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Ritual, Politics, and the "Exotic" in North American Prehistory

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Dick Ford has made the case that individual Pueblo needs for paraphernalia used in ritual performance drove intertribal exchange in the U.S. Southwest. In three case studies involving Pueblo, Hopewell, and Mississippian peoples, the authors take this argument further and explore the relationship between political structure and the acquisition of exotics necessary for ritual participation. Although there were diverse means of acquiring ritual exotics in each case, variability in procurement patterns across these cases appears closely related to variability in strategies for political prominence and influence.

In his seminal paper "Barter, Gift, or Violence" Dick Ford (1972a) demonstrated that ritual and economics were intimately linked among the Rio Grande Pueblos. Using ethnographic and historic data on the Tewa, he made the case that individual Pueblo needs for paraphernalia used in ritual performance drove intertribal exchange across the U.S. Southwest, onto the Plains, and south into Mexico. Through his emphasis on the supply of ritual items provided to the Tewa by non-Pueblo peoples (Comanche, Ute, and Apache), Ford also documented that in fact "many of the items deemed proper ritual apparel . . . come from outside the Tewa area" (Ford 1972a:42). These items included raw materials such as ochre, parrot and macaw feathers, and bison hair, and finished goods such as shell ornaments and kilts. Ford emphasized the sociality of particular mechanisms of exchange that brought these goods into Tewa villages.

In this chapter we elaborate upon this link between distance and ritual efficacy by analyzing three archaeological case studies involving Pueblo, Ohio Hopewell, and Mississippian societies. Our concern in this comparative analysis is not with mechanisms of interaction, but instead: (1) the importance of local versus distant materials in ritual paraphernalia, and

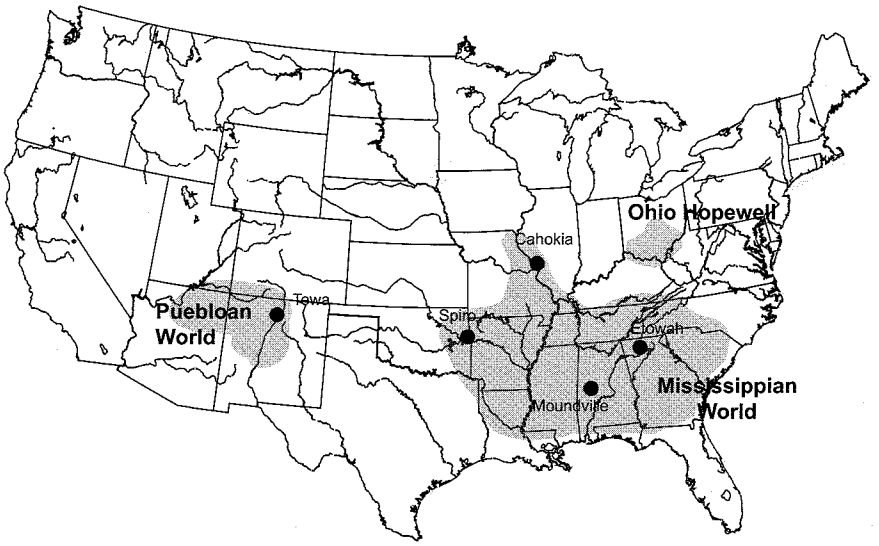

Figure 10.1. Map of cultural areas and sites discussed in the text.

(2) the emphasis on distant physical loci and distant cultural traditions as sources of powerful ritual materials. We use data from this study to argue that political structure is intimately tied to the relationship between crafting and ritual. Across these cases, variability in the sources of raw materials and finished products for ritual performance appears closely related to variability in pathways to political prominence and influence. Through these case studies we acknowledge Dick's many contributions to North American archaeology, both eastern and western, and one of the themes woven through his publications: the link between ritual and other facets of life in small-scale societies (e.g., Ford 1972a, 1972b, 1992).

In our case studies the sources of extralocal material for ritual participation and performance differ dramatically. Pueblo communities focused primarily on locally available raw materials, but also exchanged for occasional raw materials and finished products from communities outside the Pueblo world. In contrast, among Ohio Hopewell communities exotic raw materials, such as copper, mica, and obsidian, were the basis for the local creation of most ritual objects, and references to other cultural traditions through the importation of finished goods are largely absent. The third case, southeastern Mississippian societies, highlights the critical importance of a particular cultural tradition, that of Cahokia, as a source of both finished objects and concepts that underwrote subsequent Mississippian ritual practices. The degree of access to ritual objects also reveals interesting parallels and differences among our cases. Pueblo and Mississippian data suggest marked differential access to ritual paraphernalia, while among the Ohio Hopewell access to ritual power may have been more open.

Our analysis corroborates the recognition that in non-state societies ritual, resource acquisition, and politics are inescapably intertwined. As Ford and others (e.g., Dietler and Hayden 2001) have demonstrated, ritual often provides both the motivation and the context for acquiring exotic resources. Furthermore, such acquisition has an explicitly political dimension whether one takes the view that acquisition aims to cement alliances to ensure against resource uncertainty (Braun and Plog 1982; Ford 1979; Price and Brown 1985) or the view that people acquire exotic resources when attempting to build influence and renown (Brumfiel 1994; Clark and Parry 1990; Earle 1990; Helms 1988; Welch 1991).

Crafting for Ritual

Communal and personal rituals often require certain kinds of clothing and material goods in order to be both appropriate and effective in ceremony. The efficacy of a ceremonial act derives in part from the nature of the material objects used. A fundamental assumption underlying our discussion, then, is that material objects have power (Appaduri 1986; Helms 1988, 1993:3; Bradley 2000; Hamann 2002). Numerous social anthropologists have developed the argument that in many worldviews the capacity for action exists in all beings and crosscuts the Western distinction between animate and inanimate things (e.g., Ingold 2000; Swentzell 1993; Young 1988). Material objects may thus *be* alive and have the power to act in the world. Taking a related point of view, Elsie Clews Parsons (1939: x) notes that Pueblo ritual is a form of instrumentalism. Through actions involving material objects such as masks, figures, paint, and textiles, she writes, Pueblos supplicate and ultimately come to control spirit beings.

The power of material things derives from multiple attributes. Those attributes that appear to have cross-cultural relevance include: the source of the raw materials from which the object is made, the skill with which the object is crafted, and certain qualities of the finished object, such as its shininess or luster, color, and size (Helms 1992; Spielmann 2002). In this analysis we are particularly concerned with the sources for the objects that Pueblo, Ohio Hopewell, and Mississippian peoples used in communal ritual, and whether they are local or nonlocal, and if nonlocal, whether they are raw materials or finished products.

Anthropologist Margaret Rodman's (1992:63) observation that "Places produce meaning and meaning can be grounded in place," lies at the core of this analysis of the sources of ritual paraphernalia. The materials that archaeologists recover from locations of ritual production and performance can tell us a great deal about where power was situated geographically because the material objects themselves embody the power of the places from which they come (Bradley 2000; Helms 1988, 1993:3). British archaeologist Richard Bradley (2000:81-84) has coined the term "pieces of place" to encapsulate this concept that material acquired from sacred places, whether it is rock, plant or water, is powerful because it was a physical part of those places.

The "pieces of place" concept can be extended beyond sacred places to include raw materials representative of, and finished items crafted by, nonlocal cultural traditions (Spielmann 2002), as goods from distant places are "imbued with the extraordinary or cosmological powers of the . . . peoples whence they are derived" (Helms 1992:188). We might thus refer

to these items as "pieces of tradition" (Michelle Hegmon, pers. comm.). Ford demonstrated the importance of certain nonlocal items for historic Pueblo ceremonies. Ritual items crafted in Cahokia appear to have been both imported and copied by people in several southeastern Mississippian polities.

Powerful places may be local or geographically distant. Mary Helms (1988, 1993:3), in particular, argued that distance can be an important dimension of power. Interestingly, although she has noted that geographic distance is not universally valued as an attribute of power, she has not grappled with why there is variation in the degree to which geographic distance confers symbolic value. The Pueblo-Hopewell-Mississippian comparison highlights the importance of understanding both sides of the distance coin.

Both the distance to and the types of meaningful places varied for pre-contact Pueblo, Ohio Hopewell, and Mississippian societies. This variability likely reflects differences in the pathways to social power that were possible in these societies. Pueblos tend to emphasize power associated with the local landscape, a scale that generally encompasses their immediate, visible geographic surroundings and neighbors. They do however import a few critical items from communities outside the Pueblo world. People participating in Ohio Hopewell ritual activities, in contrast, sought special power through journeys to geographically distant sacred places. They crafted most of their durable ritual paraphernalia using raw materials obtained from these places, and rarely imported finished material goods. Southeastern Mississippian societies also associated power with the extralocal, but in this case several polities drew upon ritual practices and paraphernalia developed in the Cahokian chiefdom.

The Geography of Power in the Pueblo World

Anthropologist Keith Basso's book *Wisdom Sits in Places* (Basso 1996; Feld and Basso 1996) captures much of the Southwestern perception of the sacred landscape (Ortiz 1969; Parsons 1939:307). Pueblo ethnography, such as that by Alfonso Ortiz (1969) and Richard Ford (1992), supports the importance of local place in Pueblo cosmology. The centrality of local sacred places derives in part from the importance of regular travel or pilgrimage to these places to partake of the wisdom that they contain. Although Basso writes in reference to the Western Apache, he notes that sense of place imparts to both individuals and entire communities a sense of connectedness and belonging in the community. These places also exert a powerful religious force.

For Pueblo peoples, sacred places on the landscape are visible from their villages (Ortiz 1969) and are marked with shrines, at which offerings are left or religious paraphernalia cached. Shrines may be dangerous places, to be visited only by ceremonial practitioners (Parsons 1939:341; Helms 1988:168), although any place that a person uses regularly for prayer can be considered a shrine.

On occasion, pieces of particular sacred places form important components of Pueblo ritual paraphernalia or performance, as in the case of water from sacred springs and pigments from sacred mountains (Parsons 1939:275). With Pueblo ritual craft production, however, it appears more often that the type of material (for example, different species of wood for

different kinds of prayer sticks), rather than its specific source, is emphasized in the creation of powerful objects. Most raw materials used in Pueblo communal ritual come from within the Pueblo world, not beyond it. So in a certain way all that is local has a sacred quality to it. The sacredness of the locale is intimately bound with the view that the Pueblo village is the center of that population's universe (Swentzell 1993; Young 1988). In the case of the Hopi and Zuni, these spiritual centers were the destination of years of migration in the remote past (Bernardini 2002; Young 1988; Dongoske et al. 1997).

An important exception to the use of local raw materials involves the importation of macaws, and macaw and parrot feathers, from Mesoamerica. This importation has both "pieces of tradition" and "pieces of place" components. On the one hand, Pueblo concepts of the horned/plumed serpent are derived from Mesoamerica (Schaafsma 1992:64, 124-25), where parrot feathers are associated with the cult of Quetzalcoatl (Crown 1994:166; Young 1989). On the other hand, macaw feathers are associated with the south, the direction from which rain comes to the Southwest. These icons of the south are thus important in ceremonies focused on bringing rain (Crown 1994:167; Roediger 1941:71).

Pueblos also draw to some extent on the cultural tradition of neighbors, as Ford (1972a) discusses with regard to relationships between Rio Grande pueblos and Plains populations. Bison heads and hair were used in a few specific ceremonies.

The pre-contact Pueblo archaeological record reflects this same emphasis on the immediate Pueblo world for sacred raw materials. Pigments come from mountains surrounding individual pueblos, obsidian from the Jemez Mountains that dominate the skyline west of the Rio Grande, and feathers from local hawks, falcons, and eagles (e.g., Graves 2002). Macaws, shells from the Gulf of California, and bison skulls are the primary exceptions to this emphasis on the locally sacred, but these are exceedingly rare in the Pueblo archaeological record.

As Dick Ford's research documented, certain manufactured items also appear to have particular power or significance in Pueblo ritual. As with raw materials, they tend to come from within rather than outside the Pueblo world. Whether these imports are driven by connections to particularly powerful traditions in the crafting pueblos or by economic specialization or both is a matter of debate. Ethnographically, Hopi kilts and sashes are required in many Pueblo ceremonies across the Southwest (Roediger 1941:116, 135; Ford 1972a). Pueblos can import plain cloth, however, and then embroider it with their own designs (Roediger 1941:60, 116). In the pre-contact period, ceramics made at particular pueblos were sometimes important for ceremonial feasting. For example, glaze-decorated serving bowls were exported in large numbers from the Galisteo Basin, even when importing populations made their own glaze-decorated bowls. The Galisteo Basin vessels were distinctive in the yellow slips that covered them and introduced bird iconography to the Rio Grande glazeware tradition (Mobley-Tanaka 1998). It appears that owning vessels from this area (pieces of this tradition) was important because people living in this cluster of villages were responsible for developing a new, Rio Grande–specific ideology. Thus, the symbolic importance of vessels from these villages led to specialized production and large-scale export of these serving bowls (Mobley-Tanaka 1998; Spielmann 1998).

The Geography of Power in the Ohio Hopewell World

Raw material acquisition for Ohio Hopewell is markedly different from that among the Pueblos. It is commonly known that the raw materials, such as copper, mica, marine shell, obsidian, silver, grizzly bear canines, sharks' teeth, and exotic flints, from which Ohio Hopewell ritual paraphernalia were produced come from a diversity of very distant places. This distance becomes particularly interesting when compared with the Pueblo world. While the raw materials for most Pueblo sacred items come from no more than 100 km or so from any particular village, the most abundant durable materials represented in Ohio Hopewell ritual precincts—mica and copper—derive from hundreds of kilometers away, and the sources of obsidian (northwest Wyoming and southern Idaho) from over 2,000 km distant.

In the Ohio Hopewell case, in contrast with the Pueblo one, there do not appear to be local communities that provided particular manufactured goods for use in Hopewell ritual across southern Ohio. Instead, participants at each earthwork, or perhaps concentration of earthworks, appear to have crafted largely for their own use. For example, Ruhl and Seeman (1998) have documented different technological styles in earspool construction at different earthwork sites. Seeman and Heinlen (2002) noted unique patterns in grizzly bear canine modification across earthwork sites; Carr and Mazlowsi's (1995) research on textiles indicates that visible stylistic differences distinguish different valleys or portions of valleys.

Participants in the Ohio Hopewell ritual system not only procured their raw materials from geographically distant locations, but as in the case of obsidian from the West and copper from Isle Royale in Lake Superior, these places were difficult to access due to the vagaries of weather, and in the case of obsidian, presented the challenges of crossing a very different, possibly hostile cultural landscape. In this regard, we note that people in middle range societies worldwide often deliberately procure ritually important raw materials from places that are difficult to access, even when similar materials are more readily available. Richard Bradley and British colleagues, for example, have demonstrated that raw materials for European stone axes were obtained from quarries that were often in unusual or remote locations. Comparatively accessible, high quality raw material appears to have been passed over in favor of outcrops that were difficult and dangerous to reach (Bradley and Edmonds 1993; Watson 1995).

Mary Helms' discussion of "distance as an obstacle" (1988:58-59) is apt in these cases. She notes that the conquest of distance, to make a trip beyond the known world and return successfully, is a testament to the exceptional qualities the traveler possesses (Helms 1992). Successful voyaging can be used to enhance one's political prestige, the pieces of place providing evidence that the journey actually occurred. In the case of Yellowstone obsidian, the primary motivation for the journey was likely the destination: a powerful landscape filled with geysers and boiling mud, and inhabited by grizzly bears; this unique material proved that one had entirely left the world of the Eastern Woodlands. Helms refers to this form of journeying as power questing: the search for power from outside one's known universe.

Seeman (1995) has argued specifically that aspiring Ohio Hopewell leaders engaged in power-questing activities to procure exotic goods and esoteric knowledge. He suggests that the shared ideology that Hopewell writ large represented in the Eastern Woodlands

provided some degree of safe passage around that landscape. The voyages west, however, would have taken people out of this ideological realm. Seeman's power-questing model fits well with the possibility raised by James Griffin (1965, 1979) that many of the most exotic goods in the Hopewell world could have been procured with a small number of trips. For example, Griffin (1965) argued that obsidian recovered from Ohio Hopewell sites that had been procured from the Rocky Mountains could have been collected in a single canoe trip. Debate continues concerning the frequency of Hopewell visits to the far west. Stevenson and colleagues (2004; see also Hatch et al. 1990) use obsidian hydration data from the large cache of obsidian debitage under Mound 11 at Hopewell to argue that the cache grew accretionally over several centuries. They conclude that several episodes of obsidian collection were necessary to create the curated cache of debitage. In contrast, DeBoer (2004) has argued that the decrease in obsidian biface size in Ohio Hopewell contexts suggests that a single hoard of obsidian may have been depleted over time.

There is less debate regarding how these materials arrived in southern Ohio. The vast majority of the raw materials were procured by long-distance journeys; very few exhibit the down-the-line falloff pattern typical of exchange in small-scale societies (Knife River flint being an exception; Clark 1984). Moreover, DeBoer (2004) draws attention to a bighorn effigy pipe and ceramic effigy horn recovered from Mound City as likely evidence that Ohio Hopewell individuals made the journey to the Rocky Mountains and returned to describe the fauna of that strange land.

The Geography of Power among Southeastern Mississippian Societies

By necessity, the following discussion on Mississippians will be based entirely on data from the largest Mississippian chiefdoms. These sites have the most evidence of ritual objects and activity and have been the focus of the most scholarship. Many recent studies (e.g., Blitz and Livingood 2004; King and Meyers 2002; Lorenz 1996; Livingood and Blitz 2004), however, have demonstrated that there are significant social differences between the largest and smallest Mississippian communities, and thus the largest sites are not representative of the Mississippian as a whole.

Unlike the previous two examples, where status was mostly achieved, Mississippian polities tended to be hereditary chiefdoms. Early in the history of many of the large Mississippian polities, aspiring chiefs imported new belief systems and practices, and appear to have used these exotic cosmologies to legitimize their access to power. This practice suggests that Mississippians believed that the sacred can be found in the distant and the exotic.

The earliest and largest Mississippian chiefdom was Cahokia. Tim Pauketat and Thomas Emerson (Pauketat 1997, 2004; Pauketat and Emerson 1997, 1999) have argued that at Cahokia elites appropriated traditional local notions about fertility and put them under control of specialized practitioners to create a center-dominated ritual and political landscape. They melded these modified indigenous notions about fertility with iconography borrowed from the Upper Mississippi and Plains (Brown 2004; Diaz-Granados 2004), and with beliefs about mound building from the Central and Lower Mississippi Valley, to create an entirely new belief system.

Cahokians valued exotic goods that were demonstrably "foreign." They gathered valuable raw materials such as galena, hematite, and Missouri fireclay from sources less than 150 km away, and marine shell, copper, mica, and exotic flints from much greater distances (Pauketat and Emerson 1997). There is an active and lively debate over the complexity of exchange and procurement required for Cahokia to obtain the raw materials it needed (compare Brown et al. 1990; Cobb 2000; Muller 1997; Pauketat 2004), but it seems likely that for some materials, such as marine shell, some Cahokia residents must have gone out of their way to engage in long-distance procurement or develop long-distance trade relationships that bypassed simple down-the-line exchange practices (Griffin 1991; Pauketat 2004:121).

During its zenith, Cahokia was unrivaled in size and complexity, but as it began to decline around A.D. 1200, other major centers in the Southeast began to flourish. A subset of the iconography and beliefs developed at Cahokia began to find broader regional acceptance (Anderson 1997; Brown 2004). This iconography had significant regional variations, but at its core it seems to reference a set of beliefs about the otherworld and a set of stories, heroes, spirit-beings, and events related to this mythic reality (Knight et al. 2001). The objects, such as shell cups and gorgets, engraved pottery, and copper ornaments and tablets, that bear the iconography associated with these otherworldy accounts form the bulk of the ritual items known from the Mississippian world. Interestingly, most Mississippian polities did not borrow the fertility iconography and accompanying beliefs that were widespread at Cahokia (Knight et al. 2001; Pauketat 2004), suggesting that these ideas did not translate to other Southeastern cultures or that these new Mississippian communities, and specifically their elites, were picking and choosing among cosmologies.

While most major Middle Mississippian centers adopted new and foreign cosmologies in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the extent to which this exchange of ideas can be linked directly to Cahokia varies. Spiro was ideologically very close to Cahokia, imported a large number of Cahokia artifacts beginning in the twelfth century and developed an iconographic style based directly on the Classic Braden style of Cahokia (Brown 1996, 2004). Moundville, in contrast, did not become a prominent chiefdom until the thirteenth century and imported very few Cahokia-made artifacts. There is only a distant relationship between Moundville's Hemphill style of iconography and Cahokia's Braden style (Brown 2004), but there is a strong similarity in the otherworldly subject matter. This suggests that although Moundville adopted a belief system with an ultimate origin at Cahokia, it may not have done so directly or it may have tried to differentiate and localize the subject matter.

Like Moundville, Etowah did not become a prominent Mississippian center until after Cahokia was in decline (King 2004), but unlike Moundville, the elites were interred with a significant number of copper plates and shell gorgets that were manufactured at Cahokia. These objects appear to have been used as a part of a ritual regalia for powerful chiefs, possibly to demonstrate that these chiefs were avatars of mythic heroes or gods. By the time these artifacts were interred they were antiques, and Adam King suggests that Cahokia may have become a mythical place to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century residents of Etowah, distant in both time and space (King 2004:163). Therefore, the Etowah elites were using an explicitly foreign symbolic set and artifacts that were "pieces of place" of a distant and ancient polity to justify their place in the social order.

Like the Hopewell example, Mississippians were open to the notion that ritual power can be derived from distant sources. Mississippians demonstrated this belief by according special respect to cosmologies from distant locales that were themselves primarily concerned with otherworldly and extralocal beings and heroes. They contrast with the Hopewell in drawing on extant cultural traditions rather than sacred "natural" places on the landscape. In contrast to both the Puebloan and Ohio Hopewell cases, Mississippians valued ritual objects of both local and exotic manufacture, made with both locally available and exotic raw materials, although these preferences vary between polities and over time.

Ritual and Politics

Our case studies illustrate marked variation in the importance of local and distant raw material and crafted item in ritual paraphernalia. Pueblo practitioners drew (and continue to draw) strongly on the local, on the sacred center, for much ritual crafting, but incorporated important raw materials from neighboring (bison hair) and distant (macaw feathers) cultural traditions and finished items from Pueblo (Hopi) cultural traditions. Ohio Hopewell, in contrast, privileged the journey to distant places, returning with raw materials that bore witness to that journey and provided powerful materials for ritual crafting. Southeastern Mississippian societies drew on at least some of the newly fashioned ritual liturgy of Cahokia and its accompanying paraphernalia, either through direct importation or emulation. Pieces of tradition rather than pieces of place characterize ritual paraphernalia there. To understand this diversity, we consider the ways in which the goals of ritual and political activities meshed with communal ritual performances in each case.

The spiritual goals or intents of ritual performance in each society govern the nature, intensity, and elaborateness of preparation for those rituals. Among Pueblo peoples, the spirits as deities are the "sources of all man's needs," especially rain (Ortiz 1969:25), and most Pueblo ritual is dedicated to propitiating the spirits to bring rain. Rain is a localized phenomenon, forming over localized mountains and mesas, and needed for localized fields. Distant places may be of no help in bringing rain. In contrast, whatever Hopewellian peoples prayed for, distant power had the capacity to provide some of those things. Middle Mississippian societies drew on the demonstrable power of the largest pre-contact polity in North America, Cahokia, in their own religious practices.

A more straightforward explanation for the marked variation in the geographic and cultural sources of powerful materials and objects, however, lies in the different ways in which social power may have been constructed among Pueblo, Ohio Hopewell, and southeastern Mississippian societies. Helms (1988:263) argues that it is "politico-religious specialists" who are likely to engage in power questing. Yet in the Pueblo case, historically this kind of person specifically *avoids* leaving the known world (Ford 1972a), and archaeologically, we find that local materials are privileged in ritual production. The external is threatening, not powerful in a way that can be captured in a positive manner. If it is aspiring politico-religious leaders among the Ohio Hopewell who are voyaging, then the dimensions along which an individual could establish influence appear to have been quite different in these two areas.

Among the Pueblos, ethnography and pre-contact archaeology indicate relative equality in access to materials necessary for everyday life. There are few lifestyle differences evident in the archaeological record, and burial practices are modest. Individuals and groups are rarely singled out either qualitatively or quantitatively for different treatment at death (Hegmon 2005).

What does differ, at the inter-site level however, is the hosting of ritual events (Graves 2002). In the Salinas Pueblo area of central New Mexico where Spielmann works, one site, Gran Quivira, stands out for its density of ritual architecture (kivas), and ritual fauna (primarily raptorial birds). Pueblo ethnography (Brandt 1977; Ortiz 1969) documents that ritual knowledge is the currency of hierarchy in Pueblo society. Ritual personnel possess a great deal of knowledge necessary to perform the calendrical cycle of ritual that maintains the world. They act on that knowledge in the context of ceremonial groups, such as curing societies, moieties, or clans, rather than as dominant individuals. It is these ritual leaders who comprise the governing council for each pueblo village, and thus decide on land allocation, labor requirements, and communal food distributions. Ritual knowledge is power in Pueblo society, and secrecy (the limited distribution of that knowledge) is the foundation upon which hierarchy is built (Brandt 1977, 1994). We suggest that if ritual knowledge is so central to the construction of power in Pueblo society, then regular access to sacred places on the landscape is a significant aspect of legitimizing that power.

Among middle range societies in general, esoteric ritual knowledge is a source of power. Thus, Ohio Hopewell ritual specialists in some respects will not have differed from their Pueblo counterparts in controlling that knowledge. But within Ohio Hopewell society a primary source of ritual knowledge appears to have been external, acquired through power questing. Of all the eastern woodland populations, the Ohio Hopewell seem to have elaborated most upon the notion of power questing.

Power questing is related to the beliefs shared (though diverse) among Native American societies (Benedict 1964; Dugan 1985) across much of North America concerning the importance of individuals establishing their own relationships with nonhuman beings (Ingold 2000) who share the world with them. Among Algonquian populations of the Midwest and subarctic, this relationship was established through the vision quest, which involved fasting in isolation at the time of puberty, both for girls and for boys (Callender 1978; Callender et al. 1978; Rogers and Taylor 1981; Ridington 1981; Skinner 1913; Trowbridge 1939; Ingold 2000). During the fasting period, the being that was the person's guardian spirit visited the individual in a dream. Through offerings to this spirit, the individual was then able to negotiate the vagaries of life assisted by the power of the guardian spirit. Among Plains populations, adults undertook the vision quest at times when they needed the spiritual powers of nonhuman beings to cope with some future event (Benedict 1964; Dugan 1985:138). Rugged, isolated areas were sought out, as these brought one closer to the spirits one was seeking to address (Steinbring 1981; Dugan 1985:143).

In neither the Plains nor the Woodlands, however, was a great journey undertaken to achieve the visions, although it was possible among the Menominee on occasion for the dream to involve a journey. Such a dream then gave the individual the rights to create a more powerful sacred bundle (Skinner 1913:46).

In both areas, personal access to spiritual power beyond what an individual possessed gave him or her the power to live life well. Visions among Algonquian populations were accompanied by instructions on assembling a bundle of objects that were powerful for that individual due to his or her relationship with the guardian spirit. Based on these understandings of the vision quest, it is possible that for the Ohio Hopewell, (1) journeying, like vision questing, was open to a diversity of individuals, (2) journeying to distant and very remote sacred places brought one even closer to powerful spirits than the more remote areas of one's home, and (3) that the journey itself associated the individual with creative powers far beyond those available at home.

Individual vision quests do not result in the creation of the large ritual precincts that are a critical component of Ohio Hopewell ritual practice. In some ethnographic cases, however, there is a corporate aspect to the vision quest experience. Among the Menominee, eastern Sioux, Iroquois, and Pottawatomie, for example, individuals who had experienced similar dreams associated together in a loose sodality that had its own ceremonies and paraphernalia (Benedict 1964:54; Skinner 1913). Perhaps Ohio Hopewell individuals who made journeys to the same distant places were similarly allied at home, and were responsible for organizing at least some components of the ritual system.

The ubiquity of copper and mica in Hopewell sites suggests that over time a fair number of people may have made journeys to Lake Superior and the Appalachian Mountains, places that lie within the Eastern Woodlands, the area of shared iconography that Seeman (1995) discusses. In the case of copper, they traveled to places that had been visited off and on for millennia. The large quantities of obsidian at the Hopewell site, however, indicate a journey that "upped the ante," so to speak: a journey for which prestige must have been immense, when at least some of the people who attempted that journey returned. It is thus not surprising that obsidian is found almost exclusively and only in large quantities at the preeminent Ohio Hopewell site, Hopewell itself.

Among Mississippian peoples, elites were motivated to find ways to legitimize their station. One way to accomplish this was to identify themselves with temporally, spatially, and spiritually distant forces that carried the imprimatur of being powerful, morally proper, and part of the god-given nature of things (Helms 1992:186). When this was accomplished, their status and their decisions became unassailable because they were associated with entities that could not be directly scrutinized and challenged. Therefore Mississippian elites repeatedly placed themselves in position to mediate between local populations and distant powers. It is no surprise that some Mississippian elites found Cahokia to be a powerful referent and a useful entity to be associated with, even after Cahokia had faded from the political landscape.

These strategies typically resulted in the adoption of new cosmological beliefs and the creation of multiple tiers of exclusivity in Mississippian religious access and iconography. Some forms of ritual performance and ritual knowledge were open to non-elite residents and may have been performed at the household or community level. Even in communities with strong social ranking, elites may have had little control, influence, or participation in rituals involving veneration of important ancestors, celebration of kinship bonds, feasting (Maxham 2000), and other assorted "public" rituals. Additionally, elites did not control ac-

cess to raw materials, and non-elite residents had access to exotics such as copper, shell, and greenstone (Cobb 2000; Gall and Steponaitis 2001; Welch 1991; Wilson 2001). Moreover, several classes of high quality objects that contain iconographic depictions exhibit broad social distribution. For example, Hemphill-style pottery is finely decorated with significant mythical motifs and has been recovered from elite and non-elite burials from Moundville and surrounding sites. Hemphill ceramics often show extensive signs of wear, and it is suspected that they were used commonly in elite and non-elite rituals.

What distinguished elite ritual is possession of a handful of badges, symbols, and iconography that reference restricted ritual knowledge that were monopolized by elites or exclusive cults. The best evidence for these claims comes from Moundville. At Moundville the most exclusively elite objects are copper-bladed axes that are associated only with seven very high-status males buried in the most privileged precinct at Moundville (Peebles and Kus 1977). Other objects at Moundville with strong elite associations include marine shell beads, copper gorgets, copper pendants, stone gorgets, painted pottery, stone bowls, copper ear spools, mineral pigments, and galena (Peebles and Kus 1977; Steponaitis and Knight 2004). Steponaitis and Knight (2004:179) found that the iconography on these objects, especially on the pendants and gorgets, shows a remarkable homogeneity in style and may have been used as emblems of a particular social status or sodality.

These tiers of exclusivity have strong parallels in Pueblo ethnography (Ortiz 1969; Brandt 1994; Hegmon 2005; Parsons 1939), which documents the degree to which ritual knowledge and the creation of ritual objects are controlled within Pueblo societies. These exclusive rituals work to emphasize the status difference between those who are capable of performing such ritual and those who are not, and to reinforce social differences in both Pueblo villages and Mississippian chiefdoms. Unfortunately, investigating the differential distribution of ritual objects in the pre-contact Puebloan period is hampered by the fact that many ritually sacred items such as prayer sticks, altars, masks, and garments have not survived in the open-air pueblo sites of that period. Durable material goods, such as the glaze-decorated bowls discussed above, appear unrestricted in their distributions, as does the small amount of shell and turquoise recovered from the large pre-contact Pueblo sites of the Rio Grande.

In the Hopewell case, the degree of exclusivity and control is less clear. Archaeologically visible Hopewell ritual tended to consist of events for public participation. It recognized the power of exotic goods, such that individuals who literally and physically bridged the distance between the local and the distant were accorded respect and social status. If power questing, like vision questing, was open to anyone with the need or desire for the power that distant journeys bring to an individual, there may have been greater opportunity for wider participation in the ritual process.

Conclusion

We have developed two dimensions of contrast to better appreciate the relationship between political structure and the acquisition of exotics necessary for ritual participation. First, there is a strong contrast between Puebloan peoples who obtained most of their ritual

material from localities within the Puebloan world and Hopewell and Mississippian peoples who imported raw materials and ritual paraphernalia from distant locales. We have connected these practices to differing beliefs regarding sources of ritual power. Second, there is a contrast in the potential degree of control of ritual objects and ritual knowledge. In both the Puebloan and Mississippian cases, some ritual knowledge was tightly controlled, and the practitioners derived social and political status from the possession of restricted knowledge. It is likely that there were similar efforts to restrict access among the Hopewell, but the practice of power questing may have created a situation in which valuable knowledge could be obtained by those who could successfully complete such journeys. This meant that a larger number of Hopewell people might have been able to achieve status by obtaining new ritual knowledge than in cases where existing practitioners more tightly regulate the transmission of such knowledge.

Together, these contrasts document that there is a complex relationship between ritual, geography, and political structure. Beliefs about the locus of ritual power shape behavior and affect how a community organizes itself and interacts with its neighbors. Likewise, beliefs about how ritual practitioners can engage with the ritual elements across the landscape can structure access to esoteric knowledge, and through that, affect opportunities to gain social status.

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