



**Book Review - *Hopewell Ceremonial Landscapes Of Ohio:  
More Than Mounds And Geometric Earthworks,*  
by Mark J. Lynott**

Reviewed By: **Alice P. Wright**

**Abstract**

Book review of Hopewell Ceremonial Landscapes of Ohio: More than Mounds and Geometric Earthworks. By: MARK J. LYNOTT. 2015. Oxbow Books, Oxford, United Kingdom. 288 pp. \$34.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1782977544.

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of migrations, sea level changes, and climatic fluctuations in subsequent chapters weave a narrative of an ever-evolving social and natural environment characterized by diverse social, economic, and ideological options. Rather than perpetuating the stereotype of timeless, ahistorical hunter-gatherers, his history of the eastern subarctic unfolds as a much more realistic and humanized account. While the chapters are roughly ordered by time period, they are structured more as archaeological micro-ethnographies of the diverse groups whose material culture is strewn across the eastern subarctic landscape. The narrative discusses the people and their practices rather than the traditional approach of emphasizing change through time and adaptation.

While *History in the Making* accomplishes its primary goal of providing a historicized account of eastern subarctic peoples, it is also an archaeological account and, as such, engages the region's material culture. Of particular note are excellent composite figures illustrating domestic structures and a discussion of fluctuating uses of raw material types (particularly Ramah chert) interwoven throughout the chapters. While the book could have benefited from additional descriptions of the material culture of the various groups discussed, Holly focuses on some particularly interesting aspects of material life, including human-animal relations, dwellings as emblematic of varying forms of social organization, and raw materials as meaningful symbols of place.

Material culture also plays a significant role in the book's concluding chapters. As the Norse and, later, other Europeans arrived in the eastern subarctic, the social and economic systems of indigenous groups were disrupted. Prevailing histories of contact often paint a bleak picture of helpless indigenous cultures being swept away in the wake of European colonization. However, in the context of all the disruptions that had come before in the complex social histories of eastern subarctic peoples, these changes (and their ultimate outcomes) seem less deterministic and certainly less portentous. Rather, existing groups engaged the newcomers in conflict and trade, and new groups arrived on the scene to take advantage of new opportunities, particularly access to an abundant source of precious iron. While the ultimate outcome of these encounters was loss of land and life, it did not have to be so. *History in the Making* clearly demonstrates the need for more, similar historicizing accounts in archaeological interpretation.

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*Reviewed by* Alice P. Wright, Appalachian State University.

Ohio's Middle Woodland (ca. A.D. 1–500) archaeological record includes mounds and geometric earthworks, elaborate human burials, and massive assemblages of sacred art objects and exotic raw materials from across North America; together, this package comprises what archaeologists call Hopewell. Hopewell has been the subject of intensive investigation for nearly two centuries, yet archaeologists continue to wrestle with fundamental questions about its organization. Was Hopewell a religious movement, an interaction sphere, or a combination of the two? Was it limited to the Ohio Valley, or did it involve more distant groups? In what ways did Hopewell ceremonial and exchange activities intersect with social, political, and economic systems? What contributed to the rise of Hopewell ceremonial practices, and what led to their decline? In recent years, several archaeologists have tackled these and related issues, but a definitive consensus remains elusive.

In *Hopewell Ceremonial Landscapes of Ohio*, the late Mark Lynott does not claim to have the final answers to these questions. Instead, in highly readable and deeply contextualized fashion, he outlines strategies for investigating Middle Woodland landscapes and the built environment that promise to bring archaeologists closer to a comprehensive understanding of Hopewell. As Supervisory Archaeologist for the Midwest Archaeological Center and longtime investigator at the Hopewell Culture National Historic Park in Ohio, Lynott was uniquely positioned to combine datasets from massive late nineteenth and early twentieth century mound excavations and the results of more recent fieldwork at iconic Hopewell sites. In so doing, Lynott is able to offer a cogent critique of extant visions of Ohio Hopewell: namely, that various current interpretations of Hopewell ceremonialism in fact are based on limited lines of material evidence. As such, they are best viewed as hypotheses that require substantial further testing.

As indicated by the volume's subtitle, *Hopewell Ceremonial Landscapes of Ohio* concerns "more than mounds and geometric earthworks." According to Lynott, understanding Hopewell demands that archaeologists consider both ritual and domestic spheres of activity at multiple spatial scales. One of this volume's greatest strengths is its synthesis of decades of

Hopewell research, without which such multi-scalar assessments are impossible. The book's first two chapters summarize the history of Hopewell archaeology in Ohio and the research topics that have recently dominated the field, including Middle Woodland subsistence, the sacred symbolism of earthworks, and the geographic reach of Hopewell ceremonialism. This last topic receives particular attention in Chapter 2, which describes evidence for Hopewellian activities across the Eastern Woodlands, and Chapter 4, which inventories similarities and differences among well-documented Hopewell sites in Ohio.

An even greater contribution of the book can be found in Chapter 3, in which Lynott explains the methods and results of a multi-year investigation of the Hopeton Earthworks. Extensive geophysical survey, targeted excavation, geoarchaeological analyses, and a focused program of radiocarbon dating revealed a multi-generational history of monument construction at Hopeton and evidence for substantial quarrying of soils across the site related to these efforts. Lynott also presents the results of excavations of non-embankment features at Hopeton, which support the idea that the site was used exclusively for ceremonial activities during the Middle Woodland period.

The book's final two chapters evaluate the current state of Hopewell archaeology and propose several avenues for future Hopewell research with a particular focus on two persistent challenges. First, Lynott notes the lack of reliable radiocarbon sequences from almost every excavated Hopewell site, without which proposals for intrasite construction histories and intersite relationships remain purely hypothetical. Second, he points out that an ongoing preoccupation with mounds and earthworks at the expense of non-monumental sites hampers archaeologists' ability to evaluate the relationships among ceremonial, social, and economic activities during the Middle Woodland period. Lynott's solution to both of these issues is strategic, question-based field investigations that utilize modern geophysical and geoarchaeological techniques and incorporate rigorous analyses of carefully collected artifact and paleoenvironmental assemblages.

In practice, Lynott's approach may be easier said than done, considering the high levels of disturbance at many Hopewell sites, as well as various stakeholders' concerns regarding the necessity of digging at ceremonial locales. Nevertheless, *Hopewell Ceremonial Landscapes of Ohio* shows how we may transform our hypotheses about Hopewell into robust, data-based interpretations. While this process is undeniably painstaking, Lynott demonstrates its value by example and leaves as his legacy not only preliminary answers to some of our longstanding questions about Hopewell,

but also a prescription for how we can continue to demystify the Hopewell archaeological record.

*Ceramic Petrography and Hopewell Interaction.* JAMES B. STOLTSMAN. 2015. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa. xxii + 232 pp. \$69.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8173-1859-8.

*Reviewed by* Mary F. Ownby, Desert Archaeology, Inc.

This book is a wonderful contribution to the field of ceramic petrography and provides a great example of how this method can illuminate cultural interaction and pottery technology. The study is perhaps one of the geographically broadest to have been done, covering the area from the Ohio Valley to North Carolina to west Tennessee to the Florida gulf coast. Middle Woodland period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000) vessels from 31 sites were examined. As the introduction clearly states, the goal is to assess evidence for cultural interaction within the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. Thus, the results of a principally quantitative approach to petrographic analysis are presented for 586 thin sections covering the major Hopewell centers and the surrounding areas of the Southeast. Six chapters define "local" pottery signatures based on compositional indices measured during point-counting. One chapter covers the issue of limestone-tempered pottery found throughout the region. Another chapter discusses updated petrographic results for material from the Pinson Mounds site, which also had ceramics analyzed through Neutron Activation Analysis (Stoltzman and Mainfort, *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 27:1–33). The penultimate chapter examines those vessels identified as potentially non-local. Notable conclusions from this large study are summarized in the final chapter highlighting the movement of some pottery and suggesting a mechanism for this pattern.

The methods and results in this book highlight two major issues within ceramic petrography: (1) how is temper (intentionally added material) identified, and (2) what does "local" mean? While point-counting is not new to ceramic petrography (see Miksa and Heidke, *Geoarchaeology* 16:177–222, which was not mentioned), the approach taken by Stoltzman is perhaps the most comprehensive. Counts are acquired for clay, silt, and sand inclusions along with sand-size measurements and mineralogical information. Six indices are compiled to compare the analyzed sherds and create a quantitative basis for determining vessels likely made from similar raw materials and paste practices. However, for many of the samples in this study, how temper was identified is not clear. The granite in the