the population had peaked prior to the Moundville II phase. Now he sees the “big bang” construction as starting at the beginning of the late Moundville I phase (ca. cal. AD 1200) with the population apparently still at or near the peak level until the early Moundville II phase (ca. cal. AD 1250/60). I look at the implications of all this later.

7. However, if Wilson’s assessment is correct—namely, that there are many more such early Moundville I structures existing that have not been revealed by survey or excavation—the total population responsible for the midden buildup and the structures of this period might be quite a bit larger than Steponaitis and Knight postulated.

8. Of course, as noted above, Knight (2010, 361) has since conceded that the transformation of Moundville into a necropolis started much earlier, ca. AD 1250, even though major construction continued until ca. AD 1300.

9. To prevent confusion over these two readings, I will now refer to the model presented by Knight in his 1997 and 1998 papers as the

paramount monistic chiefdom polity model and to the model in his most recent 2010 book as the *simple monistic chiefdom federation model*. Importantly, these two views share the same basic premises—namely, that Moundville emerged as the center of political consolidation and that the core organizational principle was dominance-based hierarchies. They also incorporate the above mortuary and occupation data that Steponaitis has given in the same way. Therefore, there is no disagreement in this regard between the two models.

10. Interestingly, Knight does not address the positioning of Mound A. Although not as large as Mound B, it is clearly a major mound, and it is more centrally located spatially than is Mound B. As far as representing social power, it would seem quite reasonable to interpret it as the paramount monistic chief's primary mound. Of course, this would then raise the question of the meaning of Mound B.

11. I am still not fully convinced that even if, as both the paramount monistic and the simple monistic chiefdom federation views claim, the basic component groups of the Moundville community (i.e., ranked clans) sustained a balanced-dominance structuring characteristic of an "egalitarian" community, this would explain the graded size and symmetrical positioning of the peripheral mounds. If these groups were in an ongoing competition for rank, then if they were going to build mound platforms in the symmetrical layout that Knight notes, they would insist on building them all the same size. If each mound was identified with a specific clan, and size marked and constituted relative rank, then to deliberately build them in different sizes would mean that some clans—those identified with the small mounds—were already admitting to being losers in the competitive struggle for rank and dominance power. Even Knight (2010, 365) raises this as a puzzle, given his claim that these were competitive groups.

12. I will note here that Knight has taken the same interpretive route with regard to Moundville that Pauketat (2004a, 2007) has in interpreting Cahokia. Pauketat speaks of Cahokia, the “metroplex,” as a monumental *political heterarchy*. While I reject both Knight’s characterization of Moundville and Pauketat’s characterization of Cahokia in these “political heterarchy” terms, the notion of a political (mutualistic) heterarchy is quite acceptable. I see the United Nations in these terms. The critical difference between my cult sodality heterarchy view of Moundville (and Cahokia) and the political heterarchy view hinges on the notion that the political heterarchy has dominance as its core value, albeit balanced, while the cult sodality has autonomy as the core value.

13. He notes that these lesser mounds started to be abandoned ca. AD 1350 and correlates this with the forming of lesser mound sites (Knight 2010, 363).

CHAPTER 15

Moundville as a Cult Sodality Heterarchy

I will now formally postulate that the “big bang” construction expansion, beginning partway through the Moundville I phase (starting ca. cal. 1200 AD) and resulting in the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex referred to in the archaeological record as the Moundville site, was the outcome of the emergence of a second-order (or possibly a third-order) world renewal cult sodality heterarchy on the large Hemphill Bend terrace by means of the affiliation of several preexisting first-order heterarchies. It is also likely that very many other cult sodalities that had been only periodically interacting with these latter first-order heterarchies decided at this time to become affiliated. I believe that the overall patterning of this complex settlement locale with its associated “residential” clusters, CBLs, and artifactual assemblage is largely consistent with this claim, and I will demonstrate this in the following chapters through detailed interpretation and explanation of the patterning of the relevant empirical record. The magnitude of the construction alone presupposes a period prior to ca. AD 1200 during which the necessary preconditions were developed for the type of collective ideological strategy to emerge that the very existence of this construction entails. Only three known single-mound locales, Mound O, Mound X, and the Asphalt Plant Mound site, have currently been recognized to have existed on the broad Hemphill Bend terrace of the Black Warrior

Valley between ca. cal. AD 1120 and AD 1200 (i.e., prior to this “big bang”). If a single mound-and-plaza complex is taken to constitute a first-order heterarchy—that is, an alliance of several autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities—then the spatial distribution of these three mounds suggests that at least three first-order cult sodality heterarchies marked the early Moundville I phase.¹

As I noted in the previous chapter, Wilson (2008) has established that each of the 10 clusters of structures exposed by the roadway excavations in the early 1940s had several early Moundville I phase features. If each of these clusters is treated as the transient quarters of an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality, then, dividing these evenly, there would be at least two first-order heterarchies, each one associated with one of the two known mounds, and each consisting of an alliance of five or more sodalities. If the Picnic Area (PA) Tract and the East Conference Building (ECB) Tract are added, these having been recently excavated by Scarry (1998), these suggest at least two more ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities, possibly affiliated with the heterarchy responsible for Mound O. Of course, almost 1 km northeast of Mounds O and X, there is the Asphalt Mound. It could constitute another first-order heterarchy with its two to four or more affiliated cult sodalities having (currently unrecognized) sodality clusters near this mound. However, even these estimated 14 or 15 cult sodalities likely do not exhaust the total number of early Moundville I phase cult sodalities that cooperated in realizing their ritual schedules on the Hemphill Bend terrace. This is because Wilson analyzed only those clusters revealed by the roadway excavations. These were well distributed, and therefore, it is possible that another 10 or more similar clusters could be discovered in future work. As I suggested above, during this early Moundville I phase, there were likely many newly emergent ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities dispersed along the Black Warrior River that were involved but not yet

formally affiliated with these first-order heterarchies on the Hemphill Bend terrace. Their members would probably set up temporary shelters among both the 12 known as well as the currently unknown clusters while attending ritual performances at these mound sites.

Now all this assumes that from the beginning of regular usage, the Moundville locale was used by groups that regularly traveled to the site and took up transient, short-term occupancy in hostels that they built for this purpose. That is, neither the sodality heterarchies directly responsible for the original mounds and clusters of permanent structures as currently known nor those whose members attended as guests or auxiliary participants would have been permanent or sedentary occupants of the site. Since Steponaitis also noted that there are no other known mound sites in the Black Warrior River valley at this time—according to Welch (1994), apparently even the mounds of the Bessemer site above the Fall Line were constructed only near the end of the early Moundville I phase—this suggests that many, although possibly not all, of these early Moundville I phase autonomous cult sodalities between the Fall Line and its juncture with the Tombigbee River (and possibly on the latter river, also) were involved with these three first-order cult sodality heterarchies.

This raises an interesting question. What would be the difference between a cult sodality being a constituent component of one of these early Moundville I phase first-order heterarchies and a cult sodality that simply was “visiting”? Since all those participating in the rituals were transients, how could visitors and nonvisitors be distinguished, and why should they be? As I suggested above, the observable distinction would likely be marked by the visitors using temporary shelters, and the reason these visitors were there in the status of “visitors” would likely be related to the fact that the sodalities they were representing were not yet custodians of one or the other of the ritual usufruct copyrights required to perform the rituals they

were interested in carrying out as autonomous sodalities. Therefore, their status would be contingent on being guests of a cult sodality that was a custodian of the required ritual usufruct; and they would participate as auxiliary performers, possibly bringing some of their own symbolic capital in the form of human deceased as sacrificial media. This visitation practice, therefore, would be part of the preparation for them to participate in a custodial franchising event, thereby becoming franchisees and being endowed with their own custodial ritual usufruct copyright. Once this was established, they could become secondary custodial franchisers in their home region, and ultimately this could result in their forming a first-order cult sodality heterarchy that joined the original first-order heterarchies at Moundville. This process could have occurred for possibly only two or, at the most, three generations (40 to 50 years), thereby generating the conditions that climaxed in the rather sudden decision by all, or at least most, of the cult sodalities across the region to affiliate and cooperatively expand Moundville as their collective *second-order cult sodality heterarchy* locale starting ca. cal. AD 1200.

In short, it is not at all difficult to explain how the relatively deep midden that Steponaitis has recently noted was accumulated during the Moundville I phase. Of course, this does not explain the very low number of burials dated to the Moundville I phase, given my claim that postmortem human sacrifice was a critical part of the rituals performed. But I address that problem in some depth and detail in Chapter 17. And notice the gravity of this problem since, combined with the above claim that these multiple transient participants would bring their symbolic capital in the form of the remains of their deceased with them, then the very low number of burials attributed to this early Moundville I phase period, characterized by high-transient occupancy and mortuary usage, is a major puzzle to resolve, particularly as no other CBL is known to have existed

outside Moundville locale during this and subsequent Moundville phases.

Now this view of the social nature of Moundville stands in perspicuous contrast to Knight's "diagrammatic ceremonial center" view. However, this difference refers to the social nature of Moundville and not the methods that we have used. I think it is important to repeat that I believe he and I generally share the symbolic pragmatic perspective with regard to the symbolic meaning of material culture. Therefore, I believe that we agree that the reason people have to undertake collective monumental architectural constructions is to effectively constitute the activities they intend and need to perform there and, of course, reproduce (and possibly unwittingly modify) their social relations. Where we disagree is over what type of social organization Moundville was. As I noted in the previous chapter, he has consistently argued that it was a monistic chiefdom polity, although over time he has modified the precise type. In general, I have been consistent in claiming that Mississippian complexes like that of Moundville were the material product and context of cult sodality heterarchies (i.e., affiliations of cult sodalities). As I noted in the opening sentence of this chapter, the rest of this book is devoted to empirically anchoring this claim through demonstrating that the Moundville archaeological record can be most coherently understood in these latter terms. This means adjudicating between these two views, and to do so it is necessary to look beyond the monumental earthworks themselves and critically assess other related and relevant empirical evidence as it has been accumulated and published in the literature up to this point. I believe that the mortuary data are particularly important in this regard. However, as noted above, I will address these in considerable detail later.

In order to initiate my demonstration of the social nature of Moundville, it is the above set of clusters of structures and their

associated features and contents that I will now address. I have already briefly alluded to Wilson's data in this regard, and I will return to examine it in some detail. As I noted earlier, Margaret Scarry has most recently excavated and reported on the PA Tract and the ECB Tract structures and in some ways the details she reports are qualitatively more relevant than Wilson's report of the other 10 since her careful excavations and recording enables detailing the stratigraphy and contents of the features. Still, Wilson's more general overview of the settlement features and patterns, similar in many ways to those excavated by Scarry, is also very important since it elucidates the quantitative distribution of the clusters, and his assessment of their contents can be used to generalize the qualitative detail that Scarry's work has represented. Following this careful summary and critical discussion, the second half of this chapter will be devoted to reexamining the monumental architecture of Moundville along the lines that Knight did (i.e., in terms of its form and layout), but in this case, showing how the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex can be more coherently explained in terms of the cult sodality perspective than in the monistic chiefdom polity perspective. Part of this claim to greater coherence is that the cult sodality heterarchy explanations dissolve the many puzzles and anomalies that I noted with regard to the monistic chiefdom view. When I have completed this task, I move to the next chapter to recapitulate the Mississippianization process as it unfolded in the West-Central Alabama region, thereby paralleling the method I used with regard to the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley. I follow this in Chapter 17 with a critically important in-depth interpretation of the Moundville mortuary record in order to confirm that the cult sodality heterarchy view is the preferred (for now) explanation of the Moundville site.

The Moundville Clusters of Structures

Scarry (1998) reported her excavation in the Picnic Area (PA) Tract of the northwestern sector of the Moundville site first, and then she shifted her focus to report on her excavation in the East Conference Building (ECB) Tract, which is also in the northwestern sector of the Moundville site and near the bluff edge but east of the PA Tract (figure 14.1, Chapter 14). The site in the PA Tract area contained six small structures, and these were most heavily used during the early Moundville I phase. Three of these structures displayed the typical Late Woodland single-post wall feature, and three displayed combined single-post/wall trench features with floor basins. They ranged in size between 14 m² and 32.4 m², falling within the size range that Wilson (2008) established for the structures of the other 10 roadway clusters that he examined. Also interestingly, they were associated with both West Jefferson grog-tempered and early Moundville shell-tempered ceramic sherds. However, Scarry particularly discounted the likelihood that an earlier Late Woodland West Jefferson phase occupation was responsible for these grog-tempered ceramics. “[T]he relatively high frequencies of local grog-tempered sherds might seem to suggest there was a Late Woodland (West Jefferson) component in the PA Tract, but this does not appear to be the case. In all contexts, the grog-tempered ware was found intermingled with shell-tempered ceramics. There were no pure Late Woodland features” (C. M. Scarry, 1998, 73). Based on the sherds of these two ceramic types being found thoroughly intermingled in the context of the combination of the West Jefferson-like and Mississippian structure features (as well as two cases of puddled clay central hearths), she concluded that these were early Moundville I phase structures and also that they were standard Mississippian farmsteads occupied by sedentary residents and that they likely demarcated the PA Tract as a residential domestic home area.² “Overall, the evidence indicates

that the PA Tract was a residential area during the Moundville I phase.” She adds further interesting craft-related data by noting that the occupants “changed the way they built their houses, began to make a greater variety of pottery, and gained increased access to nonlocal stone. Some residents may also have become involved in craft production.” While treating these as indicators of discontinuity with West Jefferson practices, she considered that there was one central characteristic—namely, “[t]hroughout the phase . . . the area seems to have been used solely for domestic activities. There is no evidence for special-purpose buildings or ceremonial activities at the PA Tract” (1998, 75-76).

With regard to her excavations in the East Conference Building (ECB) Tract, she noted that the sector she worked on was partly within the western palisade line since she recovered the residue of a sector of the timber curtain wall. In fact, of the six structures she revealed, Structure 1 and Structure 2 were superimposed by the palisade. They also displayed the same mixed style of architectural attributes that she identified in the PA Tract structures, single-post walls and Mississippian wall trenches, respectively. Therefore, she concluded these were also early Moundville I phase structures and contemporaneous with the PA Tract structures (1998, 87). The other four, Structures 3, 4, 5, and 6, were built after the palisade was constructed. This means that they were late Moundville I phase structures contemporary with the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex. She also noted finding in and around these four structures mixed fragmentary deposits of “exotic” stones (chert, sandstone, greenstone) and mica, similar to the mix found in the Picnic Area (PA) Tract structures. However, included in this mix were some fragments of copper and galena, material not found in the PA Tract structures, suggesting an extension of the long-distance exchange system (1998, 79). Hence, except for the addition of the galena and copper, this material

associated with Structures 3, 4, 5, and 6 was similar to the material mix of the earlier Moundville I phase PA Tract structures. Therefore, in her view, the early Moundville I Structures 1 and 2 and the late Moundville I Structures 3, 4, 5, and 6, despite the addition of galena and copper, were probably used in a similar manner and, by extension, they probably were also used in a similar manner as those in the more western PA Tract.

Scarry's assessment of their usage, given these data, is particularly interesting. As noted above with regard to the PA Tract structures, she treats these as family domestic residences, and specifically denies that they had any ceremonial usage. By extension, she considers the ECB Tract structures as being used in the same manner. However, she specifically comments on the fact that both sets of structures displayed a rather small size, and she particularly noted that this lack of commodious dwelling space would constrain their use as "normal" domestic structures to an only-when-necessary circumstance—for example, to sleep in, to take refuge in during inclement weather. Wilson (2008, 52-53) extends this assessment to many of the similar-sized structures in the Roadway excavation clusters that he identified. In other words, in her (and his) view much of the daily social life of the sedentary occupants likely would have occurred *outside* the structures (C. M. Scarry 1998, 92-93). Nevertheless, and despite the mix of single-post and wall-trench attributes, both grog-tempered ceramic sherds and Moundville Incised sherds, fragments of sandstone, exotic chert, mica, greenstone, the latter being raw materials of Moundville I phase ritual artifacts, she upholds the view that these were everyday domestic farmsteads. "In sum, the people who built the first houses on the northwest riverbank at Moundville were farmers. Their foodways were more similar to those of the later inhabitants of Moundville than to their Late Woodland, West Jefferson predecessors" (1998, 90). These conclusions are in line with

the current view I have already noted—namely, that during the early Moundville I phase, the extensive Hemphill Bend terrace overlooking the Black Warrior River was occupied by a dispersed village (or a set of dispersed villages) with at least three distinct ceremonial nodal sites as marked by the three mounds (Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 12; Steponaitis 1992, 11; 1991, 198).

Wilson has seconded this domestic residential interpretation of these areas, and he has generalized it to all the clusters as indicated on the plan maps he has studied, which he argues continued to be occupied to the end of the Moundville I phase. “The Mississippian occupation of every residential group was first established in the early Moundville I phase. During this time each residential group was composed of only a few households occupying a small number of single-post and hybrid buildings . . . [and they] shifted locations when they rebuilt their domestic structures” (2008, 87). In short, for both archaeologists these were clusters of sedentary family residential dwellings. For Wilson, each cluster constituted a separate lineage-based community. “Like matrilineages, early Mississippian residential groups functioned as social and economic groups, the members of which interacted on a daily basis. Moreover, the introduction of large public buildings linked with individual residential groups indicates some degree of corporate and ceremonial autonomy. While the chiefly elite may have usurped important aspects of mound-and-plaza ceremonialism at Moundville, small-scale residential groups maintained their own ceremonial facilities and practices” (2008, 87).

Critical Discussion

While I can agree to some degree that many of the structures in the PA, ECB, and Roadway Tracts were “used . . . for domestic activities,” it does not follow that these structures were family farmstead dwellings of compounded kinship groups (i.e., lineages). That is, the

indicators of domestic or everyday life are not exclusive to the social life of kinship-based groups, such as nuclear or even extended families, which, in Wilson's view, constituted lineages. The age-sets and age-grades of cult sodalities could just as likely have been responsible for these indicators of domesticity, and they could just as likely build these structures as permanent hostels for transient-housing. As such, a substantial range of the everyday behaviors of those transients using them would necessarily produce material residue similar to that produced by sedentary families occupying farmsteads. That is, domestic residue alone does not index family groups, nor does it alone discriminate between family or sodality groups. Further, Wilson has also noted that the Roadway clusters included larger structures that he interpreted as ceremonial in nature. Scarry did not find similar structures in the PA and ECB Tracts. But given the limited areal extent of her excavations, and given the similarities that these small structures had to the small structures of the Roadway Tract excavations, it is reasonable to assume that the small-sized PA Tract and ECB Tract structures she found were also likely associated with similar larger "ceremonial" structures.

Therefore, I would suggest that it would be profitable to reexamine these permanent structures from the cult sodality perspective, one that would characterize them as permanent hostels for occupation by members-in-transience. In doing so, it may resolve puzzles and anomalies that treating them as sedentary family-based residential units raises and does not resolve. One of these is immediately apparent. Scarry's reference to nonlocal resources is particularly important in this regard. Similar details concerning nonlocal resources were reported by Wilson for the roadway structure clusters. These were exotic cherts, such as Fort Payne chert, the fine-grained sandstone used to produce Moundville-style palettes, which are now recognized as an important component of the ritual practices

of Moundville (Knight 2004, 309; Knight 2010; Knight and Franke 2007, 136; Markin 2007, 122, 124), along with some fragments of greenstone used for celts, and some mica flakes. These data do not fit well into the standard range of activities and material production carried out by regular farmstead families, given the particular material needs that these groups would have. Indeed, the exotica strongly suggest that these structures were used to enable activities characteristic of groups that were specifically concerned with ritual while, of course, also having to resolve everyday residential needs, such as preparing, cooking, and consuming meals, not to mention sleeping at night and taking refuge during inclement weather. This claim is particularly consistent with Wilson's suggestion, as noted above, that the moderately larger structures indicate that these social units "maintained their own ceremonial facilities and practices." Of course, where we differ is that, for him, these would be ceremonies of kinship-based sedentary groups, which he also sees as commoners. For me, despite their rather modest size as "large public buildings," on the average only half again or possibly twice the size of the standard structures, they would be perfectly consistent with the "in-house" ceremonial needs of cult sodality age-sets and/or age-grades. Overall, therefore, as I discuss in more detail below, the small size of these structures along with the combination of exotics, and so on, would be consistent with short-term but sequential transient usage by age-sets traveling some distance to participate at Moundville in important rituals and, prior to the scheduled events, taking the opportunity to produce, repair, and/or refine some of the ritual artifacts and gear that they were anticipating using. Finally, in this regard, I will also point out that the presence of ritual production debris in these structures is perfectly consistent with the production debris of Mound Q and a number of the other major mounds discussed in the previous chapter. Of course, I argued then that the latter represents

the practices of custodial priestly artisans. However, this would not preclude the presence of similar debris in the 10 Roadway clusters and the PA and ECB Tract structures, particularly since both the structure on Mound Q, for example, and all the structures located in the Roadway, PA and ECB Tracts are, in my view, cult sodality features. I would anticipate that the custodial priestly artisans would just as often reside as transients in the former as the latter and even move back and forth between both locales according to the daily scheduling of their duties.

Setting aside the exotica problem, the everyday-life data embedded in these structures demarcating “domestic activities” suggest that these activities would not mark the domesticity of farmstead families. I say this because, while I claim that these would be transient shelters serving as a form of hostel-like lodges, this does not mean they were ephemeral or temporary constructions. As I suggested with regard to the residential structures at Orendorf, the opposite could be the case. Indeed, farmstead houses may have also been used for repeated spurts of short-term occupancy, although the residents were “sedentary” in the sense of treating these as their kin-based homes; and in some ways their occupancy could echo the transiency that would be characteristic of the postulated cult sodality heterarchy hostel-like residences. In many cases, the family farmstead might be occupied only seasonally. This would mean that they could remain vacant for weeks or more at a time. Since many of the farmstead occupants would be participants of the cult sodalities, while they were attending sodality rituals at Moundville their own family farmsteads would likely be largely empty, particularly those farmsteads of young married persons. In contrast, transient cult sodality structures would likely be serially occupied almost continuously and year round. This is because age-sets of the same sodalities of the first-order heterarchy, structured by seniority, would likely

occupy them sequentially, each being responsible for different seasonally performed rituals. Hence, one age-set might leave to return to their family homes dispersed in the countryside while another would arrive and occupy the same building or set of buildings. This cycling is typical for “hostel” living. However, it is also likely that, several times a year, sodality-wide cult ceremonies would be performed requiring effectively full sodality participation. This would mean insufficient hostel housing would be available for all the transients. To satisfy this repetitive need, and also to serve the needs of visitors, campsite shelters would be set up. Of course, their sequential usage would simply increase the amount and distribution of debris and midden, probably well beyond what might seem proportional if judged only in terms of the aggregate floor area of these small clusters of permanent transient hostels and associated ritual structures.

In this regard, I specifically noted in the introduction that Warren DeBoer (1997, 227) has commented on the surprising amount of midden that long-term sequentially transient residency of the Chachi ceremonial centers of Ecuador generated. The Chachi have a community settlement pattern that corresponds to what I have termed the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. They have ritual centers where the dispersed families of the communities periodically convene several times annually to perform multiple ceremonies. Therefore, for most of the year, transient residency in these locales is fairly low-key, while swelling to full capacity several times per year. Importantly, the permanently constructed hostel-like household sites that frame the central riverside ceremonial plaza have accumulated deep middens that could easily be mistaken by archaeologists as the result of sedentary, year-round occupancy. The important point that the Chachi case illustrates is that transient residency does not necessarily equate with impoverished midden build-up or ephemeral building construction.³

Scarry has also commented on the absence of storage pits, as did Wilson (2008, 23). Both have suggested that this absence was the result of above-ground storage in the form of granaries and claimed that these may have been collectively under the control of lineage groups. However, it is not simply that there was an absence of storage pits; there was an overall paucity of floor features in association with these structures (although a number of these structures contained mortuary deposits, as I discuss later in some detail). Central hearths were in some, not all, structures. In my view, if these structures were family farmsteads used for rather sedentary occupation, the lack of such features would be puzzling. However, the puzzle is partly dissolved if they are treated as hostels that were serially occupied. Transient occupants arriving for scheduled rituals or other tasks would likely carry in their own food stores, pretty well knowing in advance the amount they would need. And certainly, as Scarry and Wilson both suggested, large quantities could be stored in collective above-ground granaries, and these would be recognized as under the specific custodianship of the different sodalities that constituted one of the affiliated cult sodality heterarchies. Above-ground storage also correlates with the need for transient members to know precisely where the stores were located—especially those built up for scheduled large-scale ceremonial events carried out by their sodality. If storage pits and their different contents were dug into the small floor areas of the different cult sodality structures serving as transient hostels, the knowledge of the precise placement of these pits and their contents could easily become disconnected from those who came and went. It would not take long before whole sectors of the floors of these structures would have to be disturbed just to retrieve stored resources. Everyday usage of comestibles by transient occupants could be better served by using storage bags and baskets hung on wall hooks or support posts; and as noted, for large-scale events, above ground storage

cribs and bins could be built. These would be identified as being the custodial responsibility of the particular autonomous sodalities to ensure a good supply of resources when the total sodality may be in attendance and various planned ritual feasts were to be conducted. Indeed, the presence of the residue of maize cobs in the midden of Mound Q nicely ties in with the transient nature of the occupation of Moundville since, as I noted earlier, it could well be that these whole maize cobs would have been retrieved as needed from the cult sodality's on-site maize crib and brought into the temple locale by those who planned to use them as a necessary symbolic pragmatic medium for ritual meals associated with the particular ritual events that they were responsible to perform on this and other equivalent mounds.

Another point to note is that while the absence of cooking hearths in many of these structures (not all) would be anomalous for family-based domestic units, it would not be anomalous for cult sodalities. Under the view that the users were cult sodalities constituted of enabling hierarchies of age-sets, one hearth could be used by several age-sets sharing a cluster of hostel structures; and this single hearth would serve for preparing meals collectively, which then would be distributed to the groups in the individual structures without hearths where each could consume them. But the absence of hearths in many of these structures suggests another possibility with regard to meal preparation—namely, that cooking was not limited to direct-fire cooking. Instead, *hot-stone cooking* may have prevailed. Hot-stone cooking even raises the possibility that little or no cooking was actually done on the hearths. Instead, just portable objects that could be easily heated in the fire, such as metamorphic stones, could be regularly heated in the open hearth fire and then carefully carried back to the nonhearth hostel structures where they would be used for “hot-stone cooking” there.

Now this possibility of hot-stone cooking raises some important issues. One prominent aspect of the patterning in the Moundville ceramic assemblage is the burnished/unburnished ceramic ware dichotomy. The standard explanation for this dichotomy is that the two types of ceramics served two separate functions, storing and serving comestibles, on the one hand, and preparation (i.e., direct-fire ceramic-based cooking), on the other (Knight 2010, 19-20; Steponaitis 1983, 68; Wilson 2008, 126-27). The assumption underwriting this functional classification is that the surface of the burnished ware could not withstand direct-fire exposure that hearth-cooking would entail; and therefore, it is largely taken for granted that the prolific burnished ware of Moundville, pretty well limited to wide-mouthed bowls and bottles, and even flat-bottomed vessels, was reserved for auxiliary, non-cooking usage (i.e., food presentation, serving and possibly storage). However, from this a further implication can be drawn. Since it is clear that burnishing entailed considerable extra production effort and that this effort was not needed for these auxiliary purposes of storage and serving (i.e., unburnished ceramic ware could have been just as effective for serving and storing as was the burnished ceramic ware and at less cost), it seems reasonable to conclude that the extra-labor cost of this production step points to a purpose that surpassed the utilitarian. Added to the burnishing is the fact that many of these vessels also had surface treatment entailing the engraving of decorative motifs. All this seems to justify treating these burnished ceramics as being used primarily for ceremonial purposes, particularly in related ceremonial feasting activities.

Of course, presenting this distinction between unburnished and burnished ware as a functional dichotomy (↑) (i.e., cooking/unburnished ↑ burnished/serving-storage) as the sole explanation commits the fallacy of affirming the consequent. But some may immediately respond and point out that, *given the cooking technology that*

prehistoric communities had available, this affirming of the consequent is warranted since fire necessarily was part of cooking and since deliberately producing a category of burnished ceramics would effectively contradict their use for this direct-fire cooking. Therefore, it follows that there is only one possibility on which to base the chain of reasoning—namely, burnished ware was used for serving and storage and, given the extra labor involved—in both burnishing and decorating—and from the symbolic pragmatic perspective, of course, this usage was tied into ceremonialism. However, as I just noted above, this assumption that there is only “one possibility” is not warranted since there is the other possibility of hot-stone cooking. The question is, What is the likelihood that hot-stone cooking could have been and, in practical terms, actually was practiced? Indeed, quite a bit. In terms of traditional practices, according to Kenneth Sassaman (2002), the appearance of ceramics in the Southeast, ca. 2500 BC, was tied directly to *hot-stone cooking*, or what he calls “stone boiling.” Further, this cooking practice was even older than the effective use of ceramics for direct-fire cooking since it was required when only animal hides, animal stomachs, baskets and/or pits lined with clay were available to mediate “wet” cooking. Hence, the emergence of ceramics may well have been to make hot-stone food cooking preparation more efficient, not only for “ordinary” cooking but also for large-scale extraction of edible oils from different wild nuts. Sassaman particularly notes that the early Stallings Island fibre-tempered ceramics were very efficient insulators for holding in rather than conducting heat, and indeed fabric-temper was probably used for this insulation purpose. This means, of course, that the source of heat for the cooking process was not external to the vessel but internal to it (i.e., preheated objects were used) and the efficiency of this process is exponentially increased as the insulation value of the vessel is raised. Being both flat-bottomed and

rectangular in form and having a fibrous temper fits these requirements. Finally, he has systematically found soapstone slab artifacts in direct association with these early ceramics, and he notes these artifacts were specially designed and made with drilled holes for ease of preheating in an open fire and transferring while super-hot into large open-orifice and often flat-bottomed cooking vessels as well as for removing them when they had cooled off and had to be reheated. "By the time pottery was introduced on the coast and in the lower Coastal Plain at circa 4500 B.P., resident Piedmont populations had a well-established soapstone industry The earliest ceramic vessels in these areas were ideally suited to indirect-heating cooking" (2002, 413).⁴

There is no need to invoke a radically new innovation, therefore, to suggest that burnished ware was simply a particular transformation of an alternative and very ancient foodway preparation trajectory of the general region—namely, the hot-stone cooking method with the addition of burnishing possibly mediating a special symbolic pragmatic meaning whereby an autonomous ceremonial sphere of interrelated rituals was defined and constituted. And the unburnished ware/direct-fire based cooking method existed as a complementary, parallel, and equally autonomous ceremonial sphere of performances—both ritual and everyday forms of cooking. This suggests the validity of speaking of at least two ceremonial *chaîne opératoire* foodway preparation trajectories. In short, I suggest that the usage of this burnished ware in this manner was deliberate since it was taken to transform the behaviors of *preparing*, as well as serving, and consuming of foods as counting as the activity appropriate for a particular ritual sphere. That is, unless the foods intended for ceremonial feasts were prepared properly (e.g., in burnished and properly engraved and decorated vessels used to mediate hot-stone cooking), thereby avoiding mixing cooking and fire use, these

behavioral streams would not count as constituting the ritual meal or feast that was intended. Also, of course, the unburnished ware, at least the carefully *incised* forms, was likely designed to be used for direct-fire cooking required by a parallel and complementary set of ritual feasts. Finally, this suggests a third suite of ceramics, plain and unburnished, that was used primarily for everyday direct-fire cooking (i.e., domestic preparation of food). That is, in principle, the engraved burnished/incised unburnished ware dichotomy could be manifesting contrasting methods by which to constitute distinctly complementary ritual events requiring preparation of comestibles (i.e., ceremonial feasts and even small ritual gatherings, and the like). Elaborating on this distinction would be the recognition that certain hearths were preserved for ritual use only. Therefore, when used as sources of heat for cooking, rather than food-bearing vessels being placed directly on the fire, a practice that might be seen as “polluting” the sacred fire, only the stones would be heated and the hot-stone cooking done to one side or even in another structure, thereby keeping both the fire being used and the food being cooked and consumed separate and “pure.”

Of course, the existence and practice of these two parallel but mutually exclusive *chaîne opératoire trajectories*, the dual engraved burnished ware and incised unburnished ware *chaîne opératoire trajectories*, on the one hand, and the singular nonceremonial plain and unburnished ware foodway preparation, storage and consumption *chaîne opératoire trajectory*, on the other, must be treated as a hypothesis for now. But it does suggest that there should be considerable evidence that would be consistent with “hot-stone” cooking—namely, fire-cracked rock or, if stones were prepared to be used for cooking by being boiled in water-filled unburnished jars and/or bowls, then at least caches of conveniently sized “boiling” stones or fired-clay “boiling balls.” Sassaman argues that hot-stone cooking is

best carried out using metamorphic stone items that can be placed directly in a fire to absorb its heat while resisting splitting caused by thermal shock induced by the quick immersion of the hot stone in a cool liquid. This is one reason he notes that soapstone would be ideal for this purpose. He also notes that flat-bottomed and large-orifice vessels would be favored since these formal attributes increase the insulation capacity of the ceramics to hold in the heat while facilitating the ease of inserting and removing the cooking stones. Finally, he claims that round/conical-bottomed vessels tend to be counter-productive for this type of cooking since these forms make for more efficient conductors of heat for direct-fire cooking (2002 413-14; also see Sassaman 1995, 229-32). However, there may be evidence associated with the hearths themselves, suggesting that these could be re-examined to determine if variant types existed that could be linked to these two postulated alternative foodway *chaîne opératoire trajectories*. Also, experiments could be conducted on replicated burnished ceramics to see if hot-stone cooking is viable in them and if hot-stone cooking might generate wear patterns distinctively different from direct-fire cooking.

Neither Scarry nor Wilson comment on possible hot-stone debris or “boiling balls” in their excavations that might be consistent with the requirements of hot-stone cooking (although possibly the greenstone items would be ideal). However, Wilson (2008, 30) specifically notes the careful piece-plotting of materials found in the structures revealed by the Roadway excavations—greenstone, copper, shell debris, as well as discoids and points. In this case, he noted that there were many “nutting” stones. This is a nice general and vague category of artifact that actually could be used in several nonexclusively different ways. For example, rather than being used only as “nutting” stones, it is very possible that these were also used for hot-stone cooking, particularly if a reexamination of the stones indicate significant

burning along with a paucity of nutshell. And there is another direction that could be explored in this regard. Markin (2007) found it useful to establish an index to measure the “amount of mundane activity” associated with Mounds Q and G. She selected fire-cracked rock. “The occurrence of fire-cracked rock (FCR) is *abundant* in all contexts at Moundville as a result of hearth-using I correlated the relationship between the occurrence of jar sherds and the occurrence of other potential mundane activity indicators—FCR (*brown sandstone and tabular sandstone at the site were interpreted to be mostly FCR*), daub (which denotes structures), and *cobble fragments*” (2007, 124, emphasis added). Clearly, FCR, cobble-stones(?), and other “utilitarian” stones are abundant in the structures of the site, whether classed as nutting stones or “hearth” or “cobble” stones or sandstone. Of course, claiming that certain stones are “hearth” stones is strengthened if these stones were actually found in the residue of hearths and displayed burning signs. Being found scattered across the floor, however, suggests that they were used for activities that were only tangentially related to the hearths themselves. Of course, used as stones for earth ovens would be another possibility. But earth oven features have already been noted to be absent at Moundville. Use as “boiling stones” is another possibility, of course. Future research might address this question more thoroughly and systematically.

Further to this question of ceramics and the possible feast-preparation data found in association with the structures is the residue of special cuts of selected meat, particularly the upper leg bones of deer. These dietary highlights have typically been presented in support of the singular claim of elitism, the argument being that since the occupants of the Moundville site were the ruling elite this special food source represents the tribute that was transferred to them in conformity with their elite privileges (Knight 2004; Knight and Steponaitis

1998, 16; Steponaitis 1992, 11; Welch 1996, 75-80). I find extremely anomalous the interpretation that these “special meats” were favored for consumption by elite and that, at the same time, they consumed them in the context of small, “egalitarian” structures. Of course, unless alternative explanations are suggested and comparatively critiqued, this conclusion is another example of the fallacy of affirming the consequent. Indeed, this anomaly can be easily resolved when interpreted in terms of the cult sodality view. As I previously suggested, rather than being clear evidence of “tribute” provided by the commoners to serve the “ruling elite” of Moundville in their small dwellings, it can be as easily and more coherently interpreted as consistent with what could be expected of transient residency by cult sodality age-sets and age-grades. In this case, it is likely that the junior age-set males would typically undertake hunting for this more select game meat as part of discharging their sodality rights and duties to provide select foods, such as deer, birds, and other special animals, for ritual meals and feasts. Since they were also members of the cult sodalities, they would likely not only be the hunters but also would be among the consumers of these ritual foods. This would account just as coherently, and possibly even more coherently compared to the elite argument, for the prevalence of upper limb deer bones and the remains of other “quality” or select faunal remains. I suggest “even more coherently” since claiming that these special foods mark the presence of a dominant elite is inconsistent with the actual nature of the site, constituted of small, standard, and probably “nonelite” type residences. Treating these food remains as those of age-set cult sodalities in transient residency is fully consistent with the postulated purposes of these structures.

Indeed, even the distribution of the fine ware as assessed by Wilson is much more consistent with the cult sodality view than the ranked-clan sedentary domestic residential view that Wilson

projects. As I commented earlier, he has particularly noted that the fine-ware distribution does not support the often-made assertions that these ceramic types defined and marked elite. Rather, they define ritual—and the ritual requiring similar ceramics was performed equivalently in all these clusters. As he put it in his overall judgment of the ceramic distribution across these clusters, “fine-ware pots were important ceremonial items but not prestige goods in the traditional sense. They were too widely circulated to have been tightly controlled by the Moundville elite. Moreover, they were not produced in sufficient quantity to have functioned as wealth items” (2008, 127). When the other points are added that I have already made about what age-set companions of cult sodalities would need, the total picture of these dwelling and special-purpose structures as primarily expressing and fulfilling the needs of cult sodalities becomes much more reasonable than the claim that they were residential clusters of sedentary families organized in some type of lineal clan system. Even the mixed West Jefferson and Moundville ceramics and building features are consistent with the type of lifeway that would emerge through the importing of exotic ceremonialism by way of the custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights.

Finally, as Scarry notes, the constrained nature of these structures would encourage their occupants to spend much of their time outside. This might well be a hardship for sedentary farming families, but it would not likely be experienced as a hardship for able-bodied young and middle-aged companions away from their everyday family duties. Here they would take the opportunity to help each other to repair their gear, refine their ritual items, decorate their costumes, rehearse their soon-to-be-performed ritual practices, and so on, thereby leaving behind fragments of mica, nonlocal stones, copper, and the other exotics. Therefore, in terms of comfort, the companions constituting age-sets would likely consider small structures requiring

minimal heating for rather short periods of stay to be desirable. I would also add that, as I discuss in much detail later, their size would lend them to being used during part of their individual usage-histories as charnel houses where the cult sodality age-set could curate the bodies of the deceased they brought to the locale in preparation for subsequent postmortem human sacrificial rituals. The particularly interesting point in this regard is that the structures had a standardized width and length of about 4 m by 5 m (the average size of the Class I structure was 21 m², the smallest and also the most numerous type), thereby ensuring that they would be large enough for this body-curating function while also serving as locales for performing related mortuary rituals. Indeed, those with hearths might serve this purpose, the hearths being used to sustain a constant sacred fire, an attribute that is well known to be associated with traditional historical Southeastern mortuary practices.⁵ Those without hearths, therefore, would be used for transient shelter of the living. Finally, it is quite possible that many of the deceased curated in one charnel structure would then be given terminal burial in a neighboring structure that had been previously used as transient quarters and then converted to serve as a cult sodality CBL, as I discuss in detail later.

By interpreting early Moundville in these cult sodality heterarchy terms, the heavy occupation midden of Moundville I times that Steponaitis has noted is easily accounted for as the result of the convergence of multiple and sequential sets of companions from ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities up and down the river (and possibly even neighboring rivers) regularly and serially attending to participate in the seasonal cycles of multiple mortuary-mediated world renewal rituals as well as other related sacred game rituals. Even the rather standardized size of the structures would be consistent with a cult sodality since the age-sets would also be within a fairly strictly limited size range. However, as I noted in the previous

chapter, this still leaves an unresolved puzzle. According to Steponaitis's analysis, this Moundville I phase was also the time when activity resulting in mortuary depositions was much *lower* than the heavy midden deposits would suggest it should be (Steponaitis 1998, 27; Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 19). This is a serious puzzle for my model, and as I noted then, I will address it in depth in Chapter 17 when I examine and interpret the mortuary data in some detail. This analysis will demonstrate that rather than this patterning undermining my claim, it largely confirms it by showing that it is consistent with what a world renewal CBL of a second-order or possibly a third-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy practicing sacred games and mortuary-mediated renewal rituals would likely generate.

In any case, the total ceremonial routine that ritual cycles of world renewal cult sodalities required would be well established during this initial early Moundville I phase. Indeed, it would also be the period during which the neighboring first-order sodality heterarchies sharing the same Hemphill Bend terrace became more and more familiar with each other. Pursuit for reputation probably would promote competitive ritual sacred games among the sodalities, as indicated by the appearance of chunky stones, isolated skulls and bones, as well as isolated artifacts in the burial locations, and other highly disturbed burial deposits, a pattern I have already noted was the case at the Dickson Mounds site and in the CBL locale of the Orendorf site. This competition would probably feed interheterarchical relations bringing about an emergence of a second-order heterarchy out of the original first-order alliances, possibly stimulated by the performance of custodial franchising events by which "foreign" or extraregional ritual usufruct copyrights were transferred by visiting cult sodalities to local cult sodalities. As I postulated at the beginning of this chapter, it is this initially drawn out and then

very rapid affiliation process that I interpret as being responsible for the “big bang” nature of the major construction program outlined in the preceding chapter. The construction of the palisade has been interpreted as marking a period of hostility between Moundville and more distant neighbors. It is quite likely that such hostility existed. However, I think it preexisted the palisade itself. What was added to the hostility was a symbolic pragmatic modification of ritual and warfare rules of engagement, and the construction of the palisade manifests this important addition, one that served both ritual and defensive purposes.⁶

At this point, it would be useful to address the form and layout of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex of Moundville in meaningful symbolic pragmatic terms to show that an alternative to Knight’s dominance-based or power-over “diagrammatic ceremonial center” ideological interpretation can be given that quite resolves the anomalies that Knight’s interpretation generated while being fully consistent with the types of symbolic features and facilities that a second-order cult sodality heterarchy would require. And indeed, without these, the point of the ideological strategy of the heterarchy could not be properly achieved, this purpose being to undertake the regular performance of a suite of world renewal postmortem (and possibly some lethal) sacrificial rituals associated with a complex set of sacred games in order to ensure the ongoing balance and renewal of sacred powers immanent in the natural order of the cosmos.

Moundville as a Monumental Icon of the Cosmos

To support the following interpretation, I will address the same patterning and layout of Moundville that Knight succinctly described and used to ground his dominance-based socio-“diagrammatic ceremonial center” interpretation and his subsequent modification of it.⁷ By treating the groups occupying and being responsible for

Moundville as constituting a complex second-order (or even possibly third-order) heterarchy of mutually autonomous cult sodalities, a very different reading of the empirical data sets making up the patterning of the Moundville record results. Of course, I have already agreed with the core notion that Knight has argued—namely, that as a monumental icon, Moundville represents the essential structure of the cosmos, albeit I have strongly disagreed with his claim that it also represents Moundville as a ranked clan/moiety community dominated in one way or another by an emergent inherited ruling elite. Hence, rather than Moundville's symbolism being used to evoke and presence the powers of the cosmos in order to legitimize the “power elite,” I claim that its purpose as an expressive iconic medium was to evoke and presence these sacred powers so as to warrant and enable the builders/users to transform their collective behaviors to count as the types of world renewal ritual activities they intended.

Now I have already argued that the form and size of the monuments that a social organization required in order to constitute felicitous social activities—for example, ritual and ceremony—was determined by the collective ideology of the organization and not by the nature of its social structure, whether this was, for example, dominance-based or autonomy-based. Hence, there is no entailment connecting monumentalism with dominance hierarchy and as I have argued, in principle, the labor required to build a locale on the scale of Moundville could be mobilized just as well and possibly more efficiently and on a greater scale by autonomist organizations based on enabling hierarchies constituting a widespread magnetic social field of attraction and cooperation rather than organizations based on dominance hierarchies generating gravity-well social fields of imposition and competition that are shot through with resistance and reluctance on the part of participating groups. In these terms, I postulate that the builders of Moundville generated the layout that

we see to ensure that, as they saw and experienced it, it served as an iconic monumental symbolic pragmatic device for presencing the relevant sacred properties of the cosmos immanent in its natural order and thereby constituting the suite of collective behaviors performed in its contexts to count as and be (i.e., to constitute them as) world renewal rituals that fulfilled the *raison d'être* of this major cult sodality heterarchy. Importantly, as I discussed earlier for the Central Illinois Valley, just as the attributes of form, design, layout, proportional indices of size, directional orientation, and so on, were performative action cues for the users, these same attributes can be used as clues for archaeologists to interpret the likely representational content of the symbolic meaning expressed by Moundville. This may particularly be the case when dealing with a cosmology that characterizes the world in immanently sacred terms since these sacred powers are perceived and experienced by the builders/users as residing within the natural sectors themselves, and the makeup and directionality of the material components of monuments would be construed as being expressively congruent with the sacred powers immanent in these natural sectors. This notion of “congruency” can be thought of as a mode of “fitting” the formal material constructions themselves to the sacred sectors of the cosmos, thereby eliciting and presencing their sacred powers in this material context. For the central axis of a platform mound to be aligned with the rising sun, particularly on critical days or turning points in its cycle (e.g., either the winter or summer solstices or on the equinoxes) is to presence its relevant sacred properties—and needs—on these days in the earthwork itself. Therefore, the repetition of alignments marking out solstice and equinoctial turning points, the shape and relative positioning of the constructions, the graded proportional sizes of the constructions to each other, the types of soils used, even the *profiles of the mounds with respect to each other and overall*, as well as

other built-in formal attributes that expressively relate it to the world as imagined and represented in the cosmology and as envisioned in the worldview, can be interpreted as modes not for referring to or describing the world but for evoking and presencing the often complementary powers of the different sacred natural sectors of the cosmos (Byers 1987, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2010, 2011).

Unsurprisingly then, topographical contrasts, such as the land/water, valley/upland, and other landscape contrasts, can play important roles. Many Native North American peoples consider the water/land contrast to be a sacred division, and crossing this sacred natural boundary has grave implications that entail the appropriate ritual warranting (i.e., iconic “passporting”). Hence, the fact that Moundville is built on one of the few higher terraces directly overlooking the Black Warrior River Valley may be significant for more than giving it a position quite high above the annual floods. The terrace/valley bottom distinction might represent the fundamental land/water sacred division with the land recognized as suspended on the water surface, a state of affairs that resulted from the original creation of the earth island, and of course, this island-like formal appearance would be re-created with the annual rising and falling of the flood waters. Water is also commonly associated with the Beneath World, just as the air-sky-cloud is associated with Above World. Hence, the plaza of Moundville may represent the suspended Middle World island, while the terrace edge represents the sacred and rising-falling boundary between water and land. Lankford interprets the sky/water contrast as expressed in certain Mississippian engraved shell gorget artifact motifs in these terms. These artifacts are part of what is generically termed the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC) artifactual assemblage, and he extends this iconic expressiveness to ceramics also.

The Crested Birds [of the Hixon style gorgets] stand upon a pot, and in at least one of the gorgets they do so without benefit of the Middle World disk. In other words, the rim of the pot can either be the support of the earth-disk, or itself represents that disk. The identification of the pot in the naturalistic gorget makes it clear that the Beneath World can be symbolized as a pot, an image which is fairly reasonable in the light of the facts that water is the key and that it must be contained in something The pot is also the structural complement to the solid sky vault, completing the circular cosmogram [I]t is significant that the Choctaw specifically compare the pot in which the green corn is cooked to the sky—the pot is called *shoti hikiya*, ‘sky standing’ (2007c, 37).

By interpreting the form and layout of this multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex in these terms, it follows that the mounds that symmetrically frame the plaza would represent the highest points on the land. The north-south axis divides the plaza into symmetrical east-west zones (figure 14.3). Paired platform mounds are aligned opposite to each other on either side of the plaza, and as Knight points out, from north to south they are differentiated in size from large→small. Mounds A and B, the two largest, are on the north-south axis. Mound A is fairly centered in the plaza; but its axis is actually oriented east of north, an orientation that is directed up-river, the source of the flowing power of the Great Serpent, which is likely experienced as embodied in the river itself. Since these mounds firmly rest on the plaza, which itself is likely taken to be an icon of the Middle World, and the mounds reach into the sky in a series of graded steps, smallest to the south, largest to the north, then rather than representing differential social ranking of some sort of social components, as Knight’s model claims, the mounds more likely

represent the Above World, the heavens, conceived and experienced as a series of *stepped heavens* that the sun, moon, planets, and stars “climb” starting in the east (e.g., as the Southeastern equivalents of the Siouian Red Horn/Morning Star deity complex) and rising into the sky and then climbing down into the west, only to set again into the Beneath World.⁸

In parallel with Lankford’s drawing analogically a link between ceramic design and cosmology, it may be very much less than coincidental that one of the more unusual ceramic designs—associated particularly with Moundville (although also found elsewhere in a few instances)—is the “stepped” rim vessel. Steponaitis refers to it as a “terraced rectangular bowl,” and at the time of his writing, he noted that six of these were found at Moundville. “Usually the rim on one side of the vessel is lower than it is on the other three sides. A total of six such bowls turned up at Moundville, and only two are known from sites elsewhere” (1983, 69). The castellated profile that this rim makes could be very reasonably interpreted as an expressive icon of the stepped profile form of the Moundville multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex, which also forms a stepped profile that could represent the multiple heavenly or celestial levels of the Above World. In this regard, it is quite relevant that Knight has reported finding rim sherds of six more of this vessel type (which he terms *eccentric bowls*) in the midden of Mound Q.

Rim sherds from several eccentric bowls were identified (n=6). These striking terraced-rim bowls are of interest not merely because they are rare but also because they are our best candidates among the pottery containers for bona fide display goods, manipulated by elites for special uses. They have not been found at hinterland sites within the Moundville polity. Sherds from pottery vessels, primarily bottles, bearing engraved representational art . . .

were also recovered with some frequency at Mound Q. Typologically, these 152 sherds are classified as Moundville Engraved, var. Hemphill. The more prominent themes borne on these sherds are, in order of frequency, the winged serpent, the crested bird, paired bird tails, center symbols and bands, and scalps. (2004, 311)

Furthermore, in his most recent publication, he has reported similar ceramic sherd types in association with Mounds E, F, G, B and K (2010, 357). Some of these latter sherds may be included among the number reported by Steponaitis. Therefore, I can certainly accept that these vessels were special and, of course, were importantly related to other fine ware bearing distinctive motifs of the Above World and Beneath World gods. However, as Marcoux (2007, 242) critically noted, calling them *display goods* probably mischaracterizes their meaningful nature and, in his view, these are preferentially treated apolitically as ritual media. Most importantly, however, finding a total of 16 of these castellated vessel rims (plus numerous other fine-ware sherds) in the context of six of the major mounds suggests that this type of vessel was particularly identified with the activities mediated by the mounds. I consider this to be strong circumstantial evidence, therefore, that indeed they were expressive icons that represented and embodied the same powers that were experienced as immanent in the overall ground-level profile of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex itself, which, in turn, was participating in the sacred powers of the stratified heavens of the celestial Above World. This would be consistent with the view that the purpose of their use was as symbolic pragmatic icons that effected the presencing of the immanent sacred powers of the Above World in this multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex.

This “Chinese-Box”-like expressive mediation—from the overarching celestial “roof” of the cosmos to the Hemphill Bend Terrace/

River bottom division to the multiple-mounded platform mound-and-plaza complex to the particular platform mounds to the stepped-platform vessels themselves—ensured the success of the intended world renewal ritual processes for which these monumental mounds were likely built. It is also notable that these “eccentric bowls” are wide-mouthed, flat-bottomed highly burnished vessels, and given my earlier discussion of hot-stone cooking, their overall shape would lend them to being effective as hot-stone cooking vessels. Of course, as I noted earlier, this type of cooking may have been preferred for some ritual foods since it may have ensured purity of the sacred food and the sacred hearth. I present this not as “fact” but more as “food for thought” that is consistent with the basic premises of the cult sodality perspective and is appropriate for future research.

Is there any support for this iconic congruency reading in the known cosmology of the Southeastern Native American peoples? I think an affirmative answer is clear. Most historic Southeastern Native American cosmologies in their various versions characterize the world in terms similar to those noted above and, by the way, similar in principle to the cosmologies of peoples of the Midwest and Northeast generally. Cosmologies are deep structures and, in terms of my earlier theorizing of the cultural traditions, deep cultural structures sustain continuity over time and distance, and this continuity makes it possible for surface structures, such as ideologies, to vary over the same time and distance. Therefore, while it is very possible that ideological rules governing the expressive forms necessary to mediate and constitute ritual can change rather abruptly, this change actually reproduces and sustains the essential deep structures constituting the cosmology. Hence, it is very reasonable to project the known content of historical Southeastern cosmologies back to the rather recent Mississippian periods and interpret Moundville as presupposing just such cosmologies. What are the representational

contents of the historical cosmologies? While there is surface ideological variation across the individual ethnic communities of this region, in general, these characterized the Middle World, this being the sector of the cosmos that humans occupied, as a great earth island floating on the primordial sea and suspended for stability from the vault of the Above World by four cords or cables, one at each of the cardinal points. As noted above, there are variants on this theme: four trees, a central tree or *axis mundi*, intercardinal suspension points, the earth on the back of or as a great turtle floating in the primordial sea, and so on. Prior to the creation of the Middle World, only the primordial sea and the celestial vault of the Above World existed. The latter was where the sacred sky powers lived, often expressed in figural terms by being pictured in the form of great birds—eagles, hawks, falcons, and so on, and the primordial sea was where the Great Serpent lived. The gods encouraged a small amphibious animal to swim to the bottom of the sea and gather mud to bring to the surface, which the gods then used to form the earth. This creation resulted in the earth island, or the Middle World, thereby structuring the whole into three key strata: the earth island; the great primordial sea, or the Beneath World, the domain of the Great Serpent, itself a creator god; and the Above World, the domain of the celestial gods, under the great dome of the heaven. The creator gods of the Above World and the Beneath World sector the cosmos into four sacred quarters marked by the cardinal directions and several strata of heavens. As Hudson notes, for the Cherokee, “[t]his World was believed to have seven levels . . . all [humans] existed in This World, between the Under World and the Upper World, with the first level nearest the Under World and the seventh level nearest the Upper World” (1976, 122-23). Hudson also comments that the Cherokee, in common with most Southeastern peoples, believed that the “sky vault,” the Above World, “was an inverted bowl of solid rock

which rose and fell twice each day, at dawn and dark, so that the sun and moon could pass beneath it. When the sun passed up and under the inside of the sky vault it was day, while it was returning back to its starting place in the east it was night” (1976, 122).

In terms I used earlier, this was unproblematically believed to be an *immanently sacred world*, and therefore, willfully disturbing the sacred natural order of the world/cosmos was to be avoided or at least minimized when it could not be avoided. It is clear that the custodial ethos of the Southeastern peoples would correspond with this immanentist cosmology. In Hudson’s terms, they “had rules stipulating that things belonging to radically opposed categories had to be kept apart . . . so that . . . in certain situations male had to be kept apart from female, birds from four-footed animals, fire from water, and so on. When men failed to keep such opposing forces apart, dire consequences could be expected to result. Related to this was the Southeastern Indians’ concern with maintaining purity and avoiding pollution purity was maintained when separation was successful, and pollution occurred when separation failed. Much of the ceremony of the Southeastern Indians can be understood as a means of maintaining separation and as a means of overcoming pollution when separation failed” (1976, 317). Where avoiding such disordering was impossible, interventions had to be done in a proper manner so as not to anger the guardian spirits who were the custodians of the creatures, both animals and plants, that humans exploited for their survival and reproduction. This particularly applied to the need for humans to pursue survival by means of foraging and gardening. These practices inevitably required intervening into and possibly disordering the sacred natural order. Therefore, strong ritual proscriptions and prescriptions were built into the exploitation methods to ensure that the custodial guardian spirits of the animals and plants realized that the behavioral interventions that the hunter, gatherer,

and gardener must carry out were done with respect. That is, the instance of killing or gathering had to be performed with the properly styled material media in order for the behaviors to express and manifest the respectful intentions of human foragers and gardeners toward the sacred guardians of the animals and plants (i.e., the gods). “The Southeastern Indians believed that a balanced opposition existed between the great cosmic categories Men must necessarily hunt and live, and as long as they have a properly respectful attitude toward the animals they kill, the animals are not offended. But when men kill animals disrespectfully or carelessly, the animals are offended and exact vengeance on men by causing them to have diseases specific to their offences. However, when diseases occur, men can use plants, which men seldom offend, as medicine to cure the diseases” (1976, 156-57).

In short, Hudson has neatly articulated here what I have referred to as the essential contradiction of human existence that emerges in a human community that takes the natural world to be an immanently sacred order (Byers 2004, 130-33). Built into the pursuit of survival, therefore, are rules and protocols by which human behavioral interventions when performed are constituted as respectful hunting, not disrespectful poaching; respectful gathering, not disrespectful and polluting pilfering; and respectful storing (of the flesh of the animals and the nuts and fruits of the trees and bushes, and of the seeds of the plants), not selfish hoarding (of these resources that were gifted to humans by the gods); and so on. I earlier referred to the honoring and realizing of these rules in behavior as *midwifery ritual*, and the rules were typically built directly into ecological strategies as part of the representational contents of the collective foraging strategy, thereby shaping the practices that realized them. This ritual component, which I have claimed would be manifested and constituted by material styles themselves, would

mediate the emergent-transformative moment whereby the regular intentional behaviors of agents were constituted as the types of social actions intended (i.e., hunting and gathering rather than poaching and pilfering, and so on). In this way, they minimized any sacred pollution that their interventions into the sacred natural order would necessarily generate and, at the same time, assisted in the reproduction of the species they exploited (Turner 1993, 67).

The cosmologies of the historical Southeastern communities replicate the creation themes and principles I have already discussed with regard to the cosmologies of historic Prairie and Midwestern communities. Unsurprisingly, the names of the gods are different, and the creative events that constituted the founding of the world and the human community were imagined differently; but woven into and underscoring them are the same existential beliefs and ethical commitments and views, these constituting the generalized deep structures of the Eastern Woodland cultural traditions. For many Southeastern peoples, humanity was the offspring of the First Man, *Kanati*, who was also the sun and master hunter, and his wife *Selu*, the First Woman, who was also the mother of corn, beans, and all good plants (who was possibly also the sister of *Kanati*).⁹ Her standing in the sacred order probably would include being the essential sacred power of the “Mother Earth” from which these plants were grown (Hudson 1976, 148). They had two sons. The second son was born in the normal manner. However, the first was born unintentionally from the river where *Selu* washed the blood from the game animals brought to her by *Kanati*. This second son, called “Wild Boy,” emerged from the mixing of the blood of the animals with the water of the river, and he took on a wild character. Wild Boy and his brother never met “formally.” Instead they encountered each other accidentally by the river where they continued to meet and secretly played as companions, neither parent even knowing that Wild Boy

was born. Finally, he went to his parents' house with his brother and announced himself to them as actually their senior son.

Wild Boy and his brother did not fit either the age or the normal kin categories, and the relations that the two "brothers" had were more as companions than as kin (i.e., they were companion-brothers). Hudson notes that "[o]ne of the most important features of Wild Boy is that he came from the water, and water is associated with disorder, innovation, and fertility; thus, Wild Boy was always breaking rules and doing new things. In addition to the anomalous origin of Wild Boy, Kanati and Selu were possibly brother and sister, making the other son the fruit of an incestuous union, so that he too was an anomaly" (1976, 148-49). Their nonnormal conceptions and births and the way they first encountered and engaged with each other constituted their relationship as combining both the principles of kinship and companionship as complementary oppositions. Equally anomalous, in my view, are the events of the creation story in which these "twins," two boys related as neither fully kinship brothers nor fully companions, generated the conditions necessary for the survival of humanity by busily going about transgressing the direct admonitions of their father, *Kanati*, when they deliberately released the animals from the Beneath World and stole the corn and beans from their mother, *Selu*, whom they killed on the claimed grounds that she was a witch, and so on. While transgressing, they also were acting as *autonomous agents*, a core ethos value that was no less central to the Southeastern than it was to the Midwestern and Plains Native North American cultures.

Treated in thematic terms, these creation myths of the Cherokee can be generalized as characterizing the deep cultural structural traditions of cosmology and ethos of most historical Southeastern Native American peoples. As deep structures, therefore, they would have great temporal and spatial stability, thereby making it very

reasonable to project them back in time and space as representing the cosmology/ethos complex underwriting the construction patterning of Moundville (Byers 2006a, 80-82, 148, 256). In these terms, the palisade was likely an icon of the vault of the cosmos that enclosed the celestial Above World, as noted earlier.¹⁰ The spacing of the mounds, including the pairing of the large mounds bearing timber structures with the smaller mounds, possibly serving as specialized ritual production stations (if we generalize from the Mound Q excavations), combined with their graded size from north to south, could very reasonably be interpreted as specifically representing and participating in the multiple levels of the Above World. Extending this interpretation, as noted above, the plaza likely represented and participated in the essential powers of the Middle World, and the terrace edge likely represented and participated in the fundamental division between the land of the Middle World and the water of the Beneath World. Finally, the Black Warrior River likely was experienced as participating in the essential powers of the Great Serpent, the god of the Beneath World. Thus, the layout and regular patterning of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex would manifest the “stepped nature” of the Above World—a stepped nature that is echoed in the “eccentric bowls” (i.e., the rectangular-type vessels)—and would not be reflecting relative status of the social components of Moundville.

All this does not mean that the social structural organization of Moundville had no impact on the meaningful layout of Moundville. I am sure that it did. However, the manner in which it influenced the layout would occur as merely a secondary condition of satisfaction of the ideological strategies that were formulated and implemented in order to construct Moundville. That is, *contra* Knight’s “diagrammatic ceremonial center” interpretation, which claims that the layout was deliberately made, with the goal being to highlight the dominance hierarchy of elite/commoner and sanctify the

power structure by evocatively linking it to the cosmos, I perceive it differently. While the layout was intended to evoke and presence the sacred powers of the cosmos in the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex, the responsible social groups would wish to be somewhat invisible in terms of their role in this endeavor. The point of Moundville's form and layout was to ensure that those responsible for its construction were able to *use it collectively* as the iconic symbolic pragmatic medium they intended it to be, thereby enabling their collective behaviors performed both in building it and in subsequently and regularly using it to count as the types of world renewal rituals they intended.

To explore how the influence of these social organizations would be manifested requires establishing grounds for claiming how the labor involved would be allocated. Under the monistic chiefdom polity perspective, of course, it is assumed that this labor was organized by a dominance-based hierarchy of elite and, as Knight argued for the monistic chiefdom view, in both versions, the size and positioning of the mounds expressed the rank order of the clans. This would suggest that, under the more centralist paramount monistic chiefdom polity view, the monistic chief would determine the pooling and allocation of the commoner labor resources, ensuring that all the labor was divided in terms of relative rank position of the clans.¹¹ Hence, while the mounds might manifest the relative rank of the clans, the collective labor of these clans would be allocated by the ruling monistic chief so as to ensure that his own platform mound received the maximum labor input and that each of the other mounds received the labor input appropriate to the rank of the clan to which it belonged, and so on.¹²

Under the cult sodality heterarchical view, there would also be a pooling of labor by the cult sodalities. However, these were autonomous groups, and therefore, all the sodalities would consensually

agree on how they would do this. This process would probably entail the autonomous sodalities of each first-order heterarchy meeting in council to consensually agree on a strategy of allocation, and then all the first-order heterarchies would meet in council to finalize the planning, at all times respecting consensus. Since the point of the monumental construction was to presence the sacred powers immanent in the cosmos (rather than manifest the relative standing of the sodalities), it might be that these platform mounds were not allocated among these sodalities, at least in any permanent sense. I am inclined, however, to the view that custodial care for the different mound subcomplexes was consensually allocated among the sodalities, probably at the first-order sodality heterarchy level, although the allocation was open to being reshuffled. In general, specifying custodianship would be strategically desirable since specific groups would accept explicit responsibility for the care and maintenance of specific mounds. But they were custodians, not “owners,” and their exclusive rights to custodianship obligated them to ensure that all the other sodalities had access to the mounds and its facilities as they needed them in discharging their own autonomous duties. Therefore, each alliance would actively promote the allocation of labor required to sustain its responsibilities as the custodian of a given mound complex while, of course, sharing its labor resources with the other first-order heterarchies to ensure equitable allocation of the labor requirements. For example, a sodality alliance responsible for a smaller paired complex would recognize that they must share both facilities and their labor resources with those responsible for the larger complexes, and vice versa. This allocation would also ensure that each cult sodality had access to a sacred craft production locale, such as Mound Q, where its priestly artisans could undertake the ongoing task of producing and repairing the range of iconic symbols necessary for the sodality to perform its ritual activities.

Furthermore, the custodianship of the paired sets of mounds could modify in terms of principles that were independent of the bases for allocating the heterarchy-wide pool of labor resources. For example, the ranking position of a first-order cult sodality heterarchy could be determined by its recognized custodial franchising history. The heterarchy that had one of its senior ranking autonomous cult sodalities as the primary custodial franchisee of a critical ritual usufruct used by all the heterarchies would be counted as the senior first-order heterarchy, with the secondary franchisee heterarchy of the same ritual being ranked below the former, and in turn this heterarchy would be senior to the tertiary franchisee heterarchy. This rank ordering principle would also allow for the possibility that allocating the custodianship of any given mound complex by custodial franchisee rank could be modified should the rank of any one of the first-order sodality heterarchies be improved. This would be possible if one of these, through the agency of one of its constituent autonomous cult sodalities, became the primary custodial franchisee of a new, exotic, and highly respected ritual usufruct copyright by successfully inviting a highly reputable “foreign” cult sodality heterarchy to send its official representatives to Moundville as the primary usufruct franchiser—for example, a cult sodality established at Spiro or even Cahokia.

Alternatively, the competitive sacred chunky game could be a medium by which the rank order of the participating first-order cult sodality heterarchies was modified. The winners of an important sacred game *tournée* collected the most human bones and would have the honor of reburying them as postmortem sacrificial ritual offerings of world renewal in their own specific cult sodality CBL, such as one of the structures making up its cluster that had been cycled from its initial use as a hostel to a charnel house and finally to being the terminal postmortem sacrificial offering CBL. This might

correlate with a type of “musical chairs” reallocation of the mound complexes among the alliances to reflect the new rank order mediated by the sacred game *tournée* involving the chunky game, sacred ball games, and the like, among dispersed cult sodality heterarchies and locally sponsored tournaments. Other possible criteria for reassessing and redistributing the rank of an alliance might also have existed, and these would not be mutually exclusive. What is important, however, is that while the particular mound complexes would be allocated as the custodial responsibility of specific first-order cult sodality heterarchies, at any given time, these would be responsible to ensure that the mounds under their custodianship were in good order and repair so that all the cult sodalities could participate in the world renewal rituals that each of the mounds served to mediate.

Importantly, all this collective labor and sharing would likely ensure that the cult sodalities of all the first-order heterarchies that constituted this large heterarchy would have equitable access to every mound in accordance with their ritual needs. Since I have already argued and will detail and demonstrate later, that the primary ritual sequence linked different forms of postmortem human sacrifice, these platform mounds—representing the eastern and western celestial paths of the gods—would be used to constitute different rituals in the mortuary process, probably mediating spirit-release rites identified with these different levels of the cosmos. Hence, a deceased individual might be used to mediate different ritual sacrifices on most, if not every, major mound. The abandonment of the lesser southern mounds that Steponaitis and Knight noted earlier, then, would demarcate either the emergence of an alternative form of ritual or the performance of the traditional rituals in another symbolically equivalent site, such as in the lesser single mound-and-plaza complexes. I discuss this possibility in more detail in Chapter 17, but it would definitely be an alternative explanation to that given by Knight

(2010) under his most recent model for the rather early abandonment of these southern platforms.

Therefore, at any particular moment, the cult sodalities of each first-order heterarchy would have a defined custodial responsibility for one or more mound complexes, even though the precise mound complexes that each might be responsible for could and probably did change, as noted above. Since the rank order distribution of custodial responsibilities for each mound complex would be carried out independently of the labor distribution, the latter being collectively pooled according to the principle of equitability, the size of a mound complex would indicate the (current) ranking and not the material capacity of the responsible sodality heterarchies. In all likelihood, the two largest mounds, Mound A and Mound B—the two that were located on the north-south axis—were the collective responsibility of all the first-order sodality heterarchies constituting the second-order heterarchy responsible for Moundville and represented possibly the *axis mundi* of the cosmos.

In sum, therefore, while the key social structures of the heterarchy and its key cultural structures of companionship and autonomy would be presupposed by the very existence of Moundville, the ideological strategy that the builders exercised to produce the particular layout and magnitude of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex that we now see did not express the relative material power and/or rank of the different social components of their heterarchy as the material condition of satisfaction of their purpose. The primary collective strategy (i.e., ideological strategy) that Moundville served to fulfill was to constitute the collective behaviors of all the cult sodality components of the heterarchy as the potent world renewal rituals they were intended to be. Moundville, therefore, enabled them to discharge their sacred duties. Discharging these duties, in turn, rectified the disorder of the sacred world order, much although

not all of the latter being caused by their own complementary heterarchical communities' ongoing and necessary subsistence and settlement practices, their disordering, therefore, being an unavoidable consequence of subsistence intensification. And all this resolves the central anomaly I noted in my earlier critique of Knight's model of Moundville as a sociocosmogram—namely, that it was internally contradictory since, while his interpretation could explain either (1) Mound B or (2) the peripheral mounds, it could not explain—under the same ideological strategy—how both of these came to be built by the same community in the way they were. The above interpretation dissolves this anomaly.

As a final comment, this perspective would suggest that drop-off in usage intensity of the different mounds would manifest serious problems with the stability of the total heterarchy, possibly resulting from a tendency for participating cult sodalities to minimize the intensity of active involvement in the locale while maintaining sufficient levels of ritual participation to continue to count as full participants. Of course, at a certain point the level of participation could collapse as all the groups participating recognized that the suite of multiple rituals that such a monumental site was designed to mediate had become so truncated and crippled that their continuity would be interpreted as more polluting than sanctifying in consequence. The participation would collapse, and the great heterarchy would effectively disaffiliate, a state that, following a long period of diminishing returns, could occur quite rapidly. The reasons this might have occurred will be discussed in some detail later, although I have already alluded to it in my earlier discussion in Chapter 13 of how a complementary heterarchical tribal community might transform into a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community.

Conclusion

The above interpretation of the layout of Moundville as a second-order (possibly a third-order) world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy stands as a hypothesis for now, including the postulated account of the relation between the first-order sodality heterarchies and the overall multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza layout. It will require empirical verification by three major steps. The first step, Chapter 16, demonstrates that the change in settlement patterning marking the regional Late Woodland–Mississippian transition is consistent with what could be expected under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model when new ritual practices related to maize production and world renewal are introduced into a social world of complementary heterarchical communities that are initially in the integrated settlement articulation modal posture. The second step, Chapter 17, demonstrates that the patterning of the mortuary contents of the CBL component of Moundville is consistent with the type that could be expected that a major world renewal cult sodality heterarchy would generate, and certainly comparable to the Dickson Mounds site in the Central Illinois Valley. This also directly addresses Steponaitis and Knight's claim that the apparent inversion of mortuary-event-build-up and midden-production-collapse was the result of the sacralization of Moundville, and in doing so, gives a very different account of these data, an account that is fully consistent with the cult sodality heterarchy view. The third step, Chapter 18, addresses the possibility that the very existence of Moundville may have served unwittingly to promote the transformation of some, but likely not all, of the region's complementary heterarchical tribal communities into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms, as I postulated in the conclusion of Chapter 13.

NOTES

1. However, Steponaitis has characterized these as three separate ceremonial sites of a dispersed town (Steponaitis 1992, 11; 1991, 198; Knight and Steponaitis 1998, 12).

2. It also suggests that the same groups associated with these “farmsteads” persisted in the use of West Jefferson ceramics while also using the Moundville I ceramics.

3. In fact, I suspect that there are social structural parallels between Chachi and the Mapuche of Chile that would explain the similarities of settlement patterning between the latter two and the radical differences they had with the Native North American Southeastern prehistoric peoples. As I discussed earlier, the exogamous Mapuche had patrilineal descent and practiced exclusive custodial land usufruct, and this means that while they recognized that land was a resource that could not be owned by “mere mortals,” it could be exclusively used by selected “mere mortals.” In perspicuous contrast, as I argued, following Knight (1990) in this regard, the Southeastern peoples were based on unilateral kin filiation and intergenerational autonomy. Therefore, they practiced inclusive custodial land usufruct. See my discussion of the Mapuche at the end of Chapter 3.

4. Of course, hot-stone cooking is not actually “indirect-heat” cooking. Rather it is intrinsic heat cooking, something akin to microwave cooking today in that the heat that does the cooking is generated internally to the object being cooked.

5. As I noted earlier, the use of the hearth for maintaining a sacred fire would not necessarily be inconsistent with its use for heating cooking stones for the preparation of food in burnished ware for feasts associated with the mortuary-mediated ritual since there would be no direct connection between the vessels used for cooking

and the (sacred) fires used for stone heating. Categorical separation of this sort is characteristic of communities that are structured on principles that identify them as sacred.

6. I have argued elsewhere that palisades could serve both world renewal ritual and defensive functions (Byers 2006a, 252-59). Underwriting this suggestion is the fact that there are many examples of both single and multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complexes that have three sided palisades with the fourth side often exposed to open bodies of water, as is the case for Moundville, Cahokia, Etowah, Winterville, and Lake George (Brain 1989, 1991), and Lubdub (Blitz 1993, 1983), to mention some of the better known. I have suggested that palisades served both defensive and ritual purposes. The bastions likely served both as defensive as well as sacred ritual stations, possibly correlated with the different mounds also serving as way stations mediating a cycle of rituals, as I discuss in more detail later. In general, it is important to stress that a military defensive function would be perfectly consistent with ritual, and indeed, it would likely constitute warfare as a form of special sacred ritual. The fact that many of the most important engraved-shell artifacts making up the SECC assemblage, a major expression of the Mississippian system, display the gods in mortal sacred game/combat clearly identifies aggression, competition, and battle with world creation (Brown 2004, 2007a; Brown and Kelly 2000).

7. Cameron Wesson (1998) has effectively replicated Knight's cosmological-ideological interpretation of the layout of Moundville, and this simply demonstrates that Knight's interpretive model has had considerable influence among Mississippian archaeologists.

8. As I noted for Cahokia, the location of the Great Precinct and the great Monks Mound overlooking the flood plain of the Cahokia Creek could easily be explained in terms of its being the monumental

iconic context for the performing of a ceremonial suite I have spoken of as the “regrowing of the earth ritual.” The positioning of Moundville would lend itself to a similar suite.

9. Of course, these names would vary across the Southeast since names and naming manifest surface structures of the cultural tradition of a community. It can be expected that communities widely dispersed across the Southeast will have different cultural traditions. But many of the actual differences among these widely separated and autonomous cultural traditions will reside at the level of surface structures while the deep structures of the different communities will be similar. Red Horn, Morning Star, and Kanati were the creator gods of different Eastern Woodland communities. But their natures as sacred creators of the world presuppose that these different communities practiced cultural traditions that had the same or at least very similar deep structures (world beliefs and ethos).

10. This does not deny a defensive military function for the palisade. As I stated above, there is no contradiction in understanding that it could serve as a military feature as well as a sacred monumental icon in which the bastions served as sacred way stations for ritual. Indeed, this synthesis would constitute military activity as fundamentally ritual in nature, and often lethally so. Such combat would be embraced as a form of lethal human sacrificial world renewal offering complementing the much more common postmortem human sacrificial world renewal mortuary practices that I claim prevailed at Moundville (see Chapter 17).

11. See my discussion of the Mapuche (Chapter 3), in which I noted that it was the ranking chief of the *trokinche* that organized and distributed the labor power of his lineage, from the plowing of his own fields to those of the lesser ranking chiefs to labor expended on the ceremonial locale.

12. Of course, under the “egalitarian” confederation of simple chiefdoms version, this would be done by the different peer monistic chiefs. This necessity is what makes the very existence of Moundville in this form problematic since, as I noted in the previous chapter, these monistic chiefs would find it not to be in their individual interests to “freeze” their current and contingent standing among their peers by means of permanent monumental construction manifesting their current unequal status with each other, since all would assume this was a temporary and contingent standing.

CHAPTER 16

The West Jefferson-Moundville Transition

In the previous chapter, I argued that part of corroborating my interpretation of the layout of Moundville as a monumental iconic symbolic pragmatic device characteristic of a major world renewal cult sodality heterarchy requires characterizing the nature of the region-wide Late Woodland–Mississippian transition and relating this to the social mechanism that brought it about. I have already argued with regard to the American Bottom and the Central Illinois Valley that the before/after Mississippianization settlement patterns of these two regions can be identified with the opposing poles of what I have termed the *integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum*. I have also presented the conditions causing the shift in postures by arguing that, in both cases, the bifurcated posture was the outcome of the innovation and/or emulation of surface structural or ideological strategy rules and that the exercise of these rules in practice generated a perspicuously contrasting settlement pattern—but within the context of the traditional deep social and cultural structures, which remained largely unchanged. The deep *cultural structures*, I have noted, consisted of an immanentist cosmology and a squatter custodial ethos, and I have characterized the core value-principle of the ethos as agentive autonomy. At the same time, the core deep *social structures* (i.e., social relations) consisted of the dual clan/sodality structural axes.

Given this summation, probably the clearest indicator of the Late Woodland–Mississippian transition in the Black Warrior River drainage from the West Jefferson phase of the Terminal Late Woodland period to the initial Moundville I phase of the subsequent Mississippian period would not be the emergence of mound sites, as such, but the radical transformation from the integrated to the bifurcated settlement articulation modal postures. In fact, as was the case in the Central Illinois Valley, this shift likely occurred well before the emergence of the Moundville multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex described in the previous chapters. However, while in Illinois the transition occurred ca. cal. AD 1075–1100—that is, the late Mossville (Rench) phase)—in west-central Alabama the equivalent transition occurred at a slightly later time, although probably just as rapidly, ca. cal. AD 1100–1120 (the later West Jefferson phase). This means that the early Moundville I phase (ca. cal AD 1120 to AD 1200) demarcates the first stage of the Mississippian period of this region, during which only rather minor platform mound construction was carried out. The emergence of the second stage, the late Moundville I phase, ca. cal. 1200 (table 14.2), also occurred rapidly, possibly more rapidly than the West Jefferson–Moundville transition.

The West Jefferson Phase Life-Way (ca. cal. AD 1020 to AD 1120)

A great deal more research needs to be done to clarify the precise practices that generated and developed the settlement and subsistence patterning of the West Jefferson phase. However, sufficient is currently known to draw clear parallels with other regions of the Late Woodland period Eastern Woodlands. It is widely accepted now that the early West Jefferson phase was characterized by seasonally cyclic settlement with the cold-season hamlets and warm-season integrated villages, some of which may have been quite large.

The seasonal villages were focused primarily in the floodplain region where gardens of native cultigens were cultivated, both wild and possibly domesticated, and foraging of the surrounding wild resources could be carried out. With the arrival of the cold season, the populations apparently dispersed to small hamlets and/or base camps in the uplands and practiced logistical foraging, particularly in the region below the Fall Line. Mistovich (1988, 22; 1995, 176-77) argues that, because of the ruggedness of the upland region above the Fall Line, the populations in this region may have practiced year-round occupation on the floodplain and lowlands, although it is likely that during the cold season the lowland-based integrated villages also moved into a more dispersed settlement pattern. Clearly much more research needs to be done to clarify these details.

The range of subsistence resources was somewhat in line with the widespread Late Woodland combination of nut and acorn collecting, hunting and fishing, and small scale gardens of cultivated seed crops, such as maygrass, chenopodium, and sunflower.¹ Also, it is noted in the literature that small quantities of maize started to appear in the record at the beginning of the West Jefferson phase, much as it did in the Terminal Late Woodland period in the Midwest. However, maize increased dramatically during the late West Jefferson phase (C. M. Scarry 1986, 318, 359). This two-staged pattern is the standard early-to-later Late Woodland pattern across the Eastern Woodlands—that is, first maize appearing in very small quantities, and then, after a fairly long period in this status, it suddenly expands in ubiquity. Many have suggested that the initial minimal appearance of maize across the Eastern Woodland probably records its cultivation for ritual and not subsistence purposes. It would have been cultivated in small, probably isolated gardens in order to ensure its sanctity as a special ritual crop.² Following Fortier and McElrath (2002, 181) in this regard, I will treat the late West Jefferson phase in this region,

ca. cal. AD 1070 to AD 1120 (table 14.2), as the local Terminal Late Woodland period since it marks the transformation of maize, used in the earlier West Jefferson phase (ca. cal. AD 1020 to AD 1070) as primarily a ritual medium, into being used as a major subsistence crop, although it also retained its ritual nature, as I argue later. This shift from initial ritual to dual substantive-subsistence and ritual usage is the way I have interpreted the similar pattern in the American Bottom (Byers 2006a, 139-42). Also, as noted in the previous chapter, a standard practice in the historic Southeast was to keep food resources separate to ensure their sanctity (Hudson 1976, 317). Since this “purity-by-separation” would constitute a principle of deep structural ethos tradition, it can be reasonably projected as existing in the prehistoric past. Therefore, it is likely that keeping maize and traditional wild and cultivated plant foods separate would also have been done, particularly when both were being stored, just so as to prevent mixing the maize, now stored for everyday consumption purposes, with the traditional wild and cultivated subsistence seed crops.

Given the above dating, it is not surprising that a number of archaeologists have suggested that cultivation of traditional native seed crops came later in the Southeast than it did in the Midwest, possibly becoming relevant only during the Late Woodland period.³ Krista Gremillion (2002, 485, 492, 497-500) has recently attributed this late onset of cultivation to the possibility that the primary forest of the Southeast was more beneficent to foraging than was the primary forest of the Midwest, and this discouraged the cultivating of native seed crops, given the added cost factors of the latter. However, apparently native wild seed crops were gathered, along with hickory and acorn nuts. Only in the Late Woodland period, and in some cases, the later Late Woodland period, did some gardening of these native wild seed crops occur in the region of Mississippi, Alabama, and

Georgia. While Gremillion's claim that the more southern primary forest may have promoted postponing the incorporation of seed crop cultivation may have some validity, I think that it is clear that the wild native seeds were regularly collected, and therefore, they were an important part of the diet well before this cultivation was initiated (Caddell 1981, 16-26, 47; Pluckhahn 2003, 184). But it is also important to note that, in contrast to the Midwestern archaeological methods where flotation techniques were applied in the recovery of subsistence data from the 1960s on (Struever 1968, 220-23), much of the excavation and recording of the equivalent subsistence data in this region initially occurred without using flotation. Therefore, a systematic bias in the subsistence data may be an important reason for the recognized difference in the makeup of the botanical records of the two regions (Gremillion 2002, 490). In any case, when compared to the Midwest, the cultivation of seed crops may have been actively undertaken only relatively late in this region.⁴

Margaret Scarry (1986, 406) has suggested that, beginning in the early West Jefferson phase and up to the middle of the phase (ca. cal. AD 1020-1070), maize was being used largely as an emergency or back-up crop should there be a shortfall in the production of the traditional foods. However, from this midpoint on, maize cultivation escalated to the point that it became a substantial proportion of the subsistence diet, while the traditional foods continued to be used, thereby demarcating the emergence of what I termed above the *Terminal Late Woodland period* in this region.⁵ According to Scarry (1986, 290), maize did not replace the traditional foods, although the proportions of these modified slightly. For example, the proportion of gathered hickory nuts was reduced, while acorn gathering actually proportionally increased. Wild faunal foraging continued largely unchanged, except that deer hunting seemed to increase, possibly as an unforeseen result of the expansion of maize gardens that

served to encourage deer population expansion. “Within the West Jefferson phase, hickory nut use was stable, while acorn and especially maize use increased through time. Between late West Jefferson and Moundville I, maize use increased dramatically relative to both hickory nuts and acorns. At the same time, there appears to have been a further increase in the use of acorns relative to hickory nuts. In contrast to these changes, during the Moundville I phase, patterns of food use seem to have been quite stable. On the whole, the use of fruit and small grain and oil seeds was affected little by the increase in nut procurement and maize production” (1986, 322).

The Moundville I Phase LifeWay (ca. cal. AD 1120 to AD 1250-60)

It is now generally agreed that the shift to maize as a major subsistence crop is an important marker of the West Jefferson–Moundville I transition. Mistovich has recently assessed the Moundville I phase settlement data, and he has noted that multiple farmsteads with associated gardens and possibly fields were widely dispersed across the bottomland landscape. “Villages were apparently present in the Late Woodland period but had disappeared by Moundville I. In their place were discrete farmsteads distributed liberally along the river terraces” (1995, 166-67). These farmstead dwelling structures often maintained the West Jefferson single-post circular wall attribute, although in this early Moundville I phase, farmsteads were incorporating the rectangular floor with wall trenches that had already become dominant at Moundville and common at Bessemer. An important addition to the countryside farmsteads that was not present during the West Jefferson phase was a mortuary component. Several burials were often associated with the early Moundville I phase farmstead, sometimes internal but usually on the external southeast side of the domestic structure. Hence, possibly as early as ca. cal. AD

1120, the settlement pattern of dispersed domestic structures in the countryside was in place.⁶ Knight (2010, 1, emphasis added) has also noted that “Moundville-related sites, which probably number in the *hundreds*, are distributed from present day Tuscaloosa southward approximately 60 km within that portion of the alluvial valley that traverses the Fall Line Hills.”

As noted earlier, possibly only two special-purpose locales had any recognized mound construction at this time: (1) early Moundville with the Mound O, Mound X, and the Asphalt Plant Mound on the broad Hemphill Bend terrace; and (2) the Bessemer site. However, according to Welch (1994, 12-13; 1990, 219), the latter site may have had mounds constructed only in its later Moundville I occupancy history. That is, in the early Moundville I phase, the Fall Line appears to have sectorized the valley: the moundless Bessemer site above the Fall Line, and the several dispersed mounds on the Hemphill Bend terrace below the Fall Line. However, it is not impossible that some late Moundville I and Moundville II-III phase single mound-and-plaza site complexes are actually masking earlier Moundville I phase *non-mound* cult sodality ceremonial nodal locales—although currently there are no data to support this suggestion. Welch (1998, 149), who has made the most comprehensive recent review of the chronology of these sites, does not comment on this possibility. He does note, however, that some of these single mound-and-plaza site complexes are encapsulated by the midden residue of earlier and much larger West Jefferson phase integrated villages. Indeed, one of the reasons for the initial modeling of Moundville of the Mississippian period as being based on a small set of dispersed simple monistic chiefdoms was because this extensive midden of the West Jefferson phase integrated villages was interpreted as the domestic residue of late Moundville I or Moundville II phase populations residing *around* these lesser mound sites. Therefore, the encircling

West Jefferson phase integrated village settlement was taken to be simply the section containing the commoner component of these simple monistic chiefdom towns (i.e., the “four-became-one” model). Subsequent work has revealed this error of chronological conflation, and since, for the most part, these lesser mound sites are post-Moundville I locales, this has also accordingly reduced the actual number of known early Moundville I phase mound sites.

As I noted above, Welch (1994, 12-13) interprets the three mounds of the Bessemer site as being built late in the site sequence. He comments that in the earlier Moundville I phase, the site was initiated with timber structures displaying a mix of traditional West Jefferson circular single-post wall structures and two sequential sets of major Moundville I phase rectangular wall-trench structures. These were well above the average size of known domestic dwellings. In fact, given their forms and size, Welch argues that these make the Bessemer site probably the locale of one or more *sodalities* (also see Welch 1990, 218-19). If so, he suggests that the wall-trench structures, or some of them, were early Moundville I phase structures while the mounds would have been constructed and used only in and possibly toward the end of the late Moundville I phase. I discuss this mixture of West Jefferson phase and Moundville I phase material attributes in more detail below as part of the discussion of alternative views and accounts of the transition. Before outlining the alternative models of this transition, however, this is the time to make a careful reassessment of the role of maize in bringing about this transition.

Role of Maize in the Transition

It should be noted that the following normative account of the development of subsistence and settlement practices in this region is strongly dependent, in general, on my claim that Native North American communities embody immanentist cosmologies. The validity of

this view is strongly supported by my summary in the previous chapter of Charles Hudson's work (1976, 156-57, 317), in which he characterized the historic Southeastern communities as having strong proscriptive and prescriptive norms governing subsistence practices. These norms would be strong because they were firmly anchored to and emergent from the deep structural ethos principles in harmony with the cosmological principle that the world was immanently sacred. Hence, human material intervention into the natural world order always had grave implications for its continuity. The guiding principle was to maintain proper balance of the sacred powers of the cosmos by avoiding transgressing sacred boundaries and divisions when possible. When crossing these boundaries was necessary and unavoidable, then this had to be warranted, and the disorder and pollution this transgressing caused had to be locally rectified by performing midwifery rituals. These promoted cleansing and rebalancing the disorder that human subsistence and settlement intervention had necessarily caused. As Hudson noted, these rectifying and even preventive practices would have included modes of storage and cooking that promoted careful separation of different foods. I also stressed this point earlier with regard to the burnished/unburnished ceramic dichotomy and its possibly marking two ceremonial *chaîne opératoire* foodway trajectories, the dual ritual direct-fire cooking method and the postulated indirect or hot-stone ceremonial cooking method, and the everyday direct fire-cooking method.

Now while it is generally agreed that expanding the cultivation of maize in the Black Warrior River Valley is among the major hallmarks of the Mississippianization of this region, there is less than full agreement on the precise role maize played.⁷ For example, while the rapid increase in maize cultivation is recognized by Mistovich, he argues that maize was not a major part of the diet in the countryside. "The relatively low counts of maize (on the order of 8% of food

remains) found . . . at farmstead sites imply that cultigen production continues on a garden plot scale” (Mistovich 1995, 174). Instead, maize appears much more important at Moundville and Bessemer. At the latter site, it has 90% ubiquity in the cultural features, compared to only about 8% in the countryside farmsteads (Mistovich 1995, 175; also see 1988, 32). However, Scarry (1986, 404-405) has argued that maize had a significant presence in the late West Jefferson and early Moundville I phase countryside and that by AD 1200, the late Moundville I phase, two varieties of maize were being grown, the traditional 14-row variety found in the Midwest prior to AD 1200, and the 8-row variety, associated with the post-AD 1200 period at Cahokia.⁸ In fact, she finds a parallel development occurring in Moundville’s neighboring western region, the Tombigbee Valley, as illustrated in the Summerville I phase sites.

The high diversity in the [Tombigbee Valley Late Woodland] Miller III cob population, and the lack of pattern to the distribution by cluster of the Late Woodland specimens suggest variability typical of maize raised for security (i.e., to supplement other resources) rather than for high yield. In contrast, the clear presence of two types of maize in the Moundville I samples, and the relatively clean sorting by cluster of [Tombigbee Mississippian] Summerville I cobs suggest more careful seed selection and field maintenance. It is tempting to speculate that new, labor intensive cropping strategies were adopted as maize production increased during the transition from Late Woodland to Mississippian subsistence economies. That is, not only was more maize planted, but the care and attention given that maize increased. (1986, 406)

She clearly considers this dual variety to be very significant since, in her view, being able to maintain two maize varieties in the same zone

requires considerably extra labor input to prevent cross-fertilizing hybridization. The two varieties cannot be intermixed in the same fields and, in fact, the fields have to be kept separated. Although the farmsteads that were responsible for growing, harvesting, and storing the maize were dispersed, neighbors would have to be in constant consultation with each other to ensure that they did not unwittingly plant the two varieties in side-by-side or nearby fields.

Her explanation for this extra labor was objective and instrumental. First, as noted earlier, her explanation for maize appearing in the early West Jefferson phase was its use as an emergency or back-up crop. Second, the addition of using two varieties would reduce risk and, of course, ensure higher productivity. However, as plausible as these reasons might be, I consider this objective account inadequate to explain the overall history of use of maize in this region. Why? Scarry notes that the motive for incorporating larger quantities and two varieties of maize was probably related to the later West Jefferson phase peoples' experiencing shortfalls in subsistence needs that were translating into greater nutritional risk than previously. "The changes in the use of plant foods through time may indicate that the West Jefferson peoples were undergoing subsistence stress. Human skeletal, faunal, and floral data from the nearby Tombigbee River Valley suggest that the terminal Late Woodland peoples in that area experienced dietary stress The Black Warrior floodplain is narrower than the Tombigbee's, and, particularly above the Fall-Line, the Black Warrior Valley may have been poorer in natural food resources. Thus, it is possible that the West Jefferson communities faced subsistence problems similar to those of their contemporaries in the adjacent valley" (1986, 290). I can endorse this argument. However, without denying that increasing dietary stress may have been among the motives promoting modifying the range of subsistence practices, this would not explain the history of the expansion of maize use

itself. As Scarry specifically comments, “It must be noted . . . that arguing an increase reliance on maize is an indication of dietary stress and that the response to this stress was to intensify maize production is circular. The data are not at odds with the proposition that subsistence stress was instrumental in economic changes that occurred, but they by no means prove the point. Indeed, it is unlikely that plant data alone will ever be sufficient evidence. We need complementary faunal and human skeletal data to satisfactorily address this issue” (1986, 291).

Hence, while increasing incidence of maize may indeed indicate rising aggregate nutritional demands, the real problem is that this alone does not explain the shift to increasing reliance on maize. Indeed, under conditions of rising nutritional demands, it would seem that rather than experimenting with a *traditional ritual crop* (i.e., maize) as a new subsistence source, it would be less risky and more in conformity with established subsistence practices simply to expand the traditional cultivable and foraging resource base already available and being used. However, as noted earlier, according to Scarry’s analysis, this expansion of the traditional seed crop relative to the expansion of maize was not the case. “On the whole, *the use of fruit and small grain and oil seeds was affected little by the increase in nut procurement and maize production*” (1986, 322, emphasis added). That is, traditional seed crop production seems to have remained proportionally steady—although the exploitation of acorns and hickory nuts modified, with the former proportionally increasing over the latter—and it was maize production that proportionally increased in comparison to its initial early West Jefferson phase introduction.

Furthermore, as Scarry also noted, the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers are in the same zone; and here I think that Gloria Caddell’s (1981, 49) comments with regard to the Tombigbee are germane. Caddell’s point is that the use of traditional native seed as a

cultigen could be indefinitely expanded since the very act of clearing land for fields or settlements would encourage the proliferation of these weedy seed plants. Therefore, even if expansion of food crops was required to reduce the nutritional risk of shortfalls, and I think that this was a real and pressing problem, the simple and (in objectivist terms) expectable resolution would be for these prehistoric populations to expand their traditional seed crop production level and, therefore, in objective terms, there would be no change in the usage of maize, and of course, proportionally it might remain constant or even be reduced. So, I cannot agree with Scarry's objectivist claim that initially maize was introduced as an emergency back-up food and then was recruited to become the core subsistence crop. Of course, as noted above, she wisely affirms that nonmaize data are required to ground this claim (e.g., "We need complementary faunal and human skeletal data to satisfactorily address this issue").

However, by taking a normative emic perspective the historic development of maize usage in this region can be quite adequately tied to the problem of shortfalls in production levels of the traditional foods. Of course, to the people of this region, the straightforward solution would be to expand the cultivation of the traditional native seed crops. But, resolving this need to increase production overall would not be simple, given the immanentist cosmology and custodial ethos. The requisite expansion of land usage required to increase the quantity of traditional seed crop production would need to be warranted since it would entail opening up new land that had previously not been used for this purpose. And this would not be a single-shot warranting event since by successfully expanding the seed crop across a region, the need to further expand would be ensured as population levels rose as a result of meeting these needs, thereby becoming an escalating process of intervention into the immanently sacred natural order of the cosmos. Hence, I will maintain my position

that the initial introduction and use of maize in the early West Jefferson phase was as a ritual plant used for limited ritual purpose. I postulate that its transformation into the core subsistence crop was largely unwitting, initiated by its being recruited for this warranting purpose, enabling opening of new lands, thereby instigating an unplanned chain of circumstances that quickly forced adding to the ritual use of maize its subsistence use. That is, its ritual usage was maintained while its subsistence usage was innovated. How could this have occurred?

The Sacred Maize Model. The reason maize expansion may be a puzzle is because, while the expansion has been recognized as a quantitative change in maize use identified with the transition, it may be more importantly characterized as marking a qualitative change, indeed, an ideological innovation or series of innovations that, as I postulated above, emerged from elaborating on its traditional ritual usage. That is, both the initial introduction of maize and its subsequent expansion may be considered the result of strategic ideological *ritual innovations*. I recognized above the primary or initial conditions, this being that the communities involved faced increasing risks of shortfalls in *traditional* subsistence food production caused by rising populations and/or modifying climate and that, informed by an immanentist cosmology/squatter ethos, the communities would see these shortfalls as indicators, almost a warning and an admonishment to them for intensifying their occupation and exploitation of the region, thereby causing increased degrees of sacred pollution. Therefore, what was needed was to innovate or borrow a method whereby the material productivity of the land could be expanded by opening up new lands while simultaneously ensuring that the level of sacred pollution that such intervention would normally cause could actually be rectified or even reversed. In short, the problem would be resolved if land clearing could be expanded in an

especially beneficial and warranted manner (i.e., one that would not increase but decrease pollution levels).

The Sacred Maize model is designed to elucidate how this emically perceived and constituted problem could be resolved by the local peoples (Byers 2006a, 134-62). Since Scarry's above analysis has made it empirically clear that the primary modification in food production practices was related to a significant expansion of maize production while traditional seed crop production remained proportionally steady, it follows that it was the role that maize could play in resolving this quandary that needs to be explicated. And the quandary was not how to increase subsistence production output levels per se but how to open new lands in order to afford this increase in traditional seed crop production levels without a concomitant intensification of sacred pollution, an aspect of reality that can only exist for a people who experience the world as immanently sacred. I have argued elsewhere that, for this purpose, the traditional sacred ritual powers of maize were recruited. The assumption here is that to most of the prehistoric Eastern Woodlands Native North American communities, maize was the manifestation of the sacred powers of Mother Earth, as indicated in my summary of Southeastern myth of *Selu*, the corn mother, in the previous chapter. I postulate that the sacred powers of *Selu* were believed to be presenced in "her" maize seed and that by clearing the land and planting small maize gardens in part of the cleared land, the sacred powers of the earth that were exposed were immediately enhanced by the special sacredness mediated by the maize plants themselves. Therefore, by systematically including small maize gardens within the newly opened landscape, rather than this exposure and use of the land counting as polluting, it counted as sanctifying the land (Byers 2006a, 139). Besides my reference to the corn mother, *Selu*, this sacredness of maize is confirmed by George Will and George Hyde who quote the daughter of the last

of the Mandan maize priestly custodians, who emphasized to them that her people “always treated [maize] with the greatest respect and care, no grains were ever left scattered about and the stalks were never touched by metal knives. The empty corn caches were purified and blessed before the corn was placed in them” (1964, 204). Will and Hyde also noted that, in many traditional Native North American communities, there was an annual ritual that the individuals of the community must perform in order to prepare the body properly to incorporate the special sacred powers of the green corn. Without performing this Busk ritual, the maize would make the person sick.

However, very interestingly, Robert Hall (2007), in his review of my earlier volume on Cahokia (Byers 2006a), has critiqued this for its not adequately supporting my claims about the sacred nature of maize among traditional historical Native Americans, at least with regard to supporting the Sacred Maize model. I find this a questionable point, however, since Hall actually notes that the Pawnees conserved an “archaic breed” of maize they termed *Holy Corn* that was never eaten but was used only to include in sacred bundles, and that Omaha women mixed specially sacred corn with their “ordinary” seed maize in order to “vivify the seed and cause it to fructify,” and that a particular clan had the custodial responsibility to “preserve the sacred corn,” to chant “its ritual,” and to fix “[the] time for planting” it (Hall 2007, 102). Presumably, he cites this information to note that, while many peoples had maize beliefs that underwrote its special importance and ritual usage in enhancing food production and that even some beliefs promoted the use of selected maize to “fructify” the ordinary maize, he cannot find a specific reference to a traditional belief about maize being used to actually “fructify” the land. However, another way to look at this is to note that my above claim of the special sacredness of maize is not only confirmed by his citations but that my claim is perfectly consistent with the type of maize

beliefs and practices that he has cited from the ethnography and that Hudson has also cited for the Southeastern Native American peoples. I have retroductively inferred this particular sacred usage, and since the Sacred Maize model can explain a broad range of empirical data more effectively than nonnormative deontic or objectivist models, I maintain that it is rational to accept it for now—unless another model can be presented that does a better job. Hence, I consider that the beliefs that he cites are fully consistent with my postulated claims and, therefore, can be invoked to support it.

According to my Sacred Maize model, therefore, the reason for the introduction of maize as a ritual crop in the early West Jefferson phase may have been for the above purpose, among others—namely, warranting the opening of new lands by planting a small garden of maize in one corner or even in the center of the newly opened field. The unforeseen consequence of this innovation, however, raised new problems that demanded new solutions. As an especially sacred plant, it would have been stored physically separate from the storage and preparation of the subsistence crops, thereby ensuring the ongoing sanctity of both categories of plants.⁹ Maintaining this separation would not have presented any practical problems at that time since only small amounts of maize would be raised, as I noted above, probably in small parts of the larger seed cultigen gardens, and stored separately, probably in “sacred bundles,” only to have been prepared and consumed on special occasions.¹⁰ However, because this added usage of maize to warrant the expansion of traditional food production would itself increase the level of maize production, by the end of the early West Jefferson phase, a new problem would become pressingly apparent. New ways had to be innovated in order to avoid wasting this specially sacred resource, typically not used for subsistence, as such. Wastage would certainly be unacceptable to the Mother Earth (e.g., *Selu*). To resolve this problem, it now had to become a

subsistence food. Of course, treated objectively, this would seem to be a strong plus for the community. But treated in the context of the symbolic pragmatic meaning of these plant species (i.e., maize and traditional indigenous seed crops), it required innovating and/or emulating new and more systematic techniques of separation of these species in order to maintain the sanctity of both categories of crops while planting, raising, harvesting, storing, preparing, and consuming them *on an everyday basis*. This meant new midwifery rituals had to be added to the traditional subsistence practices. The solution that probably was responsible for marking the end of the early and the beginning of the later West Jefferson phase would likely have been to borrow “tried-and-true” practices from others who had long ago resolved this separation problem, thereby incorporating maize into the everyday diet of the people. But this would require custodial franchising of these ritual usufruct practices. Because the symbolic pragmatics required for midwifery ritual are “built into” the tools (e.g., axes, hoes, baskets, pots, and so on) used to mediate practical subsistence and settlement activities, new forms of midwifery ritual can appear in a region without elaborate material “fanfare,” in this case, simply by being new stylistic variations of preexisting material items, particularly field tools (hoes, adzes) and domestic baskets, storage pits, and ceramics used to store, prepare, and consume plant products, including maize, as a series of subsistence as well as special ritual practices. Also, since everyday domestic life is a strong part of the kinship domain, transfers of subsistence midwifery rituals may have been primarily carried out through the interregional clan network rather than the sodality network.

What I am suggesting here is that this new usage of the traditional sacred powers of maize would require a systematic production of differently styled subsistence tools, from hoes and axes to harvesting baskets, storage bins and jars, to cooking and serving ceramics.

This would require a number of custodial midwifery ritual usufruct franchising events likely from an extraregional source, both to procure the know-how and the *copyright* to make these new tools and ceramic forms and the right to use the maize that was traditionally used with these types of vessels—that is, the maize that was raised for storage, preparation, and consumption in those vessels. This may seem strange to claim since, after all, the maize is being raised for consumption and, in a sense, the tools, pottery, and maize would be as much practical as ritual in meaningful use. However, in many Native North American communities, several varieties of maize are used (according to Scarry, two varieties came to be used in west-central Alabama), and the custodial usufruct copyright of each variety is under the care of a clan or a female-based sodality, and what is typically required is to arrange the use of a given variety from the responsible custodial clan or sodality. This is usually a simple, almost routine, matter of approaching the relevant corn custodian and requesting the seed and the right to plant it. In return, the custodian, usually but not always a woman, is given a small gift by the requester. Bowers reports that this was the case among the Mandan; and although he does not report this for the Hidatsa, since the two peoples practiced similar cultures and were in close interaction, it was probably the case for the Hidatsa also. “Each clan was the theoretical custodian of one variety of corn. The WaxikEna clan was custodian of the bluish-green flint corn; the Tamisik had the red corn; the Prairie Chicken had the yellow flint corn and dent; the Speckled Eagle had the rainbow corn [P]eople of one clan were not permitted to raise corn belonging to the other clans without first receiving the rights and . . . each clan claimed to be the preserver of its own corn” (2004, 31; also see Hall 2007).

Along with this transfer of specific custodial midwifery ritual usufruct copyright would be the requisite rituals to ensure the

continuing purity of the maize even when being used daily. As noted above, this might involve custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights to sanction the production and use of specific field tools, baskets, and domestic ceramic designs, and the latter two categories would be used to distinguish storage, preparation, cooking, and serving vessels used exclusively for maize from instrumentally equivalent ones used exclusively for the traditional seed crops, acorns, and hickory nuts. These distinctions would be built into the makeup of the sets of basket and ceramic vessels that would be used side-by-side in everyday domestic life and, therefore, the differences would be stylistically perceivable. But at the same time, since the differences were mediated by style, this would not affect their practical use, which would likely be objectively equivalent. I stress *perceivable* rather than *observable* here in order to note that perceiving involves all the senses, not just vision. Furthermore, perceiving emphasizes interpretation—that is, seeing something “as X.” The outsider observes two very similar ceramic pots that have distinctively different decorative designs; the knowledgeable insider perceives two different pots, one for storing maize and one for storing other seed foods, and probably has different terms to refer to them.

Treating the importance of perception in this manner, I have argued that the z-twist/s-twist duality of pottery that emerged in much of the Midwest along with the emergence of maize as a subsistence crop may have been the result of needing to “mark” the maize and nonmaize ceramics used in the domestic context. Clearly, the z-twist and s-twist attributes are not very visually tangible. However, tactile perception might be a very precise form of identifying the two assemblages, and “touching” the ceramics would become “second-nature” to those responsible for the preparation of the daily meals. In small structures with minimal lighting, tactile experiencing of ceramics might be a more vivid and veridical form of assessing the

correctness of the ceramics being used than doing so visually (Byers 2006a, 142-46).

In short, there would be midwifery rituals necessary to ensure that the maize was properly planted, cultivated, harvested, stored, prepared, and served for consumption. These would parallel those constituting the similar objective tool-mediated behaviors required for planting, cultivating, harvesting, storing, preparing, and serving the traditional seed and nut crops. Both would be built into the stylistics of the material assemblage of everyday subsistence and settlement practices of the domestic unit and probably would be under the care and responsibility of the females as the holders responsible for performing this complex plant food-related midwifery ritual. The everyday, taken-for-granted character of such midwifery ritual is illustrated when Bowers comments that a Hidatsa woman would carefully cleanse herself physically *and* spiritually when returning from her maize gardens. “White sage was used to cleanse people; it was kept in all households and after the women returned from working in the gardens they used it to cleanse their bodies from the corn spirits and to remove insects picked up in their work” (1965, 345). His adding the fact that part of the corn spirit cleansing process would also involve removing insects illustrates how “built-in” these midwifery rituals of spiritual sanctifying and purification of the subsistence resources would be.

Now this set of custodial midwifery ritual usufruct copyright transfers would correlate with the late West Jefferson period when, as Scarry noted, the incidence of maize jumped in comparison to the early West Jefferson period, and of course, this period also saw innovations in traditional ceramics, as I discuss below. However, once the warranting of everyday usage of the expanding maize produced was entrenched, a new quandary would quickly become noted. Much of this new land would be in the flood bottoms, and to ensure

that the new lands that were opened were regularly “regrown,” a new suite of rituals would be required, one that was previously not perceived as necessary. That is, the hydrological regime of floods and droughts would become a concern of a different order from that period prior to the development of maize fields. Addressing it appropriately would implicate the franchising of a suite of “regrowing-of-the-earth” custodial ritual usufruct copyrights, the types I have suggested were associated with the Cahokian assemblage, or its equivalent. These would also warrant the expansion of maize cultivation in its own right, particularly since initial modes of maintaining maize/nonmaize subsistence crops were successfully entrenched. But these “regrowing-of-the-earth” custodial ritual usufruct copyrights fall into the action spheres under the custodial responsibility of the world renewal cult sodalities. I suggest that the custodial franchising of this suite marks the initial step in the rather rapid Mississippianization of the Black Warrior River Valley, ca. cal. AD 1120, and the rather sudden emergence of the typical Mississippian-type ceramics would demarcate the introduction of these rituals. This elaborate and varied decorated ceremonial ceramic suite would be intrinsic to the custodial ritual copyright embodied in the different sacred bundles that constituted the suite of world renewal rituals directed to this region-wide need to resanctify the land and its hydrological system. Hence, it is this suite of related rituals, therefore, that would be performed at the Bessemer site, at Mound O, Mound X, the Asphalt Plant Mound site, and possibly at other currently unknown nonmound cult sodality ceremonial nodal sites. With this clarification of the role of maize and its link to the West Jefferson–Moundville transition, I now critically examine the alternative accounts of this transition, first by examining the alternative Chiefdom Polity model perspectives that are at play, and then by showing how the Cult Sodality Heterarchy model can resolve the problems of

the former, giving good reason to accept the cult-sodality heterarchy view as the preferred account.

Alternative Accounts of the West Jefferson–Moundville Transition

Given this overview of the before-and-after settlement patterning demarcating the transition and the role maize played in it, it seems reasonable to say that the contrasts between the West Jefferson settlement pattern and the subsequent early Moundville I phase settlement pattern manifest the two extreme poles of the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum. As I theorized above, this would mean that the deep social structures of the communities of this region, in particular the clan-sodality structural duality, persisted through this transformation. Of course, this deep structural continuity view directly contrasts with the current characterization of this transition, which argues that it was brought about by significant deep structural discontinuity caused either by the endogenous emergence of or exogenous imposition of elite/commoner dominance-based stratification onto a preexisting egalitarian tribal system. That is, in the terms I have developed, the current orthodox view argues that the transition was effected simply by the regional communities shifting along the dominance-power continuum from being located at the “balanced” dominance-based pole (egalitarian) to becoming located at the “imbalanced, nonegalitarian” dominance-based pole. Hence, the deep dominance structure of powers-over remained unchanged but simply its distribution changed, becoming centralized and imbalanced both within and among the regional communities. Since there seems to be no disagreement over this point, the dispute is over how monistic chiefdom polities came to replace the monistic tribal village polities. Was it by exogenous or endogenous means? Caught up in this debate is the question of the temporal pacing of the

transition process. In general, proponents of the endogenous view claim that the transformation occurred rather rapidly; the proponents of the exogenous view claim it was rather slow, possibly taking 100 years or more. I will first summarize these current orthodoxies of the transition, and this summary will be followed by a critique of these positions. I then present the alternative account under the Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models, particularly by applying the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model to the relevant data.

The Monistic Tribal-to-Chiefdom Views: The Bessemer Site

1. *The Exogenous View.* Ned Jenkins is a primary proponent of the exogenous approach. He interprets the archaeological data as implicating a rather long drawn-out two-stage process of extraregionally imposed transformation. “During the early West Jefferson Phase, AD 900-1000, it is hypothesized that contact with Mississippian groups was restricted to trait-unit intrusions. At this time interaction led to the introduction of specific technological traits such as loop handles; however, it was not a sufficient magnitude or duration to allow for any accumulation of shell tempered pottery on the West Jefferson Phase sites” (1978, 24).¹¹ Accordingly, it was only in the late West Jefferson phase that those communities or their representatives bearing the Mississippian assemblage became a permanent presence in the region. In Jenkins’ view, this presence was particularly exemplified by the Bessemer site, which he interprets as an early Mississippian ceremonial center where the local West Jefferson peoples came to interact with the Mississippian migrants. These migrants, he suggests, initially moved from Tennessee bearing a full early Mississippian cultural assemblage (the Langston phase). He postulated that the late West Jefferson phase component was “contemporary with the Mississippian occupation of the Bessemer site and the earlier portion

of the Moundville Phase. Therefore, the process which formed the late West Jefferson Phase was the interaction between the Mississippians at the Bessemer site and the surrounding West Jefferson communities The clay [grog] tempered pottery at the Bessemer site indicates there was a resident West Jefferson community living there with the Mississippians who made shell tempered pottery. Thus it seems that the Bessemer site is essentially a Mississippian ceremonial center with an accompanying community of West Jefferson people” (1978, 25).

In these terms then, the communities of the early West Jefferson phase were initially exposed to a series of rather superficial “trait-unit intrusions,” and then later subjected to a major “site-unit intrusion” of a Mississippian monistic chiefdom polity group with its ceremonial practices, ca. AD 1000-1050 (or ca. cal. AD 1090-1120), constituting the early stages of the Bessemer site. “The construction of the Bessemer ceremonial center is evidently the result of a site-unit intrusion since there is no evidence for its local development” (1978, 25). Overall, therefore, the initial steps leading to the emergence of the terminal Late Woodland were trait-unit intrusions, best exemplified by certain ceramic forms, presumably also by the early introduction of maize, and this initial trait-unit intrusion period was followed by the site-unit intrusion of a dominance-based Mississippian community. This demarcated the late West Jefferson phase. It apparently took a considerable period for this migrant community to become politically entrenched, but an even longer time for this political dominance to translate into material cultural stylistic dominance. With the achievement of the latter state, the Moundville I phase emerged (i.e., the transition was completed). “Over a period of slightly more than 100 years, the Moundville culture co-existed, dominated, and eventually completely acculturated the West Jefferson population” (1978, 25).¹²

2. *The Endogenous View.* In contrast to the exogenous view, the endogenous view treats the emergence of the Mississippian monistic chiefdom as a locally constructed polity emerging out of the dynamic mix arising from intensifying population, maize agriculture, surplus production, and long-distance exchange of exotics that came under the control of an incipient, entrepreneur-like elite striving for political as well as economic dominance. In this regard, the material cultural makeup and accumulated contents of the Bessemer and the Moundville sites map the emergence of the Bessemer site as a centralized monistic chiefdom polity, and the same view is extended to other Black Warrior River early Moundville I phase sites. That is, these emerged through the control of specialized production and distribution of such items as utilitarian green stone axes, leather production and distribution, as well as paraphernalia serving as prestige-expressing items (Welch 1990, 218; 1994, 25). In short, in these endogenous terms, while some trait-intrusive events may have occurred, if only to enable the long-distance exchange of exotics, no major site-unit intrusive migrations occurred. The West Jefferson–Moundville transition was a “home-bred” and emergent Mississippianization process.

Critical Comparative Discussion

It is generally admitted that these two views are dependent on the chronology of the Bessemer site, and this is primarily based on the seriation of the Bessemer ceramic assemblage.¹³ This seriation has become a bone of contention between proponents of the two views. The initial seriation was carried out under the exogenous perspective, and it was claimed that grog-tempered West Jefferson ceramics could be seriated into early and late West Jefferson phases on the basis of form of the vessel and the presence of loop or strap handles (Jenkins 1978, 22). The loop handle attribute on jars was established

to be an early West Jefferson attribute, and the strap handle, a late West Jefferson attribute. However, the shell-tempered strap handle vessel is also a Moundville I phase attribute. At the Bessemer site, there are West Jefferson grog-tempered vessels with handles, but all of these have strap handles. This suggests that the Bessemer site was occupied during the late West Jefferson phase. However, it has also been argued that, except for being grog instead of shell tempered, these West Jefferson vessels with strap handles are identical in all other respects to the associated assemblage of Moundville I phase shell-tempered vessels with strap handles. In fact, several proponents of the exogenous perspective have argued that, in general, the late West Jefferson and Moundville vessels are essentially identical in form, differing only in that the former are grog-tempered and the latter shell-tempered and that, indeed, as Jenkins (1978, 25) argues, the ceramic assemblage is almost equally divided between grog-tempered and shell-tempered types (also see Mistovich 1988, 26, 36). In contrast, the early West Jefferson phase ceramics differ in form from the late West Jefferson ceramics, particularly when handles were present, since the former (early) had loop handles and the latter (late) had strap handles. Therefore, it would appear that the late West Jefferson occupants of the site only modified this particular ceramic handle attribute to fit the standards of the Mississippian occupants while maintaining the use of traditional grog tempering. Since the Bessemer site was only abandoned about AD 1200, Jenkins concludes that the West Jefferson occupants must have been slowly acculturated by the Mississippian migrant monistic chiefdom and, therefore, that the Mississippian occupants constituted the elite who, over about 150 years (ca. AD 1050–1200) came to dominate the local West Jefferson people (1978, 25–26).¹⁴

Tim Mistovich (1988, 30–36) has also supported the exogenous perspective by arguing for a long-term retention of West Jefferson

traits at both the Bessemer site and at Moundville I phase farmstead sites. He excavated the Miller site, which is next to the Miller Creek where it flows into the Black Warrior River immediately south of the Fall Line. He noted that this was a two-component site, having two single-post circular wall structures with associated pits. While these two structures were effectively the same in form, he dates Structure 1 to the late West Jefferson phase and Structure 2 to the early Moundville I phase, specifically emphasizing the distribution of the ceramics and the absence of burials associated with the West Jefferson phase Structure 1 and the presence of burials with the early Moundville I phase Structure 2. In particular, he notes that the ceramics associated with Structure 1 of the West Jefferson phase are primarily grog tempered and are very similar in form to the grog-tempered ceramics typical of West Jefferson sites above the Fall Line, including those found at the Bessemer site. He notes that the ceramics associated with the Moundville I phase Structure 2 component are typical early Moundville I phase types and are also similar to those found at the Bessemer site. The direct association of Structure 2—displaying the West Jefferson single-post circular wall attribute—with both Mississippian-type burials and ceramics convinces him that: (1) Mississippian traits were introduced via migration, probably from Tennessee, and (2) the West Jefferson tradition was maintained for a long period in parallel with the traditions of the Mississippian immigrant population. The migrants, however, were located in the major Moundville I phase type sites (e.g., Bessemer) where wall-trench and other Mississippian traits came to prevail. In agreement with Jenkins, he also claims that grog-tempered ceramics in the same form as the Moundville shell-tempered ceramics continue in these two sites, while the West Jefferson housing pattern was sustained only in the countryside. He explains this dichotomy as a tendency for the indigenous people in the countryside to be culturally conservative in

contrast to the indigenous and migrant groups occupying the ceremonial centers (1988, 36-37). Of course, his argument for a long period of overlap would also be consistent with the view that the “conservative” nature of the countryside was, in fact, simply a resistance on the part of the indigenous people to cultural dominance by the immigrant Mississippian population.

The Ceramic Argument

Welch (1994, 24-25), a major proponent of the endogenous model, wrote a significant paper on the Bessemer site that critiqued the above position. When he wrote it, he was using the uncalibrated chronology, which placed the founding of the site much earlier than does the more recent calibrated chronology. Therefore, in that paper, he reasonably conceded that the Bessemer site had a long period of occupation (e.g., ca. uncal. AD 1000 to AD 1200). Even so, he found it problematic that this apparently extensive period of actual occupation was characterized by an equally extensive dual set of West Jefferson and Moundville I phase attributes. He stresses that while grounds for his position cannot be definitively demonstrated by the patterning of the site itself, however, there is circumstantial evidence that would suggest the West Jefferson component had a significantly more shallow temporal presence than the exogenous view would suggest. Since the site was abandoned ca. uncal. AD 1200, this means that the West Jefferson ceramics would have been limited to only the early part of the early Moundville I phase (ca. uncal. AD 1050-AD 1100)—that is, the initial early Moundville I phase. As I noted earlier, this conclusion is based on his estimate that the mound construction at Bessemer actually started in the later Moundville I phase and that considerable Moundville I phase timber construction had occurred prior to this mound construction.¹⁵

Under the older uncalibrated scheme, Welch's argument for reducing the period of overlap is complex but largely hinges on challenging Jenkins' claim for the formal similarity of the grog-tempered West Jefferson and shell-tempered Moundville I pottery. In his 1994 paper, Welch reported his detailed reanalysis of the Bessemer ceramics and concluded that it is simply wrong to claim that the only significant difference in these two ceramic assemblages was the grog-tempered/shell-tempered distinction. "Only *some* of the grog-tempered pottery is similar to *some* of the shell-tempered pottery" (1994, 21, emphasis in original). While bottles, jars, and bowls were vessel forms common to both assemblages and while there was some overlap in the grog-tempered and shell-tempered forms of these categories, in the details of their attributes the grog-tempered and shell-tempered ceramics were significantly different, even when the form classes were held constant (1994, 21-24). For example, while 35% of the shell-tempered jars had the flared-rim attribute, it was entirely absent in the grog-tempered jars. The particularly important claim noted above that the strap-handle attribute was as common for grog-tempered as for shell-tempered jars is also wrong, he asserts. Again, while there were some grog-tempered jars that had strap handles, the majority had loop handles while most strap-handled jars had shell tempering. Even the mode of decoration was clearly distinguished. Surface treatment of grog-tempered ceramics was typically plain and any incising present was distinctly not Moundville I phase in style. In fact, the Moundville-style incising, always on shell-tempered ceramics, was initially Barton Incised, and then later forms occurred, clearly indicating the early Moundville I phase.

Critique

I find it interesting that while the proponents of the two accounts, or some of them at least, seem to agree that the current archaeological

data are insufficient to resolve these mutually exclusive alternatives, they are still convinced that, with further empirical research, one or the other claim will be vindicated. Importantly, they both presuppose the same basic set of premises concerning the essential social nature of the communities involved, and each, therefore, assumes that these two contrasting claims exhaust all the possibilities. Of course, it is possible that the inability for one or the other account to prevail may well be the lack of adequate empirical data. However, given the current mixed bag of empirical data, even if more new data were retrieved, I suspect that the same mix of cultural traits as found at the Bessemer site and the Miller site would reoccur, and neither model would be effectively corroborated in opposition to the other model. For example, this underdetermination of new data being able to resolve the question is illustrated by Scarry (1998) who, as I noted above and in the previous chapter, confronts the same issue in her excavations of the early Moundville I phase PA structures of the Moundville site. She specifically denies that the West Jefferson ceramics found there can count as delineating an independent cultural component since these were mixed with the Moundville I phase ceramics and house structures.

When a stalemate of this sort occurs, it is possible that the real problem is not the lack or inadequacy of the empirical data but the inadequacy of the premises that both models share. Since a model is at best an approximation of the nature of the phenomenon it is about, then all models generate anomalies, and rather than more data resolving the problems, these new data will likely simply reproduce them. For example, in my view, the endogenous account cannot adequately explain how a set of Moundville I phase farmsteads on the Hemphill Bend terrace, within stone-throwing distances of important ceremonial mound sites (Mound O and Mound X), would display structures with Moundville wall trenches and associated

ceramics while retaining West Jefferson ceramics and some structures with local Late Woodland single-post wall features (albeit not circular). On the other hand, in my view, the exogenous account cannot adequately explain how West Jefferson phase traits can be perpetuated well into Mississippian times under the social conditions that its proponents claim existed—namely, the dominance of a “foreign” people with an equally foreign culture. In fact, this problem appears to be recognized since Welch reported a conversation he had with Jenkins in which he claims that Jenkins suggested that “the intrusive Mississippian culture need not have been carried by entire communities, but could have been carried by a relatively small number of elite individuals brought into ‘progressive’ Late Woodland communities The size of the intrusive groups is not important. Rather, the lengthy acculturation of the indigenous population to a new, foreign culture is the chief feature of his interpretation”(Welch 1990, 218). I consider the substance of this modification problematic; but it is significant since it presupposes premises that do not comfortably conform to the migration perspective while they would be more akin to those underwriting the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. I will return to this point later.

So, how can it be that an intrusive dominance-based hierarchical social system would permit the continuity of traditional practices by subordinate indigenous peoples for possibly multiple generations in parallel with the traditional practices of the superordinate peoples? It is possible, of course, that the dominant group treated their own cultural practices and their material media in sumptuary terms, forbidding the local subordinate group from practicing the “superior” culture. However, this could not have been the case since, as noted by Mistovich (1988, 36; 1995, 159), Moundville I ceramic and mortuary practices emerged in the (commoner) countryside alongside the retention of traditional house structures, while, at the same time,

grog-tempered ceramics were permitted to have Mississippian ceramic forms in the major sites. For different reasons, such a mixture is also anomalous under the endogenous model. Why would an emerging elite permit the performance of burials in association with Moundville I phase ceramics in the simple, subordinate countryside farmsteads if these ceramics were sumptuary goods constituting elite activities?¹⁶ Or, for that matter, why would the elite allow the new type of ceramic forms to be made using the “commoner” tradition of grog temper? Indeed, as I noted above, Welch (1994, 21-24) has responded to this type of question by arguing that, at the Bessemer site, the grog-tempered ceramics are not identical in form to the shell-tempered ceramics. However, he also admits that he cannot demonstrate that these were chronologically sequential, and therefore, he cannot deny that they could have been contemporary.

The Third Alternative

What is needed is a third overall model that is based on having different and contrasting premises to those shared by the above endogenous and exogenous models while explaining away or dissolving these anomalies. As stipulated by the hermeneutic spiral method, if this model can explain the same data in a more coherent manner than the above models and also if it can resolve anomalies and dissolve puzzles these models generated, then it is rational to prefer it over the other two—that is, it is reasonable to recognize its more adequate truth status. The alternative model, of course, is the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, along with its associated Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models. The latter characterizes the transition as the rather rapid shift of a regional system of complementary heterarchical tribal communities from the integrated settlement articulation posture into the bifurcated posture. The former, the Custodial

Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, specifies the mechanism that would be most likely to initiate the dynamics that caused this shift. And since this shift manifests modification in surface structures (i.e., ideological settlement and subsistence rules), it is likely that the deep structures that enabled this shift would remain constant (i.e., communities would retain the complementary heterarchical structural nature). The mechanism would be an initial series of custodial franchising events between two or more autonomous but cooperating cult sodalities, with the local sodalities as the recipients (i.e., as the custodial franchisees), and the extra-regional donor sodality (or sodalities) as the custodial franchiser(s), and then the escalation of the intraregional custodial franchising process that would promote the distribution of the ritual usufruct copyright among neighboring communities. The dynamics that custodial franchising would generate would promote the disengaging of the clan/sodality components of the local late West Jefferson integrated villages of the regional complementary heterarchical communities with clan components moving into the dispersed hamlet and farmstead posture, while simultaneously the multiple age-set components would quickly integrate and emerge as ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities in their own ceremonial nodal locale sites, some of which may have transformed into first-order cult sodality heterarchies through intraregional alliances among these multiple emerging autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities.

Ritual Usufruct and the Sodality Domain

As I argued at the beginning of this book, to understand the nature of a regional interaction process, we must understand the social nature of the organizations engaged in it. The type and scope of the interaction will be largely shaped by the interests of the organizations that this interaction satisfies. The Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising

and Conveyancing model, therefore, presupposes the religious-practical characterization of the mound-and-plaza site complex as the locales of emergent world renewal cult sodality heterarchies—first-order, second-order, and even possibly higher (e.g., third-order and fourth-order). As an illustrative case study, I used the premises of the model to interpret and explain the Late Woodland–Mississippian period transition in the Central Illinois Valley, arguing that this shift from the integrated to the bifurcated settlement articulation posture in the region was the sociomaterial outcome of the transfer and proliferation of Mississippian custodial ritual usufruct copyrights derived initially from the American Bottom. If the model is a valid explanation of how and why this transition occurred in the latter region, a similar empirical patterning and its development should be perceivable in the West Jefferson–Moundville transition. Based on my brief descriptions of the West Jefferson and Moundville I phase settlement postures above, I think a similar shift in patterning is perceivable. Importantly, the Mississippianization process involves both exogenous and endogenous factors.

It is interesting, therefore, that, as I noted above, according to Welch, Jenkins modified his initial site-unit intrusive characterization of the Mississippianization process in the west-central Alabama region by stating that it was possible that the migrants could be only “parts” of a given monistic chiefdom polity community—that is, as Welch (1990, 218) quoted him, “by a relatively small number of elite individuals brought into ‘progressive’ Late Woodland communities.” Furthermore, Welch noted that Jenkins also pointed out that rather than the critical factor being the size of the group, it would be the need for a “lengthy acculturation of the indigenous population to a new, foreign culture.” Welch did not say whether Jenkins specified what “elite groups” of this monistic chiefdom would be involved. That is, what is taken for granted here is that a monistic chiefdom

polity community would have no difficulty hiving off some of its elite with their supporting commoners, thereby expecting them to remain in the foreign regions for a “lengthy acculturation” period. Readers may recall that I noted (Chapter 9) that Thomas Emerson postulated a similar “partial” migratory scenario to explain the Ewell site as representing the initial Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley.

While I consider Jenkins’ raising this possibility to be very insightful, I find it implausible if treated in monistic chiefdom polity terms. In my view, if only a small elite group was responsible, then they would be unable to reproduce the community in the new region. For that matter, the motivation is not at all clear. However, if the “parts” are treated as subcomponents, such as cult sodalities, of complementary heterarchical communities in the different regions, then of course, this suggestion nicely fits the custodial franchising process as characterized under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. As noted above, this model presupposes social organizations that had a world renewal mission to achieve, and therefore, when asked and/or invited they, or the relevant components of these organizations, would actively respond, both wanting and being capable of transferring specific ritual usufruct copyrights that would be critical to advancing and achieving this mission since the exercising of these custodial ritual copyrights in the recipient regions would generate iconic material complexes that could be used to enhance the overall sanctity of the world. This also means that these outside agents, the “migrants,” would not be permanent interveners but transient visitors, even though the period of their presence could be open-ended, possibly initially planned to cover several months only to be extended-by-invitation to a year or more. Of course, seen in these terms, the notion that the Mississippianization of the region was a matter of social and cultural

dominance, whether exogenous or endogenous, must also be set aside. Indeed, nondominance-based exogenous factors would become a central part of the agenda since, under this view, the “foreign” visitors are the guests of the local cult sodality hosts, and the host–guest relation would bind socially equivalent and mutually autonomous groups that also would anticipate becoming long-distance allies in a common purpose to pursue world renewal. Alternatively, of course, the reverse could occur. Several age-sets of the cult sodalities of the local regional communities could undertake cooperatively to become franchisees of the desired custodial ritual usufruct copyrights by going on a sacred quest to the distant region carrying gifts in order to undergo the requisite training. Hence, the prospective franchisee age-sets could become the guests, sometimes quite long-term, of the hosting franchiser cult sodality where the franchising transfer event was held. Presupposing the transfer would be the particular material circumstances outlined above under the Sacred Maize model—namely, not simply a state of regional environmental distress, but one for which the local communities perceived that they themselves were partly if not wholly responsible; and, therefore, one that required innovative sacrifices on their part by which to alleviate it, these sacrificial acts being constituted as rituals that would sanctify the expanding of the resource base while minimizing and possibly reducing the level of sacred pollution.

With these needs already articulated in the collective concerns of the local communities and serving as reasons to take collective action, it is likely that the ritual that was required would already be known to be practiced by equivalent groups in more distant regions. News of the ritual performances in which such know-how was manifested and effectively realized would travel well ahead of those who practiced them, traveling first with the introduction of maize in the early West Jefferson phase as a ritual medium of early stages of

expanding the traditional farmland and then, in the late West Jefferson phase, with the franchising of midwifery ritual usufruct, thereby enabling the local production and use of new modes of ceramics for storage and consumption of the expanded quantity of maize that was now being used as both a ritual medium for sanctifying the land and enhancing the everyday diet. As I noted above, both of these earlier steps probably would have entailed interregional interaction mediated through the clan network.¹⁷

Assuming the cult sodality custodial franchisers of the requisite ritual usufruct copyrights came to the Black Warrior River Valley as guests, given the preexisting clan-based framework of interregional contacts, they would have been anticipated, and the purpose would have been known. They would come with the expectations of being the primary franchisers of this suite of critical custodial world renewal ritual usufruct copyrights and the recipient or host group, one or more local cult sodalities as the prospective primary custodial franchisees, would be obliged and very willing to treat them as guests during the full period terminating in the performance of the franchising event. As I discussed earlier, this would have involved a major material commitment on the part of the host sodality since its members would need to house and feed their guests, and this state of affairs would be continued until the visiting franchisers judged that their hosts had learned the full details of the ritual usufruct know-how, the creation stories, and the performative rituals. This know-how would likely include learning and producing new forms of ceramics (e.g. shell-tempered strap-handle jars and other shell-tempered vessels having particular engraved or inscribed symbols invoking the powers of the relevant gods related to these newly introduced rituals). The transfers were constituted with the recipients giving public performances of the new rituals, and of course, these would also involve inviting cult sodalities from within the local

region as well as ensuring the proper gifting of the franchisers, their new *irakúu* brothers, who had brought with them or else had taught their local hosts how to properly produce the sacred bundles and other warrants that performing this new ritual suite required. This exchange of gifts also constituted the alliance between them, an alliance that would be regularly reproduced by subsequent reciprocal gifting. Thus, ongoing two-way long-distance visiting would ensue, and, of course, as time passed and the original participants aged, they would ensure their own in situ replacement by conveyancing these ritual practices to those in the next generation of their cult sodality.

As I have already suggested, one of the primary material media of the transferred ritual usufruct copyright would entail the modification of the mortuary practices of the community since the major practical medium of the renewal ritual would entail specializing the postmortem human sacrificial suite. Hence, both gifting and gambling via competitive games might figure prominently—with the human-bone bundles as constitutive media. Again, such gifts and gambling might become the focal media of potent sacred games by which the spiritual powers of the bones were revitalized so that the effectiveness of the subsequent world renewal ritual they were used to mediate would be intensified. Hence, the organizing of competitive games, these games also requiring custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights of a particularly complex nature between cult sodalities, would likely come to figure prominently in the postmortem ritual sacrifices with the cooperative cult sodalities competing in multiple games in which the sacred bundles of human bones became the primary exchange tokens between winners and losers. However, this simply meant that the winners gained the honor of completing the ritual process by organizing and conducting the final ritual steps. This exchange of postmortem symbolic capital as a

result of winning and losing in sacred games would likely be interpreted as the consequence of the gods deciding to whom the spiritual powers of the deceased were to be directed. Of course, the energies of the players would also be imagined as being added to those of the deceased themselves, either directly as a result of games or indirectly through the media of the game warrants worn by the players and which they then added to the ritual bundle so as to accompany the bones of the deceased.

The visiting custodial franchisers also gained major benefits. They could regard their success as a worthy action in terms of the mission of their cult sodality heterarchy. Also, importantly, since these rituals required specialized symbolic pragmatic warrants that were often made of exotic resources that were widely perceived as having specific iconic capacity to presence the sacred powers needed to constitute the rituals as felicitous, the new custodial franchisees would be perceived as a source of, or at least as a conduit for, the ongoing acquisition of these valued and exotic resources. These ongoing ritual needs would tend to motivate revisits. At the same time, since the difficulties with rising pollution levels that the new franchisees were facing would be common to the whole region, it would quickly become known that the new primary custodial franchisees were the holders of an effective and highly valued custodial ritual usufruct copyright. As such, they would likely be approached by neighboring cult sodalities requesting to become secondary or tertiary custodial franchisees in the local region. This would not be a new network, since the sodalities were probably already interacting to a certain degree, as I noted above. However, the new ritual would restructure this network in terms of the relative standing of the different sodalities according to their rank as primary, secondary, or tertiary custodial franchisees, as discussed earlier (see Chapter 6). Therefore, it would not take long for the initial primary custodial

franchisees to become secondary custodial franchisers to the allied sodalities of their neighboring communities, and a sequential series of custodial franchise transfer events would occur across the region.

As I noted above, the new suite of rituals would likely be directed toward the hydrological regime, and I have termed these “regrowing-of-the-earth” rituals. The object of this ritual suite is the state of balance of the cosmos since what is at stake is maintaining the balance between the Above World (i.e., the heavens), the Beneath World (i.e., the rivers, lakes, and seas), and the Middle World (i.e., the earth island that was floating suspended between the Above and Beneath Worlds). Built into the suite of rituals, therefore, would be the requirements for establishing specialized ceremonial locales that would be constructed as iconic features and facilities presencing the relevant sacred powers of the cosmos. The demands of this specialized construction would promote the cult sodalities’ disengaging spatially from their integrated villages, and of course, the dispersal of the clan components as family-based farmsteads would also figure in the special requirement to minimize the concentration of sacred pollution. The result would be a rather rapid shift of the integrated villages of the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of the region into the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Finally, the growing usage of the bones of the deceased in “regrowing-of-the-earth” rites would promote the centralization of the mortuary ritual of the region generating a major cult sodality heterarchy CBL, such as Moundville.

In my discussion of the Central Illinois Valley, the initial stage of Mississippianization in that region was marked by local sites combining endogenous Late Woodland and exogenous Lohmann phase Cahokian stylistics. The Rench site, for example, displayed a local “wigwam” and an exogenous wall-trench structure, a combined Lohmann phase and Mossville phase ceramic assemblage, large storage pits, and

so on. I argued that the Rench site manifested the markings of custodial franchising of one or more Lohmann phase Cahokian ritual usufruct copyrights. From this beginning, the Rench cult sodality would have franchised this custodial ritual usufruct copyright to neighboring cult sodalities. By the end of one generation or, possibly, even sooner, the Eveland site (and probably others, although currently unknown) displayed the range of attributes that would be consistent with first-order cult sodality heterarchies in this region. And so the process rapidly developed. Although this interregional process of ritual franchising would likely not be exactly replicated in the Black Warrior River Valley, there would be aspects of the pattern that would be expected if a similar process of custodial franchising occurred here. Also I am not claiming that cult sodalities in the Black Warrior River Valley would have been recipient franchisees of a primary franchiser directly from Cahokia or one of the other American Bottom heterarchies (e.g., East St. Louis), but they may have been secondary or tertiary custodial franchisees with respect to the American Bottom by receiving the custodial copyright via cult sodalities in the Tennessee Valley or the Yazoo Basin.

Now, as I noted earlier in some detail in Chapter 5, the integrated nature of a cultural tradition, constituted as relatively autonomous collective intentional states I have termed *cosmology*, *ethos*, *world view*, and *ideology*, allows for the possibility that neighboring communities could share the same type of deep cultural structures of cosmology and ethos while varying in the traditional ideological protocols that each region used to constitute their behaviors as performances of the types of rituals intended. This variation of surface structural rules and protocols could and likely would leave largely unchanged the deep cosmological beliefs and ethos standards and principles common to the region. Therefore, since ideological rules are the content of collective intentions and since these rules would be

understood by the agents as stipulating the forms of their behavior that would be required in order for them to count as the intended ritual, each incremental step more distant from the primary custodial franchiser would likely involve modification of the sacred bundles and other material items that served as the symbolic pragmatic media of the ritual usufruct performances. These modifications would have been carried out by second-step custodial franchiser cult sodalities when they turned to franchising their Cahokian-received custodial ritual usufruct copyright "down-the-line." This is because as a secondary custodial franchiser to a group further removed from the primary custodial franchiser (e.g., Cahokia), they would be familiar with the particular background of ideological rules and protocols of the rituals of these neighboring cultural regions. Hence, the secondary franchisers would likely modify, to some degree, aspects of the material assemblage "kit" they received from Cahokia so as to make it more amenable to the ideological traditions of the prospective tertiary custodial franchisees of the ritual usufruct copyright while remaining within the allowable range of formal variation. Therefore, given the distance factor, the ritual media associated with the type of custodial franchising event by which the ritual usufruct copyright for which the American Bottom was the original source was transferred to the Black Warrior River Valley may have gone through two or three such steps of modification.

While it is difficult to predict what these modifications would be, it is likely that a core of stylistic attributes would be retained through every step, such as the prescription requiring shell as the tempering agent. One likely area of modification would be the figurative motifs. The motifs characteristic of Cahokia might be substituted for equivalent motifs characteristic of the Tennessee region, and these in turn might be modified by these secondary franchisers to correspond with the equivalent motifs of the west-central Alabama

region. This would be the case particularly if the ritual was tied to a perceived common material necessity that was the essential purpose of the ritual transfer. Seen in these terms, the transition in the Black Warrior River Valley would probably manifest a tertiary, or less likely, a quaternary custodial franchising transfer of ritual usufruct copyright. This would account for the particular mix of West Jefferson and Moundville I phase traits as described above. The Bessemer site can now be reexamined in terms of the above theoretical model.

Demonstration of the Model

I postulate that the processes that generated the Bessemer site would have strong parallels to those that generated the Eveland site in the Central Illinois Valley. In fact, it is quite possible that Bessemer combines in its locale a complex set of stages that was largely a replication of the sequential histories of the Rench-type and Eveland-type sites in the Central Illinois Valley region. If so, it is likely that the mixture at the Bessemer site of terminal late West Jefferson phase structures and ceramics with early Moundville I phase structures and ceramics is similar to the mixed cultural traits of the Rench and Eveland sites when combined. That is, the major difference between the two regions may be that while Bessemer was a single site that embodied the total process initially as an interregional custodial franchising event followed by a series of intraregional custodial franchising events by which a network of intercult sodality alliances was constituted, in the Central Illinois Valley the same process may have generated separate site types, such as the Rench and the Eveland site types. The contemporaneity of the two assemblages, late West Jefferson and early Moundville, in the same site, therefore, is precisely because this site was *not* the creature of an intrusive migrant group that imposed its culture on a subordinate local West Jefferson phase population. Rather, it was established by the alliance of the cult sodalities of the

indigenous communities of the region emerging from an initial custodial franchising event of ritual usufruct copyright, possibly performed there or in a currently unknown nearby locale. The fact that the Bessemer site is actually quite far up the Village River, a tributary of the Black Warrior River, and in a region that is not particularly suited for maize cultivation, compared to the lower reaches of this same tributary, suggests, in fact, that its location was deliberately selected to emphasize both the seclusion that an alliance of mutually autonomous cult sodalities would want to sustain so as to practice its ritual in a rather uninterrupted manner and to emphasize the arm's-length relation it maintained with the set of complementary heterarchical communities from which they came.¹⁸ Indeed, just as the sodalities might welcome this spatial distancing, so the same persons as the residents making up the domestic components of the villages would perceive dispersing their farmsteads to be a complementary mode of reducing environmental stress that was being generated by their traditional integrated villages. Dispersing in this manner would "spread" the blessing of the maize more equitably across the landscape while also minimizing the levels of sacred pollution per unit of land area used. That is, the dispersal of the domestic farmstead components would be seen as a mode of rectification of sacred pollution that complemented the somewhat spatially isolated location of the Bessemer site.

Importantly, the relative autonomy of the cult sodalities and domestic clans would promote a concentration of Moundville I phase traits in the cult sodality locales, such as the Bessemer site, without entailing a total exclusion of local West Jefferson cultural traits. At the same time, since the primary Mississippian-type rituals would be performed at the cult sodality locales, the appearance of Moundville I phase traits in the domestic farmsteads would tend to be an unwitting outcome of the individuals making up this settlement

system regularly traveling between their cult sodality locales and their family farmsteads. Now there would be little reason to produce Moundville I phase artifacts in the domestic hamlet zones since these artifacts were largely limited to mediating Mississippian ritual. But there would be good reason to bring West Jefferson ceramics and other local artifacts to the cult sodality locales and even produce them there since these latter material components would be “naturally” used to mediate the everyday practices that occupancy of even sacred locales required. Hence, sodality members who brought food with them from their domestic homes to store, cook, and consume while occupying the sodality locale would tend to make and use there some of the traditional artifacts and features, including housing, in order to carry out their everyday domestic routines while simultaneously performing the ritual activity that was their real reason for attendance. They would also deliberately produce the features and artifacts required for the Mississippian-type ritual at the locale. Hence, there would be a tendency to retain the traditional late West Jefferson traits (e.g., grog-tempered vessels, including loop-handled jars) in the Bessemer zone, and also a tendency to leave the Mississippian material there on returning to their farmstead homes. Not only does this transient occupational pattern explain the mixed ceramics and other features of the Bessemer site, it also explains the similar patterning found by Scarry’s excavations of the early Moundville I phase of the PC Tract of Moundville. Hence, in terms of the Complementary Heterarchical Community, Cult Sodality Heterarchy, and Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing models, we can explain the distribution of the ceramics and other traits as the result of the countryside farmsteads and the ceremonial locales being occupied by the same people regularly moving between these two sets of locales. Therefore, contrary to Mistovich’s claim that the countryside people were culturally conservative in being confronted

by a dominance-based migrant people, the retention of West Jefferson phase materials in the countryside and the mix of both styles in the ceremonial locales was a function of this bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. Besides, there is also the possibility that the combination of both types of ceramics was simply the outcome of using both maize and oily/starchy seeds as food with certain styles of the shell-tempered ceramics reserved for the former and the grog-tempered for the latter (see note 17).

This interpretation immediately eliminates most of the anomalies that the current exogenous and endogenous models generate between them. Indeed, Welch's reanalysis of the Bessemer ceramics is especially helpful in this regard. As he points out, while there are important similarities between the grog-tempered and shell-tempered Bessemer ceramics, the differences are clear, despite most being quite subtle and requiring him to make a detailed formal analysis in order to detect them, while the similarities strongly suggest an important cross-influencing. All this is pretty consistent with what could be expected under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model and the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture this postulated custodial franchising process would generate. Those who are producing the two sets of ceramics would be from the same cultural population so that the persons who made the grog-tempered loop-handled jars and the shell-tempered strap-handled jars may have often been the same individuals. They would accommodate their production methods and styles to the particular purposes they were anticipating to satisfy—public sodality ritual or private midwifery domestic ritual. Also, the variation between the two styles in rim profile and lip form may have been as deliberate as the grog-tempered and shell-tempered distinction in that the same producer was making vessels for different purposes, one serving the subsistence needs of companions while occupying Bessemer and the

other serving the ritual performative needs of the same persons in their capacity as performers of cult sodality ritual. Under the symbolic pragmatic view, the ceramics displaying these slight variations would operate as important warranting devices constitutive of two contrasting spheres of social activity: sodality ritual and everyday domesticity of age-set companions. That is, to serve sodality-based ritual meals using grog-tempered vessels of the wrong form would be to generate an infelicitous ritual feast, and to use shell-tempered vessels for ordinary meals might invoke the anger of the spiritual powers to which such vessels were special as clearly indicated since these Mississippian Moundville styles would be part of the relevant custodial ritual usufruct copyright that was transferred.

This duality of everyday and ritual usage can explain the presence of traditional circular structures at Bessemer with the introduced rectangular wall-trench structures. The latter buildings were likely constitutive of the ritual performed by the responsible sodality groups; the former would serve as hostels, much in the same manner that I argued for the two contrasting structures at the Rench site, one being the typical American Bottom wall-trench building and the other, a larger “wigwam” structure typical of the local tradition. In this regard, I endorse Welch’s observation when he argues that some of the larger wall-trench structures at Bessemer were not only earlier than the platform mound and the oval mound, but were probably the expression of sodality institutions. Since Welch’s characterizing the social nature of the group responsible for a Mississippian site in sodality terms is the first time I have noted a proponent of the monistic chiefdom account forefronting a sodality group in this way, it deserves being quoted in full. “Though some of the buildings are within the size range of the Mississippian houses elsewhere in central Alabama, several of the buildings were remarkably large: Structure 4 was 16.5 x 10.7 m; Structure 6 was 11.9 x 9.2 m; Structure

11 was 12.8 x 9.0 m; and Structure 1 was 18.6 x 11.9 m. Due to their size and lack of associated features, I believe these were a series of public buildings that were later replaced by the buildings atop the rectangular platform mound.” He continues by suggesting “that this sequence is the architectural manifestation of the transformation of a sodality institution(s) into institution(s) of ranking and hierarchy” (1994, 12–13). I made the above break in this single quotation because I want to emphasize that he noted a developmental sequence here. These ground-level public buildings, he claimed, would mark only the earlier period of the Bessemer site, the “sodality period.” In his view, this period, however, succumbed to the dominance-based hierarchical tendencies of monistic chiefdom polities so that he is implicitly claiming that the construction of the three mounds that make up the Bessemer mound component was the expression of a monistic chiefdom. Interestingly, of these three mounds, he considers the earliest was the burial mound (Welch 1994, 14).

While I certainly can endorse the first part of the above quotation, in which he treats the wall-trench structures and the shell-tempered Mississippian ware as expressions of sodality institutions, my reading disagrees with the second part, in which he interprets the construction of the mounds and the timber structures as marking dominance-based “institution(s) of ranking and hierarchy.” In contrast, I find it unproblematic to extend the sodality interpretation to include these mound constructions, treating them as manifesting an enabling hierarchical orientation. Therefore, I assess these constructions as simply the result of modification of the ideological rules and protocols that the original sodalities used in constructing a site that would count as the appropriate medium for constituting the collective behaviors they regularly performed in its context as the type of felicitous world renewal rituals they intended. That is, under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model,

the premound/mound chronological distinction marks a simple surface-structural change in the ideological rules constituting the construction strategy, possibly a change that was itself the outcome of a custodial franchising of a mound-building ritual usufruct copyright empowering the heterarchy to build and use such iconic structures. This ritual usufruct would have been derived from one of its long-distant *irakúu* allies. The emergence of mound construction, therefore, is not the outcome of deep structural changes in which a dominance hierarchy overwhelms and replaces an egalitarian-oriented social structure but simply the continuity of an organization based on an enabling hierarchy in conjunction with a franchising of a very important suite of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights endowing the heterarchy with the deontic capacity and reason to build mounds that would warrant its performing of the associated suite of world renewal rituals.

Indeed, this raises an interesting possibility. Since mound construction was already being practiced below the Fall Line at Moundville, rather than the mound-building franchise being derived from the northern regions, it is possible that these new ritual protocols were introduced from Moundville itself. It is notable that the construction of the platform and oval mounds in the later part of the Bessemer site occupation, possibly ca. cal. AD 1150-1200, roughly corresponds with the emergence of the *late* Moundville I phase coalescence period at the Moundville site when the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex was rapidly constructed along with the palisade. The Bessemer mound construction, therefore, may have been a “spin off” of the same dynamic ritual and organizational transformation occurring downstream. That is, the coalescence of Moundville may have been a “second wave” of interregional custodial franchising following the initial franchising that generated the late West Jefferson–Moundville transition. Caught up in such a dynamic

process, selected autonomous cult sodalities at Moundville may have sent representatives to Bessemer to franchise this new mound-building custodial ritual usufruct copyright. Of course, any modification of ideological rules, even when these are simply an addition to the current practices, usually involves some dispute among members and factions. If so, it would not be surprising to find that the mound construction period at Bessemer was apparently short-lived, and was truncated by the site's being abandoned, ca. cal. AD 1200. This could mean, of course, that, after about 80 years of occupation and development from initially an autonomous cult sodality ceremonial nodal site to a nonmound first-order cult sodality heterarchy to the addition of mounds, the cult sodality alliance was dissolved. Alternatively, however, it could also simply be that this cult sodality alliance persisted but in a new locale—this being Moundville itself. This also suggests that, in fact, Bessemer may have developed as a first-order heterarchy that also participated with the first-order heterarchies of Moundville to construct this multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex. With its completion, it refocused its organizational efforts on Moundville. This can stand as a suggested hypothesis for future research.

Conclusion

If the above account of the West Jefferson–Moundville I transition in the Black Warrior Valley region, based on the premises of the Sacred Maize model, Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model, and the Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy model for explaining the establishment of the Mississippian assemblage, is accepted as having greater coherence and explanatory power than the alternative exogenous and endogenous accounts, then it follows that it is rational to accept it as preferred over the alternatives—for now. That is, none of this

is the final word. Much more research is required to strengthen the validity of this interpretation and explanation, and this research will hopefully lead to modification of the models and even their replacement, should the replacement enable a more coherent overall account of the empirical data. In any case, in terms of these models, the (likely) clan-based midwifery usufruct franchising process that introduced new maize-related rituals promoted significant ideological modification (surface structural changes) as a strategic response to resolving emically perceived environmental and demographic-based stresses. This consisted initially of incorporating maize as a sacred medium by which to warrant the opening of new lands and exposing while maintaining and possibly enhancing its intrinsic sacredness, thereby warranting and enabling increased traditional food production (early West Jefferson phase). This enabled the sustaining of an expanding population, which then led to the problem of maintaining the sacred nature of maize arising from its increased production, which they resolved by further innovations in ceramics, enabling maize to be used as a subsistence food while retaining its sacredness (late West Jefferson phase). But the very success of these innovations created a region-wide crisis of sacred pollution that was resolved by incorporating traditional but exotic ritual usufruct copyrights by which to enhance the hydrological regime (Moundville I phase). This ritual suite became the motive for a dual adjustment: dispersing the settlement and agricultural burdens across the landscape, as mapped by the formation of a dispersed domestic component, and the formation of specialized cult sodality heterarchical locales where appropriate public rituals of sanctification and rectification could be performed, largely through the mediation of postmortem sacrifice. This process “explosively” generated the formation of a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture from the preexisting integrated settlement articulation modal posture.

I will apply the hermeneutic spiral method in the next two chapters by addressing two questions: (1) the nature of the mortuary sphere as manifested particularly at the Moundville site, and (2) the nature of the social system and its transformations in time as manifested in the patterning of this and related sites. These points will be achieved by analyzing the mortuary record of this site, focusing in Chapter 17 first on the funerary *chaîne opératoire* view, and second on the postmortem sacrificial *chaîne opératoire* view. I have argued that the former is a major pillar of the Chiefdom Polity model of the Mississippian system while the latter is the major pillar of the alternative Complementary Heterarchical Community and Cult Sodality Heterarchy models. The point of this analysis will be to demonstrate that the postmortem sacrificial *chaîne opératoire* view gives the more coherent account. To strengthen this claim, I then analyze in Chapter 18 the mortuary patterning to support my earlier claim that the emergence of a bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture in a region was the social condition that would make possible—but would not entail—the formation of one or more complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities. Therefore, if the mortuary record can also be used as evidence to sustain the possibility that, in fact, at least some of the complementary heterarchical tribal communities from which the postulated cult sodalities came that constituted the second-order heterarchy of Moundville likely did transgress the clan-sodality autonomy principle such that some of these actually transformed into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms, then this would be strong confirmation of my interpretation.

NOTES

1. I have qualified this statement with the term “somewhat” for a reason. The widespread and escalating development of cultivation and domestication of indigenous seed crops that characterized much of the Midwestern sector of the Eastern Woodlands apparently came only late to this lower Southeastern sector, although there is some difference of opinion on this (Caddell 1981; Gremillion 2002; Pluckhahn 2003; C. M. Scarry 1986). I address this point later.

2. For example, Thomas Pluckhahn (2003, 148, 156, 178, 185-89) has reported excavating small quantities of native seed-bearing plants (e.g., sunflower, chenopodium, pigweed, and even smaller quantities of maize) from the major Middle Woodland-early Late Woodland embankment and mound site of Kolomoki, Georgia. He interprets Feature 57, a semisubterranean structure in the northeastern sector of the site and near major mounds, as a domestic residence (and because of the configuration of its floor plan, he compares it favorably with the Late Woodland keyhole structures of the Midwest). It was in this feature, as well as similar features that may have been widely dispersed in different sectors of this very large site, that most of the very limited residue of maize and native seed was recuperated. My own view is that Kolomoki and these structures fully conform with what could be expected of a second- or possibly even a third-order cult sodality heterarchy of the later Middle Woodland and early Late Woodland periods and that the very limited maize residue found in these contexts is a good candidate to be interpreted as mediating very specialized world renewal ritual.

3. In contrast, in the Midwest the Middle Woodland period (ca. 100 BC to ca. AD 500) is largely defined by the reliance for subsistence on the cultivation and domestication of native starchy and oily seed crops.

4. As an addition to Gremillion's objective account, an emic perspective can suggest that the peoples of the Southeastern region avoided gardening for as long as they could, largely because of the custodial (squatter) ethos principle of "living lightly on the land." As I argue in more detail shortly, it is possible that the initial widening of the cultivation of maize that led to its becoming a subsistence crop was, in part, the incorporation of new midwifery ritual by which to warrant the clearing of larger portions of land for gardens so that the quantity of the traditional native seed crops raised could be increased. However, this unwittingly created a surplus of maize with regard to its traditional ritual usage, thereby promoting innovation, enabling it to be consumed on a more regular and even everyday basis—it became a subsistence crop by "accident." All this suggests, of course, that normative cultural constraints and evaluations as well as objective environmental and demographic factors were in play together.

5. I have adjusted the dating system Margaret Scarry (1986) used in her dissertation since, of course, at that time she was reliant on the uncalibrated chronology. Below, I summarize in more detail the subsistence changes concerning the later West Jefferson and into the Moundville I phase that Scarry established.

6. This burial component may partly explain why there are so few Moundville I phase burials registered at Moundville, despite the thick midden deposits that Steponaitis has identified (1998, 38), although I have further comments to make on this matter in Chapter 17.

7. As I noted earlier, it appears that the raising and using of maize as a subsistence crop occurred in the second half of the West Jefferson phase, and if the calibrated chronology is used, it is possible that this would have entailed only a generation or two, about fifty years at the most (ca. cal. AD 1070 to ca. cal. AD 1120). In contrast, in the Maples Mills region of the Central Illinois Valley, maize was probably used

as a subsistence crop for two centuries before the emergence of Mississippianization there. In fact, the use of maize for subsistence in this latter area may have predated its introduction as a subsistence crop in the American Bottom, as I noted in Chapter 6, when I briefly reviewed the role of maize with respect to the Sponemann site. Therefore, the core innovation postulated by the model—namely, the development of z-twist ceramics by which to contrast with the traditional s-twist ceramics in order to ensure the separation of maize and nonmaize storage and food preparation, was characteristic of the Maples Mills phase in the Central Illinois Valley, and the z-twist/s-twist ceramic distinction may have originated there or in the nearby Upper Missouri Valley.

8. The West Jefferson phase maize appears to have been exclusively the 14-row variety, and it continued to be used into the Moundville/Mississippian period.

9. Indeed, it was probably used for this purpose even earlier. Thomas Pluckhahn (2003) has noted significant indications of maize use in the midden of the large Middle Woodland ceremonial site of Kolomoki, Georgia. This suggests to me that it served as an important medium of ritual as early as AD 350 (or even earlier) in the Southeastern region.

10. According to Hall (1997, 2007), the growing of small quantities of valued plants in isolated areas was carried out by the Cheyenne when they abandoned their sedentary integrated villages neighboring the Hidatsa and Mandan and returned to their highly mobile settlement pattern with the use of the domesticated horse. While for consumption purposes they relied on exchange with their previous neighbors for maize, they continued to raise maize and tobacco for ritual. Men and women planted small gardens of tobacco and maize, respectively, using the traditional gardening pattern, and these gardens

were always kept separate from each other. Hence the tobacco (male) and maize (female) were not only raised spatially separately but also according to gender, and were used primarily to mediate rituals.

11. Of course, "ca. AD 900-1000" should now be read as ca. cal. AD 1020-1120, forwarding the period by ca. 120 years.

12. Since this account is no less dependent on the monistic polity view than was the earlier discussion of the monistic polity view of the Mississippianization of the Central Illinois Valley, the parallels with the monistic chiefdom polity view of the founding of the Eveland site should be clear. That is, under the orthodox chiefdom model, both sites are interpreted as the result of site-unit intrusive migrations.

13. As noted earlier, Margaret Scarry (1998) interprets the mix of West Jefferson and Moundville I phase ceramics she excavated in the PA Tract as indicating a full early Moundville I occupancy. That is, the thoroughly mixed association of these two ceramic styles, she claims, was the result of their being simultaneously used by the Moundville I farmsteads.

14. Again, under the new calibrated chronology, this period of dominance would be forwarded about 70 years, from ca. AD 1050 to AD 1120, and reduced from about 150 to about 80 years, or ca. cal. AD 1120-AD 1200.

15. Certainly, if the estimates were presented in calibrated chronological terms, his claim for a brief period of West Jefferson phase attributes is considerably strengthened. Instead of the overlap period being ca. uncal. AD 1050-AD 1150 (i.e., 100 years), the period would need to be pushed forward and shortened to ca. cal. AD 1120-1160 (i.e., a mere 40 years). Since considerable Moundville construction also probably occurred prior to the building of the late Moundville

I phase mounds of the site, ca. cal. AD 1160-AD 1200, this suggests that only 30 or, at the most, 40 years would be the time when both late West Jefferson and early Moundville I phase materials were significantly coexistent.

16. Importantly, of course, the significance of these questions presupposes the adequacy of treating the stylistics of material culture as having a warranting or symbolic pragmatic function/meaning, transforming the behaviors of the users into the type of social actions intended. Sumptuary rules are proscriptions/taboo by which the social actions of a recognized group are maintained as the exclusive right of this group and its members. Nonmembers using the devices carrying the sumptuary styles are performing an action that is forbidden to them, and they can expect to be sanctioned in one way or another for it.

17. In symbolic pragmatic terms, I can interpret traditional late West Jefferson phase grog-tempered jars with loop handles as likely being regularly used to store and cook maize while the traditional grog-tempered vessels, traced back to the early West Jefferson, were used to store and cook the traditional seed crops, such as chenopodium and maygrass.

18. It might also be germane that the location of the site would put it rather close to the upland water sources of the Black Warrior River drainage. As I noted earlier, the major rivers are often treated as participating in and being the “home” of the Great Serpent, and this god would be an important focus of “regrowing-of-the-earth” rituals by which the rising and lowering of the land (floods and droughts) was governed.

CHAPTER 17

The Moundville Mortuary Sphere: Competing Views

I fully elucidated the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model in Chapter 5 and Chapter 10 (Parts I and II respectively). I also referred to the sphere of social activity that this model articulates as the mortuary sphere of the community. This sphere was characterized as being a complex processual sequence of interrelated rituals mediated by the use of the deceased, and I termed this sequence the *postmortem sacrificial mortuary chaîne opératoire trajectory*, arguing that it was thematically integrated as postmortem (and some lethal) human sacrificial offering rites. The model claims that, for traditional historical Native North American communities, the range of types of mortuary actions that constituted the mortuary sphere surpassed in number and complexity the range of types of ritual actions that characterizes the mortuary sphere of modern Euro-American communities, a sphere I suggested as being limited largely to funerary and ancillary rites (e.g., mourning rites and memorial rites). Since the prevailing tendency in North American archaeology has been to address the mortuary sphere of prehistoric Native North American communities in these funerary terms—at least until very recently (e.g., see Sullivan and Mainfort 2010)—I have called this approach to the mortuary sphere of a community the funerary model or funerary paradigm, and the series of interrelated mortuary rituals that constitute the funerary mortuary sphere can be appropriately

referred to generically as the *funerary chaîne opératoire trajectory*. I have also argued that the funerary model and its associated funerary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory are a major foundation of the Chieftdom Polity model and other versions of the Monistic Modular Polity model (e.g., treating a community as a tribal polity). In complementary and contrasting terms, the Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model, as realized in the postulated postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory, is similarly a foundation of the Complementary Heterarchical Community model and its associated Cult Sodality Heterarchy model. The central purpose of this chapter, then, is to establish which mortuary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory view can be used to give the best explanation and understanding of the Moundville CBL record and, by extension, give the most satisfactory identification of the type of social system the Moundville site manifested—a monistic chieftdom polity of one sort or another (e.g., paramount, complex, federative?) or a second-order or even possibly a third-order cult sodality heterarchy. I will proceed in terms of the hermeneutic spiral method by first summarizing and critiquing the view that pretty well prevails in the current Moundville/Mississippian literature—namely, that the mortuary component of Moundville manifests a cemetery CBL, thereby empirically grounding the conclusion that Moundville was the seat of a monistic chieftdom polity-type community. I will critique the claims arising from this cemetery model by showing how it generates a set of anomalous interpretations of the empirical data that it cannot resolve. And then, I present the alternative postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory account, subjecting this to a series of critiques and demonstrating that with appropriate modifications it resolves all the anomalies generated and not resolved by the funerary model as well as anomalies the funerary model generated and was not able to resolve adequately.

Moundville as a Cemetery CBL

Christopher Peebles was an early and strong proponent and advocate of the funerary view (1987, 1983, 1979, 1974; Peebles and Kus 1977). His interpretation of the mortuary sphere of Moundville in these terms is very well known, and of course, it has been cited as the primary armature for justifying interpreting Moundville as having been the major political locale of a dominance-based hierarchical modular polity that progressed from being a simple to a complex and, possibly, to a paramount monistic chiefdom. Indeed, allowing for some minor adjustments as new data on the Mississippian period of West-Central Alabama have been recovered, the basic premises he used in interpreting the mortuary pattern as reflecting a dominance-based hierarchical community are still broadly accepted, as I have illustrated in the last several chapters. Therefore, I believe it is fair to claim that the core of his initial interpretation of this mortuary record as a cemetery CBL of a complex or paramount monistic chiefdom is still the prevailing position in the archaeological research and literature of Moundville. This is exemplified by Knight and Steponaitis' explanation of the apparent depopulation of Moundville—namely, that it became a region-wide sacred cemetery necropolis CBL, and this view is maintained in Knight's (2010) most recent interpretations of the site and its standing within the Black Warrior River drainage area.

In his initial statement, Peebles clearly states the core premise of the funerary view and treats this as a universal generalization-type law—a regularity deterministic law. “The crucial assumption which links burials with social organization is that individuals who are treated differentially in life will also be treated differentially in death. That is, the reciprocal rights and duties gathered by the individual during his lifetime will not abruptly terminate: they will carry on into his burial and, in most societies, beyond. Therefore, the

patterned variation in mortuary ceremonials accorded individuals in a society ought to reflect their positions within the society during their lifetimes” (1974, 38). As he sums it up explicitly, “A burial can be considered a terminal social persona: the variability between burials in a single cultural system reflects the social persona of the deceased and the make up of the groups who conducted the mortuary ritual. The variability in social personae within and between cultural systems can be measured and the proposed measures discriminate between egalitarian and ranked societies” (1974, 52).

As many readers know, this interpretation of the mortuary record as a reflective “snapshot” of the social structure of the responsible community, now called by some, appropriately, in my view, the representationist view (Sullivan and Mainfort, eds., 2010), emerged during the late 1960s and developed through the 1970s and has become the guiding perspective in North American archaeology for interpreting and explaining the mortuary data (Binford 1971; Brown 1971; Charles and Buikstra 1983; Goldstein 1980, 1981; Peebles and Kus 1977; Struever 1968, 23-24; Tainter 1978, 1977a, 1977b, 332; among many others). In keeping with this overall approach, and as Peebles specifically notes, the deceased’s social-standing-in-life will “carry on into his burial and, in most societies, beyond.” This has very significant interpretive implications in several ways. First, of course, it presupposes a determinate relation between regularity of mortuary data and the singular type of activity it mediates—namely, funerary. In this case, mortuary practices are reductively treated as *funerary practices*. Allowing for exceptional circumstances (e.g., genocide), there appears to be nothing else they could possibly be. Second, it warrants using the mortuary data to reconstruct the social structure of the living in a rather direct way by quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) extrapolation from the variation in the mortuary data. Third, and equally important, it claims this

social-standing-in-life has fundamental and deep, almost overriding control-over the form of the mortuary treatment trajectory to which the individual deceased will be subjected. Fourth, the “commonsense” Euro-American nature of this view largely excludes even thinking of alternative explanations, except to invoke either extra-normal conditions (e.g., war and massacres, or death occurring in the winter, and so on). But even these can be treated as simply superficial “noise” that can be factored out in interpreting the overall mortuary patterning in terms of social structural complexity/simplicity of the living community. That is, effectively all mortuary events are funerals and, moreover, all these are formally and universally determined by the social status of the deceased prior to his/her death. Therefore, this status is taken to effectively govern death-to-final-burial treatment, even if this treatment includes a sequencing of highly variable and even contradictory mortuary treatments. This may be why the funerary *chaîne opératoire* process is typically assumed to terminate in “the grave.” By usually referring to this terminal depositional feature as a “grave,” the analyst also implies that the human contents, no matter whether these consist of the full skeleton, parts of skeletons, or simply cremated ashes, along with the accompanying associated features and artifacts (if any), necessarily manifest the primary social-standing-in-life of the deceased at the time of death.

With this basic theoretical framework, Peebles’ methodology was to use a complex combination of a set of social status categories, operationalizing these in terms of differential qualitative and quantitative variation in individual mortuary treatments, and then to carry out a quantitative statistical analysis of these categories to discern the complex correlations among the attributes of the mortuary patterning across the Moundville deceased, concluding from this that it manifested a very distinct dominance-based social hierarchy. Specifically, he operationally assessed the “social standing” of those found

in the burials, first in terms of presence/absence of artifacts, the latter being treated in referential terms as designating social standing or, if absent, designating the lack of social standing, and if present, he further divided these into “socio-technic” (elite) and “technomic” (commoner) categories; and second, in terms of place of burial—for example, on a mound or proximal to a mound or the plaza (prestigious) as opposed to being located distally (nonprestigious) from these presumably privileged cemetery areas. Using a large sample of the overall burial population, he claimed to have discerned two major formal categories of burial personae, thereby manifesting a dual status division; which he labeled *superordinate* and *subordinate*. He took these formal burial personae categories as manifesting two substantive social classes, concluding that Moundville was constituted as a dominance-based hierarchical community consisting of superordinate and subordinate social classes. By using the criteria of presence/absence of “ideo-technic” and “socio-technic” artifacts and relative place of burial, he further refined the two classes internally. On the basis of presence of esteem-displaying “ideo-technic” and “socio-technic” items, he claimed two formal superordinate “elite” social subcategories: a small ascribed or inherited upper “elite” and a larger achieved and lower “elite.” He also formally divided the subordinate (i.e., “non-elite”) group of buried “social personae” into two major sub-subordinate categories according to whether a burial was associated with at least one or more “technomic” artifacts or with no artifacts at all. The former, he claimed, had achieved some modicum of status, despite being born into and dying as commoners (he further subdivided these “achieving” commoners into 10 subcategories), and the latter, those with no artifacts, were lumped under one social category (i.e., the commoners who had not achieved any special status within the commoner class of their birth). This last category of nonachieving commoners, being bereft of any artifact-association,

amounted to the majority of the sample used (i.e., about 60% of the total set of burial deposits) (Peebles 1983, 189-90, 192; Peebles and Kus 1977, 439). He further noted that the elite categories changed quantitatively and proportionally through time. In the early Moundville I phase, only 1% of the mortuary sample counted as making up the top superordinate group; by the Moundville II and III phases, the proportion of those burials counting as having superordinate status had expanded to 5%. He interpreted this greater proportion as the entrenchment of the elite class over the commoner classes (Peebles 1987, 29) and as serving to highlight his claim that this was probably more than a simple monistic chiefdom but was a stratified, almost a state-like paramount monistic chiefdom polity.

Critical Discussion

I will present two specific critiques of this analysis: one categorical and the other distributional. The first is a critical analysis of his theoretical social categories of “real person—superordinate or subordinate” and “non-person” burials, and the second addresses anomalies arising from his plotting the ceramic/nonceramic burial distribution.

1. *The “Non-Persons” Critique.* Christopher Peebles and Susan Kus (1977, 439) coauthored a paper addressing the Moundville mortuary record. This paper has been widely and positively cited, and it built upon and extended his above findings. In it, Peebles and Kus highlighted an intriguing type of mortuary category that they referred to as the *non-person* mortuary category, which contrasted with the above two categories of “person,” both superordinate and subordinate.

The category of “non-person” is perhaps the most interesting of the three major classes of human remains. They are not burials *per se*, but are either whole skeletons or isolated skeletal parts—usually skulls—that were used

as ritual artifacts. For example, adult skulls are found as “initiatory offerings” in the post molds of buildings, in the first and final stages of mound building, at the bottom of large (about 0.6 m) single set posts, in small pits near “public” buildings, and as grave goods—not as associated bundle burials—with a few adult males. Infant skeletons and skulls are found mixed with the grave fill of burials of the highest rank (Cluster IA . . .) and in the first and final stages of mound building. Lastly in an area north of Mound G three adult achondroplastic dwarfs have been found buried face-down, which is an unusual position at Moundville. (Peebles and Kus 1977, 439)

Notably, Peebles and Kus specifically stipulate that these were not “burials per se” but “ritual artifacts,” and when accompanying the “real” burials, these latter deceased were interpreted by them as being “real persons” of high esteem (i.e., superordinate persons). Hence, these “non-person” deceased burials were treated as part of the burial furniture serving to define the status-in-life of the “real” superordinate person burial. In such cases, the “non-person” was either a skull (usually of an adult), one or more “full” infants, or the mixed bones of infants, and even “whole skeletons” of adults, but only if they were misshapen or physically abnormal. However, instead of the “non-person” skull accompanying a “real” deceased, it was often placed in an “isolated” location at points where normal “burials” (i.e., “graves” marking terminal funerary rites) were not performed—for example, often at the base of a mound or in a pit associated with a public building, at the base of large postholes, and so on. These were also “ritual artifacts” but, in this case, used as foundation or “initiatory offerings.”

This “non-person” category reveals a major problem with the funerary paradigm approach when applied to the mortuary records

of both prehistoric and traditional historic Native North American communities, this problem being the highly variable, secondary, and partitioned nature of this record.¹ Certainly, extended body mortuary deposits are common, but most archaeological mortuary records reveal a wide range of treatments within a given system and, indeed, in the same CBL. Moundville illustrates this very well. Explaining this variation in the orthodox funerary terms of social-standing-in-life method becomes highly problematic, particularly as illustrated in the above cases of isolated skulls, collective skulls, both isolated and aggregated body parts, a high degree of disturbance and disordering of prior mortuary deposits, and so on. Generating the “non-person” category, however, allows a superficial rescuing of the overall representationist or funerary model by claiming that any treatment of a deceased person that seems to go beyond the “norms” of the overall pattern can be denied community social status; that is, it can be denied *real person* status. These deceased, as indicated in the above quotation, can then be used to bolster the notion that variation of treatment reflects a dominance-based hierarchy with the “non-person” mortuary residue supporting the view that some deceased were so deficient in social standing that they were not properly members of the community at all. Instead, they were used to reference the high social standing of the “real burials” with whom they were often spatially associated.

However, while I find this very problematic, treated in symbolic pragmatic terms, I still find it important that Peebles and Kus specifically characterized these “non-person” mortuary deposits, including full bodies, as *offerings* of one sort or another. That is, they recognize that the mortuary treatment of at least some human remains, albeit “non-persons,” constituted a form of either *postmortem* or *lethal human sacrifice* (under the funerary paradigm, more likely the latter than the former) serving to express and fix the social status of the

associated extended deceased, who was the “real person,” thereby firmly asserting that this was a funerary rite. This is interesting, of course, since it at least acknowledges the key concept that humans and/or human body parts can be used as sacrificial offerings of one sort or another, and of course this acknowledgment, in turn, delineates a critical role postulated in the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* view, this being the claim that most deceased were recruited as primary and progressively refined media of world renewal sacrificial rites. Of course, their dividing the Moundville mortuary deposits into “real burials—superordinate or subordinate” and “not burials per se” is consistent with the funerary paradigm and its referentialism. For this reason, even when the possibility of humanly mediated sacrifice is recognized as an actual mortuary ritual activity, the core premise of this funerary view—that “individuals who are treated differentially in life will also be treated differentially in death”—precludes extending the possibility that some, if not all, of the mortuary treatment to which the deceased in these “real burials” were subjected could *also* be the constitutive media and outcome of a sacrificial act of the type that they unhesitatingly attribute to the treatment of the “non-person” mortuary remains. That is, in their scheme, mortuary deposits defined as burials of “persons” in “graves” are the conditions of satisfaction of funerary intentions that reference social standing, and therefore, the mortuary behavior is a “normal” funeral. Superfluity of human parts can then be attributed to being the conditions of satisfaction of a different but subordinated social action, a mode of expressively constituting the former or “real” deceased persona with which it is associated as having *high social standing*. The absence of body parts from a “real person” mortuary deposit, therefore, is affirmed to be a deceased persona having low or subordinate social standing. Hence, once established in the archaeologist’s category of being a “real” burial, whether prestigious

(as marked by artifacts, including human body parts) or commoner (as particularly marked by being bereft of any artifacts at all, much less associated other human body parts), the deceased who constitute the contents of these mortuary features become immune to being considered as displaying the properties that they do by having been used as warranting media to constitute their manipulation as one or another form of postmortem human sacrifice (e.g., as being full-bodied sacrificial deposits).

Now, in my view, while it is very important that Peebles and Kus have recognized the possibility that humans, in parts or in whole, could serve as sacrificial offering *artifacts*, the problem is that they then arbitrarily limit the sacrificial characterization to being only these “non-person” deposits. Thus, where I disagree with them is in their creating the “non-person”/“real person” distinction, thereby classifying some mortuary deposits, usually body-parts deposits but also full-body deposits, as ritual artifacts no different in meaning and function than nonhuman material artifacts associated with the “real person” deposits. Besides the referentialism they presuppose, the major problem here is that this approach leaves too much variation unexplained. In this regard, I have noted several times that most traditional Native North American cosmologies characterize an autonomous human as having *multiple* spiritual essences. The personal or free soul is the one that carries on into the next phase of human social life, but in the land of the Dead. Therefore, if a deceased is to be accompanied by the free soul of another agent, this soul of the latter person must either be released at the time of burial, in which case, lethal sacrifice would be performed and two or more full-bodied burials would be deposited, or else the free soul of a person who predeceased the other must be embodied and curated—for example, by retaining a part of the body where the free soul is believed to reside, such as a skull or scalp, or by transferring the (named) free soul of the deceased into a

material symbolic pragmatic device, such as a ceramic bowl. In any case, the body of the extended deceased would then be buried along with the skull, scalp, or ceramic vessel, possibly being broken at this time in order to release the embodied soul, so both personal souls could be released together. Of course, *this skull or scalp or broken bowl* can be the very type of deposit that Peebles and Kus defined as a “non-person” (they do not consider ceramics in these terms).

But this means that, in the understanding of those responsible for this mortuary activity, the body part—skull or scalp—or broken ceramic is no less a “real person” than the full body with which it was codeposited. However, it is no longer clear precisely what the relation between the codeposits would be since the category “non-person” is not valid under this scenario. Both could have been embodying the free souls of the respective deceased, whether one body and one skull or two skulls, etc., and, therefore, both would have to be counted as full social persons whose personal or free souls were being released together by the same ritual.² That is, while it could well be that the full-bodied deceased had high status at the time of death, the personal soul embodied in the skull could also have had high status or even higher status than the personal soul of the full-bodied deceased. In fact, relative ranking status may be irrelevant in explaining this pattern. The two could be husband and wife or even boon companions who had expressed a wish prior to death to accompany each other to the land of the Dead, except the timing of their deaths was noncoincidental. Therefore, the skull of the first deceased, spouse or boon companion, and in which her or his personal soul was embodied was curated and then was placed with the body of the newly deceased at his or her death so that both personal souls could be released together.

Even so, while this might account for finding skulls or bundle burials in association with full-bodied burials, it does not account

for the isolated body part or the body parts in association with post features or the foundations of mounds, or in situ collections of singular body parts, such as skulls, without any associations, either extended burials (i.e., “real” persons) or artifacts. However, since I agree with Peebles and Kus that these constitute sacrificial offerings, probably postmortem human sacrificial offerings, the personal (i.e., free) souls of the deceased from whose bodies these skeletal parts were procured must have been previously released. Therefore, to make sense of referring to the behaviors that they mediated as sacrificial ritual would entail recognizing that the isolated body parts were used to constitute the behavioral processes they mediated as rituals by which not the free souls but the *living souls* of the body parts were released. I fully discussed earlier that the purpose for releasing these spiritual essences would be to reanimate or enhance the immanent sacred powers of the features with which the body parts were deposited (e.g., in the posthole of an offering pole, or on the foundation floor area of a new mound, and so on). If the structure was an icon of some celestial power, then the deposition would count as a postmortem sacrifice to that sacred entity. This is one reasonable interpretation (there could be others) that emerges from treating the mortuary sphere as a postmortem (or even a lethal) human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process. First, the personal soul may be released, and the ritual performed is very roughly akin to what we call a funeral, but without permanent terminal interment of the body. Then the different body parts with their associated living spirits would be used to mediate, for example, a mourning ritual or a memorial ritual to the deceased person, possibly involving recalling the free soul from the land of the Dead temporarily, while simultaneously constituting this mourning ritual as a sacred name reincarnation and renewal rite by which the living souls of the bones were also released and directed back into the cosmos through the medium of

the associated features being constructed or renewed (e.g., mounds or temples or offering posts). Seen in these terms, the social standing of the deceased person whose bones are being used as sacrificial offerings consisting of the living souls they embody is not relevant, or at best it is only tangentially relevant to the symbolic pragmatics of the ritual, and this means that the “universal generalization” does not “carry on into his burial,” at least not to this particular mortuary deposit.

A further benefit of this postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* approach over the funerary *chaîne opératoire* view is that it avoids a methodological problem of establishing substantive criteria delineating “real” mortuary deposits from “not burials *per se*” mortuary deposits. Indeed, it eliminates this issue as a problem. And once postmortem human sacrifice is recognized as a practice in the mortuary sphere of a social system, the core beliefs of the cosmology and the core principles and values of the ethos that make this practice possible cannot be invoked to limit “real” mortuary practices to only some deceased while separating out the behaviors mediated by other deceased or their body parts as not “real” mortuary acts. The total mortuary sphere must be understood as having a pervasive sacrificial aspect, even though this sphere can and usually will be refined into different forms of sacrifice (e.g., lethal and postmortem). These will be further structured into different types of sacrificial rites, types being defined in terms of the likely recipient of the sacred energy (e.g., celestial powers, underworld powers, powers of the water, and so on). And these refinements, of course, effectively deny that social status has much relevance to determining the mortuary treatment, beyond possibly the very first steps.³

2. *The Ceramic Distribution Critique.* There are three empirical facts figuring in Peebles’ funerary *chaîne opératoire* analysis of the Moundville mortuary sphere that, when treated separately, appear

innocuous and pretty straightforward. When looked at in detail and in combination, however, I consider the most outstanding dimension of the mortuary patterning they address—namely, the presence/absence and distribution of the ceramic material, to be seriously anomalous under this view. That is, I contend that the distribution of ceramics is effectively unaccounted for by the funerary paradigm. Combined with the above “non-persons” critique, therefore, these critiques ground my claim that the funerary view is not adequate to explaining the Moundville mortuary record and must be set aside.

The first fact is that the majority of the burials had no artifacts. If we extrapolate from the sample Peebles used, this amounts to between 60% to 64% of 3,000+ known burial deposits that had no associated artifacts (Peebles 1974, 92). The second fact is that the very large majority of the approximately 36% to 40% of the burials with artifacts had only one artifact in association—and by far the most common artifact category of these artifact-associated burials was, in fact, a ceramic vessel—if not a full vessel, apparently one or more sherd fragments would do.⁴ The ceramic vessel was often closely associated with the skull, or if the skull was absent, the vessel was in the place where the skull would normally be. The third fact is that, of course, a very small minority of mortuary deposits, between 1% and 5% over the course of the Moundville history, actually had artifacts that could be reasonably classed as “ceremonial” or elite-constitutive in nature. However, usually even the “richest” of these “elite burials,” those associated with the well-recognized Mississippian ceremonial categories—Dover blades, greenstone axes, copper-covered ear plugs, oblong copper gorgets and oblong stone gorgets, and so on—had only one or two of the total range available. In addition, of these “richest,” while some were either on mounds or near the mounds, many were not and, instead, were found in CBL areas that Peebles took to be lesser or even low-esteem areas.

Now, I think it would be fair to claim that Peebles would not see these empirical data as unusual. Rather, these data and their patterning are treated by him as key substantive evidence confirming his claim that Moundville consisted of a community based on a vast disparity between two social strata, superordinate and subordinate. Then why do I disagree? Looked at in detail, I find the first and second facts to be radically anomalous under the funerary model. The first fact is that about 60% of the burial deposits had *no artifacts* at all. The second fact is that the most common artifact type by far among the 37-40% of the burials associated with one or more artifacts was the ceramic vessel. Why do I find this anomalous? This is because of what is largely unstated about the mixed qualitative status of these ceramics. These ranged from being fine ware, to plain ware, to worn and used ware to simply one or two large sherds. Why is this relevant? First, if ceramic vessels as artifacts were a mark of relative social standing, as Peebles claims, then the quality of the mixed variety and state of these vessels certainly does not support this claim. It is true that there were a good number of fine-ware vessels that displayed incised or engraved motifs, but there were also many quite ordinary plain-ware vessels, often showing signs of premortuary wear-and-tear use. Second, rather than a whole ceramic vessel, often only one or two large sherds might accompany the deceased. Third, the distribution of these vessels did not “fit” the claimed superordinate/subordinate social structuring. While many, not all, of the burials classed by Peebles as being among the “superordinate” group had fine-ware vessels, some had none, and particularly interesting, a good number of the burials in “commoner” sections also had fine-ware vessels. But this state and distribution of ceramics must be put in the total mortuary context since, despite the mixed variety and qualitative state of these vessels, approximately 60% of the burials were without any artifacts at all. That is, the fact that many (the vast

majority) of these artifact-associated burials had plain ware, used ware, and even apparently deliberately broken ware, and the fact that a number of those even with fine ware were not in prestigious burial areas, should immediately raise the red flag question of why the other 60% of the burial population, those without any artifact accompaniments at all, supposedly the definitive mark of low-ranking (i.e., non-achieving commoners), did not have at least a used or broken pot. Given the above, it seems most reasonable to suggest that the absence of vessels cannot be attributed to economic costs or relative prestige standing, or for that matter, to *sumptuary* constraints that would make the use of these ceramics by the majority socially impossible. It seems most reasonable or even imperative to conclude, therefore, that some other factor or factors unrelated to social-standing-in-life were the real causes of this mortuary distribution.

Wilson's (2008) analysis of the distribution of the nonmortuary-associated fine ware across the clusters of structures that were revealed by the Roadway excavations strongly reinforces this conclusion. As he pointed out, both the low representation and the equitable distribution of this fine ware within each cluster and across the clusters clearly indicate that (1) this was a "ceremonial" and not a "prestige" artifactual category; (2) all social groups attending Moundville used it; and (3) these groups carried out similar ceremonies. As he put it, "fine-ware pots were important ceremonial items but not prestige goods in the traditional sense. These were too widely circulated to have been tightly controlled by the Moundville elite. Moreover, they were not produced in sufficient quantity to have functioned as wealth items" (2008, 127). Of course, Wilson still recognizes that the Moundville multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex manifests a dominance-based monistic chiefdom polity of some sort. However, his assessment of the fine ware clearly indicates that he interprets the production and distribution of this as being

governed by ceremonial needs and practices (i.e., ritual), and not by either wealth or by sumptuary rules, and that every group had responsibility to perform the same range of rituals—which would include mortuary rites. All this reinforces his view that a strong “egalitarianism” prevailed both within and among these clusters. Therefore, they all would have had equivalent access to ceremonial and even nonceremonial ceramics. In short, neither material poverty (even the poorest could have provided a pot or at least a pot sherd for their deceased) nor sumptuary taboo, nor for that matter the nonavailability of a ceramic can explain the absence of ceramics from the majority of the burial deposits. However, the reciprocal to this is equally significant. That is, I find it very significant that such a large albeit *minority* proportion of burial deposits had only one item, usually a ceramic, often just a sherd or two, since it suggests that, even though ceramic-mediated terminal burial was proportionally less often practiced than was nonceramic terminal burial, the use of ceramic items as mortuary media was certainly an important part of the processes constituting the Moundville mortuary sphere. Now, while this fact is certainly socially generated (i.e., there is some social cause for this patterning), given my above critical analysis, it is likely *not at all related* to differentiation of either social ranking or wealth.

In sum, the funerary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory interpretation of Moundville as the expression of a dominance-based paramount monistic chiefdom fails to explain probably the most outstanding aspect of the patterning of the mortuary sphere, this being the very unusual qualitative mix and distribution of the mortuary artifacts, particularly the ceramics. Not only does it not explain this pattern but the ceramic distribution is anomalous under the funerary *chaîne opératoire* view itself. That is, if mortuary treatment of the deceased is a function of social standing in life right “into his burial” itself, and if almost any ceramic item can count as marking this standing,

including broken ceramics, which must have been the case since a whole range of ceramics accompanied about 40% of the burials, then all burials should have been accompanied with ceramics appropriate to the social standing of the person, from a full-fledged fine-ware vessel for the esteemed deceased to a mere pottery sherd for the lowest of the commoners. I consider both the anomalous nature of the mixed quality, form, and distribution of ceramics and the inadequacy of the “non-person” mortuary category as sufficient grounds for setting aside the funerary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory model as a valid basis for explaining the Moundville mortuary data. This amounts to falsifying the claim that this large data set marks the Moundville mortuary residue as the cemetery CBL of any sort, much less of a monistic chiefdom polity community.

The Burial Data

Before proceeding to present the alternative account of these mortuary data, particularly focusing on explaining the artifact distribution and the anomalous nature of the majority of burials being unaccompanied with any, not even with a potsherd, when so many of the minority had at least the latter, this may be an excellent place to present a quantitative summary of the empirical data on the patterning of the burials that I will use. This will reinforce and highlight the strong contrast between ceramic and nonceramic burials I noted above. I have carried out an analysis of the burials of Moundville as these have been summarized by Peebles (1979). He carried out an immense task since it involved a great deal of archival research and careful interpretation of the results of the history of excavations at Moundville that started in 1905 and terminated in the 1950s. He carefully traced the development of archaeological field and archival techniques during this period and had to piece together the data from both a disparate series of approaches and a scattered set of

recordings. He produced a masterful empirical document. Because of the great variety of techniques and questions that guided and developed this history of archaeological excavations and analyses, a great deal of data was lost, as Peebles emphatically pointed out. Nevertheless, the data were sufficiently carefully collected and recorded so as to enable the discerning of valid patterns. Among the most consistently collected data were absence/presence of artifacts, and when present, the actual types of artifacts were recorded, their number, relative position with respect to the assumed associated bodies, and the conditions of these artifacts, the type of burials (e.g., extended, semiflexed, flexed, bundle), whether the burial deposit was subsequently disturbed, the particular location of the burials in relation to major features, mounds, plaza, and so on.

I decided to focus on those burials in the major known mortuary-rich areas, particularly those spatially associated with Mounds D, E, G, and R and the immediate environs. However, while Mound D was certainly a major zone, I found the details of the recorded data were insufficient for my purposes. Therefore, I excluded these latter burial deposits. Instead, I focused on Mounds E, G, and R and their associated burial environs. I organized the burials by the feature numbers as listed by Peebles for each of the burial areas associated with these mounds. I listed whether the burial was extended, semiflexed, flexed, or bundled, and if it had been disturbed. Presence/absence of artifacts was noted with particular attention to presence or absence of ceramics. Since this was a sample based on only part of the total known mortuary deposit of Moundville, it would be surprising if the proportion of burials with and without artifacts corresponded with Peebles' fuller analysis. However, as I noted earlier, Peebles did not recognize potsherds as artifacts, and therefore, even if accompanied by a broken sherd, these burial deposits were apparently lumped into the nonartifact burial deposit category. Therefore, I pooled burial

deposits with sherds as ceramic burials along with those having full vessels. Table 17.1 summarizes the data on which I have based the alternative Mourning/World Renewal Mortuary model account.

Table 17.1. Summary Overview of Moundville Burial Sample

Total for CBL zones in and around Mounds G, E, and R			
Burials without artifacts:	Total: 270 (50%)		
extended	135/270 = 50%		
disturbed	72/270 = 27%		
other	19/270 = <u>23%</u>		
	100%		
Burials with artifacts:	Total: 271 (50%)		
	<u>With Ceramics</u>	<u>Without Ceramics</u>	
extended	111/271 = 41%	35/271 = 13%	
disturbed	53/271 = 20%	4/271 = 1%	
other	52/271 = <u>19%</u>	16/271 = <u>6%</u>	
	80%	20%	100%
Grand Total: 541			

Summary Quantitative Discussion of Mortuary Data

While Peebles' major burial categories were based on presence/absence of artifacts, with ceramics counting as artifacts only if whole, my major categories were presence/absence of ceramics. As noted above, even if a burial had only one or two sherds, I treated it as a ceramic burial. Having said that, I will, however, start with Peebles' presence/absence of artifacts, which include ceramics, if any. In these terms, the total burial population from the three areas that I used was effectively equally divided between those with and those without artifacts. However, of the 271 burials with artifacts, 20%

(N=55) had no ceramics. This means that 80% of these 271 artifact-associated burials did have ceramics, and the vast majority of these had only the latter—not uncommonly simply a sherd from a broken pot. Therefore, even though burials-with and burials-without artifacts were effectively equal proportionally, if the 20% of the total artifact-associated burial population sample without ceramics, even potsherds, is analytically shifted to the nonceramic burial category, then proportionally there were more burials without ceramics than there were burials with ceramics, 60% (325/541) and 40% (216/541), respectively.

I commented above that Peebles did not include burials with merely ceramic sherds as having artifacts, and therefore, he may simply have included these as part of the nonartifact burial group. If I am mistaken and, in fact, Peebles included burials with potsherds in the category of burials with artifacts (37.9% of his total sample), then I still do not think that the difference between my category of ceramic-artifact burials (40% of my total sample), and his 37.9% artifact burials would be significant. The difference could be attributed to sampling bias. Furthermore, our data would still show that a significant majority of the mortuary deposits were nonceramic. As noted, in my sample, it would amount to 60% (a small percentage of these, however, had nonceramic artifacts). For his sample, it would be 62.1% of the total. If I am not mistaken, and he did lump the burials with one or two potsherds under the nonartifact burial category, then the 2.1% between his nonartifact burial and my nonceramic burial categories would be partly explained by this. However, only partly, since, as noted above, my nonceramic category includes the burials in my sample that, while not having any ceramics, even potsherds, did have nonceramic artifacts. Therefore, based on the summary of the data in table 17.1 I will now proceed with the assumption that the proportion of nonceramic to ceramic burials was 60:40.

The Postmortem Human Sacrificial Mortuary Chaîne Opératoire Trajectory

As I noted prior to this summary overview of the mortuary data, the mixed-bag nature of the ceramics does not support the claim that either wealth or rank played any significant role in the mortuary patterning, as claimed under the funerary model. Even so, since about 40% of the burials were associated with ceramics, whether fine ware, coarse ware, plain ware, used and worn ware, or simply one or more large sherds, and given that the ceramic-associated burials constituted such a large minority of the mortuary deposits, these two facts suggest that ceramics *did* play some important mortuary role, even though not the type of role postulated under the funerary view. Indeed, I will postulate that, in overall terms, ceramics played a critical role in constituting the action-nature of certain of the behavioral processes by which the mortuary sphere itself was generated, reproduced, and transformed. This means that the presence/absence of ceramics was determined not by the social standing of the deceased at death but, instead, by the nature of the particular mortuary rituals and their modification and transformation being performed and for which the presence or absence of ceramics was determined by the symbolic pragmatic rules of the mortuary sphere. That is, whether present or absent, ceramics were necessary for the effective constitution of the sequence of rituals they mediated, thereby constituting, reproducing, and transforming the mortuary sphere through time.

I postulate that each deceased, *even those unaccompanied by ceramics*, was associated with ceramics at some time during his/her extensive period of postmortem processing. Perception is important here, and all perception entails interpretation, and all interpretation entails assumptions (i.e., presuppositions). Do we interpret (i.e., see) the half-filled wine glass as partly full or partly empty? Our beliefs or assumptions about the prior conditions and context of the half-filled

wine glass largely determine how we perceive its current status. If we assume or know the glass was being filled when the process was interrupted, then we perceive it as being half filled. If we assume or know that it was being used as part of a festive meal that was interrupted, then we perceive it as half empty. I think that a legitimate question to ask about the presence/absence distributional pattern of the ceramics is whether it was the result of addition to or subtraction from the mortuary process—or a complex playing out of both additive and subtractive steps.

Clearly, the operating assumption of the funerary model is additive. That is, the mortuary process entails adding or withholding adding artifacts until the “burial” is performed, and therefore, their presence in the final mortuary deposit is the result of their marking the deceased’s social status in life. It follows that the absence of artifacts means not that they were removed prior to burial but that they were not added as part of the burial treatment, thereby constituting absence as a measure of the low social standing of the deceased. This is not the case for the postmortem human sacrificial view, however. The patterning of the mortuary deposit should be treated as largely the contingently final condition of satisfaction of a series of prior and distinctively separate but sequentially related mortuary actions, the performance of each of which entailed the formation and exercising of mortuary-related intentions particular to performing a specific action. The step-by-step formation and realization in mortuary-mediated activity just was the unfolding of this sequence of different behaviors that constituted the total mortuary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory, thereby bringing about the differentiated end-state patterning that manifested and constituted the total mortuary sphere of Moundville. I am assuming here that, to those responsible, the behaviors they performed at any given step would count as felicitous types of the intended mortuary acts largely in virtue of the

treatment accorded the deceased. As I noted earlier (controlling for n-transformations over time, of course), as the material outcome of the exercising of the multiple mortuary intentions over time, the mortuary residue of any given deposit, or at least some part of that deposit (e.g., the skull of the deceased, along with all or some of the long bones), could then be recruited by being gathered together to materially mediate a subsequent mortuary ritual. This latter ritual would be quite different from the one that produced these bones. Indeed, the performance of the latter was contingent on the prior performance of the ritual that generated the bones that were used. So the two rituals were quite different in purpose and nature while clearly being structurally related, being among the total set of sequential rituals that constituted the mortuary sphere. That is, the point of removing these bones would be to use them to mediate and constitute the next required ritual, which might entail their being broken or cremated and the residue being deposited along with a potsherd, thereby producing another mortuary deposition. Hence, the end-state presence/absence of ceramics of the overall mortuary depositional pattern would be a result of a complex process of adding and subtracting of ceramics, as well as other nonceramic materials, in accordance to the specific rules and protocols that governed each of the different steps of the sequential series of mortuary rites. In symbolic pragmatic terms, what this ca. 60:40 absence/presence of ceramics suggests is that, from the beginning of the mortuary processing of any given deceased, ceramics played a critical role in the constitution of the range of mortuary events that they were used to mediate and that many of these events (the majority) entailed, either prior to or at the terminal burial event, removing from the deceased the ceramics that may have been previously accumulated, or, in other cases (the minority), entailed either not removing those that were previously accumulated, or adding ceramics, either new or curated,

at the terminal burial ritual event. In most cases, these rituals and even many of the terminal events would not be properly characterized as funerary burials.

This sounds complicated and would seem to leave a methodological quandary, making it impossible to sort out what actually happened prehistorically. However, I think otherwise. By taking a retroductive approach, and having postulated the overall set of conditions that must have existed for this mortuary record to exist in the state we presently perceive it, I will postulate that the mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process that generated this dichotomous ceramic/nonceramic burial distribution must have been *bifurcated* into at least two contrasting and largely mutually-exclusive subtrajectories such that, while over the total history of Moundville, ceramics were regularly used as ritual constitutive devices, the majority of the individual trajectories terminated as nonceramic burials and, given my above discussion, constituted the ceramic-removal subtrajectory (rather than a nonadditive trajectory, as would be the case under the funerary model), while the minority were terminated as ceramic burials, and constituted the ceramic-additive subtrajectory. These two mortuary subtrajectories could have overlapping behavioral similarities, of course. For example, some of the body parts of a terminal nonceramic burial may have been subsequently recruited to mediate another mortuary ritual involving the addition of ceramics, or involving the combination of selected body parts of several prior burials (e.g., several skulls, possibly some being nonceramic and others being ceramic burials), and to this set of skulls may have been added some ceramics, and this compound deposit terminated this particular trajectory, thereby constituting a compound skull/ceramic-associated mortuary deposit. In any case, these two postulated subtrajectories are defined by opposing terminal states. In a sampling of the known mortuary depositions, about 60% had the ceramics removed

prior to what was, for many cases, probably intended to be the final burial event, while about 40% were accompanied by ceramics that had been added probably as part of the terminal rituals.

Some may rightly question, beyond the above point that I made concerning the mixed quality and state of the ceramic distribution, what warrant there is for my postulating that the ceramics played such an important symbolic pragmatic role in the constitutive formation of Moundville mortuary events—even when absent from the terminal deposition. Given what is known about the ceramic record of this region, I believe there is strong independent albeit circumstantial evidence supporting this claim. This evidence derives from the mortuary patterning of the Moundville IV phase of this region. Although this phase is very poorly represented at Moundville itself, it is well represented in the region; and one primary characteristics that demarcates it is the unique nature of the mortuary sphere data. As I noted earlier, this phase used to be referred to as the *Alabama River phase* and the cultural complex that was responsible for it was termed the *Burial Urn Culture*. The reason for this latter descriptor simply results from the practice of interring the bones of the deceased in large ceramic urns. The fact that these urns bore designs that can be formally linked to many of those found on the earlier Moundville phase ceramics, as well as similarity of forms, and so on, strongly suggests that the use of ceramics was a constitutive medium of the mortuary sphere of the Moundville IV phase. Therefore, this usage would probably have been simply a variant innovation of the equivalent critical constitutive role that ceramics played at Moundville during the earlier Moundville I, II, and III phases. It is very appropriate to quote Craig Sheldon in this regard. “Whether the urn burial complex had its origins in the Moundville phase, or was developed *sui generis* in the Burial Urn Culture, the development of urn interment sites as a definitely structured custom was rapid and

simple because most of the component items and practices were already present The vessels were domestic globular jars and wide rimmed bowls most of which had indications of heavy use before their secondary function as sarcophagi. The dismemberment of adult skeletons for placement in the jars was already present as evinced by the unenclosed secondary bundle burials [and] the variant custom of placing inverted bowls over extended burials did have definite precedents in the Moundville phase at Moundville” (1974, 53-54). In short, the Moundville IV phase Burial Urn complex displaying a direct association between the mortuary use of ceramic vessels (many displaying everyday wear-and-tear use) and the dead for interment is consistent with and reinforces my claim that the Moundville distribution and usage of ceramics vessels, whether whole or partial, had important substantive symbolic pragmatic meaning that participated in the production, reproduction, and transformation of the Moundville mortuary sphere.

As noted above, particularly intriguing in the Moundville data is the common presence of sherds in association with mortuary remains. These were usually large sherds. And this suggests that, in many cases, rather than those sherds being used simply because they were conveniently “at hand,” they may have been procured from one or more whole pots that had been deliberately broken in order both to satisfy a ritual need at the time of breakage (e.g., spirit release) and to satisfy the *anticipated* future need for just such sherds. If so, then the remaining parts of the pots would likely not have been tossed away but instead were also curated, likely for use to mediate future memorial mortuary rites for the deceased or to perform reincarnation rites by which to ensure the proper transfer of the spirit names of the deceased to newborn infants, and so on. In any case, the common presence of sherds in the mortuary deposits suggests that this practice was not simply an expedient addition or, in cases of absence

of any ceramics at all, either a deliberate or simple oversight. Furthermore, there were significant numbers of burial deposits in which the skulls were missing while vessels were placed apparently as substitutes. One is tempted to think that an association between vessel and skull may have expressed the belief that the skull was the “vessel” of one or more of the important souls of the deceased (probably the free soul) and that, through the association of form and effective ritual, the ceramic bowl or bottle was treated and experienced by those responsible as the substitute to embody the free soul when the skull was removed, probably in order to use the latter to mediate a living soul spirit-release rite. The “personal-soul-in-the-skull” ceramic may have then been curated until, at a later ritual, the free soul was given a final spirit-release rite that enabled it to travel to the land of the Dead, possibly marked by a deliberate breaking of the vessel. One or more sherds of this vessel then may have been selected and curated to mediate a future act of soul name rebirth, and so on.

Since I have postulated that the total mortuary sphere of Moundville manifests a bifurcated postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process consisting of two mortuary subtrajectories that generated two burial populations defined primarily by the presence or absence of ceramics, I will proceed in a hermeneutic spiral manner by retroductively inferring several hypothetical scenarios that if they had occurred would explain this complex mortuary depositional end product. I will try to be exhaustive here. By this I mean that, given the empirical data and the fact that I have already set aside the funerary scenario as falsified on explanatory grounds, I will try to present the complete series of reasonably plausible scenarios under the premises of the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* model. These different scenarios must each be tested against the mortuary record by showing which can give the most coherent explanation of the mortuary patterning while exposing

the least number of anomalies and inconsistencies. Of course, retroductive inference consists of our drawing on the best and most relevant current knowledge we have to postulate necessary but not necessarily sufficient causal conditions, and therefore, aspects of the targeted data patterning can emerge as unaccounted for—just as I demonstrated was the case for the funerary model. However, this unaccounted-for or anomalous patterning need not be passively accepted as a falsification of the hypothesis since a proactive aspect of the hermeneutic spiral method treats it as an opportunity to refine and modify the model by showing how the conditions that generated what appear to be anomalous patterning could have existed only if they were conditions among those already postulated but unnoted in the original model of retroduced conditions. The hermeneutic spiral method, therefore, is not only a mode of testing models through detailed and nonanomalous explanation of the patterning of the data but also a mode of refining, elaborating, and advancing these models (i.e., a spiraling method of knowledge construction rooted through explanation in the objective patterning of the empirical data themselves). In these terms, therefore, the scenario or coscenarios that achieve the best explanatory fit can be treated as elucidating the best approximation of the real social conditions generating the Moundville mortuary patterning—at least for now. That is, the “successful” scenario or coscenarios are not the final or absolute “truth” but simply the best of several postulated approximations of the social conditions responsible for the Moundville mortuary record that I can retroductively infer. If my colleagues do not agree and think that one of the alternative possible scenarios, or even a new one that they can retroductively postulate, is a better approximation of what activities actually occurred, and thereby what kind of social entity Moundville was, then it is up to them to participate in the hermeneutic spiral process by critiquing my analyses and results and then by presenting

their alternative(s) and use it(them) to explain the same data. If this explanation makes the data even more coherent while dissolving anomalies of the explanation that were exposed by their critique of my current model, so be it. Accepting it and setting mine aside will count as advancing our knowledge of Moundville. Only by means of this critical, spiraling hermeneutic-explanatory manner can our theoretical knowledge of the Moundville social world be corrected, replaced, expanded, and validated in the empirical data.

I will proceed by presenting, first, a dual set of related scenarios that I call the *Split-Stage Scenario* and the *Doubled-Up-Stage Scenario*. While this set can be used to explain many aspects of the mortuary data, as a result of my also subjecting them to an internal critique, it turns out that they generate anomalies in the explanation of certain data that, although only tangentially associated with the mortuary process per se, serve as grounds for rejecting, or at least supplementing, these scenarios. The anomalies caused by the first set of scenarios are resolved by theoretically elucidating and empirically grounding a second set, which I call the *Primary Mortuary Scenario* and the *Secondary Mortuary Scenario*. This second set of scenarios maintains and confirms most of the premises of the first set, in particular, the claim that much of the patterning of the ceramic and nonceramic burials was generated by a bifurcated mortuary trajectory program, while resolving the problems and anomalies the first set generated, and furthermore, they enable me to give a more detailed characterization of the necessary nature of the wider Black Warrior Valley social system from the perspective of the mortuary data focused at the Moundville site.

The Split-Stage and Doubled-Up-Stage Mortuary Scenarios

1. *The Split-Stage Scenario*. I have characterized the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process as consistent with the

primary type of activity that participants in an ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy are committed to carrying out (i.e., world renewal ritual performed primarily through the medium of human postmortem manipulation). Now, it is important to note that this mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process applies not only to that part performed by the cult sodalities but also to the *total* mortuary sphere of the region and this was under the joint responsibility of both the clans of the complementary heterarchical communities in their bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture and the autonomous cult sodality heterarchies of the region. Therefore, the total mortuary sphere would be constituted in two sequentially performed stages: that stage of the trajectory performed by the clan components dispersed in the countryside of the region and that stage performed by the cult sodality components in their sodality locales. It is likely that a deceased would first mediate the clan stage of the split-stage scenario, and it would be akin in action terms to our own Euro-American funerary practice, except that, in most cases, this stage would not be terminated with a permanent burial. Since permanent burial would be a rather rare event, much of the first stage of this split-stage mortuary trajectory would be archaeologically invisible. It is primarily the second stage that becomes the majority component of the tangible mortuary residue of the region since the series of events that mediated this stage terminated in burial or in-ground mortuary deposits performed primarily in the cult sodality context. Hence, the typical mortuary processing of an individual deceased would probably be instigated in the countryside, possibly as a laying-in rite involving placing ceramic and other items by the body in his/her dwelling or at the locale of the clan leader. This initial laying-in period would entail the performance of a series of mourning rites, and it is at this stage that the notion of the status of the deceased in life could operate to govern the postmortem treatment. Possibly

these would be followed by a scaffolding rite, as illustrated by my earlier discussion of the Hidatsa practice, terminated after a few days with a personal or free-soul release rite (i.e., with “final” *funerary* rites), along with the transfer of the name spirits into some personal items of the deceased to be curated for later ritual reincarnating of the spirit name to be given to a newborn of the deceased’s clan, and so on.

When the first or clan-based stage was drawing to an end, preparation of the deceased to mediate the first step of the second, or sodality, stage would occur. The body, likely wrapped in some type of animal-skin or plant-based textile shroud, would be removed from the scaffold and placed on a mortuary litter, which would then be carried in mourning-like procession by his/her companions to the ceremonial nodal locale of the autonomous cult sodality of the deceased. None of these cult sodality locales have actually been empirically identified, as far as I know, possibly because no one has looked for them, although the early stages of the Bessemer site may have been this type (Welch 1994, 12-13). Following some further mourning and spirit-release rites, the companions of the deceased along with select kin would then carry the litter bearing the shroud-wrapped body to the first-order cult sodality heterarchy locale. Now, the absence of any ceramics in 60% of the mortuary events at the Moundville CBLs suggests that, at some point, the ceramics and artifact(s) that would have been accumulated during the first funerary-like stage of this process would be removed from the body—for example, when it was wrapped in a new shroud in preparation to be carried to the second-order cult sodality heterarchy (i.e., Moundville). In short, the moving of the deceased to the major context of the second stage of the process meant that the body went “naked” in terms of ceramics, although, as noted above, it would be bundled in a shroud and, in a few instances, accompanied by (usually) a few

personal artifacts placed with it during the first stage. In this stage, the living social standing of the deceased was likely irrelevant or, at least, only tangentially relevant. The significant relevance of the deceased was as the medium of a projected set of postmortem human sacrificial world renewal rites.

If so, this removal of the ceramics would have been an important constitutive moment marking the transfer of primary mortuary responsibility from the clan to the sodality. The emic reason for this split-stage moment may have been that the ceramics probably were no longer required for the second stage since their spiritual essences had already been transferred to accompany the personal soul of the deceased at the time of its release rites (i.e., the “funerary” event had been performed), and as noted, the social standing of the deceased was no longer relevant to the subsequent treatment that the deceased was to mediate (i.e., a sequence of renewal rites mediated by postmortem human sacrificial offerings). The removal would also enable the kin and companions to retain these artifacts for possible later use as symbolic pragmatic media of their own special memorial rites or as media to embody the name spirits of the deceased. Their use might be critical in the sacred name rebirth rites by which newborn were inducted into the community. Therefore, they were likely curated for later rites or other reasons I will suggest later. This also means that the *nonceramic* burials at Moundville were the consequence of the cult sodalities subjecting these deceased at Moundville itself to a second series of spirit-release rites, possibly beginning with initial scaffolding at this second-order cult sodality heterarchy CBL, thereby releasing the spirits of the flesh to the Above World gods, and/or alternatively, being curated in a charnel structure at this site and then wrapped and buried, curated for possible disinterring and dividing the bones of the macerated body to be used for different living soul spirit-release rites, and then depositing the remaining bones

in the earth in order to reanimate the land. In all likelihood, during this process, the deceased would be taken in procession to one or more of the mounds where further rituals were performed, possibly each mortuary-mediated ritual on a mound counting as releasing some of spiritual energy of the living souls of this body, thereby serving as sacrificial offerings to the deities occupying the Above World strata, only then to be returned to the charnel structure, further ritual performed to reanimate the bones, and then used to repeat this ritual procession on another mound representing the next level of the Above World, and so on. The final spirit-release ritual would be terminated by burial in one of the cult sodality CBLs of the heterarchy. In this way, it is possible that most deceased were cycled in an orderly manner from one to the next mound to mediate spirit-release rites directed to each of the celestial strata that each mound represented and in which each participated.

Some readers may immediately object to this “imaginary reconstruction” on the grounds that it is merely a “Just-so” tale, and therefore, that it can be dismissed simply because it cannot be empirically demonstrated. My response is to refer such skeptical readers to my detailed discussion of the use of retroductive inference to undertake model construction that I presented in the closing section of Chapter 3—as well as my above reiteration of the hermeneutic method. In terms of this methodological and ontological discussion, it should be clear that to the extent that any residue of past human behaviors (i.e., the archaeological record) presupposes cultural practices, then in regard to reconstructing and explaining this residue, all prehistoric archaeological models are imagined. Hence, critiquing a prehistoric archaeological model by accusing it of being a “Just-so” tale (i.e., a “fairy” story) not only totally misses the rationality of using retroduction to construct models and abduction to test them, it also implies that any alternative model that the skeptic uses as his/her basis

for dismissing this “Just-so” model is also itself a “Just-so” story. And if this is denied by the skeptic, then she/he is simply privileging it without any justification. This unwarranted privileging will not do, of course. Or to the skeptic who claims that his/her “Just-so” story is warranted because it is grounded on analogy, let me emphasize that all the models I have presented are also based on widely accepted and known anthropological cultures, albeit I have had to critique this received knowledge and show where it must be modified for adequate usage. For example, given what we currently know about traditional Native North American communities, my reconstrual of this structural knowledge by emphasizing the centrality of the dual kinship/companionship structural principle warrants speaking about them as complementary heterarchical communities. Given my elaboration of what we already know about the mortuary practices of these people, these can very reasonably be understood as constituting complex mortuary spheres that are quite different in content from, for example, the Euro-American mortuary sphere, and so on. Skeptics cannot, therefore, act reasonably if, in rejecting the resultant models I have presented on the grounds that they are “Just-so” stories, they have not demonstrated that the concepts on which these models are based are not defensible. But to do this, they must engage in the hermeneutic spiral process, ultimately showing that the model or models they favor (i.e., the particular “Just-so” stories they prefer) draw on more adequate analogies and give a more coherent account of the patterning and content of the empirical data (which we all recognize) than do the models I have proposed.

2. *The Doubled-Up-Stage Scenario.* In any case, the split-stage burial trajectory scenario is clearly not the whole story since, while it accounts for the nonceramic burials, it leaves unexplained the other estimated 40% of the mortuary deposits at Moundville—the ceramic burials. Since the claim is that ceramics were accumulated as part of

the first stage performed in the clan context and removed as part of the second stage performed at Moundville, then the ceramic burials suggest that either they were not subjected to this split-stage trajectory process or else some of the deceased who were subjected to the split-stage rituals had the ceramics removed in the normal way, but then these were replaced some time prior to or at the terminal burial at Moundville. I will examine the former possibility first and the latter possibility later, since it turns out to be quite valid. In terms of the former, this would mean that there were many burial events at Moundville in which the deceased were not subjected to the split-stage trajectory, and instead, the total mortuary process for each of these deceased occurred at Moundville. This would effectively mean that these burials would not have entailed a *mortuary* procession from the countryside to Moundville, although processions of the sick or the lethally wounded, or the senile and enfeebled elders, and so on, may have occurred. Indeed, dying at Moundville rather than elsewhere might be desired by many, if they could arrange it. Of course, normally the living person being carried to Moundville in a state of imminent death would likely soon die once at Moundville, and hence it would have been convenient for the total series of mortuary rites to be performed there. This would mean that the body would be buried in association with all its accumulated ceramics and other mortuary-associated artifacts. This possibility is what I will term the *Doubled-Up-Stage Scenario*. Of course, since choosing one's place of dying is a contingent matter, and I have already postulated that occupation at Moundville by the living was transient, only a minority of the deceased would be so "fortunate" as to have been able to arrange to die at Moundville. In short, nonceramic and ceramic burials were the result of two ongoing alternative and mutually exclusive mortuary trajectories: the split-stage mortuary trajectory and the doubled-up-stage mortuary trajectory.

Critical Assessment

As noted above, I have stressed that *critique* is an important part of the hermeneutic spiral method for testing models, and therefore, the above account of the Moundville mortuary record must also be subjected to critique. I will initiate it by first asking whether it explains the mortuary pattern more coherently than the alternative funerary *chaîne opératoire* view. Certainly, in my view, the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* view covers the same data as the former, and in doing so, it eliminates the anomalous categories of burials/“not burials per se” mortuary deposits, and the anomalous social positions of “persons”/“non-persons,” while endorsing the claim by Peebles and Kus that human body parts, even though they limited these to what they term *non-persons*, were effective symbolic pragmatic warranting devices of postmortem and possibly some lethal human sacrificial rites.⁵ Importantly, while the funerary view recognizes that many deceased had no ceramics, given that many of those who did had a very disparate range of ceramics, indicating the likelihood that ceramic distribution was not determined by economic or rank standing, it cannot explain this pattern without contradicting its own premises. In contrast, my alternative explains this pattern in symbolic pragmatic terms; that is, the ceramics were used as critical constitutive media of the mortuary rituals that made up this sphere and, specifically, as constituting a range of different types of mortuary-mediated rituals organized as two complementary mortuary subtrajectories.

Another critical mode of confirming which model is preferred is to determine which enables the more coherent explanation and interpretation of empirical data that appear to be unrelated to, or at best, only tangentially related to the sphere of interest. Under the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* interpretation, it becomes clear that the distribution that Wilson has noted of the

clusters of dwelling-like structures and their contents, on the one hand, and the nature of the mortuary pattern, on the other, quite nicely correspond in that they are consistent with the absence of dominance-based rank ordering of the clusters. The clusters are similar and equitable in makeup and content no matter where they are located, and the absence of dominance-based ranking factors is consistent with the view that the social components are mutually autonomous cult sodalities. Therefore, treating the mortuary distribution as the outcome of two mortuary subtrajectories, each being a complex of different mortuary rituals, is quite consistent with the content and distribution of the structure clusters. Such consistency is patently absent when Peebles' interpretation of the mortuary data as the manifestation of a paramount monistic chiefdom polity is tested against Wilson's interpretation of these patternings as equitably similar.

Another and very important but tangentially related problem will be recalled, this being the inversion of the buildup of occupational midden and burial deposits. Knight and Steponaitis (1998) accounted for this inversion by claiming that starting about or sometime shortly after ca. AD 1250 Moundville was transformed into the sacred political capital of the monistic paramount chiefdom.⁶ In their explanation, from ca. AD 1250 on, there was the ongoing exclusion of the large majority of the commoners from living in Moundville. I critiqued this claim by arguing that it was internally contradictory—a position I still firmly hold. However, I did not complete my critique of their explanation (see Chapter 14) because at that point I had not given an alternative explanation of this sacred capital/necropolis claim under the Cult Sodality Heterarchy model. With the prior interpretation of the Moundville layout under the Cult Sodality Heterarchy model completed (see Chapter 15) and the above elucidation of the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* view, I am

now prepared to complete that task by explaining this apparent inversion of the burial and midden deposition data in terms consistent with the Cult Sodality Heterarchy model and the postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire*, thereby confirming the claim that the Moundville CBLs manifested the mortuary sphere of a second-order (or possibly a third-order) ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy.

The Occupation/Mortuary Record Inversion Puzzle

The sacred capital/necropolis explanation of the occupational and mortuary empirical data by Knight and Steponaitis presupposes both the funerary *chaîne opératoire* process and the sedentary settlement nature of Moundville residency. That is, as the seat of a monistic chiefdom prior to ca. AD 1250 Moundville had a permanent sedentary population, and following ca. AD 1250, while continuing as the seat of a monistic paramount chiefdom (Knight and Steponaitis 1998), or as a less centralized federation of simple monistic chiefdoms (Knight 2010), it actively excluded most of this population by banning them to the countryside where they took up equally sedentary occupation, but at the same time it became the regional valley-wide sacred cemetery CBL necropolis. The view of Moundville as a second-order cult sodality heterarchy would deny both premises. In respect to occupancy, it has postulated that permanent or sedentary residency at the Moundville site was rare and that in effect its occupancy would be based on sequential *transient residency* resulting from members of the autonomous cult sodalities regularly cycling between Moundville and their countryside homes. Because of this circulation, while the farmsteads manifested a sedentary residential tendency, the necessity of regular absences while being transients in the heterarchy qualifies the sedentary nature of the countryside occupation, suggesting it was also a form of quasi sedentarism. Furthermore, similar

to my description of the Dickson Mounds site (see Chapter 10), the mortuary patterning of the Moundville site manifests the process characteristic of a postmortem human sacrificial CBL of a complex world renewal cult sodality heterarchy. Given these claims, the same questions that Steponaitis and Knight addressed must be reformulated and new answers given.

(1) How was it that during the Moundville I phase (and possibly into the earlier Moundville II phase), when the midden buildup indicates that transient occupation was heaviest and most intense, the intensity of mortuary depositions appears to be the lowest in its history and, overall, almost incidental?

(2) How is it that apparently the reverse occurred during the rest of the post-Moundville I phase times; that is, the intensity and number of terminal burial events became the greatest—indeed, skyrocketed—while, given the reduced rate of midden build up, even transient occupancy significantly dropped off and became the lightest?⁷

Explanation

Steponaitis (1983, 83-90) based his chronology on the seriation of 505 ceramic mortuary deposits. These were derived from the sample of the 2,053 burials on which Peebles based his mortuary analysis. Critical for this seriation analysis was using this sample of 505 ceramic burials to apportion the total burial population according to the ceramic-style-based phases. This means that only those burials with diagnostic artifacts would be useful, and for this purpose, this largely entailed analyzing the ceramic burials and working out the proportion of burials per phase as marked by these relatively phase-sensitive ceramics and extrapolating this proportion to the total burial population, most of which were nonceramic burials (i.e.,

about 60%). For example, if 7% of the ceramic burials were dated to the early Moundville I phase (in fact, it will be recalled this was the proportion that Steponaitis computed), then by extrapolation the estimated proportion of the burials performed in that phase would be about 7% of the *total estimated burial population* of 3,000+ burials (i.e., both ceramic and non-ceramic burials), and so on per phase. Of course, as noted earlier, the occupational midden buildup per phase did not accord with the mortuary record buildup configured in these terms. The greatest midden buildup occurred during the period when only 7% of the total burial population—both ceramic and nonceramic associated—was deposited and then, when the proportion of burials increased 6.7 times, the buildup of the midden significantly lagged and dropped off. It is from this inversion following the Moundville I phase that he concluded the permanent/sedentary occupancy level of Moundville “collapsed,” and in parallel, the rapid escalation of the number and intensity of mortuary events occurred. “Yet no matter which method one chooses, all estimates point to the same inescapable conclusion: The vast majority of burials at Moundville—something in the order of 90 percent—date to the Moundville II and III phases Correcting for differences in phase duration . . . we see that the rate at which burials were deposited increased 670 percent between Moundville I and Moundville II and another 40 percent between Moundville II and Moundville III, after which it declined precipitously” (1998, 38).

Presupposing this “inescapable conclusion,” of course, are the assumptions that the Moundville I phase population was sedentary, and even when Moundville stopped being the focus of occupation, the overall valley population numbers remained largely steady, and the mode of settlement continued to be sedentary. But the people—for the most part “commoners”—were resettled in farmsteads dispersed in the countryside, as well as, to some degree, in the

single mound-and-plaza complexes that came to be built in the post-Moundville I times. That is, since the puzzle he raises is how the post-Moundville I mortuary deposit record could be so much larger than the Moundville I phase deposit record, while the post-Moundville I midden record marked a major drop-off in permanent residential occupation of the Hemphill Bend terrace zone, Steponaitis seems to be committed to the view that the panregional demographic levels remained relatively steady during the total history of Moundville—only the distribution of the population modified. Of course, all this also means that if 93% of the sedentary occupants of this postulated monistic chiefdom polity center was not buried there during the Moundville I phase, then where was it buried?

The resolution of these puzzles may be relatively easy under the dual split-stage and doubled-up-stage scenarios. This is because, while Steponaitis' ceramic seriation is valid in terms of relative dating, and it is still recognized as such, his use of the ceramics to extrapolate the proportion of total burials per phase would not be valid. This is simply because, under the above scenarios, interphase variation in ceramic burial proportions does not record variation in mortuary population size buildup per phase but variation in the proportion of *split-stage to doubled-up-stage trajectory burial events per phase*. Hence, if ceramics are absent from a mortuary deposit, this is most likely because the deceased was subject to the split-stage mortuary trajectory with the ceramics being *removed* prior to terminal burial. Of course, Moundville I phase ceramics were associated with only 7% of all the ceramic burials. This low proportion, however, would not represent the proportion of the total mortuary deposits associated with this phase (i.e., 7% of ca. 3,000=ca. 210). Rather, it would represent only the percentage of the total mortuary deposits of this phase that were the result of *doubled-up-stage burial trajectory events*. Clearly, the doubled-up-stage subtrajectory was a distinct 7%

minority practice in the Moundville I phase. But this also means, of course, that there is no reason to think that the great majority of burial events of this phase, 93%, were performed elsewhere. Rather, it is quite reasonable to assume that these events were performed right there at Moundville. They would be *second-stage burials of the split-stage subtrajectory of the Moundville I phase times*, and therefore, they would have had no ceramic artifacts in association. Let me reiterate. Under the above split-stage and doubled-up-stage trajectory scenarios, the fact that the proportion of Moundville I phase *ceramic* burials is much lower than the proportion of later phase *ceramic* burials does not warrant claiming that the increased proportions of the latter are a measure of an increasing rate and intensity of burials by phases. In overall terms, however, it does warrant claiming that the proportion of split-stage burials, while still remaining the majority, dropped significantly in post-Moundville I times while the reciprocal proportion of the minority doubled-up-stage burials increased. Of course, this view also assumes that transient occupation was the standard form of residency practiced during all phases.

Hence, under this perspective, there are no mortuary-based empirical grounds to argue that the overall rate of burials increased or decreased over time, at least not in the way Steponaitis has argued. Indeed, it becomes quite reasonable to assume that, *ceteris paribus*, the average number of burial deposits carried out at Moundville probably remained fairly constant from year to year and phase to phase—while it was only the proportion of split-stage to doubled-up-stage subtrajectory burials that changed. After all, given the postulated *raison d'être* of the heterarchy (i.e., mortuary mediated world renewal ritual), maintaining a steady level would be desirable.⁸ In this regard, it is very interesting to note that Wilson (2008, 39) has also demonstrated that the ceramic sherd assemblage resulting from the roadway excavation, the latter being unrelated to mortuary deposits

as such, has a rich content of folded-rim sherds. This is significant since, according to Steponaitis (1983, 71-72), the folded-rim-sherd attribute is distinctive of the early Moundville I phase. Steponaitis also notes that only one burial in this sample was associated with a vessel having this attribute. However, it is clear in the light of Wilson's analysis that early Moundville I phase sherds, indeed, probably whole vessels, were readily available to mediate mortuary practices if required. It follows that the absence of such sherds from the mortuary record reinforces the view that many of Moundville I phase burials (ca. 93%) were split-stage burial trajectory events.

Internal Critique

The above critical assessment shows how the split-stage and doubled-up-stage trajectory scenarios explain the empirical data while resolving anomalies raised and left unresolved by the funerary paradigm and by those generated by the related Chiefdom Polity model—namely, the inversion of the mortuary and midden data. However, it is also important to give an internal critique of this scenario view, and in fact, such a critique generates a number of anomalies and puzzles related to this set of scenarios. First and possibly foremost, if Moundville had transient residency and if the mortuary deposition rate would remain relatively constant so that, *ceteris paribus*, the overall number of mortuary deposit events from year to year would also remain relatively constant, it follows that the buildup of the occupational midden per phase should also remain relatively constant, varying only in terms of the overall length of the phase. It does not. The intensity of occupational midden distinctly drops off, as Steponaitis's midden analysis has demonstrated (Steponaitis 1998, 32). A second problem that adds to this anomaly is the new calibrated chronology. This is because under the uncalibrated chronology, the Moundville I phase covered 200 years, ca. AD 1050-AD 1250. Under

the calibrated chronology, its beginning is advanced by 70 years, from 1050 AD to ca. AD 1120 and its length is reduced 80 years, so that the time frame of the Moundville I phase is ca. cal. AD 1120-1260. While the calibrated dating does not significantly change the time spread of the later phases as this is indicated under the uncalibrated chronology, the shortening of the Moundville I phase by ca. 80 years means that the densest and deepest buildup of occupational midden occurred over a significantly shorter period than originally postulated by Steponaitis. This suggests under the postmortem sacrificial *chaîne opératoire* trajectory model that there would have been an even more intensive series of mortuary ritual depositions practiced by transient occupants during this period than would have been the case if the uncalibrated chronology was valid—which it is not. Therefore, to explain the post-Moundville I phase reduction of midden accumulation when probably just as many mortuary ritual events were being performed per year, it must be that the average number of participants in these rituals and/or the average length of transient occupancy during which these rituals were being performed was being systematically and even quite dramatically reduced. This is a particular puzzle since, with the increasing proportion of doubled-up-stage to split-stage burial mortuary trajectory events, we could expect the opposite; that is, *ceteris paribus*, a doubled-up-stage event at Moundville should involve much greater midden production than the second stage of the split-stage event.

A third critical problem, also related to the above reduced midden buildup puzzle, is the question of whether the total set of ceramic burials is at all adequately explained by the doubled-up-stage scenario. While the ceramic burials make up a minority of the total mortuary population, it was a large minority of about 40%, many occurring primarily in the post-Moundville I period. Figuring roughly at least 3,000 known mortuary events over the Moundville I, II, and

III phases, this amounts to approximately 1,200 doubled-up-stage burial events, and about 93% of these occurred in the two later phases, Moundville II and III. As I defined doubled-up-stage burial events, they were the result of individuals arranging while alive to go or be taken to Moundville, where they subsequently died. Under this scenario, the possibility for people who lived dispersed in the countryside to make such arrangements so consistently seems implausible. In short, this increasing level of preplanned death allocation appears to be inconsistent with the fundamental claim that Moundville was a second-order heterarchy whose component units, the cult sodalities, were from complementary heterarchical communities widely dispersed in the countryside, and therefore, sodality members went to Moundville only as transients. At the same time, however, it is too small a proportion to sustain the claim that Moundville was based on permanent sedentary residency. That is, if Moundville had a permanent sedentary population, as assumed under the monistic chiefdom model, then most deaths would occur there and effectively all the burials would have been doubled-up-stage events entailing ceramic content—and since this is not the case, then it would appear that this internal critical analysis has created a quandary.

The Primary and Secondary Mortuary Scenarios

I have given careful thought to this set of problems, and again using retroductive inference, I think the solution is rather straightforward—and it incorporates another important body of evidence, the post-Moundville-I phase construction of the lesser mound-and-plaza complexes. This means that while I maintain the claim that the split-stage and doubled-up-stage scenarios and the subtrajectories they describe are valid, they do not by themselves fully characterize the historical complexity of mortuary trajectories constituting the Moundville mortuary record.

Knight and Steponaitis use the term *necropolis* to speak of the mortuary character of post-AD 1250 Moundville, and this means that, under the funerary paradigm, the community treated it as the final *cemetery* CBL necropolis of the region from ca. AD 1250 to the end of the Moundville III phase, ca. cal. AD 1520. *Necropolis* is a useful term because its sense suggests that there was a region-wide recognition of the *proper place* where the mortuary rites should be performed, particularly terminal—if at all possible. In using this term for my purposes, however, instead of characterizing the Moundville CBL as being a cemetery CBL necropolis, it would be a world renewal postmortem human sacrificial CBL necropolis of the second-order (possibly third-order) cult sodality heterarchy of the region. Instead of limiting its temporal usage to the post ca. AD 1250 times, I would characterize it as being a world renewal postmortem human sacrificial CBL necropolis from the beginning of the Moundville I phase. Hence, the people who occupied the Black Warrior River Valley region would collectively recognize that, whenever possible, as a cult sodality heterarchy, Moundville was the proper place for terminal burial because it was the premier postmortem human sacrificial CBL for the region. Therefore, it was the most desired sacred locale where releasing the living souls of the flesh and the bones of the deceased could be most effectively and felicitously performed in order to return these sacred energies back to the immanently sacred natural order of the region. When possible, it was also the most desirable place to release the free souls to enable them to travel to the land of the Dead. Realizing this latter possibility, of course, would generally be limited because of the transient nature of occupation, given its specialized ritual usage.

Given this characterization of Moundville and given ca. cal. AD 1250 as the beginning of the inversion (i.e., when the occupational midden data started indicating a reducing intensity and/or length of

occupation per mortuary ritual event), although, as I maintain, in the context of the postulated overall year-to-year numerical constancy of final postmortem human sacrificial offering events being performed, the most reasonable explanation is that it is at this time that a significant and growing proportion of split-stage and even whole doubled-up-stage mortuary events started to be performed *outside* Moundville, only then to be subsequently terminated at Moundville generating a mortuary deposit that mimicked the doubled-up-stage mortuary event. I postulate, therefore, that a new and supplementary mortuary trajectory emerged starting about AD 1250 and escalated over time.

How would this work? Clearly, the extra-Moundville mortuary events would have required locales that were the equivalent in symbolic pragmatic nature, if not in material scale, to Moundville itself. Given their form, the only known sites that could have taken up some of the burden from Moundville for mediating the postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* trajectory would be the “lesser” or single mound-and-plaza site complexes (Welch 1998, 161-63). I postulate that these lesser sites figured as the contexts where not all, but certainly progressively more and more, post-Moundville I phase mortuary events occurred—both doubled-up-stage and split-stage rites. At the same time, however, in general, these locales were not used as the contexts of terminal mortuary rites. Instead, another step was added to the mortuary trajectories performed at these lesser mound complexes that extended and enriched the mortuary process so that they were linked to and terminated at Moundville—and this was to satisfy the strong desire and duty for terminal mortuary deposition at Moundville. That is, while more and more often the second stage of the standard split-stage trajectory events were performed at one of these lesser mound-and-plaza site complexes (and, indeed, they could also have witnessed more and more

doubled-up-stage events), they were generally not completed there. Instead, the deceased might be temporarily buried or else curated on scaffolds or in charnel structures at these sites, and at the appropriate time, another ritual step unfolded, possibly only secondarily related to the world renewal ritual needs of Moundville, as such. The deceased were rebundled and carried in mortuary procession from the lesser mound site to Moundville to be used to mediate the performance of terminal mortuary rites there, and this extra step normally entailed the addition and retention of ceramics.

How could this be? This extra or *third step*, as I will call it, would have been innovated as a result of the same dynamics that promoted the formation of the lesser mound-and-plaza complexes. Building and using these entailed innovating and adding the third step, which required the deceased be taken in procession from the lesser center to Moundville. But this procession would entail *adding* ceramics and other artifacts in order to serve as symbolic pragmatic devices to constitute this procession as the innovated mortuary ritual that it was intended to be. What kind of ritual could this be? I postulate that this ritual was initiated by reincarnating the deceased, who had already been given full second-stage or even possibly doubled-up stage mortuary treatment at the lesser site. However, in order to be brought to Moundville, his/her personal soul would have to be recalled so as to reenter the curated remains, either in whole or in part (e.g., bundle), of the deceased who would then be borne by companions and kin on the litter to Moundville. Therefore, the sacred bundle of the deceased was actually taken to be a “living” person being carried by his/her companions in order to die *again* at Moundville. In other words, the procession would be taken to count as the pre-death state of a standard doubled-up-stage mortuary event in which the living person was being taken in a litter to Moundville to die in the most desirable and appropriate locale in the region—Moundville.

Hence, this processional event would mimic and count as the first step of a *doubled-up-stage* mortuary event. This mimicked performance would entail adding ceramics either at the lesser locale prior to the procession or on arrival at Moundville, and these might range from fine-ware vessels to plain-ware vessels or even large sherds retained from the earlier first-stage of the actual funerary rites, and a few other items. As a doubled-up-stage mortuary event, albeit a “symbolic” one, just as in the case of the actual doubled-up-stage mortuary event like those relatively few that were performed in the Moundville I phase, these artifacts would, of course, be retained with the deceased with the terminal burial event at Moundville.

Since this third-step reincarnation ritual procession would instigate a “replay” of the original mortuary events to which the given deceased had been subjected and that were terminated at the lesser mound complex (i.e., initially in the clan context and then in the elaborate “heavy-duty” rites at the lesser mound locales), it follows that the third-step terminal mortuary rites at Moundville would be somewhat brief and truncated, and of course, they would require very little time and only a few key participants. Nevertheless, the overall annual number of final mortuary rites at Moundville would be sustained at a constant level. Therefore, this postulated third step would explain (1) the rather large proportion of ceramic burials most of which displayed post-Moundville I ware (i.e., a period of about two centuries, from AD 1250 to ca. AD 1450+); (2) the radical drop-off in midden buildup resulting from the truncated nature of the post-Moundville I phase Moundville-centered ritual, while as I claimed above, the burial numbers remained constant; and (3) why mound usage at Moundville dropped off in these post-Moundville I times since many of the mortuary-mediated world renewal rites for which these mounds were originally intended, particularly those in the southern portion of the plaza, would have already been performed

in the lesser single mound-and-plaza complexes. I suggested earlier that the total set of peripheral mounds at Moundville embodied the sacred stratified order of the celestial Above World, possibly in both the solar and lunar (day and night) aspects. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the lesser single mound-and-plaza sites that started to be built and used shortly following ca. AD 1250 were the result of this new mortuary trajectory that incorporated the third step. Of course, this scenario implicates an explanation of the “abandonment” of Moundville that significantly contrasts with Knight’s (2010, 363) explanation. For him, the reduced usage of these smaller mounds indicates a breakdown of the “egalitarian” federation of simple monistic chiefdoms. Under this alternative model, these data indicate a reorientation of the cult sodalities that were responsible for Moundville. However, this reorientation also implicates significant stresses and strains in the heterarchy, which I address more fully in the next chapter.

Hence, instead of a single bifurcated trajectory process explaining the ceramic and nonceramic burials, a dual bifurcated process is postulated. I will call these the *Primary* and *Secondary Mortuary scenarios*. The *primary mortuary scenario* is simply a renaming of the original set of split-stage and doubled-up-stage scenarios discussed earlier. These are now termed *primary* because, until ca. AD 1250, probably most sodality-based mortuary rites were performed at Moundville alone, and most would have been split-stage trajectory burials, while only a small minority of burials (i.e. the 7% figure) would have been the result of doubled-up-stage trajectory events (i.e., preplanned dying at Moundville). Notably, under this set of primary and secondary mortuary scenarios model, this lower proportion of ceramic burials is now consistent with my claim that Moundville was the locus of transient occupation since this revised model argues that most of the ceramic burials were third-step events, and the

rate of these events increased in the post-Moundville I phase times, thereby resulting in the many ceramic burial depositions.

Lankford (2007b) has insightfully noted that the Moundville ceramic iconography, particularly as displayed by the ceramic series termed *Moundville Engraved var. Hemphill* (Knight 2010, 27-28), would suggest that this multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex was seen as the primary locale for launching the free soul into the heavens so as to enable it to pass more securely and assuredly through the Orion constellation, which he argues was believed to be the portal for the free soul to gain access to the Path of Souls (i.e., the Milky Way), leading to the land of the Dead. "To get to the Path, however, one must leave the earth-disk and enter the celestial realm. The portal that is appointed for the free-soul at death is to be seen on the edge of the Path of Souls. It [Orion] is a constellation in the shape of a hand, and the portal is its palm" (2007b, 177). He even notes that there is an optimum time for the free soul of the deceased to make that leap. "The portal in the Hand must be entered by a leap at the optimum time, which is a ten-minute window which occurs once each night from November 29, when the Hand vanishes in the water in the West just at dawn, to April 25, when the Hand sinks at dusk not to be seen again for six months. During that winter period the portal is on the horizon for a breathless few minutes each night, and free-souls must enter at that time or be lost . . . [remaining] in the west . . . [where they] can eventually become unhappy threats to the realm of the living" (2007b, 177). Of course, if the majority of the ceramic burials were, in fact, the result of the termination of this third step consisting of the reincarnation and free-soul-release rites, and if Lankford is correct, since the spirit-release rite would have occurred primarily at night and in the cold season, this would also suggest that the ritual was neither drawn out nor were the participants expected to remain for long. Rather, it may have taken only

one, two, or possibly three nights, and those who performed it could quickly leave Moundville, thereby resulting in minimal occupational midden buildup. All this can be treated as a strong likelihood since it contributes to the explanation of why the occupational midden buildup was much reduced in this later period despite my claim of a constancy in the number of mortuary events per year.

In sum, I postulate and have grounded in the relevant empirical data that there were effectively two forms of doubled-up-stage burial trajectories, and these may have been related in that both were motivated to the same end, except that one was the actual planned living-procession and subsequent terminal burial trajectory occurring at Moundville, thereby ensuring the above transition of the free soul to the land of the Dead (and this does not preclude that such actual doubled-up-stage events could also occur at the lesser mound locales), and the other was the third-step reincarnation trajectory, initiated at the lesser mound locales as rites of reincarnation and completed at Moundville as a terminal ceramic burial performed immediately following the release rite of the reincarnated free soul, sending this soul off to the land of the Dead from the most favored position on the face of the Middle World occupied by humans—that is, Moundville. The majority of the ceramic burials, then, would be the result of the latter event, and these were largely specific to the secondary rather than the primary mortuary scenario trajectories, although further research is required to strengthen this claim.

Conclusion

Treating Moundville as a second-order or possibly a third-order world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy, and by extension, treating the single mound-and-plaza site complexes as either first-order heterarchies or, possibly in some cases, as autonomous cult sodality ceremonial nodal locales, can account for the same

occupational and mortuary patterning that Knight and Steponaitis's (1998) paramount monistic chiefdom account does while eliminating the anomalies and puzzles that the latter generated (and this claim also applies to Knight's 2010 revised version of this account). One of these anomalies arose from their claim that, based on the extrapolation from the proportion of burials displaying Moundville I phase ceramics, the lowest level of burial activity occurred during this initial occupational phase, prior to and early in the emergence of the multiple-mounded mound-and-plaza complex. And yet this was also the period when the occupational midden buildup was heaviest. As I argued earlier, these levels would be the result of initially all or nearly all the autonomous cult sodalities in the region participating in the three or four first-order cult sodality alliance heterarchies as marked by the single mound locales constituting the dispersed Moundville site at this time, as well as their participating as members of the second-order cult sodality heterarchy of Moundville when it emerged and operated during the late Moundville I and part of the early Moundville II times. Since no other large CBLs are known for that time, and since, clearly, there was a significant occupational density given the midden buildup, the puzzle this claim raised and was not able to resolve was, If Moundville was not the locale where the many sedentary Moundville deceased in this early Moundville I phase were deposited, then where were they deposited? The above reinterpretation of the mortuary deposition answers this question by arguing that, in fact, allowing for the low number of burials we know were probably associated with some of the dispersed farmsteads in the countryside (Mistovich 1988, 30-32), most terminal burials were performed at Moundville all along.⁹ For the most part, these would be among the mortuary deposits displaying no ceramics (i.e., the result of the split-stage trajectory of the primary mortuary trajectory scenario). The overall annual rate of burial deposits during the

Moundville II and III phases probably remained roughly the same as during the Moundville I phase, but the proportion of ceramic-burial events significantly increased, even with the reduction in intensity of participation, since more and more burials were the result of the third step of the secondary mortuary trajectory mediated through the single mound-and-plaza site complexes, thereby accounting for the many Moundville II and III phase reincarnation-type doubled-up-stage ceramic-associated burials at Moundville.

I believe that the primary and secondary mortuary scenarios resolve most of the puzzles that I have raised, both those that my critique of the funerary view noted and, of course, those noted and addressed in my internal critique of the first dual-scenarios version. Therefore, the most reasonable conclusion is to recognize that the postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* paradigm is a more adequate model than the funerary *chaîne opératoire* paradigm to account for the Moundville mortuary pattern, and by extension, for characterizing the social nature of Moundville as being a second-order or possibly a third-order cult sodality heterarchy rather than being a monistic chiefdom type of society. The postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* paradigm under its set of primary and secondary mortuary scenarios can also explain the lesser single mound-and-plaza site complexes as the expressive result of a slowly escalating and then a sudden or rather abrupt “disaffiliation” of the Moundville heterarchy. In this regard, therefore, I address the question of how and why these lesser sites emerged by arguing in some depth in the next chapter that they were the result of and promoted the instigation of a drawn-out historical process of disaffiliation-by-a-thousand-cuts of the historic cult sodality heterarchy of Moundville. I treat this as an alternative account of the abandonment of Moundville to the one that Knight has given (2010, 363-65).

NOTES

1. I have already noted that I am not alone in this view since a number of archaeologists are now recognizing that the “secondary burial” phenomenon is widespread in the North American mortuary record and, furthermore, that it cannot be treated adequately within the funerary or representationist framework, suggesting that they have serious concerns with that framework (Brown 1996, 2003, 2010; Goldstein 2000, 2010; Pauketat 2010; Sullivan and Mainfort 2010).

2. To make things more complicated, as I noted earlier, the cultural traditions of many historical Native North American peoples also recognized that certain mortuary rites could be used to recall the free soul from the land of the Dead. This would be done to mediate special rituals transferring sacred names of a deceased, and so on. The free soul that was summoned for this ritual would then be given a gift of thanks, as part of the termination of the sacred name transfer, and sent with the spirit of the gift back to the land of the Dead.

3. Besides, in my interpretation of the Mississippian social system, there are really two major social groupings involved: the complementary heterarchical community and the cult sodality heterarchy. The social standing of the same deceased person could very well differ in these two social contexts and, when the tasks constituting the total mortuary sphere are divided between them, very different rules and protocols would come into play depending on the particular stage of the mortuary process a given deceased is mediating as a symbolic pragmatic device. I discuss this in considerable detail below.

4. Of the 3,051 recorded burials at Moundville, Peebles narrowed his sample to 2,053 (1974, 80). It is this sample on which he based his analysis. Of these 2,053, 778, or 37.9%, had associated artifacts, and the large majority of these had only one artifact. He selected 719

from these 778 artifact-accompanied mortuary deposits and sorted the 719 into 143 categories by artifact type—*but minus the pottery sherds*—to generate 10 clusters of artifact/burial associations that he labeled Cluster I to Cluster X (1974, 96-119). He based his social stratification analysis on these clusters.

5. “Elite” burials would certainly be part of the doubled-up-stage cult sodality mortuary process since the sodality consisted of an enabling hierarchy, and sodality chiefs would be peer selected members who often were the custodians of ritual items and, as Peebles noted, may have served to carry on this duty into death. But finding exotic goods with burials does not entail that the latter were “elite.” Under the cult sodality view, the treatment of the deceased was a function of the type of postmortem rituals they were mediating, and it would be the rituals and not the social standing of the deceased that would be the deciding factor.

6. I have already noted that, although Knight (2010) has rejected the centralized “paramount chiefdom polity” model, he has remained committed to interpreting the mortuary and midden buildup data in terms of the sacralization of Moundville by the ruling/artisanal “elite.” So my critique of this explanation counts also as a critique of his most recent simple monistic chiefdom federation model version. Besides, my overall purpose is not with Knight’s most recent interpretive model but with characterizing the sociocausal nature of the Mississippianization process as such. Knight’s new view is still firmly embedded in the Chiefdom Polity model explanation.

7. I noted earlier DeBoer’s (1997, 227) cautionary remarks about the thick midden buildup of the “vacant centers” of the Chachi. These centers were transiently occupied. This indicates that transient residency and heavy midden buildup are not contradictory or mutually exclusive. I also noted earlier that the new empirical data resulting

from the most recent excavation project at Moundville has led Knight to recognize that some of the heaviest construction occurred when he now claims the sedentary occupancy was lowest, and therefore, he now effectively recognizes that labor during ca. AD 1300-1350 must have been transient (Knight 2010, 361-62, also see Chapter 14 under “mortuary/midden critique”).

8. Speaking in approximate terms, if it is assumed that the Moundville I, II, and III phases were roughly equal in length (which is not the case, of course) it would mean that the approximately 3,000+ known mortuary deposits would be split equally per phase—that is, about 1,000 deposits per phase. The 7% of the ceramic burials for Moundville I then would mean 7% of about 1,000 events (i.e., about 70 doubled-up-stage mortuary trajectory events). The other approximately 930 deposits would have been nonceramic events and, therefore, the result of being the second stage of split-stage trajectory events. These estimates could be adjusted in terms of actual temporal spreads of the phases.

9. I suspect that these countryside burials were isolates. That is, as described earlier, most deceased would have been given funerary-like treatment and then handed over to the sodality, as described. The few deceased that have been found in these countryside contexts would probably have been the last of the household heads. Subsequent to the abandoning of the dwelling, this person had the honor of being left in place, possibly in order to guard the spiritual sanctity of the old homestead. In sum, I am speculating that these countryside burials represent a very small proportion of the region’s overall human population.

CHAPTER 18

The Roadway Excavation Mortuary and Ceramic Data and the Development of Moundville Factionalism

My concluding remarks in the previous chapter—namely, that the mortuary and ceramic data associated with the Moundville site constitute grounds supporting the claim that it was a cult sodality heterarchy CBL necropolis that served as the context of world renewal rituals mediated by postmortem human sacrificial offerings—recommend reassessing the implications of other data sets of Moundville that have been interpreted and explained under the monistic chiefdom polity view—specifically, the clusters of rectangular structures dispersed around the plaza, ten of which were revealed in the Roadway excavations of the 1940s (Wilson 2008), and two of which were recently excavated and reported by Margaret Scarry (1998). Another data set is that of ceramics bearing exotic motifs that, despite their nonlocal design have recently been identified as having been produced using local clays. I will revisit the clusters of structures first and then turn to the “exotic” locally-made ceramics, critically summarizing the current interpretation made of them under the Chiefdom Polity model and showing how these are more coherently argued to be consistent with the view that Moundville was a major cult sodality heterarchy.

Revisiting the Moundville Clusters of “Dwelling” Structures

In Chapter 15, I suggested that the wall-post feature plans of the twelve partially exposed building clusters—the ten park Roadway excavation clusters and the two recently excavated clusters, one in the PA Tract and the other in ECB Tract—demarcate residential buildings that probably had a cycle of differentiated usage. Likely initiated as hostels, over time some of these, the minority, were probably converted to being used as charnel structures, or mortuary-based world renewal lodges, and at a certain point, some of the structures came to be dedicated to serving the ritual needs of their respective first-order heterarchies as mortuary locales (i.e., as world renewal ritual CBLs) where the terminal mortuary rites were performed by their respective cult sodality components. Although Wilson established that only four of the excavated clusters displayed Class II and III structures, he noted that the other clusters likely also included similar types. But because of the rather narrow right-of-way excavation limits, these were probably not exposed. “Most of the buildings within residential groups are small Class I clusters. However, large [Class II and Class III] public structures are associated with four residential groups. Similar public buildings may have been associated with other residential groups; however, the narrow boundaries of the Moundville Roadway often limit the complete identification of residential group size and composition” (2008, 74-75). It is these Class II and Class III structures that he argues were “public structures” (2008, 78-79). The mortuary purposes they served is a point that I raised in that chapter but have left until now to elaborate.

Wilson’s description of the mortuary deposits in association with these Class II and Class III structures—both inside and outside some of them—neatly encapsulates the range of postmortem treatments that were performed, clearly indicating that much more than extended burial was involved. “[T]here are numerous examples of

secondary burials such as disarticulated bundles . . . and even individual cranium interments [T]hese variable mortuary treatments likely represent different ‘snapshots’ in a complex, multistage mortuary sequence in which the living exerted claims about their corporate identity and status Indeed, the *variety of different mortuary treatments* present in any one of these kin-group cemeteries indicates that the dead were often subject to different ritual steps of inhumation, exhumation, and reburial. In this way these cemeteries served as a kind of social resource in which kin groups could promote their corporate status through ritualized manipulation and processing of ancestral skeletal material” (2008, 134, emphasis added). This is certainly an interesting description of and commentary on the range, variety, and intensity of postmortem treatment, particularly emphasizing its rich representation of secondary manipulation. Of course, Wilson is interpreting these data in terms of the funerary paradigm, as clearly indicated by his reference to these collective burials as constituting “cemeteries” of corporate kin groups. But I find this complexity inconsistent with the funerary view. While claiming that the deceased may serve as ancestors to fulfill the social needs of their descendants, precisely how this variation in range of postmortem manipulation of the “ancestors” would serve these corporate interests is left unelucidated. That is, how and why would the treatment of some of the deceased and/or their body parts in one way and others in other ways be determined if all that was needed was ancestral warranting? Given his use of the funerary perspective, then it is fair to ask why simple extended burial, reinforced by clear deposition of elite burial furniture appropriate to mark the social standing of the deceased in life, would not be sufficient. Clearly, none of the actual postmortem complexity would be a result of unplanned activity, as such. Instead, it implicates some type of strategy being worked out that cannot be reduced to mapping a straightforward

funerary process having the goal or purpose of entrenching the interests of the living making up the kinship-based corporate groups. To postulate that this manipulation would be carried out actively by kin groups to “promote their corporate status through ritualized manipulation and processing of ancestral skeletal material” leaves out the necessary theoretical elucidation to make this interpretation and explanation convincing, a background that could be filled in through analogical exemplification. In contrast, and given the interpretation of the same mortuary record that I presented in the previous chapter, this particular patterning is fully consistent with a postmortem human sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* process.

In any case, Wilson (2008, 30, 85-86) counted 279 burials distributed over the ten clusters revealed by the Roadway excavations. If the 10 burials Scarry revealed in her excavations are included, the total known mortuary population associated with these clusters stands at 289.¹ It is indeed unfortunate, as Wilson pointed out, that the recording of the patterning of the floor depositions of 1940s Roadway excavations did not include stratification levels. This makes determining the in situ chronology very problematic. Apparently 255 of these 289 burials were nonceramic burials, while the other 34 were ceramic burials. Only one of these latter was associated with a folded-rim vessel, and as I noted earlier, according to Steponaitis (1983, 102), this attribute is a strong indicator of the Moundville I phase. This means that the 33 other ceramic burial deposits would appear to be the result of post-Moundville I phase mortuary events.²

As indicated in Wilson’s illustrations (figure 18.1), typically most but not all of the nonceramic burials were located within the wall-trench frames outlining the floors of the structures. Also, it is clear that many of these same nonceramic burials were superimposed so that several of these were covered or partially covered by later nonceramic burials. While it is clear that many—if not all—of

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Figure 18.1. Class II Structures with Associated Mortuary Content. (From Wilson, 2008, p. 58, figure 4.7. Used with the permission of The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.)

these burials had no ceramics and, therefore, had no chronological markers, the fact that they were deposited within the wall-trench framing of features that were typical Moundville I phase structures, according to Wilson, makes it seem quite reasonable to conclude that the burial deposits were carried out during the same Moundville I phase. That is, these nonceramic burials would be the end product of a series of multiple primary split-stage mortuary trajectory events of the Moundville I phase in which the mortuary depositions entailed the prior removal of the ceramics. Indeed, the very

low representation of ceramic mortuary deposits in association with these Moundville I phase structures, effectively absent within or even

Figure 18.2. Small Courtyard CBL in Moundville Group 9. (From Wilson, 2008, p. 134, figure 6.2. Used with permission of The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.)

outside the wall trenches, would be fully consistent with my analysis in the previous chapter demonstrating that the highest proportion of split-stage scenario mortuary events occurred during the Moundville I phase (i.e., about 93% of all Moundville I phase burial deposits would be nonceramic).

But as I noted earlier in Chapter 14, this is precisely what Wilson does not conclude. In fact, he interprets *all* these deposits, both inside and outside the wall-frame structures, as being post-Moundville I phase burials. He particularly cites the earlier claims by Steponaitis, Peebles, Knight, and others to reinforce his conclusion that by finding some burials superimposed on the wall trenches of at least

three Class II Moundville I phase structures, and presumably some of these being among rather than superimposed on the nonceramic burials (although he does not make this clear), as well as those deposited within the courtyards formed by these Moundville I structures (figure 18.2), warrants him to claim that *all* the burials found in association with these structures, both those inside the wall-trench frames and those outside and/or within the “courtyards,” were the outcome of post-Moundville I phase mortuary events. This claim is quite significant for my view and merits a full quotation.

An examination of small rectilinear arrangements of burials associated with three Class II structures (Structures 16, 25, and 89) suggests these buildings were contemporaneous with most of the Class I buildings in Moundville Roadway and Riverbank. Figure 4.7 [see Figure 18.1] illustrates the location of two of these burial clusters in relation to Structures 16 and 25 [of his Clusters 3 and 5 respectively]. At first glance it is tempting to conclude that the burials that make up these small cemeteries were placed beneath house floors while the structures were in use. Like the houses with which they were associated, most of the burials in each cemetery are oriented in the cardinal directions, creating a rectilinear spatial arrangement. Closer examination, however, reveals that *several burials superimpose the wall-trench foundations of these houses* (Figure 4.7 [Figure 18.1]). Thus, it is clear that these cemeteries postdate the wall-trench structures that they superimpose. Indeed, Steponaitis’s (1983, 1998) analysis of the pottery vessels interred with these burials reveals most date to the late Moundville II and early Moundville III phases, which indicates their interment after the abandonment of these earlier domestic structures. (2008, 55-56, emphasis added)

Critical Discussion

Overall, Wilson's assessment is consistent with the claim that Steponaitis and Knight (1998) have made, and that Wilson also cites—namely, that while the Moundville I phase constituted a period of intense sedentary occupation of the site, very few mortuary events actually occurred there during that phase, and in reverse, while the later times witnessed a period of low sedentary occupation, primarily limited to certain exclusive elite, the vast majority of mortuary deposits that occurred there were those of “rural” peoples who, however, were almost exclusively buried in this sacred cemetery CBL necropolis. Hence, apparently and primarily because “*several burials*,” presumably associated with post-Moundville I phase ceramics (i.e., “most date to the late Moundville II and early Moundville III phases”), also “*superimpose the wall-trench foundations of these houses*,” he concludes that the burials *inside* the wall-trench frames are also post-Moundville I phase burials, despite being deposited on the floors (some possibly under the floors) of Moundville I phase structures. And again, “[r]urally located kin groups converted their former residential areas at Moundville into small corporate cemeteries. Most Moundville II and III burials were interred in small rectilinear clusters that superimpose the wall foundations of earlier domestic structures (figure 18.2 [his figure 6.2]). Very few burials in the Moundville Roadway and Riverbank excavations are located outside of these former residential spaces. By burying their dead in traditional kin spaces, the rural inhabitants of the Black Warrior Valley continued to assert their place in the Moundville sociogram and the network of relationships it referenced” (2008, 133-34).

Notice, the burials shown in figure 18.2 that he is reporting “superimpose the wall foundations of earlier domestic structures” are actually outside these structures, so he is speaking of the “courtyard” burial sets and not the sets of burials inside these dwellings. So, while

I recognize his claim that the several post-Moundville I phase burials superimposed on the wall-trench features of these structures as shown in figure 18.1 are post-Moundville I phase burials, and probably all those courtyard burials shown in figure 18.2, including those that superimpose the walls of the dwellings framing this courtyard, are also post-Moundville I phase burials, I must respectfully disagree with his extending his chronological assessment to all the burials contained *within the walls of these Moundville I phase structures* as also being post-Moundville I phase burials. With respect to these, first, it may be salutary to note that, in his 1983 volume, Steponaitis recognized that dating the structures with these internally associated burials was very difficult using the available ceramic-burial patterns. In fact, Steponaitis commented quite unfavorably on the use of ceramic associated burials to assess the chronology of these features, and his comments refer to the very same plan maps that Wilson has used.

Judging from the burials that can be dated by their inclusive vessels, it is clear that many of these maps represent palimpsests of features from several different time periods . . . the fact is that less than a third of the burials and *virtually none of the structures*, are directly associated with temporally diagnostic vessels. Thus, a typical map might show 3 structures and 20 burials, but only 5 of these burials are likely to contain ceramics that can be unequivocally dated. If the ceramically dated burials fall into different phases (as they often do), then it becomes extremely difficult to infer chronological positions of the structures and other burials. Except in the relatively infrequent cases of direct superposition, the only avenue of interpretation possible is one that relies *on spatial proximity and spatial alignment*—lines of evidence that, needless to say, tend to be inconclusive. All that one can

say for now is that burials quite often do seem to be spatially associated with structures; more detailed interpretations may well be possible in the future, but not until the sherds from these localities are more fully analyzed. (Steponaitis 1983, 150-51, emphasis added)

I take a clear meaning from his 1983 comment, this being that *very few if any* burials with firmly datable ceramics were actually in direct association with other burials within the wall trenches that delineated the floors of these structures and, indeed, only a few ceramic burials were actually superimposed on the wall trenches themselves, the rest possibly being outside the wall trenches of the structures.³ “[T]he fact is that less than a third of the burials and virtually none of the structures, are directly associated with temporally diagnostic vessels.” And it is notable that Steponaitis ends by recommending that great caution be used in drawing a chronological conclusion “until the sherds from these localities are more fully analyzed.” By saying “localities” rather than “structures,” I take him to be referring not only to ceramics found in the buildings themselves, which apparently were very few (if any), but generally to the different locales displaying ceramic assemblages. If this is the case, then in fact, as I noted in Chapter 14, Wilson has “more fully analyzed” the sherd assemblage associated with these Roadway excavations, and he gives a very clear conclusion. The Roadway ceramic assemblages in general—not those with the burials themselves, which are few in any case—display significant amounts of Moundville I phase ceramics. “[T]he Moundville Roadway assemblages are comparable to the late Moundville I Riverbank and North of Mound R assemblages in terms of the relative frequency of these ceramic variables. In nearly every case, the relative frequencies of Moundville Incised sherds, folded rims, and folded-flattened rims are higher than or equal to

those from late Moundville I assemblages from North of Mound R and the ECB tract The only explanation for these patterns is that the vast majority of sherds in the Moundville Roadway assemblages date to the Moundville I phase with only a slight Moundville II and III admixture” (Wilson 2008, 39).

It seems that now Steponaitis does recognize a few instances of burials associated with post-Moundville I phase ceramics as superimposing some of the wall trenches, indicating that these were placed after these Moundville I phase structures were used, and given that very few are post-Moundville I phase sherds, suggests that the scenario I outlined in the last chapter—namely, the few ceramic-associated mortuary events that were performed involved a short period with only a few attendees (i.e., they index the termination of the third step). However, I do not think that his recognizing these can be legitimately extended to the burial aggregations *within* the wall-trench frames. I think that Steponaitis’ 1983 cautionary chronological remarks still stand—namely, “the only avenue of interpretation possible is one that relies on spatial proximity and spatial alignment—lines of evidence that, needless to say, tend to be inconclusive.”

However, these latter burials are the very ones that Wilson cautions readers against interpreting as being “placed beneath house floors while the structures were in use.” Instead, apparently his grounds for this conclusion are these very few burials associated with what might be post-Moundville I phase ceramics that were superimposed on the wall trenches or were associated with some of the burials in the courtyards. To reinforce his point, he also noted in an earlier part of his book that “not a single burial from the Roadway is superimposed by a wall-trench or single-post building foundation” (2008, 55-56). However, this is not surprising since if these were Moundville I phase structures, as he argues, and there were no prior Moundville I components in the Moundville site, as apparently

is now generally recognized, then it would be surprising to find any of these structures superimposing any Moundville phase burials at all. Therefore, his three observations that (1) a few post-Moundville I phase ceramic burials superimpose the wall trenches of a few of these structures, (2) a few post-Moundville I phase ceramic burials are associated with the courtyard CBLs, and (3) no known Moundville I wall-trench structures superimpose any burials, do not add up to demonstrating the claim that all or at least the vast majority of these burials within the confines of the wall-trench frames of these Moundville I phase structures were, nevertheless, the result of post-Moundville I phase mortuary events. In fact, given my demonstration of the primary and secondary mortuary trajectory scenarios, and taking seriously Steponaitis' cautionary recommendation to rely for now on spatial alignment and proximity, the opposite case has much greater likelihood—namely, that the burial deposits found within the wall-trench frames, at least the great majority, are Moundville I phase nonceramic deposits. Why I noted my demonstration of the primary/secondary mortuary trajectory scenario in the previous chapter is that finding effectively only nonceramic burials within the context of the wall trenches of these Moundville I phase structures is fully consistent with my conclusions that about 93% of the Moundville I phase mortuary activity was the outcome of primary split-stage mortuary trajectory events (i.e., nonceramic burials).

A careful analysis of the layout of these burials sustains this conclusion. For example, it can be seen in figure 18.1 that each aggregate set of burials associated with Structures 25 and 16, respectively, can be rather easily resolved visually and analytically into two spatially separate burial groups: (1) the mortuary deposits that are contained within the limits of the wall-trench frames of these two structures, which I will term the *in-situ* mortuary deposits; and (2) those that directly or by association superimpose the wall trenches, which I

will term the *wall-trench* mortuary deposits. A clear spatial disjuncture is apparent with the majority of burial deposits in both Structures 25 and 16 being in-situ burial deposits, and these are internally structured. For example, excluding the 5 mortuary deposits that are external to the wall-trench frame of Structure 16 (figure 18.1), including Burial 2723 that is shown as just touching the outside of the eastern wall, I count 39 mortuary deposits, 31 in-situ mortuary deposits and 8 wall-trench mortuary deposits. The 31 in-situ deposits can be further sectoried into three sets, the central, eastern, and western, with Burial 2737 of the eastern set superimposed by Burial 2724, one of the two wall-trench burials superimposing the eastern wall. According to this floor plan, Burial 2737 is the only in-situ mortuary deposit that is actually superimposed by a wall-trench mortuary deposit. These three spatially distinct internal sets of in-situ deposits might be the result of chronological sequencing during the period when this structure was used for mortuary deposition as a cult sodality CBL, although apparently, there is no current evidence to support this possibility. The northern wall trench has 6 wall-trench mortuary deposits. But none of these superimposes any of the in-situ inner central set. Indeed, the latter set appears to be clearly separated from both the northern and eastern sets of wall-trench mortuary deposits. The inner western in-situ set is also unencumbered by any wall-trench mortuary deposits.

All this means that the in-situ burial deposits of Structure 16 form the large majority ($n=33$ or 74%), and they are clearly separate both from each other and from the wall trenches and the few wall-trench mortuary deposits that superimpose these trenches. A similar in-situ/wall-trench mortuary deposit dichotomy of the space is clearly apparent in Structure 25, although there are fewer burials in total. However, two hearths are also indicated with the southernmost hearth superimposed over Burials 2785 and 2786, suggesting a

significant period of use prior to abandonment of this Moundville I phase structure, likely being used first as a hostel, then as a charnel structure lodge, and finally as a cult sodality CBL, assuming the hearths superimposing the mortuary deposits served as sacred fires. In short, the clustering of the majority of the deposits in both structures was carried out such that they did not superimpose the wall trenches. While these structures were being actively used for mortuary purposes during the Moundville I phase, and in this case, after the hostel-then-charnel lodge stages were completed, it was transformed into a cult sodality world renewal CBL lodge. Therefore, while I can accept that the wall-trench mortuary deposits associated with these two structures are very likely post-Moundville I phase deposits, the orientation and spatial in-situ/wall-trench mortuary deposit dichotomy recommends that the former, or in-situ, mortuary deposits are properly treated as Moundville I phase burials, indicating that the structures are Moundville I phase features that were actively used in this phase by mediating the full cycle of usage, first as hostels, then as charnel lodges, and finally as world renewal CBL lodges.

However, Wilson is probably right in claiming that the few mortuary deposits superimposing the wall trenches are the result of post-Moundville I mortuary events, in which case, collective memories of the responsible cult sodalities were the only guide when it came to selecting these particular places to mediate CBL mortuary events. Indeed, this reliance on memory may account for those responsible failing to focus on the main mortuary deposits consisting of the in-situ burials. That this collective memory was likely faulty in spatial exactitude simply suggests that, indeed, considerably reduced attendance at Moundville occurred in post-Moundville I phase times as events manifesting the third-step mortuary scenario became progressively entrenched and the terminal rituals at Moundville were so shortened that hostels became less and less needed. A similar

argument can be applied to the instances of burials found in apparent courtyards. Wilson does not give any quantitative account of these, but he does illustrate this practice (figure 18.2). Again there is no question that several burials superimpose the Moundville I phase structures that frame this space. It is also clear that, at least in the area illustrated, there are no in-situ mortuary deposits. This does not mean, however, that the total cluster of structures has only this set of burials in association since, as noted earlier, the narrow right-of-way strictly limited the lateral expanse of the Roadway excavations, and probably many structures are still there to be exposed by future surveys and excavations. In any case, the particular positioning of the “courtyard” world renewal CBL suggests again that considerable serendipity is at work, and those who were responsible for it likely were guesstimating from increasingly vague collective cult sodality memories the position of the original structures.

In this regard, it would be interesting to assess the proportion of nonceramic mortuary deposits, marking burial events of the primary mortuary trajectory scenario, to ceramic mortuary deposits, marking mainly third-step burial events of the secondary mortuary trajectory scenario. I would expect that the number of ceramic mortuary deposits over time would increase in proportion to the nonceramic mortuary deposits, thereby marking the reduction in commitment of time and labor to the second-order Moundville heterarchy by the affiliated ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities. That is, both the above examples of superimposed burials would indicate that the Moundville heterarchy was suffering from significant “creeping” disaffiliation, a state of affairs I postulated earlier under my discussion of how a complementary heterarchical chiefdom might emerge from a preexisting complementary heterarchical tribal community (Chapter 13), and which I further examine in the second part of this chapter. Therefore, it seems very germane that the 34 ceramic burials of

the total 287 Roadway-associated burials make up only 12% of this set of burials. This low proportion, 12%, should be compared to the 37% to 40% proportion of the total site-wide burials that had associated ceramics. Does this have any chronological implications? I believe the low proportion does say something about the timing. It is notable that the total site-wide proportion of the minority ceramic burials to majority nonceramic burials was in the range of ca. 40:60. This ca. 40% ceramic burial proportion is more than three times the above proportion of Roadway ceramic to nonceramic burial deposits found in direct association with the 12 clusters, 12:88. If the ceramic mortuary deposits consist largely of third-step deposits, this suggests that most of the Roadway burials, 255 of 289 burials (88%), were *not* third-step burials. This 88% is almost the same proportion of 93% that I noted above would make up the estimated split-stage mortuary trajectory events of the Moundville I phase. Hence, most of the nonceramic burials were likely performed in the Moundville I phase, with some spillover into the early Moundville II phase, while most ceramic burials were probably carried out either *early* in the Moundville II phase when third-step burial events of the secondary trajectory started to be performed, or in the later Moundville II and the Moundville III phases—or possibly both, with the wall-trench superimposed burials being the earlier and the “courtyard” burials being the later phases. Only further research can resolve that question.

The Nonlocal Ceramic Stylistics Puzzle

This brings me to the very interesting and recent finding that many Moundville ceramics displaying nonlocal styles have been identified not as “imported” ceramics but as having actually been produced by artisans using clays derived from within the immediate region of Moundville. Welch (1996, 84-85) has noted that for years it was assumed that the ceramics displaying nonlocal styles were produced

elsewhere and brought to Moundville.⁴ He particularly noted that these Mississippian period vessels included styles from the central and lower Mississippi Valley to the Gulf Coast region, Florida, Georgia, and the Cumberland Valley of Tennessee. Recent microscopic analyses of these ceramics, however, indicate that they were actually made of clays located in or near Moundville. Welch has made two important assessments of this finding. "This unexpected result has led, naturally, to the suggestion that it was not pottery that was imported, but rather nonlocal persons came (or were brought) to the site and, once there, made pottery macroscopically similar to the pottery in their homelands. Regardless of where the pots or the potters came from, it is striking that pottery that looks nonlocal is found at Moundville, but that none of it has been found at any of the outlying sites. The distribution of exotic-looking pottery was apparently restricted to people resident at Moundville itself" (1996, 85).

There are several of his points here that I want to address critically. First, since the ceramics displaying nonlocal styles were actually produced in Moundville, he concludes that they were produced by foreign born-and-bred and not local potters and that these foreign potters took up residence at Moundville, either willingly or not, and exercised their skills in Moundville as artisans-in-residence. Second, apparently the distribution of these locally made foreign-styled ceramics has been exclusively limited to Moundville since none (or very little) of this "exotic" home-bred pottery has been identified elsewhere in the Black Warrior Valley. Of course, if the pottery was made by "foreign" potters-in-residence who made them "exclusively" in and for Moundville occupants, this might reinforce Welch's claim that dominance-based social power of the Moundville monistic paramount chief emerged through his/her control of the specialized production of selected "prestige goods." Under this scenario, by controlling this production, the monistic chief was able to leverage greater

control over the “rural” population, particularly by also controlling the production at Moundville of greenstone axes that were critical to the dispersed commoner farmsteaders in order to enable them to clear their fields and plant maize crops (Welch 1996, 81). Controlling the production as well as the distribution and use of this nonlocal pottery, and by extension, of the foreign potters who produced it, therefore, reinforces his interpretation as simply a further lever by which the monistic paramount chief could enhance control over the activities of his/her people in their widely dispersed farmsteads, particularly enhancing his/her control over the activities of the lesser elite who would consider the nonlocal ceramics as prestige goods.

The evidence for production and distribution of goods within the Moundville chiefdom has a clear pattern. Most subsistence goods and utilitarian items were produced by ordinary households throughout the chiefdom. Limited quantities of specific foodstuffs (upper limbs of deer, shelled maize) were transported within the chiefdom, either as provisions to the elite or as provisions for communal feasts. A few goods—polished axes and perhaps some of the burnished pottery—were only made at the paramount center. Most imported goods, as well as exotic-looking pottery, were restricted to (elite?) persons residing at the paramount center, with only small quantities of a few classes of goods being distributed to outlying settlements. To put it succinctly, the subsistence economy was decentralized, but the economy of exotic and presumably valuable goods was tightly centralized. (1996, 86)

Critical Discussion

I have already summarized Wilson’s (2008) argument that there is very little evidence in the empirical data supporting the claim of control of specialized goods of the above sort by the postulated monistic

chief residing at Moundville. Wilson argues that greenstone axes, in particular, were likely made in the quarries about 85 km northeast of Moundville by those who used them in their fields (2008, 29; also see Wilson, Marcoux, and Koldehoff 2006, 60-61). I have also noted that the particular mix of maize kernels, whole maize cobs, special cuts of meat, and the absence of storage pits is fully and without strain consistent with the ways that the special needs of cult sodalities would be met when the members occupied Moundville as transients while participating in performing their collective rituals. Therefore, I will simply extend the latter account of these supposedly “elite-constitutive” materials to the locally made exotic pottery by showing how this pottery served the needs of a cult sodality. That is, this answers the question of why local cult sodalities active at Moundville would undertake to produce facsimiles of nonlocal, exotic ceramics, using local clays. Welch noted that it must be that persons from these regions “came (or were brought) to the site and, once there, made pottery macroscopically similar to the pottery in their homelands.” I certainly can accept one part of this claim, this being that the styles were derived from outside the region. But it does not follow that the rest of Welch’s claim is valid. Indeed, it sounds like some special pleading to rescue his model by harmonizing these new and unexpected empirical findings to make them consistent with his own dominance-based chiefdom polity view. However, when all these findings—the greenstone distribution, the locally produced exotic-styled ceramics, the select and valued faunal remains, kernalized maize, lack of storage pits, and the like—are seen in the light of Moundville as a cult sodality heterarchy, a very different and more coherent explanation of their presence and importance results.

Under the symbolic pragmatic view of the meaning of material culture, I have argued that the stylistic component of an assemblage is the basic formal conventional mode by which the behaviors that

this assemblage was intended to mediate were constituted as the types of social activities that the agents intended to perform. Hence, ceramic styles would be critical symbolic pragmatic media that the cult sodalities would require in order to perform their rituals—and as I specified earlier, ceramics would be an important part of these requirements and would likely become an essential component of ritual usufruct copyrights manifested in the sacred bundles that mediated rituals. If this is the case, then in order to make these ceramics in conformity with the appropriate forms, the makers/users would need to have acquired not only the know-how and design templates for this pottery but also the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights to produce it, and in acquiring these they would also, of course, learn the nitty-gritty technical know-how of the design production. This facsimilization of exotic ceramics, therefore, can very easily be accounted for under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model as the result of the primary social mechanism by which the Mississippianization process itself unfolded—namely, transregional intercult sodality custodial franchising. Therefore, I have no problem seconding Welch’s claim that these ceramics first appeared in Moundville by the arrival of “foreign potters.” However, they would not simply be foreign artisan potters. The differently styled foreign pots index important visitors from extraregional cult sodality heterarchies, and the reason these groups came would likely be to franchise their respective critical sets of custodial usufruct copyrights of certain particular world renewal ritual suites to one or more of the cult sodalities participating in the second-order Moundville heterarchy. Since these rituals would subsequently be performed at Moundville, it is likely that, as the primary warranting devices of the rituals that would be performed there, the ceramics and their residues, in whole or in part, would come to be located there and not in the countryside sites.

However, this raises the question of why there was a relatively limited distribution of such locally made exotic ceramics. After all, from ca. AD 1250 on, the lesser mound-and-plaza complexes were constructed. Why would these styles not be replicated there? It is possible that resistance arose to the new rituals based on the view that for some sodalities these were perceived as incompatible with the established styles of ceramics used to mediate autonomous rituals and, therefore, these new forms failed to “take root.” That is, part of the escalation of the construction of the lesser mound locales included resistance to the new custodial ritual usufruct copyrights. Alternatively, and this is my preferred explanation (and in fact these are not mutually exclusive explanations), the limited known quantity of locally produced ceramics bearing these exotic styles suggests subsequent in situ or local innovation and modification of the received exotic designs. If there was an innovation, it would likely occur when the conveyancing rites first started to be performed as a result of the retiring of the age-sets that were the original recipient franchisee groups. That is, with their retirement, while the next generation of companions would have this ritual usufruct copyright conveyed to them, this might also be the opportunity to innovate these foreign styles so as to harmonize them more closely with the thematic expressions of the local styles. Knight, for example, has noted that Moundville Engraved *var. Hemphill* bears the primary range of figural representations of the total Moundville corpus. He suggests that they are local expressions of the same concepts as found expressed in engraved form on most of the other ceramics of the Southeastern Mississippian region, but in uniquely different Moundville expressive forms. As he comments, this series “holds together nicely as a well-bounded local style with its own canons, by which it can be distinguished from engraved representational art on pottery in other regions in the Mississippian world” (2010, 28). At these moments of

intragenerational age-set to age-set transferring by means of conveyancing ritual events, it is likely that these innovations would not be seen as transgressing the custodial ritual usufruct copyrights that were originally franchised but as enhancing them, possibly justified or warranted by the newly initiated custodial artisan reporting a dream in which the guardian spirit responsible for the suite of rituals informed her/him that such an innovation would be appropriate. Innovation in some such manner would help explain why these ceramics bearing exotic designs are not found in the countryside (e.g., at the lesser mound sites), since these exotic stylistic expressions would be fairly quickly modified and replaced by styles, such as the Hemphill series, that were considered equivalent and appropriate for the region, and from this time would be distributed across the region. Therefore, these ceramic data count as further evidence in support of the Mississippianization process as postulated under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model and reinforce the characterization of Moundville as a second-order or possibly third-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy that I have articulated.

In sum, two interpretations of the mortuary patterning of Moundville have now been completed in terms of the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* perspective. The first was presented in the previous chapter, and the second was represented above—namely, the mode and timing of the mortuary data in association with the twelve dispersed clusters of building structures strongly suggesting that these went through a sequential cycling of usage from being hostels to some being used as charnel lodges and finally as cult sodality world renewal CBL lodges. I have added to these two interpretations of the mortuary sphere the interpretation of the presence of a rich set of locally produced ceremonial ceramics displaying nonlocal styles. While not strictly supplementing the

mortuary interpretation, this interpretation has brought back to the forefront the central theme of this book—namely the Mississippianization process as postulated under the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model. Each one has served to demonstrate the greater explanatory power of the cult sodality heterarchy view over the monistic chiefdom polity view, in particular by showing that a very broad range and mixed set of categories of the empirical data—mortuary, stylistic, ceramic, residential, monumental forms, layouts, and so on—is more coherently explained by this approach than by the monistic chiefdom view, in whatever polity version. In particular, the cult sodality heterarchy view has been able to resolve many anomalies that the Chiefdom Polity model interpretation raised and was unable to resolve.

Cult Sodality Heterarchy Factions: Revisionists and Autonomists

However, there is another dimension of change that this cult sodality heterarchy interpretation can ground. I theorized earlier that the emergence of a region-wide bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture could be the major sociomaterial condition that could but would not entail one or more of the complementary heterarchical tribal communities of a region transforming into complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities. Importantly, this transformation would only indirectly influence the affiliation of the cult sodality alliances, at least in the initial stage of transformation. Therefore, the primary material indicators would not likely emerge in the mutualistic cult sodality heterarchy, such as Moundville, but in the countryside where the clan components of the particular community or communities were dispersed across the landscape. Here, a farmstead that had been the household of a ranking clan leader, constituting a clan-type ceremonial nodal site, might be transformed

into a more elaborate nodal locale “appropriate” for the family whose senior age-grade members were also being habitually selected to occupy the complementary heterarchical tribal chiefly position. This occupancy, traditionally rotated among the clans, would become a *de facto* singular chiefly position and, in time, could be legitimated as a *de jure* singular chiefly position. In fact, it is possible that this nodal locale might become marked by mound construction.

As the process advanced, this structural transformation of some of the complementary heterarchical communities clearly would not leave the cult sodality heterarchy of Moundville unscathed, as I note shortly. However, the material changes occurring in the countryside would be primarily the playing out of the initial transgressing of the principle of arm’s-length clan–sodality autonomy by ambitious families in some these communities encouraging the age-sets of their junior kin to select these latter persons as their peer leaders, thereby attempting to ensure that these persons would become senior chiefly leaders in the cult sodality heterarchy at Moundville, thereby almost guaranteeing that at the appropriate time they would be selected by their communities for the senior chiefly position. This process may have advanced in one or two regional communities to the point that these communities may have had *de facto* selective singular candidature in place by the end of the Moundville I phase (i.e., ca. AD 1250/1260).

I have suggested that, since the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture is firmly anchored to the arm’s-length clan–sodality principle of relative autonomy, it would be highly unlikely for all these communities to pursue the same transgressive trajectory and transform into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms. Indeed, considerable resistance to and criticism of these noncomplying sodality allies would emerge from the other cult sodalities who upheld the autonomy principle, and this criticism would spread and

simply enhance the fact that the clan-sodality autonomy principle was being systematically transgressed by some of the complementary heterarchical communities of the allied cult sodalities. These cult sodalities would probably begin to be seen by the nontransgressive cult sodalities as “rogue” participants in the mutualistic cult sodality heterarchy. Avoidance practices would proliferate, and a type of systematic ostracism would set in that would be manifested by relegating the peer leaders of the sodalities of the transgressive complementary heterarchical communities to lesser ranking leadership positions in the governing councils of the second-order or possibly third-order cult sodality heterarchy of Moundville. Nevertheless, the principle that all the communities shared custodial care of the land in the region and, therefore, ought to/must participate in actively contributing to its ongoing sanctification and resanctification, would sustain ongoing participation at Moundville of the cult sodalities from both the *autonomist* and *revisionist communities*, as I am now calling them. The autonomist communities would be those complementary heterarchical communities that upheld the clan-sodality autonomy principle and, of course, the revisionist complementary heterarchical communities were those that transgressed it and, as a result, emerged as *de jure* complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities. The cult sodalities from each set would tend to form what I will call the *autonomist* and *revisionist factions* of the Moundville cult sodality heterarchy. The overall level of labor being invested in Moundville would probably be reduced on the part of the cult sodalities from both the autonomist and revisionist communities, and given the new dynamic arising from a singular chiefly position, the labor of these complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities would tend to be redirected such that the residential locale of the singular chief would likely come to emulate the monumentalism of the cult sodality heterarchy. What emerges starting from ca.

AD 1250 and escalates following ca. AD 1300, therefore, is the ceremonial settlement sites now recognized as consisting of a series of single mound-and-plaza complexes built by some of the first-order heterarchies that were also responsible for Moundville, but probably no more than two to four emerging and being occupied at any given time. These were dispersed linearly along the bottom lands of the Black Warrior River Valley. As disputes developed between the autonomist and revisionist factions constituted by the cult sodalities from these structurally different communities, first a partial disaffiliation of cult sodalities would occur, as expressed in these lesser locales, and then a final and probably abrupt disaffiliation and dissolution would occur. This process of disaffiliation would be mapped by increasing reduction of labor and ritual effort at Moundville, as marked by a severe falloff in the rate of occupation midden build-up and the escalation of secondary mortuary trajectory events as marked by the increasing proportion of third-step ceramic burials, since the sodalities of both the complementary heterarchical tribal and the emerging complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities would tend to limit themselves more and more to performing only this compressed third step of the secondary mortuary trajectory at the Moundville world renewal CBL necropolis. The development of this scenario would lead to the rapid vacating of Moundville in the later 15th or early 16th centuries, probably significantly prior to the entry of Soto and his Iberian army into the Black Warrior Valley in 1540. This abandonment of Moundville would be the result of a final split between the sodalities of the autonomist faction whose communities retained the traditional arm's-length clan-sodality autonomy principle and the sodalities of the revisionist faction whose communities had breached this principle. Therefore, with the rather abrupt final rupture of the second-order or possibly third-order Moundville heterarchy, probably both sets of communities would

have shifted back to the integrated settlement articulation modal posture regionally and, being societies of different structural character, complementary heterarchical tribes and complementary heterarchical chiefdoms respectively, they would come to stand toward each other in a somewhat antagonistic manner. This would probably have resulted in the former group abandoning the Black Warrior Valley and moving south where they may have reshaped settlement into the integrated posture and their material culture to constitute what has been termed the *Burial Urn culture*, currently referred to as the *Moundville IV phase community system*. This simultaneous retreat of the two types of communities and their likely parallel shift to the integrated posture would have resulted in the Moundville region approaching the status of being a no-man's-land (Sheldon 1974, 30-54).

Demonstration

This is a complex hypothesis. Besides the already discussed reduced rate of buildup of occupational midden and escalating rate of ceramic-associated terminal mortuary deposits, are there any further empirical data that might reinforce the claim that such a prehistoric scenario occurred? In fact, in collating the mortuary data that I used (table 17.1), I was struck by the variation among the different CBL deposit patterns. Each set of CBLs of Mounds D, E, G, and R had several multiple burials, usually clusters of two or three individuals, sometimes all extended, sometimes an extended burial with a bundled burial, and so on. However, Mound E not only had several units of these small multiple burials, largely consistent with the notion that these were generated by cooperating cult sodalities who may have pooled some of the deceased that they had accumulated in their charnel temple lodges, but its associated CBLs had at least three very large multiple mortuary deposits. These seemed to be fairly unique, and I did not note their equivalent in other CBL complexes.

Furthermore, they are all in the CBL zone east of Mound E, suggesting a locale that was secluded and possibly avoided by other cult sodalities in the performance of their postmortem human sacrificial world renewal offering rituals, suggesting a type of ostracism being exercised. I will quote Peebles's summary description of the largest and most complex of these multiple mortuary deposit units in this East of Mound E world renewal CBL.

Burials EE1322 to EE1340, EE1341, EE1343, EE1344, EE1345 and EE1346 represented the most complex multiple interment found east of Mound E. A central burial (EE1322), whose grave furnishings included two copper ear plugs, a bear canine, and three shell gorgets, was surrounded by a mass burial of eight adults, one child, and two infants. The eight adults (EE1333 to EE1340) were a tightly packed mass of skeletons. Each of these skeletons had shell beads at the ankles and the mass of burials as a whole contained a number of other artifacts. Two infants (EE1345 and EE1346), each of which had strings of beads as grave goods, were associated with the main mass of burials, as was the skeleton of a child, EE1341. Another child (EE1344) and an infant (EE1343) were found on flat ground at the edge of the pit containing the other skeletons. (Peebles 1979, 300)

What Peebles does not mention in this description is any pottery. However, in his list of accession numbers, some of these burials were noted to be in association with ceramics. For example, EE1324 had a crushed bowl, EE1326 had a broken water pot, and EE1331 had a bowl. While burials "EE1333—EE1340 were a mass of closely intermixed adult skeletons . . . [that] were so mixed 'that it was impossible to differentiate between them'" (1979, 355), nevertheless burial EE 1340 has a ceramic sherd assigned to it, specifically a sherd of a

water bottle, and burial EE1343, an infant associated with this mass burial deposit, had a bowl and a pot in association. Another infant, EE1346, had a “toy bowl,” and so on. A careful reading suggests a type of compound burial that could be generated by a mass lethal sacrifice. In the above case, there is a “central figure” that is well endowed with iconic warrants that clearly implicate important action constitutive (i.e., symbolic pragmatic powers-to-act).

In the second case of mass burial, of the eight burials the “central figure” has no direct artifact associations, including ceramics, but the other seven, who are a jumble of bones “at his feet,” are well endowed with ceramics, about half of them being whole vessels and the rest sherds (1979, 322). This would be the termination of the third step of a secondary mortuary scenario event. In this case, apparently a period of time followed the second stage at a lesser mound locale, possibly because these seven deceased had been subjected to maceration and were disinterred, reincarnated with the addition of ceramics used to accompany the reincarnated “central figure,” the latter possibly having been curated in a charnel structure or wrapped and placed on a scaffold. The third example of a multiple burial group, in this case nine burials, was also a mass of bones. The “central figure” is marked primarily by left and right ear plugs, one being copper covered. Otherwise, there seem to be no other artifacts, not even ceramic sherds.

Only the latter of the three mass burials seems to fit the category of being a primary split-stage trajectory burial event of the postmortem sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* since it had no reported ceramics in association. Also, being a mass of bones suggests either an extensive curation period, possibly involving maceration, or else a major post-burial disturbance, possibly to “mine” for bones. However, the first two sets reported above would represent the third step of two distinctly separate secondary mortuary trajectory events. The

massing of the multiple, mostly adult male skeletons in considerable disorder could be reminiscent of the type of mass burial found at Feature 229, Lower Stratum, of Mound 72 in Cahokia. However, while, in the latter case, there are overt signs of death by blows to the nape of the necks (Byers 2006a, 342-51), in the former, there are none reported. This suggests that if they were the result of a lethal sacrifice, these males, with the exception of the “central figure,” could have been killed by strangulation in a lethal sacrificial mortuary *chaîne opératoire* event performed outside Moundville (i.e., at one of the single mound-and-plaza complexes). Death by strangulation may have been a Mississippian form of lethal sacrifice similar to that witnessed in the early 1700s by the French when they interacted with the Natchez (Swanton 1911, 139).⁵ In cases witnessed by the French, the lethal sacrificial event was part of the mortuary rites of the Great Sun, and those sacrificed included infants, the wife of the Great Sun, as well as some designated “companions.” Unfortunately, the French recorders do not specify the relation of these latter victims who accompanied the Great Sun, but it is clear that they would likely fit in as “boon companions” to the deceased chief. This type of burial is often referred to in the archaeological literature as a *retainer burial*. I consider this terminology to be an unfortunate choice of terms since it immediately implicates a type of dominance-based hierarchical structuring of the mortuary group.

However, some readers may well object to this interpretation on the grounds that, by definition, lethal sacrificial deaths cannot be characteristic of communities based on agentive autonomy since the deliberate killing of another presupposes a dominance hierarchy, one in which a person in the dominance-based position of “sacrificer” (i.e., the person who orders a lethal sacrifice) commands a subordinate occupying the position of “sacrificer,” to kill the victim, and since the “sacrificer” does this behavior under the orders of the

“sacrifier,” then the killing is constituted as a *lethal human sacrifice*. Certainly, while this would likely be the social structure characterizing a human sacrificial event in a dominance-based social system, it does not follow that lethal sacrifice could only be performed in this type of community. Voluntary lethal sacrifice (i.e., voluntarily surrendering one’s life), even if the actual killing behavior is performed by another (possibly a selected boon companion), is probably common and possibly more common to preindustrial enabling-based social systems than is lethal (nonvoluntary) human sacrifice to dominance-based preindustrial social systems. James Mooney, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnologist of the Southeast, has cogently pointed out that to the Cherokee and, presumably, many Southeastern cultural communities, the death of a person was a dangerous time for his/her boon companions and close relatives since the spirit of the deceased often aggravated the sense of separation and intervened powerfully in dreams to invite and promote his/her boon companions to accompany him to the land of the Dead. “Thus it is that the friends of the lost [deceased] one pine and are sorrowful and refuse to eat, because the shadow-soul is pulling their heartstrings, and unless the aid of the priest is invoked their strength will steadily diminish, their souls will be drawn from them, and they too will die” (Mooney, 1900, 3). Hence, self-desired death may be part of what is required in such cultures to count as being an honorable person. Companions of a deceased singular chief may well have chosen to be lethal sacrificial victims—requesting other companions to act as the “sacrifiers”—in order to be reincarnated at Moundville so they could accompany their boon companion on the Path of Souls (i.e., the Milky Way) to the land of the Dead. Hudson (1997, 24, 181) has even noted in some detail that under conditions that would be interpreted by Southeastern persons as endangering their honor, they would choose self-inflicted death (i.e., suicide) rather than

continue life as dishonorable persons who would be seen by others to be acting so as to subordinate the singular chiefs or their families to the profoundly insulting treatment by the Spanish army, or its commander, Hernando De Soto.

Further, as I noted above, typically these mass sacrificial deaths are treated as demonstrating that the Natchez Great Sun had power-over the life (and death) of others, even though these lethal sacrifices were performed only after the Great Sun died. However, there are reported data that suggest a strong self-selected voluntarism was involved (Swanton 1911, 110; 142-43, 149; 147-51). Furthermore, the occupant of the singular chiefly office had little discretionary power in exercising his social powers and responsibilities. For example, while the Great Sun had the power to declare the commencement of green corn ceremonies, he could not refuse to do so. About his only discretionary power in this regard was to determine the timing of his declaration. Once he performed the declaration, the group responsible for the ritual in the community—and my reading of Swanton suggests that this was a male-based sodality—was able to exercise their powers-to-act, thereby insuring the equitable distribution of stored maize to everyone. The community-wide feast that occurred is an excellent example of equitable distribution I argued was typical of complementary heterarchical communities, even those that had a strong form of singular chiefly leadership (Swanton 1911, 114-18; 122-23). Finally, as I noted above and reiterate here, one of the major concerns a community had when one of its own died was that his boon companions and close relatives might commit suicide so as to go with their companion or kin to the land of the Dead (Mooney 1900, 3).

In terms of the earlier discussion of how a complementary heterarchical tribal community could transform into a complementary heterarchical chiefdom community, what might be manifested in these three mass burials is the historical development of the shift

from the former to the latter status. The “central figure” of the non-ceramic mass burial described above (the third one) may have been a senior sodality chief whose community had already strongly moved toward becoming a complementary heterarchical chiefdom. Since there were no ceramics in this case, the “central figure” marked by earplugs probably represents the second stage of a primary split-stage ritual trajectory, and the rest of the cumulative mass burial of nine deceased probably represents a lethal sacrificial ritual, possibly curated in order to be completed at an appropriate time. The first two described above, however, would be the outcome of the third step of the secondary mortuary trajectory. Again, the two “central figures” could plausibly be the highest ranking leaders of their cult sodalities at Moundville and, in these terms, the deceased associated with them would be sodality members, possibly the boon companions of these singular “chiefs-in-waiting,” who had been subjected to or, possibly more adequately stated, had subjected themselves to lethal sacrifice by requesting it in order to accompany their boon companion when the latter had prematurely died.

In sum, only a few of the communities whose cult sodalities had affiliated to form the second-order or possibly third-order heterarchy of Moundville would likely develop into complementary heterarchical chiefdoms. While it could turn out in the future that other equivalent mass burial features will be revealed, I suspect that these will be few, and the overall numbers will be consistent with the claim that, in fact, (1) Moundville was a second-order (or even possibly a third-order) world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy; (2) that some of the communities of the sodalities involved did breach the autonomy rule; and (3) that this set in motion a trend leading to the emergence of one or more complementary heterarchical chiefdoms, as exemplified in the above three unique mortuary features associated with the East of Mound E CBL complex.

NOTES

1. Although the precise number is not necessary for my analytical purposes here, in a more recent publication of these mortuary deposits the authors cited 265 burials for the “excavation of the Moundville Roadway” (Wilson, Steponaitis, and Jacobi 2010, 77). If I add the 10 mortuary burial deposits that Margaret Scarry (1998) excavated, the total would then be 275 instead of 289 that I have derived from Wilson’s earlier book (2008). I will note at this time that, except for the disparity in the numbers quoted, the themes and overall analyses of these two Moundville mortuary studies are the same.

2. Even though only one ceramic burial with this folded-rim Moundville I phase attribute was identified with these burials (Burial SK2884, figure 18.2), as I noted in Chapter 14, Wilson identified a rich representation of Moundville I phase nonburial-associated ceramics in the Roadway excavations, as such. In fact, he particularly used these ceramics to argue that most of these structures were probably Moundville I phase features (2008, 38).

3. Only one of these ceramic burial deposits associated with the clusters (SK2884—see note 2) actually can be identified with the Moundville I phase, and this is outside/beside and not inside the associated structure (figure 18.2). This positioning is consistent with my argument that these structures were initially built as hostels. This mortuary deposit could well be an early doubled-up-stage trajectory mortuary event performed by the deceased’s companions who carried him/her while alive with the purpose of enabling him/her to die at Moundville. Burying this person outside the hostel where he/she died would be quite appropriate since, of course, his/her companions would intend to continue using the hostel. Only when the hostel lodge use was completed would it have become a charnel-type world renewal lodge where the terminal nonceramic burials constituting

sacrificial offerings would be performed, thereby accounting for any burials that may have occurred within the wall-trench frame, although in this particular instance, none are indicated.

4. For example, even though they constituted 15% of his sample of 1,121 whole vessels, Steponaitis explicitly excluded them from his seriation of the Moundville ceramic assemblage, largely because, being derived from outside the region, the precise chronological value of these vessels and sherds could not be established (e.g., they might be “heirlooms,” and the like) (1983, 49). He also noted that with regard to his sherd sample of 8,213 from the excavations north of Mound R, only 21 were nonlocal. Therefore, he assumed that these nonlocal vessels were not part of the repertoire of “local” potters. A reanalysis of these Mound R “exotic” sherds may show that some or all of them are locally produced ceramics displaying non-local ceramic styles.

5. The Natchez community would be a classic example of what I have termed a *complementary heterarchical chiefdom*.

CHAPTER 19

The Mississippian Cult Sodality Heterarchy System (MCSHS): A Summary Overview

I initiated this exegesis of the distribution of the Mississippian assemblage by delineating the Mississippianization process of the Late Prehistoric period Eastern Woodlands that it mediated with a discussion of the Winnebago god heroes, Red Horn and his boon companions, particularly the Thunderbird Storms-as-He-Walks and Turtle, and their ongoing struggles with the Giants. This also included the follow-up myths of Red Horn's two sons who killed the Giants in revenge for the deaths of their father and his companions. The sons then retrieved the bones of Red Horn and his companions, as well as the bones of the rest of the members of Red Horn's village, and they ground these up and used the powder to reincarnate the heroes and the people. I pointed out that this suite of myths had thematic and narrative parallels with the myths of other Plains peoples, including the Mandan, Hidatsa, Crow, Osage, and Pawnee. My purpose was to focus on the relationship that linked these primary god heroes, noting that, in most cases, they performed the initial acts of world creation as companions while the acts of their offspring were derivative in terms of world creation. I did this to emphasize that the sanctity of companionship was as much rooted in the cultural traditions of Native North American peoples as was the sanctity of kinship. To support this claim, I carried out an in-depth analysis of the historic Hidatsa and, to a lesser degree, of the closely related Mandan social

systems, and showed that, as important as kinship was in the organization of these communities—and it certainly was important—complementing it was companionship constituting non-kin peers, and each presupposed the other. I generically referred to the two types of social organizations that these structural principles grounded as *clans* and *sodalities*, respectively. I believe the dual kinship-companionship structure of these two well-known historic peoples is not unique to them. Rather, generalizing from them, I have postulated that the dual complementary kinship-companionship structural relation operated as the primary cognitive-normative armature of the traditional historical Native American communities east of the Rocky Mountains (although I suspect that it also operates in the Pacific coast region, albeit, probably differently). I have generically referred to this community type as the *complementary heterarchical community*; I consider that not only did it prevail at the time of the arrival of Europeans, albeit manifested in many structural variations (e.g., complementary heterarchical band communities, complementary heterarchical tribal communities, complementary heterarchical tribal-chiefdom communities, and complementary heterarchical chiefdom communities) but this complementary kinship-companionship duality also prevailed in the prehistoric period possibly as deeply in time as the Late Archaic period and certainly, in my view, from the Early Woodland times on. I also argued that, at the time of the European appearance, many (possibly not all) of these maize-based communities of the Eastern Woodlands were in the integrated settlement articulation posture. This posture tends to highlight the tangible material organization of the kinship groups while masking, or at least making less obvious, the tangible signs manifesting components of the material organization of the complementary sodality groups.

Robert Hall's analyses of the Red Horn myths have been particularly relevant (1991; also see Hall 1997, 2000). He has interpretively

linked the set of artifacts making up an important part of the Mississippian assemblage, in particular the Long-Nosed God maskettes and related materials, to the heroes and their activities as depicted in the creation stories. I have claimed that these artifacts were treated by those responsible for their production and use as iconic pragmatic symbols. I have defined icons to be material symbols (i.e., those formal aspects of material cultural features, facilities, and artifacts manifesting the operation of conventions and rules) that are taken by their users to participate in the properties of the entities that they symbolically represent. As icons, therefore, they served as crucial constitutive media of the activities that their users performed (e.g., rituals). I also noted that the purpose of Hall's analyses was to use the myths to ground his claim that, as monistic chiefly rulers of Cahokia, a Calumet-like ceremonialism was used by them to link the leaders of the different nonchiefdom communities into a dominance hierarchy with the Cahokian chief(s) as the ranking leader(s). This network of relations articulated what Hall termed the *Cahokian Interaction sphere*, this being the evolving context and reproduced medium of the Mississippianization process as it unfolded from Cahokia and the American Bottom, thereby extending their relations northward and, presumably, southward. However, rather than tying this Calumet-like ceremonialism to the primary origin myth of the great battles between Red Horn and his boon companions, on the one hand, and the Giants, on the other, he firmly tied it to what I consider to be the second-tier myths detailing the activities of the sons. This has had the unfortunate consequence of highlighting the centrality of the gods as *kin*, as *father-son*, *mother-daughter*, *brother-brother*, *sister-sister*, *sister-brother*, rather than as *companions*. While I recognize the importance of kinship among the gods in the overall suite of creation myths, I claim that by focusing on this single principle, Hall obscured and downplayed the significance that

companionship played in the creation stories, and by extension, this focus has largely obscured the relevance of a companionship-based form of Calumet-like ceremonialism that I have argued operated as the primary social mechanism enabling the constitution of extensive relations among communities, not through the mediation of kinship adoption, which no doubt played some role, but more importantly through that of intercompanionship or intersodality alliance. The ceremonialism would have constituted an equally sacralized relation to that of kinship, one in which the principle of autonomy plays out fully in that it would have been taken to embody and reproduce the sacredness of the gods as mutually autonomous companions, as peers (i.e., as boon companions). Hence, Hall's focus on kinship structure, particularly the intergenerational structure, also promoted the view that dominance was the prevailing principle characterizing the Mississippianization process. In contrast, by focusing on the companionship principle, I have promoted the view that autonomy was the prevailing principle and, further, that this principle could only prevail because it was also central to the structuring of the communities, constituting them as complementary heterarchical communities. Without this structure, in my opinion, the Mississippian process would not have been possible.

Hence, I have taken a firm contrarian position in terms of the nature and unfolding of the Mississippianization process, and I have thematically postulated that companionship-based Calumet-like ceremonialism was the primary modal medium by which interregional alliances and interactions were constituted and reproduced. Of course, this does not preclude that, in some cases, clan leaders may have implemented fictive kinship adoption ritual in order to constitute and extend long-distance relations with clan leaders of other communities in the neighboring and more distant regions. But this interactive mode would likely have been parasitic upon and

emergent out of what was from the interregional perspective the more fundamental companionship-based Calumet-like ceremonialism. This ceremonialism was the primary medium by which interregional sodality alliances were constituted. I argued that the founding of the intersodality alliances emerged from the performances of custodial franchising events by which different and mutually autonomous ritual usufruct copyrights were transferred from the donor to the recipient cult sodalities. I claimed that, in this way, different American Bottom sodalities formally and meaningfully constructed long distance alliance relations with many equivalent extraregional sodalities. I referred to the mechanism of this process of alliance construction as the custodial franchising of ritual usufruct copyrights, and I termed the theoretical framework of the Mississippianization process that this mechanism generated the *Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model*. This model recognizes custodial conveyancing was also an important part of the Mississippianization process, and this is because conveyancing ensured the continuity through time of a given sodality's rights of performance of the originally franchised rituals and, therefore, of the possibility of sustaining the interrelations that this initial custodial franchising generated. However, this means that conveyancing was also parasitic on the initial custodial franchising event and, therefore, rather than conveyancing between the age-sets of a sodality related in an enabling hierarchy, it was custodial franchising between equivalent but transregionally located sodalities that was the primary mechanism for generating the Mississippianization process.

Custodial franchising can be treated as a major form of cultural diffusion, and while certainly it entailed that sodalities be mobile across large regions, it did not mean that this mobility entailed any type of permanent migration. Instead, typically this process was characterized by *transient migration*, as I noted in the previous

chapter, with regard to the recent finding that Moundville has a fairly extensive set of ceramics bearing exotic motifs but produced from local clays. As I suggested then, these cult sodality groups regularly moved back and forth following sacred paths and pathways. I particularly note this because I recognized that Pauketat's (2007, 142) recent claim that Cahokia and the American Bottom region bear the signature of multiple ethnic groups is probably correct. However, he accounts for this as a result of a form of permanent immigration of ethnic groups from distant regions into the American Bottom and its surroundings. I do not see that the signature of multiple ethnicity validates this claim or its associated claim that Cahokia can be referred to as metroplex, a sedentary political heterarchy constituted of a range of ethnically different balanced-dominance communities. This characterization simply reduces to being a stronger version of Knight's recent characterization of Moundville as a federation of simple monistic chiefdom polities, except that Cahokia becomes a federation of complex monistic chiefdom polities.

The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC)

The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC) artifactual assemblage has long been recognized as an important component of the overall Mississippian assemblage. Recent work has been published interpreting the SECC component in terms of both the representational meaning of the major iconographic motifs of this assemblage and the purposes that these symbolic artifacts served to realize and fulfill (Brown 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2004; Brown and Kelly 2000; Diaz-Granados 2004; Kelly et al. 2007; Knight 2007, 1989, 1986; Knight, Brown, and Lankford 2001; Lankford 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Reilly 2007, 2004). These researchers also incorporated Robert Hall's (1991, 1997, 2000) above interpretive work, particularly his linking of the Cahokian Long-Nosed God maskettes and other related iconic

artifacts, as well as rock shelter graphics, to the prehistoric communities whose creation stories were of the same order as those of the historical communities that Hall cited, such as the god heroes of the Winnebago—Red Horn, his Thunderbird companions, his sons, and so on. Not only have they reinforced Hall's core claim that the subjects expressively depicted on the SECC icons are of the equivalent gods of these prehistoric communities, they have gone on to expand the range of gods and their powers that were intended to be invoked and presenced through the mediation of these icons. For example, while they recognize that gods equivalent to Red Horn and/or Morning Star and his companions and sons are prominently displayed on many of these SECC artifacts, these being generally recognized as celestial gods, there are also representations of the Winged Serpent (i.e., the Underwater Panther) and various transformed expressions of these Beneath World gods and the great events of world creation in which all were involved—namely, the battles of the Thunderbirds and Giants (i.e., the equivalents of Red Horn and his companions and sons) against the Winged Serpent/Underwater Panther and his companions (i.e., the Giants) (Reilly and Garber 2007).

I would like to have explored more deeply this recent work on the SECC assemblage by the above group of Mississippian researchers since the major conclusion they make is that this formal set of items constituted an artifactual assemblage by which these world creation myths served as “charters” of particular social components of the Mississippian world. I think that this work of substantive interpretation of the representative contents expressed by the major SECC motifs has been outstanding, and indeed, as I am sure many readers have noted, I have drawn quite heavily on it in preceding chapters. However, I must take issue with some of the basic assumptions these researchers have concerning the social systems that were responsible for underwriting this iconic work in that, for the most part, they have

followed Robert Hall by largely retaining both the dominance-based hierarchical perspective and the centrality-of-kinship view. That is, I think it is fair to say that most of them have operated with the assumption that the Mississippian period communities were monistic chiefdom polities. Where they have differed is over the degree to which these Mississippian communities can be located toward one or the other pole of the nonegalitarian↔egalitarian continuum. Along with this, they also share the assumption that these were permanent sedentary communities of dominance-based hierarchically ranked kin groups of one sort or another. Possibly because these communities are treated by them as complex structures of differentiated and specialized political, social, and economic groups, each having defined “powers-over” constituting their exclusive and effectively proprietary social rights and privileges over the activities of others, the “commoners,” these researchers have found it logical to sector the major categories of the Mississippian assemblage into specializations paralleling this complex dominance-based hierarchical social structure. They particularly emphasize separating the SECC artifactual assemblage from the rest of the Mississippian assemblage by treating it as demarcating a specialized elite-based warrior cult (e.g., Knight 1986; Pauketat 2004a, 113-14; 2007, 156-59). Having bracketed off and isolated the SECC artifact assemblage and its usage in this way, they then identify the rest of the Mississippian assemblage as mediating the remaining complex of component socioreligious groups of these monistic chiefdom polities. This “non-SECC” ceremonial component of the overall assemblage included the monumental architecture—that is, the mound-and-plaza complex, its features and facilities, such as the platform summit “temple,” the great standing posts, as well as certain artifactual categories, such as the temple statuary, non-SECC fine-ware vessels, the CBLs and any associated non-SECC artifact contents. Carefully separated from the elite-based warrior

cults and their SECC materials, all these other categories are treated as the media demarcating and constituting the rest of the different subgroups of the typical monistic chiefdom, some being commoner communal cults, some elite priestly cults, chiefly ancestral cults, and others—including the communal cultic aspects of the rural countryside farmsteads (Knight 1986, 676-80; 1989, 287). In short, all this splitting of the categories of the Mississippian assemblage more or less corresponds to the assumed hierarchical, dominance-based specialized groups that are understood to characterize monistic chiefdom polities.

I have already argued that dominance-based hierarchies are the manifestation of discretionary “powers-over.” However, I have stressed that these “powers-over” are themselves parasitic upon (i.e., derived from) “powers-to-act.” Hence, the landlord position incorporates the discretionary control of the “powers-to-act” that the peasant needs access to in order to transform his behavior of tilling the land into the social act of plowing. Since he does not control these social powers-to-act (i.e., the warranting rights), he can only exercise them as his duties by which he discharges his obligations to the landlord. If those performing the behaviors entailed by husbandry and farming did not occupy the position of peasant, serf, and so on, then in that social world they would be counted as poachers and pilferers. That is, they would be outlaws, and all their ecological-economic behaviors would count as poaching, rustling, pilfering, and thieving. This upward displacement of these discretionary “powers-to-act” so as to make them properties of the landlord position endows the latter, and thereby those who occupy it, with dominance, or powers-over the social life of those agents who occupy the peasant position, and of course, this upward displacement of “powers-to-act” is the expression and reality of the cultural principle of dominance. This strong tendency to identify powers-over with social power has

led to archaeologists being largely oblivious to the symbolic pragmatic reality of powers-to-act. These are the primary social powers, while powers-over are secondary and derived social powers. I have argued that traditional Native North American culture has agentic autonomy as its core ethos principle, and therefore, the deontic normative “powers-to-act” constituting a social position are normally not upwardly displaced relative to any given social position. Instead, they are integral to and constitutive of the social positions that autonomous agents occupy. These positions then enable the occupants to exercise position-specific constitutive powers according to their individual but responsible discretion, and thereby sustain their individual autonomy and responsibility to act socially.

Apropos to my theorization of material cultural items as warrants of social actions (i.e., the enablers of actions), I was pleased to note that John Searle (1995; 2010, 7) has come to similar conclusions, not surprisingly since I have found his work on intentionality, action, and consciousness as central properties of the human mind to be extremely insightful. In his most recent extension of the implications of his social ontology, Searle (2010) has argued the point that I have insisted on in this book—namely that social actions are emergent deontic phenomena in the sense that they are collectively constituted by people behaving in accordance with symbolic pragmatic rules. He emphasizes that these rules are not only realized in speech acts, such as commissives (promising, betting, agreeing, and the like) and directives (commanding, ordering) but also in *material actions*, such as using money to buy and sell, and so on. For him, the “master” collective speech act is the declarative act whereby those in the appropriate positions create status functions (i.e., positions and their associated rights and duties) by formally declaring them to exist. “The distinctive feature of human social reality . . . is that humans have the capacity to impose functions on objects and people where

the objects and the people cannot perform the functions solely in virtue of their physical structure. The performance of the function requires that there be a collectively recognized status that the person or object has, and it is only in virtue of that status that the person or object can perform the function in question” (2010, 7). He goes on to illustrate this by noting that “[e]xamples are pretty much everywhere: a piece of private property, the president of the United States, a twenty-dollar bill, and a professor in a university are all people or objects that are able to perform certain functions in virtue of the fact that they have a collectively recognized status that enables them to perform those functions in a way they could not do without the collective recognition of the status.”

I would add to his claim by emphasizing that the agent or instituted body that performs the declarative act that constitutes the status function of a party must itself be constituted through the mediation of material cultural items bearing distinctive styles and used by the declarer in performing the speech act, whether this is uttered or written or signed. Only then does the speech utterance of the person or body performing the speech act count as the declarative act so intended. This point highlights the fact that, as with all social actions, speech acts must be treated as emergent from the behaviors that realize them and that even declarative acts require symbolic pragmatic warranting. In my view, this is critically important to note. Any normal participant in a community can utter the same words as the priest when the latter utters, “I hereby declare you husband and wife,” without, however, thereby constituting the utterance as a declaration that brings about the social reality it describes—namely, the husband-wife structural relation. This is because the person doing the utterance must occupy the position of *priest* (no matter how this position is referred to in different languages) and must be recognized and warranted as doing so. As I have emphasized, this requires

legitimately wearing the appropriate material items, both clothing and other material symbols, and being in the appropriate symbolic context (e.g., a church). The speaker is then seen as occupying the position of “priest” in the moment that he/she makes the utterance, thereby transforming the utterance into the declaration so intended. And should all these material entailments not be possible because of abnormal or contingent conditions, then this abnormality must itself be recognized as such, for the participants in the event to nevertheless constitute the event as intended; that is, they must recognize the infelicity in the performance and express their agreement that it is legitimate in any case precisely because of the particular “emergency” conditions in which it had to be performed. Hence, as I have stressed throughout, the symbolic pragmatic nature of material culture and the social structures it makes possible, as well as the conventional expression of the intentions of the agents that it makes possible, operate in an internally structured (meaningful) manner to constitute the social activities of agents. Searle does not, however, recognize my above claim that even speech acts need to be materially warranted. He thinks that these are self-warranting, a position with which I disagree.

Having emphasized where I agree with Searle’s overall approach, there is a major manner in which I believe it falls short for my purposes. Indeed, there is a Euro-American ethnocentric bias in his overall social ontology since, while he definitely recognizes the “powers-to-act” of social positions that enable their occupants to perform the range of social actions (i.e., functions) associated with these positions, he also claims that these deontic structures (i.e., “rights” and “duties”) are ultimately “powers-over.” As he puts it, “[t]he core notion of power is that A has power over S with respect to action B if and only if A can intentionally get S to do what A wants regarding B, whether S wants to do it or not” (2010, 151). Clearly,

while he is recognizing “powers-to-act” as agentive powers, for him, these are not social powers. Rather, what defines a social power is that it endows the human agent with “powers-over” the actions of others. To be specific, as I interpret his work in this regard, while Searle definitely recognizes social actions as generated by agents following constitutive rules (i.e., he would recognize that there is a difference between “poaching” and “hunting”), he does not recognize these rules as social powers in any interesting sense. In contrast, I consider them to be primary forms of social power in that it is only through the knowing and using these constitutive rules in their interactions that they can perform social actions at all. As I argued in Chapter 12, social powers of the “powers-over” type are derived from the constitutive “powers-to-act” by means of bifurcating the rights/privileges–duties/obligations that make up the deontic constitutive rules of action. By bifurcation I meant the distribution of these deontics across social positions such that these positions are internally and asymmetrically related into dominance–subordinate social structures. These are asymmetrically related not only in that the former monopolizes the rights and privileges of action but also in that it endows its occupant with discretionary control over the exercise of the duties and obligations that the occupant of the subordinate must fulfill. Hence agent A has the right to order agent B to do X (i.e., in virtue of occupying the dominant position, A has control over the actions of B). It is the asymmetrical distribution of these deontics of action that warrants my referring to these powers-over as simply derived social powers, derived from the more fundamental constitutive powers-to-act. In effect, for agent B to act, he/she(they, if this is a group) “borrow” these “powers-to-act” from the agent occupying the ranking position. This “borrowing” is implicated and built into the structural relations that bind the dominant and subordinate positions and is well represented by the notion of the command or

order. To be ordered entails obeying the order, and therefore, a command is a mode of dominating the actions of the recipient(s) of the command. Even if this person or group embodied all the know-how and physical capacity to perform the behavior that such action requires, they could not do so in the absence of the warranting order; or if they did behave in accordance with the form of the action rules independently of the command, the behavior would not count as the social action that it would be if the behavior was performed in accordance to an actual command being given. To shoot at the enemy is warranted when so ordered; to shoot without the order is murder. In my view, this nonrecognition of powers-to-act as social powers in their own right, indeed, as primary social powers, is a shortcoming of Searle's overall approach since it does not enable him to speak of social systems that I have called autonomist societies and, instead, leads to assuming that all social power is dominance power. Of course, I have noted that such structures of dominance characterize many modern societies, not just those based on Euro-American cultural traditions. However, Searle generalizes his social ontology as a universal theory of society.

Therefore, while it should be very clear that, as I noted earlier, I do not deny that dominance-based social systems exist as outlined by Searle, or by Knight for that matter, to reiterate, I consider dominance-based social powers, "powers-over," to be derivative in nature, while "powers-to-act" are primary. It is only when agentive autonomy exists as the prevailing structural principle of an ethos that autonomist societies then exist. Such societies can display rank and hierarchy, but these arrangements are enabling and not dominance mechanisms. Therefore, while I consider that the basic principles of Searle's constitutive approach are particularly adequate with respect to Euro-American social systems, I believe it is necessary to modify his approach along the lines I have suggested in order to make

it relevant for application to the *prehistoric social systems of Native North American communities*, particularly by emphasizing the notion of deontic powers based on the core ethos value of agentive autonomy. Therefore, even though an agent in such a community may well have exclusive rights in a given community context to perform certain social activities (i.e., they are holders of a particular custodial usufruct copyright), these exclusive rights are strictly powers-to-act, powers that enable the agent to act, and these powers cannot be used by the agent to exert powers-over-the-actions of others. That is, being exclusive does not define powers-over. What is important about exclusive powers-to-act (i.e., having the exclusive discretion to perform a given action or sphere of activity in an autonomist community) is that it includes a primary social responsibility to the community. That is, *an irreducible aspect of these exclusive discretionary powers-to-act includes the overriding duty/responsibility to exercise them so as to ensure the maintenance of the autonomy of the community and its agents*. Such exclusive rights translate into social responsibility and reciprocity vis-à-vis others, not social dominance and subordination.

Therefore, I have taken a different direction from Searle, Hall, and Knight, and many of the other scholars I cited above, in modeling the Native North American cultures and social systems and in characterizing the dynamics of the Mississippianization process in respect to Calumet-like ceremonialism, a direction that, as noted earlier, I find has already been partly adumbrated by James Brown in his reanalysis of the Mound 72 mortuary rituals (2006, 204-209; also see Holt 2009). I certainly agree that the mythology “chartered” these positions in the sense that this mythology served as the constitutive grounds and cultural sources that enabled exclusive “powers-to-act” to be endowed on users of the SECC materials, as well as all the other material resources of the cult sodalities. However, since I

have argued that the core principle of agentive autonomy transforms the ordering of different social positions occupied by agents into enabling, sharing, and reciprocating rather than dominance and subordinating hierarchies, this becomes the basic structural nature of what I have termed the *ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality*. I have argued that this is the primary social institution responsible for the Mississippianization process (i.e., for the complex process of intersodality custodial franchising and intrasodality conveyancing of world renewal custodial ritual usufruct copyrights).

I have argued that it is this dual custodial franchising/conveyancing mechanism that was responsible for the diffusion and reproduction of the assemblage that is commonly referred to as Mississippian. I have applied this format to understanding what Mississippianization was as well as both why and how it occurred. This ritual transfer entailed (by mutual consent) that the donor cult sodality teach and the recipient cult sodality learn a comprehensive body of cultural knowledge and know-how (i.e., the total ritual usufruct copyright) that enabled—in both the deontic and practical sense of enablement—the franchisees to transform the learned set of formal behaviors that they performed in accordance with these normative rules so they would count as and be the intended rituals. This specific body of cultural knowledge would include the myth and its sacred stories, the ideological rules for making and using the iconic material artifacts, constituting the sacred bundle embodying the custodial usufruct copyright and, of course, the practical and constitutive know-how about the whole set of features and facilities that was required for the felicitous performance of the rituals—namely, the plazas, the mounds, and even the standing timber curtain wall/bastion complexes (i.e., the palisades).

Of course, once the custodial ritual usufruct franchising event was successfully completed, subsequent custodial franchising events

transferring other ritual usufruct copyrights would likely occur. Therefore, there would be an accumulation by a cult sodality of a series of autonomous custodial ritual usufruct copyrights and, in their exercising of these copyrights in ritual performances and their being subsequently conveyed by the senior to the maturing junior age-sets would reproduce and expand the above Mississippian assemblage of a cult sodality, including of course, the multiple burial deposits. But this conveyancing process also opened the possibility to effect innovations in the received exotic styles so as to enable them to be made to fit more closely the expressive norms and canons of the recipient region. I consider that all of the above material categories, including the monumental locales, constituted a single but complex and developing material cultural assemblage because I consider these, along with and not separate from the SECC assemblage, to be largely isomorphic with the autonomous world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchies that produced them. That is, in my interpretation, the copper plates, engraved shell gorgets and cups, the Long-Nosed God maskettes, and the like, making up what the above scholars identify as the SECC artifact assemblage *per se*, are among the total set of *portable* categories of ritual warrants that were involved in transforming the behaviors that the participants in these sodalities performed so that they would count as the rituals and the other social activities that they intended and by which they discharged their sacred duties to carry out sacrificial offerings of world renewal ritual. Simultaneously, the permanent features and facilities—that is, the mounds, plazas, CBLs, and so on—made up the nonportable ritual warrants of the same complex of activities and interactions. These artifacts and features were meaningfully used together as an integrated set of symbolic pragmatic devices making possible the total range of world renewal ritual activities that their users performed.

This inclusive view of the Mississippian assemblage is fully consistent with the social nature of the system of world renewal cult sodality heterarchies, whether first-order, second-order, third-order, or as postulated of the Central Precinct of Cahokia, fourth-order in nature. And along with this assemblage and its distribution, I have argued that the interaction at local, regional, and interregional levels constituted, reproduced, and expanded a complex of magnetic-like social fields that enhanced and encouraged expanding the scope of the interaction on the basis of attraction characteristic of social components that shared a grand central theme that embraced the totality of the cosmos as they characterized it. For example, an autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality alliance constituting a first-order heterarchy—that is, an affiliation of two to four or more mutually autonomous cult sodalities—would necessarily require a fairly full complement of the standard material cultural features, facilities, and artifacts that constituted the warranting or, as I have also called them, the *symbolic pragmatic devices* of their ritual activities. If the first-order heterarchy lacked the full range, then it would actively pursue rectifying this matter, one method being to pursue alliance with a another nearby first-order cult sodality heterarchy, or possibly several such heterarchies, thereby constituting a second-order heterarchy that, because of its multiple first-order components, could mobilize sufficient manpower dispersed across a large region so as to build a monumental locale such as Moundville where the total range of requisite and possibly expanding number of rituals could be performed. I have added to the above set of artifactual categories the very important category of human bones and, likely, human hair. These were probably actively procured through interaction with long-distance allies—for example, by engaging in chunky game competitions that were both world renewal rituals in their own right and competitive forms of pursuing cult sodality and individual

reputation (and I would add to this active long-distance procuring of symbolic capital that mode of procurement we term *warfare*). As I noted earlier, the winning sodalities would be awarded bone bundles (or captured enemy warriors, in the case of warfare) that they could then take in sacred procession back to their own cult sodality heterarchy in order to perform a series of living-soul-release rituals.

The answer to the question of how the specialization of production that these material cultural categories would require would be implemented is already implicated in the organizational nature of the autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality, particularly since it normally was allied with several others. These organizations are intrinsically complex, having a range of specialized skills distributed across the different sectors. The clergy would embody specialized shamanic-like ritual know-how and skills, and they would include apprentice-like members who would be trained by the senior clergy in order to replace them at the appropriate time. The laity would also incorporate and allocate specialized skills according to seniority and the range of custodial ritual usufruct copyrights associated with each age-set. These rituals would presuppose the teaching and conveyancing of specialized artisan skills and, of course, enabling the time and energy for those possessing these skills to produce these materials. As I argued earlier in critiquing Knight's (2010, 360-65) reconstrual of his earlier paramount monistic chiefdom polity modeling of Moundville, the complex patterning of structures, facilities, ritual artifacts, the production residue of these artifacts, and even the residue of human bones that he so clearly revealed as being distributed on the summits and the flank middens of most of the mounds, is fully consistent with the view that Moundville was a second-order or possibly a third-order ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality heterarchy.

Therefore, it would be appropriate to speak of this total Mississippian assemblage—monumental features and their layout, the facilities in the form of renewal lodges, charnel houses, age-set “hostels,” V.I.P. visitors’ hostels, the CBL mortuary deposits, disinterred and reburied body parts and/or bone bundles and, of course, the above artifacts—as demarcating the constitutive assemblage of the Mississippian ecclesiastic-communal world renewal cult sodality heterarchy system. I suggest shortening this by calling it the *Mississippian Cult Sodality Heterarchy System* (MCSHS). I have referred to the basic, although not necessarily the minimal, site level in a given region as the *cult sodality ceremonial nodal site*. There could also be smaller (the minimal) site units identified with age-sets or age-grades of a parent ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. The smaller age-set and the larger age-grade sites and the more complex ceremonial nodal site would together constitute the material context of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodality. Its key ceremonial purpose and task was to carry out world renewal rituals, and it would constitute the basic building block of the regional Mississippian system. Larger complexes of cult sodality sites would incorporate the total range of the Mississippian assemblage and its typical spatial relations. These can be termed *Mississippian cult sodality heterarchy locales*, or MCSH locales, with the appropriate modifiers, first-order, second-order, and so on. An intraregional and interregional comparison of MCSH locales of the system, whether first-order, second-order, or third-order, would of course reveal regional and historically unfolding variation among the core symbolic pragmatic forms of the Mississippian assemblage, and the total would consist of multiple autonomous but interacting social ceremonial spheres.

At the same time, the variability of these monumental locales in terms of their specific features, facilities, artifactual contents, and even particular settings would presuppose deep social and cultural

continuities, both intraregionally and interregionally. In these terms, then, I would speak of a site such as Moundville as initially a dispersed set of first-order autonomous cult sodality heterarchies that, about AD 1200, affiliated to transform the Moundville site into the premier second-order MCSH locale in the west-central Alabama region. Each of its affiliated first-order alliances sustained continuity as several (two, three, four or more) mutually autonomous ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities. Some of these may have been among the set of single mound-and-plaza site complexes contemporary with Moundville but established in the neighboring Tombigbee Valley, such as the single mound-and-plaza complex of the Lubdub site (Blitz 1993). This is a possibility that could be further researched, and if so would be evidence to characterize Moundville as a third-order cult sodality heterarchy.

Conclusion

I have proposed the Custodial Ritual Usufruct Franchising and Conveyancing model as articulating the primary, but not the only, social mechanism whereby the Mississippianization of the Eastern Woodlands unfolded, at least in those parts of this vast region that have mound-and-plaza complexes manifesting this generalized assemblage of the Mississippian Cult Sodality Heterarchy System of the Late Prehistoric period. As I have consistently argued, the components of this system were not total communities in a given region but the autonomous cult sodalities of the complementary heterarchical communities of the region, the latter being in the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture. I have also argued that these sodalities emerged as world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities when these complementary heterarchical communities shifted into a region-wide bifurcated posture. Indeed, the emergence of the ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities was itself partly responsible

for the shift from the integrated to the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture.

To arrive at this conclusion, I have had to further the theoretical characterization of the social systems that were responsible, and this has meant deconstructing the received view of the social and cultural nature of prehistoric Native North American communities and reconstructing it as what I have generically called the *complementary heterarchical community*. Using this community type concept I have attempted to build a new and more coherent understanding of the Late Prehistoric social system responsible for the Mississippian assemblage. I have grounded this alternative view in the relevant empirical data by first summarizing my earlier case study, Cahokia and the American Bottom (Byers 2006a) (Part I), and I have then presented two more case studies of the relevant exemplary regions of the Midwest and the Southeast—namely, the Central Illinois Valley (Part II) and the Black Warrior River Valley (Part III).

I have further suggested that while the historical Native American communities were, in fact, complementary heterarchical communities, by the time these communities were confronted by representative interest groups from England, Spain, France, and Holland, many of these communities had already shifted into the integrated settlement articulation modal posture, probably toward the end of the fifteenth century, in the European calendar (i.e., shortly prior to this confrontation). The integrated posture, of course, is the complementary extreme of the bifurcated settlement articulation modal posture of the integrated↔bifurcated continuum and could have occurred in any given region rather abruptly. The Europeans were bearers of a general cultural tradition in which exclusive proprietorship, the ethos principle of dominance, and the phenomenon of (derived) social “powers-over” prevailed, and therefore, most if not all of these were structurally characterized by dominance hierarchies.

Furthermore, whether Protestant or Catholic, as disputatious as they were toward each other, they shared and practiced the same deep core of religious cosmology/ethos complex, this being based on the belief of the transcendent nature of the sacred; and this sustained an associated exclusive proprietorial domain perspective, fundamentally different from the immanentist cosmology and squatter/custodial ethos of the Native North American communities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Europeans almost consistently misinterpreted the Native North American social world (and vice versa), whose cultural and social practices were so different from while simultaneously *appearing* to be “not that different from” their own. After all, “these ‘New World’ people buried their dead ‘just like’ or at least *almost* just like we do.” However, while the tangible aspects of the historic Native North American peoples’ social activities seemed to echo and parallel those of the Europeans in many ways, the Europeans were constantly faced with unexpected behaviors by their often reluctant hosts. When these behaviors came to contradict the newcomers’ interests, or were (mis)interpreted as contradicting them, the newcomers had no hesitation to speak in unambiguous terms of their hosts’ activities as being those of “brute savages.” In the rather fewer instances when the behaviors of the indigenous people were interpreted as benefitting the interests of these visitors, they also had no hesitation to speak of them as being those of “noble savages.”

As archaeologists, many of us being of Euro-American ethnic background, we still have a great deal more to learn about the social world of the Mississippian period and, of course, in the process of learning about it, we have a great deal more to learn about the historical conditions of our own social and cultural world. I have attempted to resolve the contradictory European perceptions of this social world as expressed in such terms as *egalitarian tribes* and *nonegalitarian chiefdoms* with their respective populations of

“noble savages” and/or “brute savages,” along with elaborations of these systems as “primitive democracies” or as “savage states” by developing a new perspective that perspicuously contrasts with the orthodox Euro-American view. A key aspect of this new perspective, the concept of the complementary heterarchical community, is that, in virtue of the immanentist cosmology embodied by these communities, the latter is firmly grounded on the basic cultural principles of inclusive territorialism and agentive autonomy. These principles enabled generating the integrated↔bifurcated settlement articulation modal continuum. The bifurcated pole of this continuum, I have argued, is the primary material condition for the emergence of the MCSH system as it was constituted of world renewal ecclesiastic-communal cult sodalities realized in bottom-up structuring of first-order, second-order, and third-order heterarchies and, I claim, the fourth-order level as manifested in the Central Precinct of Cahokia. Much more must be done to develop these notions and critically apply them in more detail to the Mississippian archaeological record and, in turn, to extend this critical application to the rest of the Eastern Woodland Late Prehistoric period. I believe that the gains in understanding of this social world and our own are worth the pursuit.

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