

**DISPLAY GOODS PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION IN
THE MOUNDVILLE CHIEFDOM:
A MISSISSIPPIAN DILEMMA**

by
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A THESIS

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Alabama Museum of Natural History (AMNH) catalogue numbers are included in figures depicting artifacts from its collections.

ABSTRACT

This thesis highlights recent debates over the role of prestige or display goods production and circulation in the political, economic, and social systems of prehistoric southeastern chiefdoms. Three popular “prestige goods” models of production and circulation in chiefdoms are presented. Archaeological data from late Mississippian (A.D. 1300-1450) deposits at Moundville, a political and religious center, and outlying sites are examined in order to test the applicability of these “prestige goods” models to display goods production and circulation in Mississippian sociopolitical systems. Additionally, this thesis addresses ongoing debates involving the nature of elite control over the production and circulation of Mississippian display goods.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.”

-John Donne (1572-1631)

In the poetic statement “No man is an island...,” John Donne identifies one of the most important and universal features of human existence, that of the collective nature of human consciousness. The connections between humans so simply implied by Donne’s writing are ones that lie at the heart of anthropological inquiry. Specifically, anthropologists study the manifestations of these connections as they play out in a cultural context.

The most obvious manifestation of the interconnectedness of humans is expressed in the phenomenon of social living. Humans are not solitary animals; instead, existence for humans almost invariably involves close contact with other humans. Social living for humans involves a multitude of cultural behaviors and processes that act as both centripetal and centrifugal forces operating within the physical and cultural boundaries of a group of otherwise independent biological entities.

Certain human behaviors and processes, such as marriage, exchange, and warfare, act to integrate societies and appear to operate in all human societies. Anthropologists study the form and cultural contexts of these universal behaviors in the attempt to arrive at fundamental explanations for their existence. In essence, anthropology attempts to explain why and how all humans live as part of a greater whole called “society.” This task seems very daunting when one considers the tremendous amount of variability that exists among the many societies of the world, but anthropologists have at their aid a very useful conceptual tool.

Conceptual models provide anthropologists with a framework that can be used to structure interpretations of complex political, economic, and social processes. Models can be thought of as skeletons whose theoretical bones are formed by the compilation of numerous individual case studies. The principal variables used in cultural modeling are often highly abstracted and filtered in order to accommodate cultural variability. The benefit of conceptual models is that they provide anthropologists with a set of expectations to compare with data generated from research into a single case. The utility and explanatory power of these constructs can continually be tested as the models are compared with data from additional case studies. When discrepancies between the model and research data occur (as is often the case) changes can be made to the model or it might be discarded altogether. In either case, the process is one that ultimately attempts to achieve a higher level of understanding.

When reading through the archaeological literature that pertains to the economies of chiefdoms, one will likely see terms such as “production” and “circulation” (e.g., Earle 1987:296; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978:77, 78, 81; Muller 1997:270-271, 381-384). The literal meanings of these terms are rather simple, with “production” referring to the process of creating goods through physical effort, and “circulation” referring to the movement of goods. These terms, however, refer to processes that can be laden with complex, inter-related economic, political, social, and ideological dimensions that are hard to identify from archaeological remains.

The complex tapestry of cultural variables affecting production and circulation within a chiefdom cannot be more pronounced than when dealing with artifact assemblages known as prestige or display goods. For the purposes of this study, the term “display goods” (Muller 1997: 17) (alternatively known as “prestige goods” [Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978] or “skillfully crafted goods” [Helms 1993]) refers to artifacts that are rare, non-utilitarian, and ornately crafted often times with symbol-laden iconographic elements. The category includes items produced from exotic raw materials that are either modified locally or obtained from external sources in a finished form.

Several current cross-cultural models posit that both production and circulation of display goods are crucial for establishing and maintaining political, social, and economic power in complex chiefdoms (Blanton, Feinman, Kowalewski, and Peregrine 1996; Earle 1987, 1994, 1997; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978). These models provide useful conceptual frameworks for attaining considerable insight into the role of display goods production and circulation in prehistoric chiefdoms, but they can also pose limitations on the interpretation of archaeological evidence. The formulation of models and theories that can explain cultural phenomena across prehistoric chiefdoms is a desired and necessary goal, but with repeated use comes the risk of transforming the models into monolithic constructs.

The main deleterious effect of evoking cross-cultural models involves the glossing over of potentially important variability among cultures, (a) because the models assume that the role of display goods will be similar across cultures (Cobb 1996:257), and (b) because other cultural factors that play crucial roles in the political economy of a chiefdom, such as ideology or kin organization, may be assumed from the models rather than established through archaeological and ethnographic research (Yoffee 1993: 63). Thus, it is important to empirically test the applicability of these models to particular cases before they are used to construct explanations about prehistoric cultural dynamics.

The prehistoric southeastern United States presents a good case study for the production and circulation of display goods in chiefdoms. Most researchers agree that the Mississippian-stage societies that occupied much of southeastern North America from A.D. 1000-1600 fit the profile of a chiefdom (Peebles and Kus 1977; Smith 1978, 1990). Thus, these societies should provide excellent contexts for testing the applicability of cross-cultural chiefdom models. Also, current debates in Mississippian archaeology demonstrate that a theoretical polarity exists in terms of the degree of political and economic control held by elites in these societies (e.g., Muller 1997 *contra* Welch 1991; Pauketat 1994; Pauketat 1987 *contra* Prentice 1985). By using archaeological data from one of these Mississippian societies, we can test how well the cross-cultural models fit the observed data, and provide additional information regarding the degree of political and economic control held by Mississippian elites (after Welch 1986, 1991).

CHAPTER 2

A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT, TESTING, AND REFORMULATION OF CHIEFDOM MODELS

The history of socio-evolutionary typologies is cogently dealt with by various authors (e.g., Carneiro 1981 dealing specifically with the chiefdom concept; Earle 1994; Yoffee 1990). Some background, however, will help the reader to better understand the historical processes that affect the creation, testing, and transformation of anthropological and archaeological models.

Nineteenth-Century Evolutionary Typologies and “Chiefdoms” in 1950s and 1960s Anthropological Literature

The mid-nineteenth century saw major theoretical changes within the realm of natural and social sciences. These changes were the result of the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace first presented in 1858 (1993 [1858]). Evolution and the process of natural selection offered researchers a theoretical foundation on which to place the study of variability in human culture. The writings of Edward Tylor (1931[1881], 1958 [1871]) and Lewis Henry Morgan (1877) represent the first evolutionary models of culture. These models differ in their emphases on measures of complexity and engines of culture change, but a full review is well beyond the scope of this work.

Both models conceptualized culture as a set of adaptations to the natural environment and cultural institutions as “traits” that operate according to the principle of natural selection. Models thusly based on evolutionary competition assumed that cultural institutions existed and changed in response to evolutionary pressures, mainly population stress. This response-oriented relationship between population pressures and cultural responses propelled cultures along a positivist course of culture change and complexity. The result of such a positivist

view was a hierarchical model that divided all societies into discrete developmental stages based on complexity.

In the nineteenth-century cultural models, evolutionary stages included titles like “savagery,” “barbarism,” and “civilization” (Morgan 1877). Because all societies were thought to occupy stages in a single hierarchy of complexity, individual manifestations of culture could be formed into universal abstractions like “writing” or “religion” and used both to place cultures within the hierarchy and to compare cultures of different stages (i.e., cross-cultural comparison). For example, Edward Tylor (1931:300-305 [1881]) described ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics as “...a style half-way between the lowest and the highest [because they] have not quite left behind the savage stage of art.” Tylor’s statement demonstrates ethnocentrism in the models in that complexity is measured using contemporary European states as the pinnacle of the hierarchy.

The positivist spirit of cultural models from the late nineteenth century was preserved in anthropological literature from the mid-twentieth century, particularly in ethnographic studies. Like their predecessors, proponents of “neo-evolutionism” (Yoffe 1993:60) argued that all societies evolve from small simple groups to large complex states (Fried 1967; Oberg

Oberg (1955)	Fried (1960, 1967)	Service (1962)
Theocratic Empires	State	State
City States		
Feudal Type States	Stratified Society	Chiefdom
Politically Organized Chiefdoms	Ranked Society	
Segmented Tribes		
Homogenous Tribes	Egalitarian Society	Tribe
		Band

Table 1. The evolutionary typologies of the 1950s and 1960s. Societies progress from the bottom of the table to the top. (Adapted from Earle 1994:Table 1).

1955; Sahlins 1983 [1963]; Service 1962). As with earlier models, the course of cultural evolution was also broken into stages such as “Band,” “Tribe,” “Chiefdom,” “State” (Service 1962) or “Egalitarian,” “Ranked,” “Stratified,” and “State” (Fried 1967) (Table 1). Also, these models organized societies into stages by measuring universal variables. The variables used in the ethnographic models, however, dealt with different dimensions such as scale of integration and form of social structure (Earle 1994:941-949). A final similarity between the 1950s and 1960s models and earlier models involves the argument that population growth is a necessary and sufficient condition for cultural change and increased complexity.

Unlike earlier models that measured complexity using contemporary European society as a benchmark (i.e., intelligence for Tylor 1931:341 [1881]), the ethnographic models of the 1960s strove to use more objective measures of complexity. All of the ethnographic models shared the same basic view of society as a socio-political unit with economic foundations (Fried 1960:719; Oberg 1955:473; Service 1962:133). Two of the models (Oberg 1955; Service 1962) broke up societies into an evolutionary hierarchy based on the way social, economic, and political institutions (or lack thereof) create and maintain the group as a viable socio-political unit. The other model (Fried 1960, 1967) placed a heavy emphasis on the degree of social, political, and economic inequality as a measure of complexity. Thus, a society was seen as occupying a stage in the hierarchy based on certain foundational and universal variables, rather than according to the ethnocentrically measured “complexity” of individual cultural traits like religion, technology, and so forth. As a result of this framework, criteria for classification into evolutionary stages was seen as more objective and less ethnocentric.

It is in these ethnographic models that one first sees a focused research effort into the stage of society known as a chiefdom. Among the societal types of every model lay a socio-political unit that was not totally egalitarian and not totally a state. Because all societies were believed to evolve from simple to complex groups, these middle-range societies were thought to represent one or more social stages in transition between complete egalitarianism

and utter bureaucracy. Consequently, interest in chiefdoms during this period was often the result of the desire to learn about the origins of state level society (Yoffee 1993:60). The following discussion will entail three of these models focusing on the varying definitions of a “chiefdom” and pointing to some of the major political, economic, and social features associated with each model. These three particular models are used because their influence is readily seen in later archaeologically derived models of prehistoric chiefdoms.

Kalervo Oberg (1955) presents us with one of the earliest neo-evolutionary ethnographic models. Arguing that culture is comparable to a biological organism (Oberg 1955:472; see also Spencer 1967 [1882]), Oberg built on a classification system originally created by Julian Steward (1949) for pre-Columbian, South and Central American cultures. As in biology, the aim of the classification system was to organize individual societies into groups that could be compared to trace historical processes across cultures or to determine developmental relationships within or between cultures (Oberg 1955:472). In Oberg’s classificatory system, societies were seen as socio-political units that could be organized into types based on social structure (1955:472-473). Oberg (1955:473) identified six major social structures including the following: (a) homogenous tribes, (b) segmented tribes, (c) politically organized chiefdoms, (d) feudal type states, (e) city states, and (f) theocratic empires.

The types in the system represented social structures in a hierarchy that were successively more complex and wholly defined in terms of material factors such as population, technology, and subsistence production. Oberg (1955:473) argued that increases in complexity resulted from the addition of structural feature(s) (e.g., development of political office) and came with a reorganization of social relationships. Furthermore, the reorganization of social relationships was believed only to occur when consistent food surpluses were achieved, for these surpluses served to fuel both population growth and social inequality.

Oberg (1955) also offered his view regarding how the development of political, economic, and social inequality could have taken place. He argued that food surpluses generated in early egalitarian societies allowed certain groups to engage in non-subsistence

activities, mainly hosting rituals and feasts. This position facilitated a tenuous ritual authority over society as leaders began to collect and utilize surplus food production in order to host these ritual events. Eventually, the nascent economic control developed into institutionalized political, economic, and social power for a class of formal priests. This developmental sequence exhibited a strong causal link between economic foundations (i.e., subsistence production and control) and resulting social and political power structures.

Within Oberg's typology, the "politically organized chiefdom" type marked the first appearance of economic and political centralization, and social, economic, and political inequality. By definition, this type consisted of "...multi-village territorial chiefdoms governed by a paramount chief under whose control [were] districts and villages governed by a hierarchy of subordinate chiefs" (Oberg 1955:484). In Oberg's (1955:484) model, a chief's superordinate social position was exemplified by large accumulations of wealth in the form of slaves and property. Achieved prestige, especially in the form of war honors, was also a major component of a chief's social position. Thus, the major distinguishing feature of a chiefdom was social, political, and economic inequality based on a hierarchical political structure that placed authority over judicial, martial, and economic matters in the hands of subchiefs, in individual villages or districts, and chiefs throughout whole provinces.

The source of a chief's power in Oberg's model was very tenuous and dependent on the "common interests" of the governed people and ties of common descent (1955:484). The rule of a chief depended more on popular acceptance than on coercion because chiefdoms lacked the coercive political and economic institutions that typify a state-level society. They did not feature standing armies, established bureaucracies, or systematic tribute demands. Chiefs in Oberg's (1955:484-485) model did have the judicial authority to settle disputes and punish offenders, and the political and economic authority to assemble raiding parties and food surpluses, but warfare never involved the subjugation of a people, and any accumulated food stores were ultimately distributed to villagers. Overall, while chiefs were capable of

exerting considerable political and economic control over their followers, chiefly authority was ultimately based on the consensus of the governed people.

The attempt to explain the origin of the state within a neo-evolutionary framework was also represented by Morton Fried. In two works, Fried (1960, 1967) laid out a cultural typology that, like Oberg, organized societies in an evolutionary hierarchy according to their social structures. Fried argued that all societies progressed through a series of stages with each successive stage marking significant changes in social relations between members of a society. The stages were defined with particular attention paid to the emergence and development of political, economic, and social inequality (i.e., egalitarian society, rank society, stratified society, state society). While Oberg focused on the political nature of social relations, Fried (1970:721) placed emphasis on the economic foundations of social relations and on control over resources in particular.

In Fried's model, population increases were seen as the main catalysts behind the emergence of political, economic, and social inequality. Beginning with egalitarian societies, limits on natural resources necessarily caused the emigration of local populations into surrounding areas. Ties of kinship, determined by rules of descent, linked new satellite groups to their parent groups and provided a basis for the emergence of social "rank" and a redistributive economy. These were the hallmarks of ranked societies. Further changes in social relations involved the establishment and maintenance of social hierarchies that cross-cut kin groups (i.e., stratified societies) and the emergence of an economy based on unequal access to basic life-sustaining resources (Fried 1967:186). Fried (1967:185) argued that evolutionary progress from these stratified societies to state-level societies was very rapid and marked by the formalization of control measures through bureaucratic political institutions.

Fried's "rank societies" appear to be the best correlates of what are today called chiefdoms. Fried (1967:109) defined "rank societies" as "...[societies] in which positions of valued status are somehow limited so that not all those of sufficient talent to occupy such statuses actually achieve them." This was opposed to egalitarian societies in which there

were no such limits on the number of positions of valued status that existed in a society. The limits imposed on positions of high status in rank societies, however, did not involve any control over access to basic life-sustaining resources. Consequently, rank societies featured cultural mechanisms that aided in limiting access to positions of high status without affecting the ability of the population to sustain itself.

To Fried, the importance of kin relations in egalitarian and rank societies provided a logical foundation for the establishment of status barriers and social ranking. Corporate descent groups formed by birth rules facilitated social ranking by creating a measure which could be applied to all members of society in order to determine relative social standing. The measuring standard in ranked societies was represented by the genealogical distance of any member of a descent group to its mythical founding ancestor (1967:126). Combined with a principle of seniority (i.e., birth order), rank based on descent from a common founding ancestor neatly resulted in what Kirchoff (1959:260-270) called a “conical clan.” The apical position of a ranked group, what we may call the “chief,” was reserved for the person who was most closely related to the mythical founder. Relative statuses of all members of society were then determined by genealogical distance from the chief. Such a mechanism naturally lent itself to creating status barriers for entry into positions of high status as valued positions were filled by those most closely related to the chief.

Status barriers were also reflected in forms that were readily seen by the members of society, particularly in the form of sumptuary rules (i.e., restrictions placed on behaviors and costumery that are reserved for high status individuals). Fried (1967:109) was very quick to argue, however, that the objects of prestige did not represent wealth, for wealth, in Fried’s mind, must have the quality of universal exchangeability. In other words, objects of prestige were not wealth because they could not be exchanged for food or other resources. Furthermore, Fried (1967:110) argued that accumulation of these objects did not result in any privileged access to basic resources. In sum, the highest positions in Fried’s rank society were filled by virtue of descent and marked by manifestations such as costumery and

sumptuary practices, but these latter phenomena were thought to be reflections of superior rank, not sources of power.

Fried believed that ranking occurred simultaneously with the emergence of a redistributive economy. A redistributive economy was generally argued to operate in sedentary agricultural groups and involved "...the flow of goods into and out from a finite center" (Fried 1967:117). The finite center Fried speaks of was also the spatial manifestation of the pinnacle of the rank hierarchy. Thus, the highest-ranking member of society, or chief, occupied a position of economic, social, and spatial centrality. The duties of the chief as redistributor included collecting resources that eventually would be allocated back to the population in the form of feasts or stores in time of resource failure (Fried 1960:718). Much like Oberg, Fried contended that redistribution reinforced status inequality in rank societies as chiefs gained more prestige through the reallocation of resources at ritual events.

The nature of a chief's power in Fried's model relied heavily on corporate consensus as it did in Oberg's model. Fried (1967:718) explicitly argued that the function of a chief was not to accumulate or consume, but to collect and distribute. Also, Fried (1960:718) contended that chiefs in rank societies ruled without political authority. Instead, they relied on authority in the forms of kinship obligations and sacred ritual practices such as those that occurred at feasts. A chief occupied the ultimate ascribed status position by virtue of birth, that of the closest living link to a mythical ancestor. This genealogical position carried with it *a priori* ritual power, as was exemplified by the chief's key role in many rituals observed ethnographically (Fried 1967:137-141). This status was also tied to the chief's economic role as redistributor in that a chief, as ritual leader, organized the necessary economic resources for feasts and other redistributive rituals.

Fried, like Oberg, recognized the truly tenuous influence a chief exercised over his followers. In the absence of any political authority or coercive power, a chief relied on his superordinate status as the closest earthly link to the supernatural ancestral world. Even this seemingly important priestly status carried little actual power in Fried's model (Fried

1967:141). The key to a chief's power in these kin-centered societies stemmed from sources that were inherent in kinship systems. Superordinate rank, by virtue of birth, and the role of distributor, by virtue of asymmetrical exchanges, were the most effective sources of power available to a chief. With the lack of any coercive power, one can imagine why chiefs in rank societies could not control access to basic resources while the heads of states could.

In his seminal work *Primitive Social Organization: an Evolutionary Perspective* (1962), Elman Service presented a model of cultural evolution based on a different view than the models described above. Rather than concentrating primarily on the social structures of societies, Service's model defined social stages in reference to the different ways political, economic, and social institutions integrated members of society. Service organized societies into an evolutionary model where a society's progression through a series of stages was marked by the multiplication of human groups (i.e., increases in population densities) and increased specialization in political, economic, and social institutions (Service 1962:132).

Criteria used to set up the evolutionary stages (Service's "forms of integration") centered on the different ways societies maintained themselves as viable social, political, and economic units. Service argued that each stage in his model represented a different form of integration. Thus, "band," "tribe," "chiefdom," and "state" were terms that were applied to societies in reference to four different integrative structures. Population density and total environmental situation were seen as the major factors that operated within a society to determine the dominant form of integration.

Service argued that the evolutionary progression through the four stages of integration involved significant increases in the interdependence of a society's constituent social, political, and economic institutions. Bands and tribes, the first two stages in Service's model, featured forms of integration that Service (1962:132) called "mechanical" in reference to Durkheim's notions of segmental organization. Bands were small, egalitarian, often mobile kin-based groups that were comprised of fifty or fewer people. Members of band level societies relied on hunting and gathering resources for survival; therefore, these societies were composed of

highly independent family units. Because the lifeways of bands required high mobility, integration in these societies was weak and achieved mainly through kinship ties. These societies were also highly egalitarian as wealth accumulation was very difficult when constantly moving.

Tribes represented societies that were integrated on a larger scale than bands. Tribal level societies were like bands in regard to social equality, the function of residential units, and the relative independence of residential units (Service 1962:132). Integration at this level was believed to be kin-based as it is in bands, but integration in tribes also involved the formation of corporate sodalities that were capable of incorporating thousands of people. The corporate groups were often formed by rules of descent, but they also cut across descent groups and multiple villages. Such segmental organization usually required only temporary large group cooperation (as in times of famine or defense), while the small residential unit was argued to be the main, self-sufficient unit of society. According to Service, both tribes and bands, with their self-sufficient residential units, featured a form of integration that lacked any real sense of interdependence between dissimilar institutions. Even sodalities that organized thousands of people in tribe-level societies could be seen only as highly redundant institutions that served to integrate communities in a very limited capacity (Service 1962:132). Thus, because these societies could not effectively integrate large numbers of people except in emergencies, these types of societies were argued to be less complex.

The upper evolutionary stages in Service's model (i.e., chiefdoms and states) featured a form of solidarity that was qualitatively different from band and tribe level integration both in scale and in structure. So-called "organic" solidarity was present in societies with cultural institutions that were both highly specialized and mutually dependent (Service 1962:132). This form of solidarity was necessarily a more potent force of social integration than "mechanical" solidarity given Service's assumption that interdependence in organic structures was created and maintained as a result of increased specialization by constituent parts or institutions. Here, the dynamics of specialization can be thought of as a trade-off between

an increase in efficiency and a decrease in time and resources to spend doing other activities. Consequently, for specialization to be successful these “other activities” must be tended to by other people or institutions. According to Service (1962:134), the need for central coordination was fostered by economic specialization.

In Service’s evolutionary typology, organic solidarity first developed in chiefdom-level societies through economic specialization in the production and redistribution of subsistence and other goods (1962:134). The catalyst for economic specialization in Service’s model was what he deemed a “total environmental situation” where varying physiographic zones within a region provided areas of concentrated resources that were specific to one zone (Service 1962:133-134). In these circumstances, central agency in production and distribution, via a paramount chief and local sub-chiefs, resulted in higher productive efficiency through regional specialization. In essence, regional specialization occurred when people in different physiographic zones each specialized in production that was suited to local resources. The chief, in these cases, acted to funnel resources between zones in order to provide an even distribution of resources. While highly productive, the structure of this economic system naturally bred growing producer dependence on central distribution for essential resources.

State-level societies in the model expanded central coordination and mutual dependence far beyond that of a chiefdom. The major difference between chiefdom and state-level societies was that states featured a form of integration that involved “legitimized force” (Service 1962:165). In effect, the formal laws and bureaucratic institutions of a state provided *a priori* justification for their existence. With coercive powers, states could effectively coordinate many more areas of society than chiefdoms. As we shall see, chiefs in Service’s model relied mainly on the economic role of distributor as a fund of power.

Like middle-range societies in the other two evolutionary models, Service’s “chiefdom-level” societies exhibited the first forms of political and economic centralization, and political and social inequality. In defining a chiefdom, Service (1962:140) stated, “It is

the presence of the office of chief that makes a chiefdom.” This is a very simple statement; however, what Service did not say, but implied about the economic foundations of chiefdoms, is far more telling. To Service, the role of redistributor was tantamount to the office of chief, for it was through redistribution that central economic coordination developed (see the discussion above on “total environmental situation”). He argued that central organization, both in production and redistribution, provided a clear advantage to groups who existed in a competitive environment (Service 1962:138). For instance, increases in productivity due to specialization created surpluses that could be then be used to establish asymmetrical exchange relations in competitive regional exchange systems. Consequently, a society could be said to cross the threshold from tribe to chiefdom when the economic role of redistributor became a necessary and permanent political office.

On such economic foundations rested the political and social inequality inherent in the chiefdoms of Service’s model. As with the other two evolutionary models, the political and social structures of Service’s chiefdoms can be thought of as pyramids with the chief occupying the apical position. Unlike Fried and Oberg, who assigned foundational roles to kinship and descent in determining social and political status in chiefdoms, Service argued that political and social statuses were wholly defined in reference to the economic centrality of the office of chief. As discussed below, the superordinate political and social status of a chief was a consequence, not a cause of central economic coordination (Service 1962:140).

Chiefdoms in Service’s evolutionary model featured the first appearance of a hierarchical, corporate political structure. With the rise of regional economic specialization, producers became dependent upon this system to obtain goods from other physiographic zones. Thus, growing societal dependence on central economic coordination combined with competitive advantage created the need for a permanent office with ascribed functions that could exist beyond individuals (Service 1962:139). In such societies, transmission of this office was typically hereditary and included a social dimension. As the central economic coordinator in a fully developed chiefdom, a chief became a political leader typically

responsible for funneling regional production through a fixed geographical center and back into the general population. One person alone could not possibly have accomplished such a task; instead, control over local production must have been in the hands of others who served the interests of the chief.

The pyramidal form of political statuses in Service's chiefdoms mimicked the economic roles played by those who aided in the coordination and distribution of regional production. Ideally, production and distribution in local groups was coordinated by a local sub-chief who passed local goods up the line to the main chief in return for non-local goods (Service 1962:142). The non-local goods were then redistributed to the populace by the sub-chief. Hence, the hierarchical political structure of a chiefdom was a legitimizing extension of central economic coordination. One can see how this economically driven cause-effect relationship differed from Fried's model where almost equal emphasis was given to descent and central economic coordination as primary catalysts for the creation of a political hierarchy.

In Service's model, ranked social hierarchies were another hallmark of chiefdoms that had their origins in a redistributive economy. Service stated that while regional production was collected with the intention of redistribution, not all of the collected goods got put right back into circulation. Instead, some of the accumulated subsistence production was held by the chief and used to create a resource buffer for the entire chiefdom in times of need. These subsistence stores created a fund that allowed a chief to support more wives, fund craft specialists, and host elaborate ritual feasts (Service 1962:139). In addition to prestige gained through being the central economic redistributor, these activities placed the chief in a position of very high social rank relative to others in society (Service 1962:139). Furthermore, because chiefdoms featured kin-based residential groups as the basic economic unit, the superordinate social rank of a chief was easily transferred to members of his kin group (Service 1962:139-140). Hence, Service's model held that the creation of a ranked social hierarchy was a direct result of the operation of a redistributive economy.

Whereas the rise of political and social inequality may have been a natural result of a redistributive economy, the maintenance of such asymmetrical relations required cultural institutions that justified this inequality. In the absence of coercive power, such as that possessed by state-level societies, chiefs relied on other legitimizing means. Service used the term “rules” to describe the quasi-legal institutions that served to validate and perpetuate the office of chief. The two main types of rules that served these ends were sumptuary rules and rules of succession (Service 1962:146).

Cultural recognition of the office of chief as a permanent office was necessary in order to facilitate the shift from a tenuous regulatory position associated with individual leaders. Service (Service 1962:147) argued that this task was accomplished through sanctions, prescriptions, and proscriptions known as “sumptuary rules.” Sumptuary rules often involved distinctions in dress, diet, marriage rules, and even speech that were applied to a chief and his close relatives. Such rules became associated with the office of chief and set a chief and his relatives apart from society as a separate class of people. Service (1962:150) noted that these classes were social and political in origin, and had nothing to do with economic self-seeking and wealth accumulation. Of course, rules of dress and ornamentation were easiest to recognize, especially in the archaeological record; therefore, much attention has been paid to these rules in studies of prehistoric chiefdoms.

To Service, one of the most important steps in establishing a permanent office involved establishing a means of transferring power from one individual officeholder to the next. While sumptuary rules did separate a chief and his kin from the rest of society, they did not alone identify a particular person to occupy the office of chief. Also, rules of succession became imperative because political positions other than chief also needed to be filled (Service 1962:150). As chiefdoms were normally thought of as kin-based societies, rules of chiefly succession usually involved concepts of heredity and primogeniture (Service 1962:148). Reinforced by mythological rhetoric, the resulting structure of ranked social and political

statuses was very similar to the ones posited by Fried (1960, 1967) and Oberg (1955) and called a “conical clan” by Kirchoff (1959).

In summary, there are some commonalities we can draw from this extended review of three anthropological models of chiefdoms that dominated studies in the 1950s and 1960s. First, all of the models were based on the belief that all human societies evolved from small simple groups to large complex societies. Second, all the models contained a stage that was not wholly egalitarian, but did not yet have institutionalized inequality sanctioned by coercive force. Third, this intermediate stage could be identified by the first appearance of political centralization, usually in concert with economic centralization. Fourth, authority in these intermediate societies was based upon legitimization through cultural means, especially sumptuary rules, descent reckoning of status positions, and ancestor mythologies. Fifth, the reader will by now have noticed how little of a foundational role ornately crafted display goods played in these early models. The growing importance of these goods in archaeological models would be seen after a major theoretical shift that occurred in the late 1970s.

Early Use of 1960s Anthropological Models and the Rise of Display Goods in Southeastern Archaeological Contexts

During the two decades following their introduction, archaeologists used evolutionary anthropological models in the attempt to flesh out the fragmentary material record left by prehistoric societies. Archaeologists working on late prehistoric Mississippian societies (ca. A.D. 1000-1600) in the southeastern United States found that these models provided a conceptual framework that allowed them to go beyond strict materialist interpretations of the archaeological record (Brown 1971; Larson 1971; Peebles 1971). Archaeologists generally co-opted the anthropological models because they outlined sociological processes based on numerous cross-cultural studies of middle range societies. These processes could be linked to possible archaeological correlates in order to create a picture of the actual operation of prehistoric societies. This methodology was part of the processual critique of culture history that charged culture historians with focusing too heavily on the chronology of prehistoric

societies while ignoring the anthropological questions that might be addressed (Binford 1962; Taylor 1948). Numerous Mississippian sites identified in the Southeastern United States during the first half of the twentieth century provided a testing ground for the cross-cultural models.

Two southeastern archaeologists, James Brown (1971) and Christopher Peebles (1971), addressed the 1960s anthropological models in their analyses of mortuary practices among late prehistoric societies in the Southeastern United States. In the attempt to make archaeology a more objective science, the goal of this research was to identify methods that would allow archaeologists to make testable statements about prehistoric societies. In essence, these authors strove to demonstrate that the superorganic dimensions of prehistoric societies (e.g., political and social structures) could be identified from the archaeological record in the same manner as more obviously material dimensions such as subsistence practices.

Archaeologists do not have the benefit of speaking to live informants about customs and practices; therefore, questions relating to prehistoric societies must always be answered using inferences based on material culture. Consequently, the archaeological research we are about to discuss focused heavily on burial treatment as a correlate to how individuals in society were treated when living (Binford 1962). Following the “Binford – Saxe” program for the study of mortuary remains, social and political inequality were believed to appear archaeologically as marked differences between the burial treatments of a single society (Binford 1962, 1971; Saxe 1970). Archaeology’s dilemma over the socio-political role of ornately crafted display goods began with this bridging argument.

Brown (1971) and Peebles (1971) both argued that the unequal distribution of display goods in burials could be used as an identifier of social and political hierarchies. The key is that these archaeologists viewed display goods as identifiers of high status and power. The “prestige goods” models that are dominant today view display goods not solely as identifiers of status, but also as major sources of power and status (e.g., Earle 1977, 1987, 1997; Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978; Wright 1984).

Brown (1971) employed the 1960s ethnographic chiefdom models as conceptual tools in his study of status in burials at the late prehistoric site of Spiro. Brown (Brown 1971:95) built an analytical key that separated burials at Spiro using three major categories including the handling of the burial, internal burial context, and population profile (i.e., sex and age). Using this key to analyze burials, Brown identified multiple contemporaneous burial programs present at Spiro during the period known as the Spiro phase in the paper (A.D. 900-1450). The programs had varying treatments including the relatively rare and lavish burials. These burials included litters and precious grave goods (i.e., copper and marine shell gorgets), or skeletons that exhibited evidence of partial disarticulation.

Brown (1971:101) noted a link between burial treatment and status, arguing that the burial programs at Spiro defined separate segments of society that were, in effect, social classes. He argued that consistencies between litter burial treatments at Spiro resembled elements that were associated with “office” (in Service’s sense). Brown saw litter burials as being reserved for chieftains and copper plate burials as being reserved for the members of his family. Additionally, Brown (1971:102) stated that the pyramidal arrangement of membership to statuses based on burial treatment and unequal access to precious goods corresponded to the inequality inherent in the socio-evolutionary stages of Service’s “chiefdoms” or Fried’s “rank societies.”

Mortuary analysis was also used by Christopher Peebles (1971, 1974) to model the prehistoric socio-political organization of Mississippian societies in western central Alabama. Peebles (1971:69) argued that the advantages of such archaeologically derived status models laid in their comparability to the anthropological typologies of Fried and Service. The advantage of this approach was apparent once the typological assignment of a prehistoric society was determined (i.e., ranked society, chiefdom, state, etc.). Peebles argued that after this task was complete, archaeologists could use the definitional characteristics of that particular evolutionary stage to generate new archaeological questions that addressed prehistoric social, economic, and political systems. Furthermore, because the anthropological

models were based on cross-cultural comparison, they allowed archaeologists to compare prehistoric societies that were separated by time and/or space (Peebles 1971:69).

Peebles's studies centered on the archaeological remains of Mississippian societies located on the Tennessee River and Black Warrior River in present day Alabama. Like Brown, Peebles relied on burial treatment as an indicator of social and political status. Consequently, variability in the spatial arrangements of burials and distribution of display goods occupied a good deal of the studies (Peebles 1971:68, 1974). Using Binford's (1962) distinctions for material culture, display goods in Peebles's works were viewed as symbols that provide social information about individuals (i.e., socio-technic dimension).

One of Peebles's works (1971) identified two sets of burial goods that had a socio-technic dimension. One of these sets included "supra-local" symbols which were ornately crafted items made of rare material, some bearing iconography, that were found at sites across the Southeast. The other set consisted of more common items like animal claws and ceramic items which had a much more local distribution. Peebles (1971:69) argued that both sets of artifacts as well as the placement of burials functioned to differentiate individuals with respect to rank and status.

Peebles used statistical techniques to study the distribution of both of these sets of artifacts at the level of local community, small mounded "local centers," and the "regional center" of Moundville finding that there were significant differences in distribution that implied ranked statuses. Specifically, local symbols were more abundant and concentrated in burials at local community cemeteries and non-mound cemetery burials at Moundville, while what Peebles deemed the highest status items (e.g., ceremonial axes and sheet copper hair plumes) were only associated with a few individuals and confined only to mound contexts (Peebles 1971:84-85). The by now familiar pyramidal distribution of these artifacts and their associated statuses was argued to be analogous to Fried's concept of a ranked society (Peebles 1971:87). Furthermore, Peebles (1971:87-88) drew upon Service's notion of a redistributive network when he described the diversity of environmental resources around

the Moundville site. Within the next decade, Peebles would take part in a critique of the very model of redistribution that he espoused for Moundville.

In another work, Peebles (1974) used statistical procedures to test hypotheses regarding mortuary treatment and social organization. He conducted cluster analyses on data generated from burial records at the Moundville paramount center. The objective of this research was to form statistically derived clusters of burials based on grave furnishings (Peebles 1974:112-122). After the clusters had been created, Peebles (1974:112, 119) determined the artifact classes that defined each cluster by dividing the percentage occurrence of an artifact class in the cluster by the percentage occurrence of the artifact class in the entire burial sample. Peebles also compared the clusters using variables such as age, sex, orientation of burial, and location of burial (i.e., mound and non-mound).

Peebles found that the cluster analyses produced patterns that would be expected in Fried's "rank societies." Two dimensions of ranked social organization were identified, one reflecting ascriptive rules limiting access to the highest ranking positions, and one reflecting achieved rank. Artifacts relating to the first dimension were what we consider display goods. Peebles (1974:132) stated that these artifacts were all non-local, but he did not discern between locally and non-locally manufactured items. Grave goods that Peebles identified as belonging to the second dimension were largely utilitarian including items such as bone awls and projectile points.

When the clusters were analyzed in regard to age, sex, and burial location, Peebles (1974:183) found that the artifacts relating to the first dimension occurred with both child and adult burials, concluding that the social identities of these individuals were determined by ascription (i.e., birth). Artifacts that defined the second dimension, or achieved rank, were found to covary with both age and sex. Peebles (1974:184) argued that the data reflected restrictions in access to certain items based on sex and age, which are components of achieved rank.

The two social dimensions were also argued to be evident in burial location. Peebles (1974:185) stated that clusters with artifacts relating to the ascriptive rank dimension were interred together either in mounds or in nearby cemeteries on the north side of the plaza while most of the clusters representing the achieved rank dimension were located to the south, east, and west of the plaza. The result of these analyses was a model of social organization that mirrored Fried's "rank societies" with an apical social position held by a chief and pyramidal hierarchy of ranked statuses determined by ascription and achievement.

Ethnohistorical Critique of Redistributive Networks and Three Resulting Political Economy Models

Within the last quarter century, a fundamental theoretical shift occurred in chiefdom studies that changed how archaeologists viewed and modeled these societies. As a result, archaeologists now strove to explain prehistoric chiefdoms using models informed more by archaeological and ethnohistorical methods (e.g., Earle 1987, 1997; Peebles and Kus 1977; Yoffee 1993) and less by analogy to the 1960s ethnographic models of chiefdoms (e.g., Fried 1967; Sahlins 1983 [1963]; Service 1962). The shift reflected archaeologists' hesitations to evoke the 1950s and 1960s anthropological models after research in the 1970s effectively questioned the redistributive foundations of chiefdoms (Earle 1977; Peebles and Kus 1977 *contra* Service 1962).

Earle, Peebles, and Kus used ethnohistorical evidence to test how well the 1960s models applied to Hawaiian society, a society then considered to be an archetypal example of a chiefdom. Earle (1977) demonstrated that Service's ideas of regional specialization and dependence on chiefly redistribution did not apply in Hawaii where districts were self-sufficient and purposefully arranged to encompass a wide variety of environmental zones. Peebles and Kus (1977) added to this, arguing that the food resources and display goods collected by Hawaiian chiefs rarely entered back into general circulation; instead, these goods were used by the chief and nobility to maintain their political and social dominance.

As theoretical favor shifted away from the view of chiefdoms as “redistributive societies,” archaeologists began to posit that it was inequality and control of social, political, and economic power that typified chiefdoms (e.g., Earle 1978; Johnson and Earle 1987; Pauketat 1994; Peebles and Kus 1977). Consequently, research changed focus from placing the evolutionary label “chiefdom” on a society to questioning how power and inequality emerged in these societies. The archaeological models that were developed after this shift naturally focused on the political nature of chiefdoms and imbedded issues of power and inequality (e.g., various papers in Earle 1991; Wright 1984).

While the view of a chief as the key resource manager ultimately fell to the idea of a chief as a political opportunist, the concept of social evolution and the use of cross-cultural comparison lives on in archaeology. Three models typify the present theoretical climate with its emphasis on the use of display goods production and circulation as a universal source of political power in chiefdoms. Frankenstein and Rowlands’s “prestige goods economy” model (1978), Timothy Earle’s “synthetic theory of social evolution” (1978; Johnson and Earle 1987), and Blanton, Feinman, Kowalewski, and Perigrine’s “dual processual theory” (1996) provide three conceptual frameworks for analyzing display goods distribution and consumption in prehistoric complex chiefdoms like Moundville.

The Prestige Goods Models: Display Goods as Funds of Chiefly Power

In the late 1970s, Susan Frankenstein and M. J. Rowlands (1978) wrote a seminal article in which they applied an anthropologically generated model of political economy to data from Early Iron Age chiefdoms. The model described a system known as a “prestige-goods economy” which placed political power in the hands of those who could control access to exotic wealth items through external exchange relations (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978:76). The foundation of the model depended on a set of ethnographic analogies to groups that placed a high priority on exotic wealth items in determining status (e.g., Sahlins 1983 [1963]). The value of prestige goods laid in their use as “payments” in a system of

social transactions that emphasized competition for status between descent groups (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978:76). In essence, prestige goods were seen as items that were used in a constant cycle of status competition (e.g., marriage wealth, feasting) to pay social debts and to place social debt upon others.

In this model, attainment and distribution of non-utilitarian wealth objects was obviously of utmost importance in gaining political control, for political and social status were argued to be intertwined in chiefdoms. For Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978:76), status competition, as evident in fairly egalitarian societies, naturally led to hierarchical economic, social, and political situations as nascent elite descent groups invested food surpluses in wealth objects that were used to acquire more wives and dependents for the group. According to the authors (1978:76), increasing the demographic strength of the local group was crucial for creating a system to support the ceaseless cycle of status competition. Once the competitive cycle began to breed asymmetrical social relations, it was argued that nascent elites could begin to use sumptuary laws to assert control by determining what items could be used as “prestige goods.” By determining the form and value of these social commodities, a chief could, in effect, entrench himself at the top of the political and social hierarchy through a policy of social loan sharking.

Life at the top, however, was never a stable environment. Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978:78) noted that a chief must constantly struggle to control the supply of prestige goods in order to keep “inflation” from devaluing the objects. Thus, trade with external polities, any manufacturing technique related to prestige goods (i.e., metallurgy in Europe), and any sources of non-local raw materials were tightly controlled in order to maintain a competitive advantage. Also, the political aspirations of a host of minor elites were dealt with through the dispersal of foreign prestige goods to local sub-chiefs. In sum, expansion of political power in this model was a function of the supply of prestige goods at one’s disposal. When the supply of prestige goods was steady and tightly controlled, the political and social dominance of an elite group was maintained. When there was a disruption in the supply of

prestige goods or loss of control over their production, elites lost dominance because they could no longer meet their social obligations to their subordinates. This idea of prestige goods being commodities in a fund of chiefly political power is one that plays out in both of the following models.

Timothy Earle studied chiefdoms from this political economy perspective, grounding his theoretical model in the concept of multilineal evolution based on material processes. Earle (1978, 1987) argued that chiefdoms were emergent political institutions that possessed fundamentally the same dynamics as archaic states; therefore, he argued that the same processes that drove political, social, and economic dynamics across states could be applied to chiefdoms. Furthermore, the motivation for individuals to seek political advantage was presumed to be a universal human trait in this model (Earle 1997:2). The development of unequal power relations and central organization within a polity were said to be based on the manipulation of social, economic, military, and ideological sources of power by individuals or groups (Earle 1994, 1997).

Earle argued that while there were numerous sources of power from which one could draw to achieve superior status, they were not interchangeable or equal in effectiveness. Economic power alone was believed to create the stable environment necessary for the emergence and growth of a political centralized polity (Earle 1994:956). Justification for this was two-fold: First, any strategy to achieve power must have been informed by material conditions (i.e., resources and technology). Economic activities were necessarily informed by material conditions, thus allowing many opportunities for control. Second, the degree that elites could control each of the four power sources (social, economic, military, and ideological) was not equal. As discussed above, economic power was argued to be the easiest to control, and because economic resources were necessary to fund the other sources of power, it was very effective at controlling them (Earle 1994:956). Whereas social, military, and ideological sources of power were tremendously important, effective elite strategies in Earle's model incorporated these sources with an economic foundation. Much of Earle's

(1997) fieldwork in the last twenty years has involved cross-cultural comparisons focusing on how the different combinations of power sources affected the development of chiefdoms.

According to Earle, control over the production and circulation of display goods played a major role in strategies to attain and maintain domination for an individual or group. Earle (1997:70) argued that all centralized polities must possess a developed political economy in order to finance political and economic expansion. Earle separated political economy into two systems, staple finance and wealth finance. Both of these systems contributed resources to fund elite activities, but each involved different mechanisms of control (Earle 1997:70). Earle (1997:71) defined effective staple finance as a system based on elite property holding where “rents,” in the form of commoner production or corvée labor were paid to elites in return for access to land and resources. In this model, staple finance was effective in creating a surplus of food and labor that could be applied to projects that expanded the elite power base (i.e., monumental labor, attached craft production, warfare).

Earle’s concept of “wealth finance,” which can be thought of as the result of effective staple finance, relied heavily on display goods as mechanisms for control. Wealth finance was defined as a system that uses valuable objects as “political currencies” in social transactions that “compensate people within ruling institutions” (Earle 1997:73). Display goods could be used by chiefs to “buy” loyalty from local underling elites, to establish and maintain alliances with foreign elites, and to maintain a rigid hierarchy of economic, social, political power. Earle (1987:299) pointed out that the display objects themselves held no importance; instead, their value was in the esoteric knowledge and power they symbolized as a result of their connection with exotic, supernatural sources (see also Helms 1993). This symbolism was achieved by the use of ornately crafted objects, frequently made from materials exotic to the polity.

Display goods, as manifestations of supernatural power, were argued to ultimately link economic processes (i.e., wealth finance) and ideological sources of power in order to justify and maintain the inequalities inherent in a chiefly society. In order to effectively

control wealth finance, elites controlled the production and circulation of display goods. As with a “prestige goods economy,” access to display goods was believed to be tightly controlled in order to prevent over-circulation and “devaluation” in terms of supernatural power. This view of wealth finance was very similar to that of the “prestige goods” model of Frankenstein and Rowlands, but Earle envisioned wealth finance as but one dimension in an integrated model of political economy that could be highly variable from chiefdom to chiefdom.

The concept of power in relation to socio-political change, a common thread in the earlier two models, also plays an important role in a third model that addressed display goods production and circulation in prehistoric societies. “Dual processual theory” was, in essence, a reaction to the failure of evolutionary models (e.g., Fried 1967; Service 1962) to adequately explain the development of Mesoamerican polities (Blanton et al. 1996:1). In their critique, Blanton, Feinman, Kowalewski, and Peregrine (1996:1) argued that evolutionary models constricted variability among cultures by assuming a single trajectory of increasing political centralization through a series of static stages without explaining the human behaviors behind the change. Like Earle, the authors assumed that individual aspirations of power, wealth, and power were universal to human society; furthermore, like Earle they argued that political actors used differing strategies to attain power (1996:2).

The dual-processual model differed from the other two models in that the authors recognized corporate strategies in addition to the exclusionary strategies posited by Frankenstein, Rowlands, and Earle. Prehistoric societies could thus be modeled not according to a particular level in an evolutionary typology, but according to the use of either corporate or networking (exclusionary) strategies. Corporate strategies, through a cognitive code of solidarity imbedded in ideology, placed an emphasis on the sharing of power across different sectors of a society as opposed to exclusionary strategies that attempted to centralize power in one individual or group (Blanton et. al 1996:2). In fact, those societies that employed corporate strategies often discouraged personal accumulation of power. The authors argued that both corporate and networking strategies could co-exist in the same society or cycle

between the two through time. One strategy, however, tended to be dominant at any one time. The explanatory utility of such a model laid in its ability to deal with both highly centralized societies (e.g., Maya city states) and highly corporate yet complexly organized societies (e.g., Teotihuacan).

While the idea of corporate strategies is highly intriguing, especially considering the potentially communal Mississippian activity of mound building, it is in the other strategies, so-called “network” strategies, that display goods were addressed. Networking strategies involved the economic interactions of individuals beyond the local group in attempts to establish dominance (Blanton et al. 1996:4). Like Frankenstein, Rowlands, and Earle, the authors argued that distant exchange connections provided nascent elites with two essential tools in gaining power, exotic valuables and esoteric knowledge. As with the other models, competition among individuals for display goods was assumed to be constant, making control over production and circulation a primary concern. Control over these processes was believed to be achieved through a combination of “patrimonial rhetoric” and “prestige-goods systems.”

“Patrimonial rhetoric” is a term used to describe various descent-oriented practices such as polygyny, clanship, and multigenerational extended households. The dynamics of these practices were believed to be very similar to those envisioned by Fried and Service, especially in reinforcing a ranked system known to many as a “conical clan” (See Kirchoff 1959). Such a hierarchical system of rank provided both an infrastructure and the ideological justification for the elite mobilization of surplus resources from the whole society (Blanton et. al 1996:5).

As with the “prestige goods” model (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978), prestige goods systems required control over the production and circulation of display goods. In networking strategies, elite control over prestige goods systems was necessary to eliminate possible competition with other local groups over external exchange contacts (Blanton et. al 1996:5). On another level, this competition was believed to pervade interactions between the elites of each local system as they vied for dominance within a regional system. Also in

networking strategies, a regional system of elite interaction was manifested in an “international style” which helped encourage interactions between culturally dissimilar groups while at the same time provided elites with a way to distinguish themselves on a local and regional level (Blanton et al. 1996:5). The important aspect to the authors’ concept of international style was that no one polity could dictate its meaning, therefore the symbols could have very different or similar meanings between distant local groups.

The models presented above give archaeologists a conceptual framework for how display goods might have operated in prehistoric chiefdoms. In fact, many southeastern archaeologists use some of the basic principles of these prestige goods models in their work just as Brown and Peebles used the anthropological models of the 1960s (e.g., Brown, Kerber, and Winters 1990; Steponaitis 1991; Welch 1991, 1996). Specifically, these authors appear to agree with the notion that display goods represent sources of social and political power that operate to establish and maintain inequality in Mississippian societies. This correlation between power and display goods, however, needs to be rigorously tested much like the 1960s models involving redistribution were tested by Earle (1977) and Peebles and Kus (1977). Hopefully, this historical review of modeling in chiefdom studies has demonstrated the importance of testing and reformulation in the anthropological tradition.

Now that the basic tenets of each prestige goods model have been presented, it will be useful to summarize the ethnohistorical and archaeological correlates that will help in determining the applicability of these models to display goods production and circulation in the Moundville chiefdom. The issue of the overall importance of display goods in elite Mississippian strategies to gain power is central. If display goods play as crucial a role in Mississippian political economy as they do in the all three models, one would presume they would (a) be fairly ubiquitous in the archaeological record, (b) be found in high concentrations among few individuals, (c) be made from rare exotic materials whose sources could nevertheless easily provide an ample supply, (d) be non-utilitarian and highly ornate, often times displaying symbols in a common iconographic system that occurs in Mississippian

contexts throughout the southeastern U.S. (i.e., international style), and (e) be present in both local and non-local contexts (i.e., locally made display goods should appear in contexts outside of the polity). Control over display goods economies can be operationalized as the concentration of these goods and evidence of their manufacture in and near the paramount political centers and subordinate administrative centers where elites presumably lived. Finally, the idea of competition between descent groups and patrimonial rhetoric should manifest itself in ethnohistoric examples of conical clan or other descent group systems in the southeastern United States.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEBATE OVER DISPLAY GOODS IN MISSISSIPPIAN CONTEXTS

While one goal of this work is to test the applicability of cross cultural prestige goods models to a Mississippian context, there is another equally important aim. This aim is to use the archaeological data from the Moundville chiefdom to address ongoing debates regarding the nature of display goods control in Mississippian societies. Existing theories and models involving elite control over the production and circulation of display goods within Mississippian societies have yet to reach a consensus. The main issue of contention in this debate revolves around the extent of political control held by elites over the economy. One side of the argument contends that Mississippian display goods production, exchange, and distribution were controlled in varying degrees by a powerful minority of high status individuals living at the paramount center (Pauketat 1994, 1997; Peebles and Kus 1977; Welch 1991, 1996; Yerkes 1983). The other side of the argument posits that Mississippian display goods economies were not strictly controlled; instead, most activities were practiced at the household level without any restrictions concerning access to raw materials or production processes (Brown et al. 1990; Cobb 1989; Milner 1990; Muller 1987, 1997).

Debates Over Display Goods Production

Much of the current debating over Mississippian display goods production deals with the concept of “craft specialization.” This term, depending on how it is used, can carry very strong implications of elite control. This is especially true when the word “attached” is attached to “craft specialization.” The resulting lexicon implies that craftspeople are excluded from the toil of subsistence activities and supported by chiefs and other high status individuals. In return for support, the craftspeople manufacture display goods for use in the prestige

competitions of the nobility. This, in effect, assures a healthy supply of “political currency” for powerful chiefs. On the other hand, craft specialization does not have to have such strong control connotations. Instead, craft specialization can be said to occur outside of elite auspices, being practiced by people of varying social and political statuses. According to this usage, specialization can occur in social contexts where prestige competitions are without significant status barriers and involve all members of society.

The application of “prestige goods” models to archaeological remains in the American Bottom region of the upper Mississippi River valley demonstrates the disparity between the theoretical sides of the production debate. Both proponents and opponents of the prestige goods models interpret the same data dealing with display goods production, particularly marine shell beads, yet come to much different conclusions. Yerkes (1983, 1991) argues that evidence exists for elite-sponsored craft production at the paramount center of Cahokia. Specifically, he interprets the concentration of microdrills at Cahokia as a specialized lithic tool kit used in the manufacture of marine shell beads by elite-sponsored specialists. Similarly, Pauketat (1993, 1994) interprets concentrations of shell refuse and microdrills around the Kunnemann mound as evidence for elite-sponsored activities. Also, Pauketat (1994) uses ubiquity measures involving domestic activity debris and crafting activity debris at Cahokia to demonstrate the growing importance of display goods production through time. To these researchers, caches of raw materials and specialized tool kits located in mound centers equal elite control and support of craft activities.

Evidence for specialization has also been identified in the small Mississippian settlements located outside of the large mound center at Cahokia. Production evidence, in the form of shell bead blanks, microdrills, and shell polish micro-wear on bit tools, is found in the small farmstead sites that dot the central Mississippi River valley (Pauketat 1994; Prentice 1983). Also, Yerkes (1989) argues that elite control over shell bead production in the Cahokia hinterlands is evident during the height of its dominance from A.D. 1050 – 1150 when production appears restricted to just a few sites. Other archaeologists (Milner 1990;

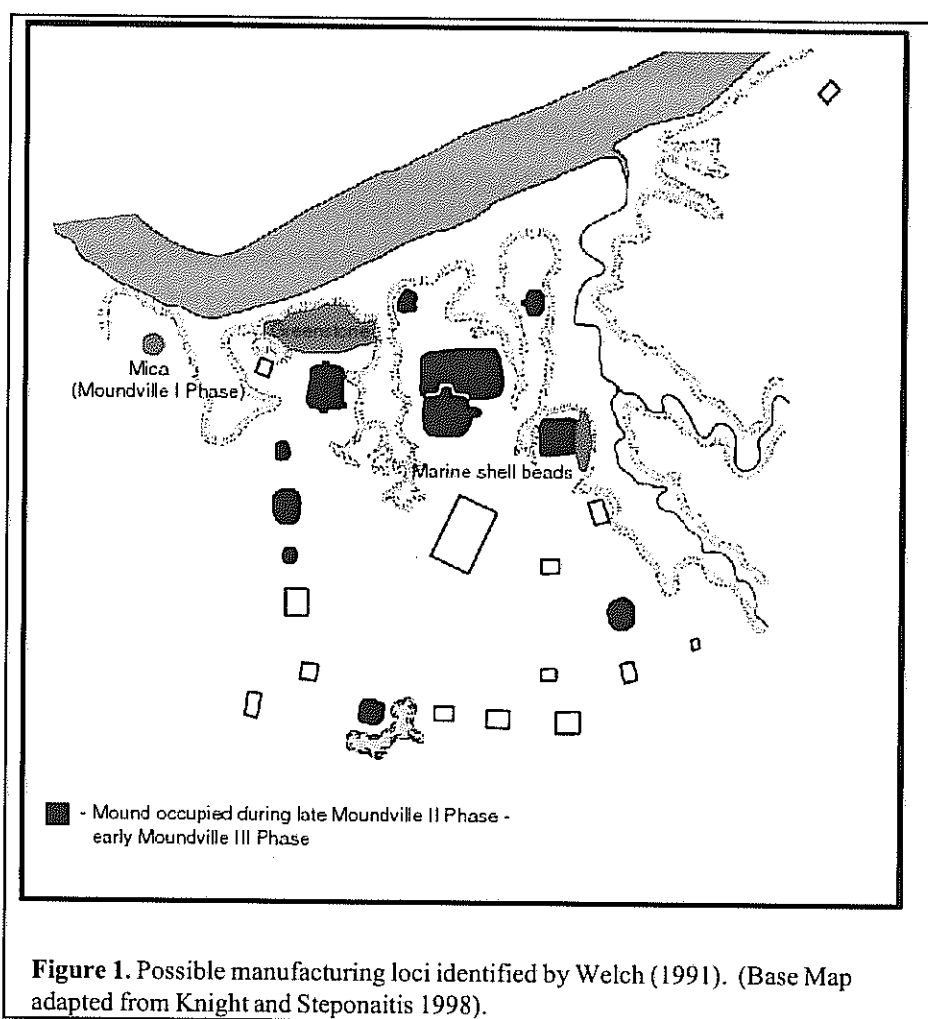
Pauketat 1987) are quick to disagree with such calls for elite control, contending that much of the evidence for specialization is marred by sample size, preservation, chronological vagaries, and discard patterns. Still others (Brown et al. 1990) argue that control over hinterland production in the American Bottom is a moot point if all members of society were engaged in a system of prestige competitions.

Charles Cobb (1996) argues that regional specialization clearly occurs in the American Bottom, but not under the control of elites living at Cahokia. His work deals with artifacts called Mill Creek hoes that are utilitarian implements made from a chert type that outcrops in southwestern Illinois. While these hoes are not display goods, their concentrated distribution in and around Cahokia has led a few researchers to entertain the possibility that centralized elite control existed (e.g., Brown et al. 1990). Cobb's investigations in the source areas of Mill Creek Chert demonstrate that specialized workshop and quarry sites exist, but their widespread distribution precludes the possibility of strict elite control over production. Furthermore, archaeological materials such as ceramics found at the source sites demonstrate a local archaeological "culture" that is not dominated by material culture from Cahokia. Cobb (1996:288) concludes that production is not a monolithic entity that is either controlled or not; instead, he argues that there is great variability in the organization of Mississippian production.

Jon Muller can be seen as representing the most conservative view regarding the extent of elite control over display goods production in Mississippian economies both in the American Bottom and the southeast in general. In his synthesis of Mississippian economies, Muller (1997:50) argues that access to raw materials and production of display goods crosscuts social status, and virtually no control over the production of display goods is evident. His main contention is that control over production in Mississippian societies is more often assumed from models like the "prestige goods economy" than proven (1997:340). He sees the lack of archaeological evidence of strict control over access to resources (e.g., fortifications around raw material sources, attached craft specialization, isolation of production evidence

in mound center contexts) as proof of an open system of competition for prestige between all segments of society.

Previous research in the Moundville chiefdom also points to elite control over display goods production (Peebles and Kus 1977; Welch 1991, 1996). Paul Welch, Peebles, and Kus argue for a pattern of production organization that is indicative of politically centralized societies. Specifically, Welch (1991:170) finds that evidence of display goods production only occurs at the paramount center of Moundville and not in any of the surrounding sites. He calls attention to possible manufacturing loci for greenstone axes, mica artifacts, and shell beads (Peebles 1978:17) all within the site boundaries of Moundville (Figure 1) (Welch



1991:164-165, 169). In the case of the axes, Welch (1991:165) notes four specimens that exhibit evidence of partial manufacture. Welch (1991:169) admits, however, that due to the lack of excavations in hinterland contexts, very little information exists that addresses manufacturing locales outside of the mound center.

According to Welch (1996), the concentrated evidence of utilitarian greenstone axe manufacture at Moundville is suggestive of a tightly centralized economy. While Welch (1996:89) believes that the subsistence economy was comprised of largely self-sufficient households, he argues that food production could have been indirectly controlled through centralized production and distribution of this most necessary agricultural tool.

Welch also argues that evidence of craft specialization exists at the Moundville site in the form of ceramic production. First, Welch (1991:147) points to six large fired areas west of Mound P and caches of clay and mussel shell west of the plaza as evidence of concentrated production areas for ceramics. Second, striking stylistic similarities in the mold-made pottery type known as Moundville Engraved lead both Welch (1991) and Hardin (1981) to argue that only a few potters could be responsible for many of the specimens in

Pottery Type	# of vessels in collection	# of identified potters	Expected % of pots/potter	Largest # pots by one potter	% of total pots by one potter	Level of significance p=
Moundville Engraved var. <i>Hemphill</i>	138	130	0.77	3	2.17	0.029
Moundville Engraved var. <i>Wiggins</i>	47	39	2.56	9	19.15	0.002
Moundville Engraved var. <i>Taylorsville</i>	28	19	5.26	6	21.43	0.003
Moundville Engraved var. <i>Tuscaloosa</i>	21	18	5.56	2	9.52	0.219
Moundville Engraved var. <i>Northport</i>	16	14	7.14	3	18.75	0.078
Carthage Incised var. <i>Carthage</i>	19	18	5.56	2	10.53	0.2

Table 2. Significance testing of specialized pottery production for selected varieties (as calculated by Welch [1991:Table 5.2]).

Moundville's collections. Welch (1991:142-143) attempts to quantify this argument using a binomial test of statistical significance comparing the total number of Moundville Engraved pots ($n=269$) to the number of potters identified for each analytical variety ($n=238$) (Table 2). Welch finds that there is a statistically significant difference in three of the five varieties of Moundville Engraved pottery concluding that certain potters were making a disproportionate amount of certain pottery styles.

Welch's findings are contested by Muller (1997:350) who argues that the limited extent of excavations outside of the Moundville center can explain why there is no evidence of display goods production in the hinterland. Concerning Welch's data on ceramics, Muller (1997:348-349) argues that the sample size is too small for meaningful statistical measures and that, at best, the largest number of vessels attributed to one potter is only nine. Additionally, Muller states that the spatial evidence presented by Welch concerning firing areas and caches might show some localization of production, but that this evidence falls short of demonstrating specialization.

One can see the polarity in interpretations of Mississippian production from this brief review of research in the American Bottom region and at Moundville. As we shall see, the same basic arguments hold for both exchange and distribution. On one side of the argument, display goods are seen as "political currency" whose access must be jealously guarded to ensure elite domination. On the other side of the argument, access to display goods is not strictly controlled, and competition for prestige is open to all segments of society. In some cases, both sides of the argument use prestige goods models to structure their interpretations.

Debates over Display Goods Circulation: Exchange, Acquisition, and Distribution

There can admittedly be some ambiguity in differentiating between exchange, long-distance acquisition, and distribution in archaeological contexts. The fine line that separates the three is generally only identifiable through direct observation of the event. Unfortunately for archaeologists, the actual transfer of a display good from one party to the next is often

invisible in the archaeological record. The dilemma is made clear in the following question: If an exotic artifact or raw material is recovered from a site, how is one to decide whether the find is a result of direct exchange with a foreign polity, long-distance acquisition, or distribution? The general term “display goods circulation” will be used in this work to recognize the ambiguities caused by the fragmentary archaeological record. Exchange, acquisition, and distribution often operate in different cultural contexts and have their own social, political, and ideological dimensions. Helms (1993), for instance, looks at how the geographical movement of raw materials and finished goods functions within a seemingly universal ideological framework.

The ideological concept Helms identifies is a frequently encountered dichotomy between “local/inside” and “exotic/outside.” Helms (1993:7) believes that most societies are egocentric, dividing the world around them into this dichotomy. Those things belonging to the “inside” of a society are controlled, contemporary, and ordinary while those things identified as “outside” of a society are chaotic, temporally distant, and exotic. The connection between “inside” and “outside” is perpetuated by cosmological and cosmogonical beliefs that attribute great knowledge and power to the “outside” realm. Consequently, raw materials and finished goods obtained from distant sources are imbued with supernatural power and knowledge. This theoretical view is cited in many of the current prestige goods models of Mississippian display goods production and circulation (e.g., Earle 1997; Steponaitis 1991; Welch 1991).

Differences between seemingly similar economic activities become apparent within Helms’s ideological framework. For example, Helms (1993:95) states that exchange and long-distance acquisition are very different activities in that the former is a two-way action whose focus is the relationships between trade partners, while the latter is a one-way action whose focus is the exotic item itself. Whereas exchange operates on sociological principles such as reciprocity and maintenance of group ties, acquisition operates on ideological principles. Helms argues that individuals who take part in foreign acquisition often are

perceived by society as being connected to the exotic, supernaturally charged sources of power. In these cases, individuals can use the ideological sanction to attain and maintain a position of high political and social status.

The “distribution” of display goods is a term that mingles spatial and economic dimensions. Often, distribution is written of as a strictly elite process, but the flow of goods from one point to another can take place under a myriad of contexts without such hierarchical political and social implications. Furthermore, distribution can be viewed in many ways depending on the theoretical focus of the analysis (i.e., social, political, economic, ideological).

Examples abound that demonstrate how interpretation can be shaded by one’s theoretical focus. Service’s model, for instance, focuses heavily on the economic dimension of distribution. In his model, subsistence, utilitarian, and display goods are all funneled through a fixed geographic center. There, the chief, as holder of a permanent political office, coordinates regional economic activities. Regional coordination of production and distribution of goods serve as foundations for Service’s chiefdoms, while social and political hierarchies are viewed as consequent developments of the economic system.

In contrast, the prestige goods models conceive of distribution as an economic activity that operates primarily within a centralized political system. In prestige goods models, mobilized surplus from subsistence and crafting activities creates a political fund from which high status individuals can draw to achieve and maintain unequal power relations. In these models, the economic importance of distribution is secondary to the importance of political stratagems, and distribution is essentially seen as an economic vehicle used to attain political power.

The variable contexts for the circulation of display goods can create problems with using cross-cultural prestige goods models to structure interpretations of prehistoric chiefly economies. The inherent vagaries of archaeological data establish a conceptual limit beyond which the explanatory power of abstract models drops dramatically. This constraint is evident

in the following Mississippian studies where the archaeological evidence offers the possibility of multiple interpretations for the circulation of display goods and raw materials.

Some Mississippian studies argue for centralized control over display goods circulation. Defining Mississippian chiefdoms as centralized political institutions (after Earle 1991), Welch (1991, 1996), Steponaitis (1991), and Pauketat (1994) all characterize display goods circulation as an elite controlled activity used to maintain hierarchical relations.

According to Welch (1991:181), comparisons between Moundville and surrounding sites in regard to the quantity and variety of non-local display goods do not demonstrate a strict prestige goods economy in the sense of Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978), but do demonstrate unequal access to imported goods. The data demonstrate a large disparity both in the amount and types of foreign and local display goods between the Moundville center and single mound centers. In addition, no foreign or local display goods are reported in any of the small hamlet or farmstead sites where commoners presumably would have lived (Welch 1996:84). This is contrary to a prestige goods economy model where local production from households is passed up to the chief for use in external trade (1991:181). Consequently, the circulation of these goods is argued to have been firmly under the auspices of elites at the political and religious center of Moundville, but the production and movement of display goods is argued to differ from expectations generated by the use of prestige goods models.

Steponaitis (1991) makes a diachronic regional comparison of display goods circulation between the Moundville region and the less complexly organized Pocahontas region of Mississippi. Through an analysis of display goods in burial contexts of both polities, Steponaitis (1991:Figure 9.4) is able to plot the frequencies of display goods in burials through time. The pattern of the data show that frequencies of display goods in the Pocahontas region decline around the same time that dramatic political centralization occurred at Moundville and other polities in the vicinity (ca. A.D. 1200). Steponaitis (1991:226-227) posits that the Pocahontas region never developed to the degree of Moundville because local elites lost access to exotic display goods when other, perhaps better located centers like

Moundville, apparently monopolized region-wide circulation. Steponaitis believes that this pattern demonstrates the operation of a prestige goods economy with its emphasis on non-local display goods in the political development of complex chiefdoms.

Pauketat (1994:20-21) also believes that display goods circulation is an effective strategy used by Mississippian elites to establish and maintain power in relation to both local commoners and external elites. According to Pauketat, however, too much attention has been paid to the economic dimension of display goods circulation. He proposes that the ideological dimension of display goods circulation should also be addressed, for hierarchical relationships can also result from a hegemonic ideological system. Display goods circulation in Pauketat's model is a manifestation of the controlled circulation of exotic knowledge and power, not economic goods.

The circulation of display goods in Muller's (1997) model is seen not as the source of elite power, but as a reflection of competition that is open to all segments of society. The widespread presence of finished display goods and production evidence in farmstead and mound center contexts (e.g., Pauketat 1987; Prentice 1985; Yerkes 1983) adds evidence to the argument that production and consumption were controlled at the household level and that any accumulation of wealth at the hands of individuals is reflective of successful competition and not control. According to Muller (1997:358), the importance of external exchange networks using display goods and staple goods lies in establishing and maintaining economic relations that can be called upon during times of shortages, not in attaining political, economic, and social power (i.e., prestige goods economy). Ethnographic evidence shows that the sources of power open to would-be Mississippian chiefs probably depended less on wealth accumulation (through display goods) and more on the ability to collect and distribute more mundane items like food and clothing (1997:362).

Brown, Kerber, and Winters (1990) agree that display goods circulation in Mississippian societies can be modeled using a prestige goods framework; however, the authors' interpretation of the prestige goods model departs from Steponaitis by questioning

the necessity of using centralization in decision making as a basis for chiefdoms. According to the authors' interpretation of the prestige goods model (Brown et al. 1990: 256), centralized control over local production is not a necessity in the development of chiefly economies; instead, it is argued that lineages with external trade contacts can indirectly control production by setting the acceptable form of payment for social debts (e.g., bridewealth, funerary offerings). In such a way, those lineages with access to exotic goods can devalue local goods, making it necessary to increase local production to pay off social debts. The development of certain dominant lineages depends heavily on the competitive advantage gained through efficient production and mobilization of food resources as described by Frankenstein and Rowlands (1978).

Brown, Kerber, and Winters use the traditional prestige goods economy model that emphasizes competition and the payment of social debts rather than direct centralized control as a keystone in the development of hierarchical relations. This is a significant departure from Welch, Steponaitis, and Pauketat, who argue for a model of centralized elite control over display goods circulation.

Conclusions

One can see that a lot of theoretical leeway exists in interpretations of Mississippian display goods economies. Some southeastern models use a prestige goods framework to argue for centralized elite control over display goods circulation (Steponaitis 1991). Others argue that centralized control over display goods production and circulation occurred in contexts that differed from prestige goods models (Pauketat 1994; Welch 1991, 1996). Welch's (1996) model also includes the indirect centralization of the subsistence economy through centralization in utilitarian axe production and distribution. Brown et al. (1990) argue for the utility of prestige goods models because they can explain the development of hierarchical polities such as Cahokia without the precursory development of political centralization. Finally, Muller's (1997) model differs from all of the others in that he argues against both

centralized control over display goods production and circulation and the use of prestige goods models to describe Mississippian economies.

Just as Welch (1991) concluded, the apparent lesson here is that these interpretations should be tested for goodness of fit in each archaeological case. The test should be empirical and use multiple lines of archaeological evidence. The resulting pattern of data can be compared to what should be expected to occur archaeologically in each of the scenarios described above. The current study will empirically test these interpretations using evidence from late Mississippian deposits (ca. A.D. 1300-1450) of the Moundville chiefdom located in western central Alabama.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT SETTING AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

The Moundville Chiefdom

The name “Moundville Chiefdom” is applied to the archaeological remains of a prehistoric Mississippian polity that occupied land along a 40 km stretch of the Black Warrior River in west-central Alabama (Figure 2). According to newly calibrated radiocarbon dates, this polity existed as a consistent (at least in material culture) cultural unit from A.D. 1120 to A.D. 1520 (Knight, Konigsberg, and Frankenberg 1999). Chronological units at Moundville are based on ceramic phases that follow Steponaitis’s (1983a) seriation.

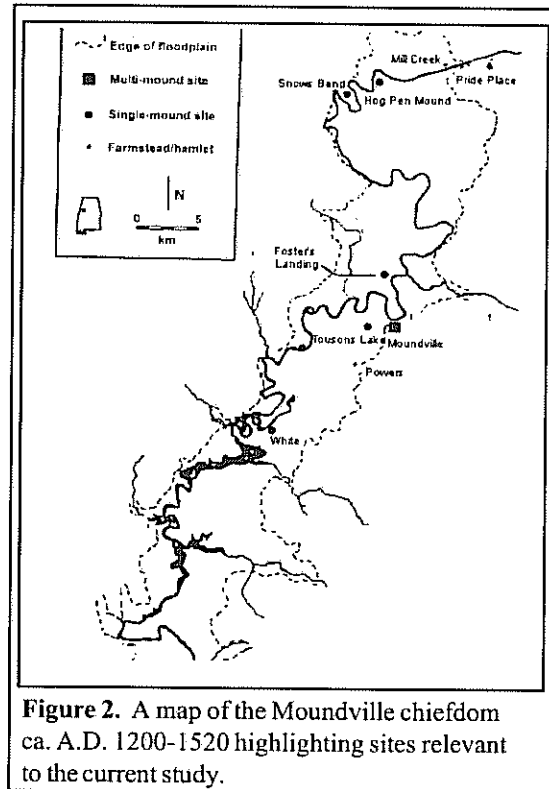


Figure 2. A map of the Moundville chiefdom ca. A.D. 1200-1520 highlighting sites relevant to the current study.

Five ceramic phases are identified that encompass the rise and fall of this polity. It is generally accepted by scholars that this polity developed into a complex chiefdom with consolidated regional control by A.D. 1300 and existed as such for about one hundred and fifty years until about A.D. 1450 when dramatic changes in material culture no doubt mark severe political decline (Knight and Steponaitis 1998) (Figure 3).

Previous research and interpretations of the Moundville system have mostly been informed by the same concept used by Earle, that of the chiefdom as a construct of political centralization typified by social, economic, and political inequality (e.g., Peebles 1971;

Moundville IV Phase A.D. 1550-1700	Moundville IV Phase A.D. 1520-1650	Collapse and Reorganization
Moundville III Phase A.D. 1400-1550	Moundville III Phase A.D. 1400-1520	
Moundville II Phase A.D. 1250-1400	Moundville II Phase A.D. 1260-1400	Paramountcy Entrenched
Moundville I Phase A.D. 1050-1250	Moundville I Phase A.D. 1120-1260	Regional Consolidation
	West Jefferson Phase A.D. 1020-1120	Initial Centralization
West Jefferson Phase A.D. 900-1050		Intensification of Local Production

Figure 3. Comparison of the old chronology (Steponaitis 1983a) to the new chronology (Knight et al. 1999) developed for Moundville. The column on the right corresponds to the developmental sequence at Moundville (Knight and Steponaitis 1998).

Peebles and Kus 1977; Steponaitis 1978, 1991; Welch 1986, 1991, 1996). In its current conception, the Moundville chiefdom consisted of a large, multiple mound site that acted as the political and ritual center for the population living along the Black Warrior River. This chiefdom was marked by economic, social, and political inequality as evidenced in settlement patterns (Peebles 1978; Steponaitis 1978), mortuary treatment (Peebles 1971), and centralization of the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of display goods (Welch 1991, 1996). To some (Steponaitis 1991; Welch 1991; 1996), the role of display goods appears to be crucial in the development of political authority in the Moundville chiefdom.

Paul Welch's (1986, 1991) foundational work previously addressed the applicability of cross-cultural models to the chiefly economy of Moundville. Welch chose to test the utility of four cross-cultural models including Service's "redistribution Model" (1962), the "mobilization model" of Peebles and Kus (1977) and Earle (1977), Wright's "tributary model" (1977), and Frankenstein and Rowland's "prestige goods model" (1978). After reviewing data pertaining to Mississippian deposits at the Moundville paramount center and the White

site, a subsidiary mound center in the Black Warrior Valley, Welch (1986, 1991:179) found that no one theoretical construct could accurately predict the archaeological data pertaining to the economic articulation of the Moundville center and outlying sites. Additionally, Welch concluded that display goods production and circulation in the Moundville chiefdom was tightly controlled. In his model, display goods made from exotic raw materials were produced only at Moundville, and the distribution of exotic goods was concentrated and controlled by the elites at the paramount center (A summary of the study is given in Chapter 2).

Welch's model testing and reformulation represents the type of research that is necessary in order to establish the utility of using cross-cultural constructs to model prehistoric economic behavior. There is, however, an aspect of his model that needs to be reassessed. Welch's model is partly based on data from late Moundville I phase (ca. A.D. 1200-1250) deposits at the primary center and late Moundville III phase deposits (ca. A.D. 1450-1520) at one subsidiary mound site (the White site). This entails both the assumption that Moundville's economy operated in basically the same manner for three hundred years, and that economic relations between different subsidiary centers and the paramount center remained the same (Welch 1991:182-183). Subsequent revisions to the chronology of the Moundville chiefdom place the occupation of the White site in a period of political collapse and reorganization on more egalitarian principles (Knight and Steponaitis 1998).

In recent years, excavations at the Moundville center and outlying sites have provided additional data that can be applied to studies of display goods production and circulation during the height of political consolidation in the chiefdom (ca. A.D. 1300-1450). As with any long-term archaeological study, data from more recent excavations at contemporaneous contexts throughout the chiefdom will be beneficial to attaining an appreciable understanding of Moundville's economic dynamics.

Study Methods

The methods used in this study build upon Welch's (1986, 1991) work and include additional research in the attempt to address two research themes: (a) assessing the

goodness of fit of prestige goods models in the Moundville chiefdom, and (b) determining the nature of centralized control over display goods production and circulation in the later Moundville chiefdom (ca. A.D. 1300-1450). The basic design of the study involves a comparison of late Moundville II – early Moundville III deposits at Moundville to contemporaneously occupied subsidiary center sites, farmsteads, and cemeteries located within the Moundville chiefdom. The archaeological distribution of production evidence and finished display goods is analyzed for patterns that indicate spatial centralization (not necessarily political or economic centralization). The distributional data is then compared to the expectations generated by the prestige goods models and conflicting Mississippian models.

To begin with, it would be helpful to discuss the types of artifacts considered display goods in this paper. Following my earlier identification of the archaeological correlates of typical prestige goods (Chapter 1), the specimens so identified in this study should be made from rare or exotic materials, and/or they should be non-utilitarian and ornate, often times displaying symbols in a common iconographic system that spans broad geographic areas and multiple polities (i.e., international style). These goods should also serve to isolate certain members of a society through their role as costumery in sumptuary rules.

Table 3 provides a list of the artifacts that qualify as display goods according to the qualifications set above (see also Appendix A). This list includes objects of rare materials such as copper, marine shell, obsidian, and mica from distant sources like the Gulf of Mexico and the Appalachian Mountains. A problem with certain items is that their raw material sources are so distant that they preclude the possibility of easy transport. If these objects represent wealth, one should expect to find them in considerable quantities in the hands of Moundville's elite. The other objects include items of relatively local raw materials that could be easily accumulated by the elite, like micaceous Pottsville sandstone, ceramics, and greenstone.

Items on the list also qualify as display goods based on the second criterion which states that the goods should be non-utilitarian and should function to isolate certain members

	Copper Objects	Marine Shell Objects	Stone Objects	Objects made from other Materials
COSTUMERY	Copper Clad Wooden Ear Disk Copper Gorget Copper Headdress Element Cemochechobee-style Copper Symbol Badge Side-Notched Copper Symbol Badge Copper Bead Copper Clad Wooden Bead Copper Clad Shell Bead	Shell Bracelet Engraved Shell Gorget Shell Axe Pendant	Oblong Tabular Stone Pendant Mace-Shaped Tabular Stone Pendant Human Head Effigy Tabular Stone Pendant Greenstone Gorget Monolithic Axe Pendant Mica Ear Ornament Amethyst Pendant Galena Bead Mica Cutout Ornament	Shark Tooth Pendant Pearl Occurrences Resin Bead
	DISPLAY OBJECTS	Decorated Shell Cup Undecorated Shell Cup	Ornate Chipped Stone Biface Non-utilitarian Greenstone Axe Carved Monolithic Axe Engraved or Notched Stone Palette Obsidian Biface Stone Effigy Pipe	Moundville Engraved <i>var. Hemphill</i> vessel Eccentric Rimmed Vessel

Table 3. List of artifacts classified as display goods that are included in the sample (See Appendix A for artifact counts).

of a society. First, the objects represent basically two functional categories, costumery and non-utilitarian objects. Use of these objects is assumed to be outside the usual domain of domestic functions in contrast to items such as cooking pots and stone tools. Second, many of the items are ornately crafted, in comparison to utilitarian goods, and include iconography that belongs to the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC), an iconographic complex that spanned the Mississippian southeastern United States (papers in Galloway 1989). These qualifications appear to place Moundville's display goods well within the criteria for items in prestige goods economies.

Chronological considerations are taken into account in this project. Data used in comparisons between Moundville and surrounding sites are restricted to contemporaneous deposits. The reason for this is two-fold. First, the selection of contemporaneous deposits throughout the chiefdom circumvents the chronological problem Welch encountered with

his comparison of the White site to Moundville (1991:182-183). Second, the time period selected for study (i.e., late Moundville II phase A.D. 1300 - early Moundville III phase A.D. 1450) is supposed to represent the height of the paramountcy when political and economic centralization would have been at their peaks (Knight and Steponaitis 1998). Also, data from contemporaneous surrounding sites addresses questions regarding the extent of centralized power exerted by the paramount center over the surrounding chiefdom.

Unfortunately, most of the burials at Moundville were excavated before detailed field records were taken by archaeologists, before C-14 dating was discovered, and before internal chronological phases were assigned to the site's occupational history. A considerable amount of data comes from C.B. Moore's (1996 [1905, 1907]) investigations of Moundville cemeteries in the early twentieth century. Moore kept fairly accurate field notes, but at best these only recorded grave lots and the general locations of the burials. The other major portion of data comes from the Alabama Museum of Natural History excavations conducted between 1930 and 1941. Records for these excavations are better, at times, than Moore's, particularly after the mid-1930s.

Fortunately, this rather messy chronological situation can be cleared up by referring to the ceramic grave-lot seriation performed by Steponaitis (1983a). His seriation is based upon the distribution of chronologically sensitive ceramic attributes on vessels in selected burial lots. Those grave lots which exhibited at least two of the sensitive ceramic attributes were analyzed using a statistical technique known as multi-dimensional scaling. The result of this rather involved statistical procedure was a scale that placed grave lots and their associated ceramic attributes into a relative chronological sequence (Steponaitis 1983a:Figure 26). Stratigraphic analysis and C-14 analysis since the seriation's inception has confirmed and refined the phase sequence. This seriation is, at present, the ceramic basis for the assignment of archaeological deposits into occupational phases known as Moundville I, II, III, and IV.

According to Steponaitis (1983a:168), the elaborate^{*} burials with display goods and ceramic vessels that could be dated, were placed in the Moundville II and early Moundville

III ceramic phases. Therefore, most of the artifacts in the Moundville sample are assumed to have come from this time period. According to Welch (personal communication 2000), however, roughly four-fifths of what Peebles deemed the highest class of burials remains undated. When possible, both ceramic diagnostics and C-14 dates are used in determining the occupational phase of a deposit.

The hinterland sites and isolated finds selected for comparison to Moundville all contain occupations that date to the late Moundville II and/or Moundville III phases. Even though the isolated finds (i.e., the Dorroh axe and a Pottsville sandstone palette fragment) collected on hinterland sites are not strictly provenanced, they are assumed to date to the same period. Other sites within the limits of the chiefdom date to the late Moundville II and early Moundville III phases, but they are excluded from the study because only minor excavations and surface collections have been conducted on them. The following description of outlying sites included in the study is organized into the familiar categories of the chiefdom's settlement hierarchy (i.e., farmstead sites and single mound sites).

Mill Creek (1Tu265) is a farmstead site located at the confluence of the Black Warrior River and Mill Creek. Archaeological excavations were conducted at the site in the mid-1980s in response to future plans for the construction of a lock and dam (Mistovich 1988). Two structures were identified from among numerous subsurface pit and post features. Based on ceramics found in the structures, Mistovich assigned one structure, Structure 2, to the West Jefferson phase (A.D. 1020-1120), while the other structure, Structure 1, was argued to be associated with the early Moundville I phase (A.D. 1120-1200) (Mistovich 1988). Welch (1998), however, disagreed with Mistovich's chronological placement of the structures. He argued that there was, in fact, no ceramic evidence of an early Moundville I phase occupation at the site. According to Welch, ceramic evidence indicated that Structure 2 could not have been occupied before the late Moundville I phase, and Structure 1 was occupied during the Moundville II through early Moundville III phases.

The Pride Place site (1Tu1) is located on a terrace above the Black Warrior River just south of the Fall Line, approximately 30 km north of the Moundville center. The 1998-1999 excavations at the site were prompted by the construction of a gas line (Johnson 1999). This farmstead site includes two well-defined structures, numerous post features, and several Mississippian burials. The occupational history of the site includes multiple components with major deposits spanning the late Woodland and Mississippian stages (Johnson 1999). The site's location within sight of outcrops of fine, micaceous Pottsville sandstone offers the possible association of this site with formal sandstone palette manufacture. Additionally, an intact midden dated to the Moundville III phase (A.D. 1400 – 1520) contains evidence of sandstone artifact production.

The Powers site (1Ha11) is located along the banks of Millians Creek approximately 5 km southwest of Moundville. It was excavated in 1981, 1988, and 1991 under the direction of Richard Krause (Welch 1998). The excavated portions of the site consist of three burned Mississippian structures and three burials, two infant urn burials interred beneath one structure and an adult secondary burial located beneath another structure (Welch 1998). Pottery contained within the structures dated to the Moundville III phase.

Snows Bend is a single mound center (1Tu3) with an associated village and cemetery (1Tu2) located along the Black Warrior River approximately 20 km upriver from Moundville. The cemetery portion of the site was excavated during the early 1930s (DeJarnette and Peebles 1970). Years later, a controlled surface collection was made at the village and two excavation units were dug on the mound (Bozeman 1982:94-109). Based on ceramic data, Welch (1998) places the occupation and burials at the site in the late Moundville II to early Moundville III phases. Snows Bend rounds out the sample of outlying sites used in this project. Additional sites mentioned in this work are either located outside the reported limits of the Moundville chiefdom or pre/postdate the time period of concern. Descriptions of these sites will be offered when pertinent.

The methods employed during the study involve the classification of artifacts and simple arithmetic. For the Moundville center sample, original records from 1869-1941 excavations

were consulted (Moore 1996 [1905, 1907]; Peebles 1979; Steponaitis 1983b), and an inspection of relevant specimens accessible to the author was conducted in the special collections room at the Office of Archaeological Services in Moundville, Alabama. The author, did not have the opportunity to personally inspect any of the objects recovered from C.B. Moore's excavations. The other artifacts represent specimens excavated during University of Alabama field schools between 1941 and 1990. Other data analyzed in the project resulted from the 1990s University of Alabama excavations at Mounds Q, E, and F under the direction of Vernon James Knight. All items that met the qualifications of display goods were tabulated, and any evidence of the manufacture of these items was recorded. Data from outlying sites was compiled from published works and personal communications with those who participated in the excavations.

It must be remembered that this study is largely an artifact study, however, not an in depth study of the archaeological contexts for display goods production and circulation. As such, the identification of evidence for production is confined mostly to specimens that were unfinished or broken during manufacture. There are obvious drawbacks to studying only artifacts, but the lack of detailed records from early excavations and the daunting task of analyzing the contexts of more recent excavations are problems that are best dealt with after this preliminary work is completed.

One last preliminary discussion is necessary in order to point out certain problems with identifying display goods production and circulation in the Moundville chiefdom. First is the obvious problem of preservation. Welch (Welch 1991:134-135) and others have mentioned the fact that many display goods could have been made of organic materials such as wood or feathers which cannot survive in the acidic, aerobic soils of Alabama.

A second problem presents perhaps one of the most serious impediments to developing a robust model. The tremendous difference in scale of excavations between the Moundville center and outlying sites presents major problems with sample sizes. Following a critique of Jon Muller (1997:350), apparently tremendous differences in the presence and number of

display goods between center and hinterland might disappear once a sufficient number peripheral contexts have been excavated.

A third problem involves distinguishing the location of consumption of these goods. While the concentration of display goods at Moundville is irrefutable, the contexts in which they are found are typically mortuary in nature. Steponaitis (1991) has shown that while the resident population at the Moundville center drastically declined during the height of the paramountcy (A.D. 1300-1450) the burial population at the site continued to increase. This means that most of the individuals interred at Moundville during this period did not live at the paramount center (Steponaitis 1998). While Moundville may represent the ultimate consumption of these goods as grave furnishings, information about their prior use as non-funerary objects outside of the center is desperately lacking. The apparent concentration of display goods within burials at the Moundville center may lead to spurious conclusions about the degree of elite control over distribution and consumption of these goods. Only additional surveys and excavations can shed light on the use-life of these goods outside of the Moundville center.

Chapter 5

Exploring the Nature of Display Goods Production and Circulation in Moundville Chiefdom ca. A.D. 1300 - 1450

Now that all of the preliminary caveats have been addressed, the empirical testing of our models can proceed. First, the production of display goods will be addressed by evaluating past evidence and presenting new evidence uncovered during this project. Next, evidence for the circulation of display goods will be visited in the attempt to discern between exchange, long-distance acquisition, and distribution in the archaeological record at Moundville.

Production

A good starting point for the study is reassessing the manufacturing loci of shell beads, mica artifacts, and greenstone axes identified by Welch (1991:Figure 5.1) and Peebles (1978). Despite the assertions of Welch (1991) and Peebles (1978), a review of the excavation records from 1905-1951 (Peebles 1979) did not reveal any evidence for the possible manufacturing locus of shell beads east of Mound E (Figure 1). The only shell artifacts not related to burials were one shell bead, one shell pendant, and one shell ear plug (Peebles 1979:279).

Analyses of greenstone artifacts provide conflicting ideas regarding the greenstone manufacturing locus north of Mound R. Wilson's (2000) analysis of material from DeJarnette's 1931 and 1972-75 excavations north of Mound R, and C.B. Moore's findings (1996:119 [1905]) agree that the abundant polished greenstone fragments recovered near Mound R were the result of tool usage rather than production. Welch's (1991:Figure 5.8) analysis of greenstone from Scarry's (1986) excavations north of Mound R, however, indicates that 50 percent of material was unworked.

The high concentration of unworked mica found near the Conference building at the northwestern fringes of the Moundville site does provide indirect evidence for display goods production at the primary center, but these contexts date to the earlier Moundville I phase (Scarry 1998).

Analysis of Knight's 1990s University of Alabama excavations of Mounds Q, F, and E as well as a reanalysis of artifact collections from previous excavations at Moundville provide some new direct and indirect evidence for display goods production at the paramount center. For the purposes of this study, direct evidence of production is defined as specimens that exhibit signs of partial manufacture. These

specimens were either discarded or lost before being crafted into their final form. Isolated specimens exhibiting evidence of production will be discussed first. The first isolated specimen is a quartz crystal bead that was recovered from the summit of Mound E (Figure 4). This bead exhibits evidence of polishing and partial drilling at both ends.

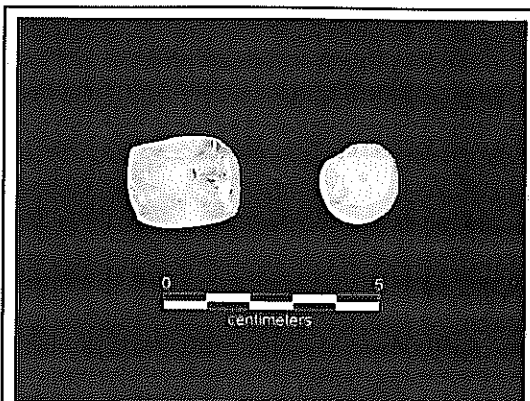


Figure 4. Partially manufactured quartz crystal bead. (AMNH: A993.41.2474.1)

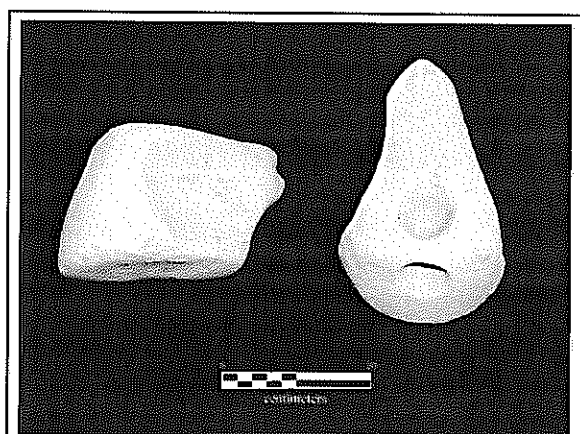


Figure 5. Unfinished limestone frog effigy pipe. (AMNH: A934.3.25)

Another isolated specimen that exhibits evidence of partial manufacture is a limestone frog effigy pipe recovered North of Mound M (Figure 5). The two drilled holes presumably acted as a bowl and attachment point for a wood or ceramic stem. The rough form of the pipe resembles the shape of ceramic frog effigy vessels that are also found at the site

(Steponaitis 1983a:Figure 65t). The lack of detail and moderately ground surface of the pipe differs radically from the exquisitely carved effigy pipes that were collected at the site by local residents and depicted in Moore's (1996:Figure 1 [1905]) work about Moundville.

Direct evidence for the production of greenstone, limonite, hematite, and micaceous sandstone display goods at Moundville is more substantial. Wilson's (2000) analysis of greenstone artifacts from the 1939-1940 excavations of the main roadway, 1932 excavations north of Mound E, and the previously mentioned 1930s excavations north of Mound R provide considerable insight into greenstone production at Moundville. Contrary to Welch (1991), Wilson (2000:5) finds that virtually all of the greenstone artifacts related to utilitarian tools resulted from tool usage rather than production. In fact, Wilson (2000:6) finds no evidence of primary reduction (i.e., unpolished flakes, shatter, rejected preforms) in the greenstone at Moundville, concluding that this activity was performed outside of the Moundville center or even outside the chiefdom. This is at odds with Welch (1991:164), who presents evidence for the manufacture of greenstone celts in the form of three partially manufactured specimens that were recovered during the "Roadway" excavations.

Wilson (2000) also identifies a possible locus for the manufacture of greenstone artifacts other than the one posited by Welch north of Mound R. Deposits from the 1932 north of Mound E excavations and later excavations on the summit of Mound E yielded concentrations of hematitic sandstone saws, hammerstones, and thin (0.75 cm - 1.71 cm) greenstone slabs exhibiting evidence of sawing (Wilson 2000:7). These slabs may have been an initial production stage for display items such as "ceremonial" celts. This also raises the possibility that other display goods made from greenstone, like carved monolithic axes, or non-utilitarian greenstone spuds (Figure 6), were manufactured at the center. Wilson concludes that greenstone production at



Figure 6. Non-utilitarian greenstone spuds.
(AMNH: A930.2.306 and A930.3.201)

Moundville was variable in nature, featuring elite-controlled production of greenstone display goods and largely unrestricted access to greenstone utilitarian goods. This dual structure of elite and non-elite economic systems is very similar to that proposed by Cobb (1996) for the production of Mill Creek chert hoes.

Tabular stone pendants offer the most abundant direct evidence for local manufacture of display goods. These artifacts are made of materials such as limonite, hematite, and possibly red slate and micaceous sandstone, but no definitive material study has been performed on the items. Specimens in the sample include oblong-shaped pendants with engraved motifs, mace-shaped pendants, and a human head effigy pendant.

One oblong pendant fragment recovered during a nineteenth-century Smithsonian investigation at Moundville exhibits six drilled holes, but the lack of the usual engraved decoration lead Vincas Steponaitis (1983b:Figure 10g) to believe it was broken during manufacture. The raw material of the specimen is identified as red slate, which it may be, or

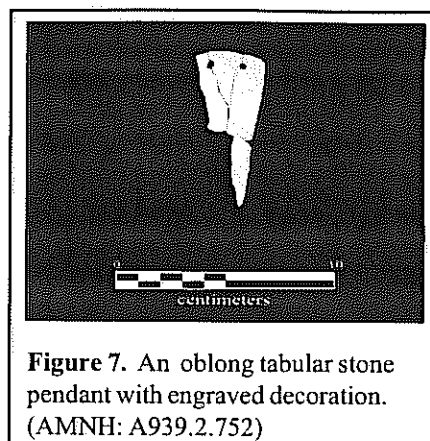


Figure 7. An oblong tabular stone pendant with engraved decoration. (AMNH: A939.2.752)

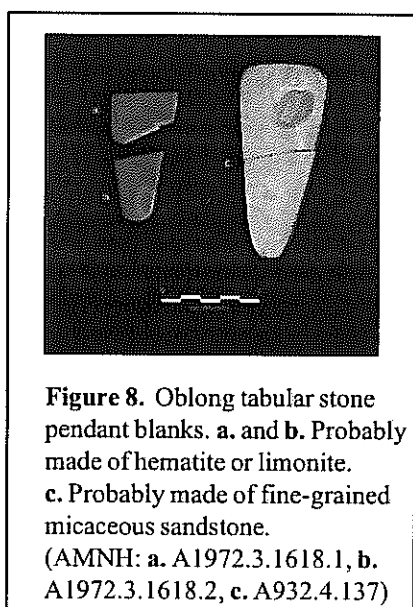


Figure 8. Oblong tabular stone pendant blanks. **a.** and **b.** Probably made of hematite or limonite. **c.** Probably made of fine-grained micaceous sandstone. (AMNH: **a.** A1972.3.1618.1, **b.** A1972.3.1618.2, **c.** A932.4.137)

it may be hematite. The same is true of two other pendants, both oblong in shape with engraved decorations, that have been recovered at Moundville (Figure 7) and at one peripheral site (the Powers site).

Three other oblong stone pendant fragments without decoration have been recovered from Moundville. The lack of decoration and drilling evidence support the notion that these items were pendant blanks in an intermediate stage of production. Two of the blanks were recovered from the area North of Mound R (Figure

8a&b) and the other from the area North of Mound E (Figure 8c). The blank from North of Mound E also exhibits evidence of partial drilling on both sides of its upper portion.

Finally, a mace-head shaped pendant blank was recovered from excavations on the summit of Mound E (Figure 9). This specimen exhibits rough, unground edges that appear as if they were freshly sawn and snapped from a larger tablet of limonite. No evidence for drilling is evident.

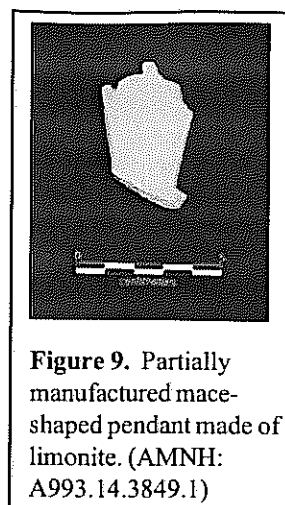


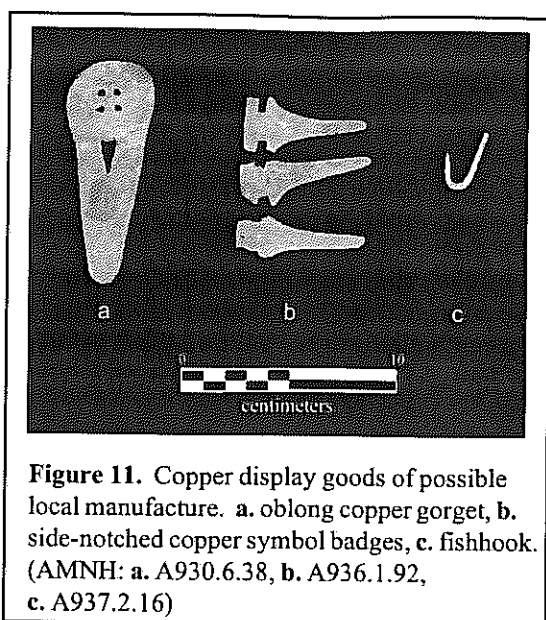
Figure 9. Partially manufactured mace-shaped pendant made of limonite. (AMNH: A993.14.3849.1)

Formal notched and engraved micaceous Pottsville sandstone palettes also represent direct evidence for display goods production at the Moundville site (Figure 10). These palettes are made from a fine-grained micaceous sandstone that outcrops in the Pottsville formation at the Fall Line of the Black Warrior River. Their distribution is highly concentrated around the Moundville site (see following discussion on circulation). Direct evidence of production exists in the form of sawn and snapped tabular debitage of the same thickness found with in Mound E contexts, and sandstone abraders and saws, tools logically related to the manufacture of these palettes, that are present in high frequencies in Mound Q contexts (Vernon J. Knight, personal communication 2000).



Figure 10. Formal notched and engraved micaceous sandstone palettes. (AMNH: A938.3.20, A932.3.835)

Indirect evidence of display goods production at Moundville also exists. Indirect evidence can take many forms; however, the justification for local production of the following copper artifact categories mainly involves the presence of copper scrap in Moundville refuse deposits and the



spatial concentration of finished forms at the paramount site. For example, the thirty-two finished oblong shaped sheet copper gorgets recovered from Moundville are believed to be made locally (Figure 11a). Gorgets of this style have embossed five and six-pointed star and swastika motifs which closely resemble the engraved motifs on oblong tabular stone pendants. The distribution of this particular decorative style appears confined to the burials at the

Moundville center. Such a high concentration of specimens at the primary center can logically be assumed to reflect the local manufacture of these items.

The same argument can be made for the style of seven side-notched sheet copper “symbol badges” (Figure 11b). These artifacts appear to have functioned as costumery, possibly as hair ornaments. The overall form of these symbol badges differ from the so-called “Cemochechobee”- style badges (Brain and Phillips 1996:373) that tend to feature an embossed eye motif and exhibit a much wider distribution (Moore 1996:Figure 104 [1905]). Copper fishhooks represent the final artifact class whose distribution is restricted to the Moundville center (Figure 11c). The rarity of these items ($n=11$) and availability of other functionally equivalent raw materials such as bone or wood justify the designation as a display good.

Indirect evidence also exists for the local production of pottery vessels classified as display goods such as those with eccentric rims and engraved iconographic representations. This classification is admittedly arbitrary, being based on the rarity and ornate nature of vessel construction or decoration. Eccentric rimmed vessels are characterized by a rectanguloid shape and terraced lips (e.g., Steponaitis 1983a:Figure 63d). Pottery bearing

engraved iconography, called Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill*, is usually made from finely crushed shell-tempered clay in vessel forms restricted to partially mold-made globular bottles and bowls (Steponaitis 1983a:314-323) (Figure 12). The Moundville center contains a significant concentration of both of these forms of pottery (see later discussion on circulation). As noted in Chapter 2, Welch (1991) has argued for specialization in certain varieties of Moundville Engraved pottery including *var., Hemphill*. While the author agrees with Muller's (1997) critique of

Welch regarding the degree of craft specialization in Moundville pottery, the evidence still points to a local source of production.

Some stone bifaces, finely worked from exotic chert, may also have been produced at the paramount center. These bifaces are believed to be non-utilitarian display goods because they do not exhibit any evidence of use wear, and they are featured in the iconographic representations of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (Larson 1971:63). An abundance of non-local chert debitage at Moundville lends support to an argument for local production of bifaces. A high frequency of non-local debitage at Moundville and outlying farmsteads has been noted for earlier occupational phases (Maxham 2000; Scarry 1998; Welch 1991), and late Moundville II/early Moundville III phase deposits at the Mound Q contain 67 percent non-local chert. While this evidence does not establish certainty of production, it does demonstrate that at least some Moundville residents possessed a ready supply of exotic chert.

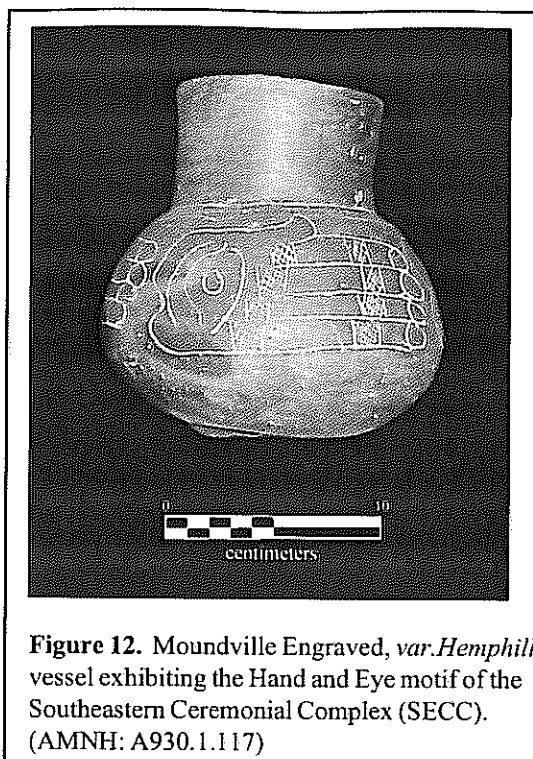


Figure 12. Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* vessel exhibiting the Hand and Eye motif of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC). (AMNH: A930.1.117)

Evidence for the production of display goods, either direct or indirect, is non-existent in the deposits at the peripheral sites included in this study. Only two pieces of direct evidence for production outside the center exist, and neither of these is definitely related to the manufacture display goods during the height of the paramountcy. A utilitarian greenstone celt preform was recovered from the surface in the vicinity of Tousons Lake (1Ha14/15), a single mound and associated village site, during the 2000 Black Warrior Survey. A strong Woodland stage component noted at the site, however, precludes any direct chronological assignment for the preform (Scott Hammerstedt, personal communication 2000). As such, it is not known whether the preform is associated with Mississippian or earlier Woodland production.

Welch (1996:83) reports that 1992 excavations at the Hogpen Mound site, a late Moundville I to early Moundville II phase construction, uncovered a sandstone palette fragment that was broken during production. According to Welch, the undecorated triangular fragment exhibits unground faces and a rounded saw groove that presumably represents an attempt to create a circular palette shape (Paul D. Welch, personal communication 2000). Of course, the specimen's final form is impossible to determine, and undecorated, utilitarian, sandstone palettes are found throughout Black Warrior Valley.

While this study is largely focused on artifacts, a brief comparison of archaeological contexts can serve to demonstrate what inevitably will be done once more peripheral sites have been located and excavated. The 1998-1999 excavations at the Pride Place site (1Tu1), located some 30 km north of Moundville, can offer a comparative basis for production contexts of display goods in the Moundville chiefdom.

Moundville III midden deposits from the outlying Pride Place site can be compared to contemporaneous deposits at Mound Q at Moundville in order to determine if any qualitative or quantitative differences exist in regard to display goods production. The close proximity of Pride Place to fine-grained micaceous Pottsville sandstone sources that outcrop at the Fall Line of the Black Warrior River establishes some testable expectations regarding

the production of formal palettes. Also, the Mound Q context offers evidence of non-domestic, display goods-related activities (Markin 1997).

Table 4 shows the raw frequencies of selected artifacts relating to display goods manufacture from Moundville III phase deposits at Mound Q and Pride Place. Ubiquity measures relating domestic activities to craft activities (i.e., ratios of

Artifact Description	Moundville III Mound Q Deposits	Moundville III Pride Place Midden
Copper Scrap	3	0
Galena	3	0
Sandstone Discoidals	7	8
Notched and Engraved Pottsville Sandstone Palette Fragments	3	1
Sandstone Saws	9	1

Table 4. Comparison of production evidence between contemporaneous Moundville III deposits at Moundville and Pride Place (Numbers denote raw artifact counts).

Mississippi Plain rim sherd counts to frequencies of copper scrap, tools, etc.) were originally conceived to deal with differences in excavation volumes between the sites (after Pauketat 1994). The relatively small assemblages of display goods-related artifacts in both contexts, however, resulted in practically meaningless ratios. Also, because the difference in excavation volumes between the two sites is not large, it was determined that a straight comparison of contexts would be acceptable.

First, the deposits at Mound Q contained occurrences of copper scrap (n=3) and galena (n=3). These two exotic raw materials do not occur at all in the midden refuse at Pride Place. Second, the frequencies of undecorated sandstone stone discoidals are roughly the same between sites (Mound Q n=7, Pride Place n=8) while the number of decorated palette fragments differs somewhat more (Mound Q n=3, Pride Place n=1). Nine sandstone saws were also found in the Mound Q deposits while only one was recovered from the Pride Place midden. Finally, nonlocal chert types comprised 43 percent of the Moundville III stone debitage at Mound Q and 31 percent of the debitage in the Moundville III midden at Pride Place.

Circulation

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the phrase “display goods circulation” is used to recognize the inherent ambiguities of archaeological data. The terms “exchange,” “acquisition,” and “distribution” should be reserved until research provides specific evidence for these activities. The results of the study are divided into two sections. The first section deals with the distribution of exotic raw materials throughout the chiefdom. Sourcing information of exotic raw materials is used to establish source proximity to the Moundville chiefdom. The second section addresses the archaeological distribution of both local and non-local finished display

Artifact Description	Moundville	Powers Site	Pride Place	Snows Bend	Mill Creek	Lubbub Site
Finished Display Goods						
Pearls (Occurrences)	12	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Headdress Elements	6	0	0	0	0	0
Cemochechobee-Style Symbol Badges	19	0	0	0	0	12
Copper Bladed Axes	11	0	0	0	0	0
Embossed Sheet Copper Plates	0	0	0	0	0	1
Plain Sheet Copper Plates	2	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Clad Wooden Effigy Rattles	2	0	0	0	0	0
Stone Effigy Pipes	11	0	0	0	0	0
Engraved Shell Gorgets/Fragments	14	0	0	0	0	5
Decorated Shell Cups	3	0	0	0	0	0
Obsidian Projectile Point	1	0	0	0	0	0
Exotic Raw Materials						
Copper	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Marine Shell	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Present
Galena	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Present
Mica	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Present
Obsidian	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent

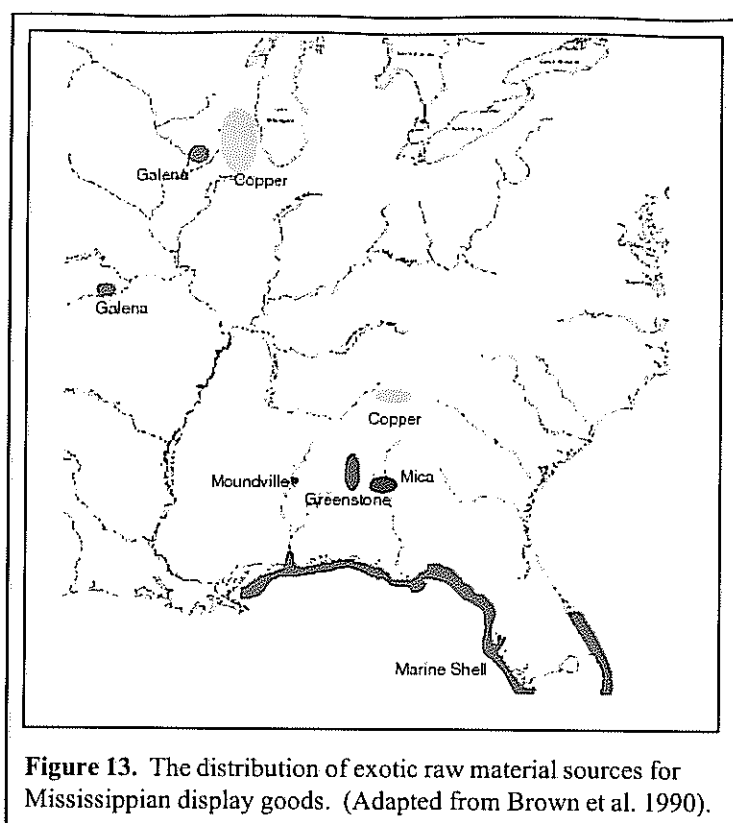
Table 5. Frequencies of probable non-local finished display goods and presence of non-local raw materials at sites in the study.

goods throughout the chiefdom. The discussion section at the end of the chapter will use the data to suggest possible contexts for the circulation of some of these raw materials and finished artifacts.

Table 5 provides a list of finished display goods and raw materials whose production/extraction sources are not local to the Moundville Chiefdom. Imported finished display goods comprise 17 percent of the total sample of display goods used in this study (n=475). The majority of these imports are copper artifacts which make up 50 percent of non-local goods in the sample. Imported marine shell and stone artifacts form 20 percent and 15 percent of the sample respectively. From these percentages, one can see that imported finished display goods did not dominate the local economy as one would expect from a prestige goods economic model. Excluding finished goods, exotic raw materials, other than chert, are also included in this discussion. While not quantified in this study, some discussion is warranted regarding the presence of copper scrap, marine shell, faceted galena chunks, unworked mica, obsidian, and raw greenstone in the Moundville chiefdom.

The sources of raw materials necessarily influence the context of their circulation. For instance, if some material at Moundville was sourced to the Pacific coast, it is unlikely that it was brought to the site as a result of long-distance acquisition. Exotic materials that are present in a raw, unworked form at the Moundville center ca. A.D. 1300-1450 include copper, marine shell, galena, mica, one piece of obsidian, and greenstone. Sourcing information for the exotic materials can help determine whether or not their presence suggests importation through foreign acquisition (Figure 13).

The sourcing of Mississippian copper has presented some difficulty to researchers. The high level of purity in native copper requires that trace element identification be used to distinguish between sources. Two independent trace element studies identify a source of copper in the southern Appalachian Mountains (Goad 1980; Hurst and Larson 1958). Distant, northern sources of copper are reported to lie in the glacial gravels of the Snake, Illinois, and Mississippi River valleys in Minnesota and Wisconsin (Brown et al. 1990). No source studies



have been performed on copper artifacts from Moundville; therefore, no one source can be assigned confidently. What can be said is that Moundville residents probably never directly visited these sources. Also, it can be argued that stylistic similarities that exist in Moundville's copper artifacts are aligned with the Etowah site which is located in north Georgia near the southern Appalachian copper source.

Generally, the distribution of marine shells used in Mississippian display goods is restricted to the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the south Atlantic shore of present day Florida.

Galena and mica are both exotic mineral resources related to display goods. Chunks of galena, some exhibiting faceted sides, are found both in burial and non-burial contexts at Moundville. Two sources have been identified for seven pieces of galena from Moundville, one in southeastern Missouri and one west of Lake Michigan (Walthall 1981).

Mica is brilliant yet fragile mineral that may have been used as a pigment or manufactured into cut-out ornaments. Caches of unworked mica were recovered near the

Conference Building and Moundville, and one mica cutout ornament was identified in the sample. Sources of mica are located relatively close to Moundville in the Piedmont of eastern Alabama (Jones 1939).

Obsidian and greenstone make up the final category of exotic raw materials found in the Moundville region. Aside from an obsidian biface, only one other piece of obsidian was recovered from the Rhodes site at the Moundville center (Peebles 1979). The exact source of these pieces is not known, however, the closest known sources of obsidian lie far to the west in the Great Plains or the Rocky Mountains.

Greenstone is relatively ubiquitous in Moundville contexts throughout the chiefdom. It was undoubtedly an important resource to Mississippian people who utilized greenstone celts in clearing agricultural fields. The definite source of some greenstone artifacts from Moundville has been located in the Hillabee formation of eastern-central Alabama where greenstone occurs in the form of boulders and river worn cobbles (Gall 1993).

The archaeological distribution of these raw materials is highly concentrated at the paramount center. In fact, no peripheral site in the study sample contained any of the exotic raw materials other than greenstone, which is relatively abundant throughout the Black Warrior Valley. Excavations at some peripheral sites have uncovered exotic raw materials such as galena (e.g., Welch 1991:169); however, most of these sites fall outside of the time range of this study. Even if they were considered, the miniscule occurrences of exotic raw materials at these sites would have little effect on the observed distribution.

The circulation of finished exotic display goods in the chiefdom features essentially the same centralized structure exhibited by exotic raw materials. Some of the manufacturing sources of these artifacts are reasonably well known while other sources are more speculative. For instance, copper clad wooden ear discs (n=99) and copper clad wooden beads (n=72), whose manufacturing sources could either be at Moundville or elsewhere, comprise 20 percent and 15 percent of the total sample of display goods for the chiefdom (n=475).

Pearls occur exclusively as grave furnishings in burial contexts at Moundville. All of the specimens recorded by Moore (1996 [1905, 1907]) are perforated and used as beads. The manufacturing source for these artifacts is unknown as is the raw material source, although the historical accounts of the DeSoto *entrada* note an abundance of fresh water pearls in the mid-Atlantic region

(Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1993). Also, the Tennessee River offers another possible source for the pearls.

Imported finished display goods made from copper offer two possible sources of manufacture. These goods include copper headdress elements (Figure 14a), “Cemochechobee” style copper symbol badges (Moore 1996:Figure 104 [1905]), copper bladed axes (Moore 1996:Figure 28 [1905]), and embossed copper plates (Figure 14b). The Etowah site, a possible manufacturing locus for copper located in northwestern Georgia, is relatively close to the southeastern sources of native copper, and it contains a very high concentration of embossed sheet-copper artifacts exhibiting highly uniform decorative motifs (Larson 1971). The similarities in decoration are so uniform that some believe that the sheet copper artifacts were produced by craft specialists at Etowah (Larson 1971; Leader 1988).

Brown (1989), on the other hand, argues that Cahokia is the likely manufacturing locus for many of the embossed sheet copper plates found at Etowah, and other sites throughout the southeastern United States. Brown (1989) argues that the decorative motifs

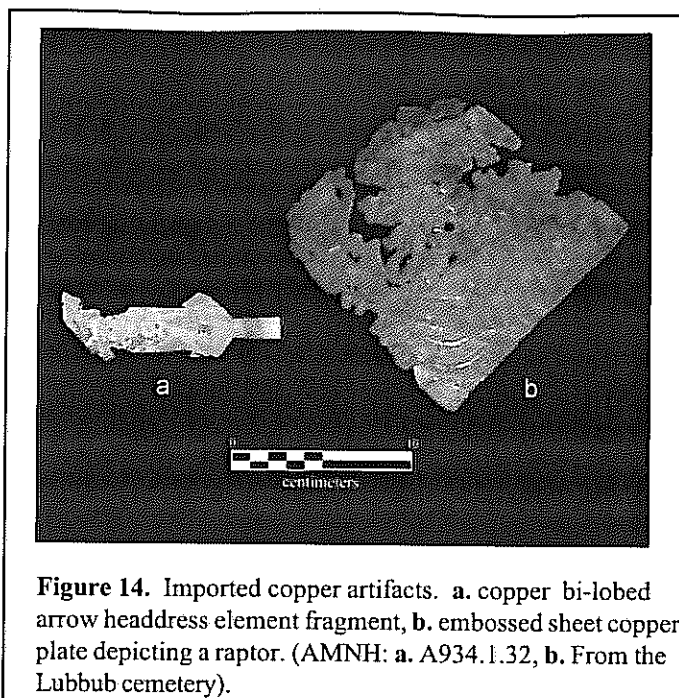


Figure 14. Imported copper artifacts. **a.** copper bi-lobed arrow headdress element fragment, **b.** embossed sheet copper plate depicting a raptor. (AMNH: **a.** A934.1.32, **b.** From the Lubbub cemetery).

on embossed sheet copper plates at Etowah is strikingly similar to the decorative motifs on engraved shell gorgets believed to have been made at Cahokia. He concludes that both shell gorgets and the embossed copper plates were made at Cahokia positing that the stylistic interaction noted in shell, copper, and ceramic artifacts is undoubtedly the result of trade between the two polities.

Limestone effigy pipes at Moundville also have a foreign origin. These pipes are exquisitely carved and are often in the form of a large monstrous feline (Moore 1996:Figure 1 [1905]). The decorative form of the effigy pipes is very similar to pipes found in appreciable quantities at Emerald Mound and other sites in the lower Mississippi River Valley (Brain and Phillips 1996:384-387). While there is possible evidence for the local manufacture of at least one limestone effigy pipe (see above discussion under Production), the majority of specimens are believed to be imported from the lower Mississippi Valley region.

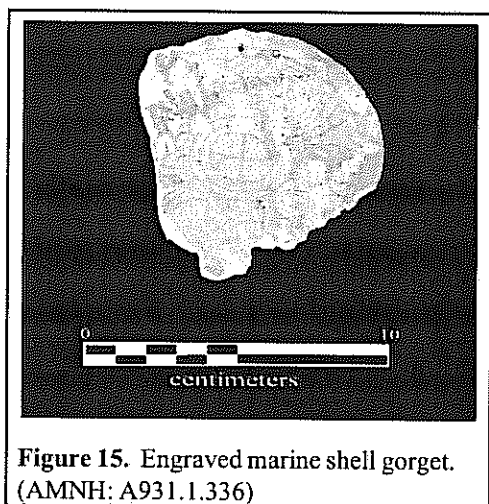


Figure 15. Engraved marine shell gorget.
(AMNH: A931.1.336)

Engraved marine shell artifacts at Moundville take the form of gorgets (Figure 15) and cups. There is some debate as to the use of certain decorative motifs to establish manufacturing loci for engraved shell artifacts (e.g., Muller 1997:370-382 *contra* Brain and Phillips 1996). Brain and Phillips (1996:354) identify styles of gorgets at Moundville that correspond with styles from the the Spiro site of Oklahoma, the Tombigbee River valley, the

Nashville, Tennessee area, and the Coosa-Tallapoosa drainage of central Alabama. Muller, on the other hand identifies a separate “Moundville” style of gorget whose distribution does not extend beyond present-day central and northwestern Alabama (1997:Figure 8.5).

The obsidian biface recovered from excavations north of Mound E is another artifact with an unknown manufacturing source (Figure 16). About the only things that can be said

regarding the point are that no other Mississippian center in the South has reported artifacts of obsidian and that sourcing research is necessary.

A review of table 5 will reveal that there is a very high concentration of finished exotic display goods at the paramount center. In fact, none of the artifacts listed in the table are found at any of the outlying sites in the chiefdom. Here, problems with differences in excavation volume become apparent. The distribution is obviously biased by the fact that virtually all of these finished display goods are used as grave furnishings, and only one small cemetery, Snows Bend, has been identified outside of the paramount center that dates to late Moundville II through early Moundville III phases.

The only site in the study that can even remotely compare to Moundville is called the Lubbub site. It consists of a single mound with an associated village located in the central Tombigbee River Valley. Mississippian occupations in the area have been broken into three chronological phases (Summerville I, II, III) that are roughly contemporaneous with the Moundville I, II, and III phases in the Black Warrior River valley (Blitz 1993). The Lubbub polity, however, is considered to be politically independent from the Moundville paramountcy because of its distance from the Moundville center (Blitz 1993:2; see also Hally 1993).

It is generally held that the Lubbub polity is structurally different from the Moundville polity in terms of the development of political and social hierarchies. Blitz (1993:128) states that the social, political, and economic structure of the Lubbub polity is more akin to Sahlins's (1983 [1963]) "Big Man" societies than to the intensely hierarchical centralized Moundville polity described by Welch (1986, 1991, 1996) and others (e.g., Knight and Steponaitis 1998; Peebles and Kus 1977). First, the settlement pattern in the Lubbub area demonstrates a two-tiered hierarchy (i.e., a mound center/village and scattered farmsteads), while Moundville's settlement hierarchy is three-tiered (i.e., a paramount center, numerous single mound subsidiary

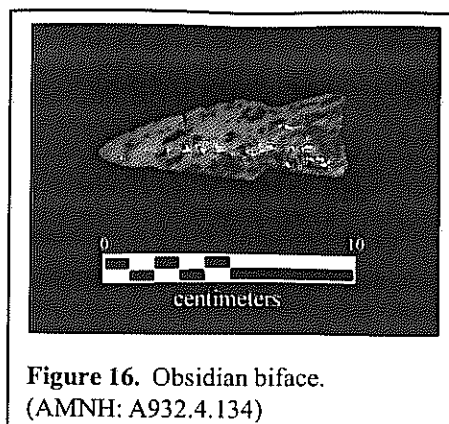


Figure 16. Obsidian biface.
(AMNH: A932.4.134)

centers, and scattered farmsteads). The number of tiers in a settlement hierarchy is sometimes viewed as an indicator of the degree of political complexity (Peebles 1978; Steponaitis 1978).

Second, data regarding display goods manufacture and distribution at Lubbub suggest that access to exotic resources and finished display goods was not strictly controlled; instead, the relatively widespread distribution of finished display goods and production evidence demonstrates that display goods were manufactured at the household level (Blitz 1993:128). This pattern closely resembles models proposed by archaeologists for the American Bottom region (e.g., Brown et al. 1990; Muller 1997).

The excavation of twenty one individuals from the cemetery at Lubbub recovered the bulk of non-local display goods. The burials contained three occurrences of copper clad wooden ear discs, twelve Cemochechobee style copper symbol badges, five engraved shell gorgets, one embossed sheet copper plate depicting a falcon motif (Figure 14b), one eccentric rimmed vessel, and three undecorated marine shell cups (Jenkins and Ensor 1981:68-93). Excavations in non-burial contexts at the site recovered two formal notched and engraved Pottsville sandstone palette fragments (Blitz 1993).

Other sites in the Tombigbee River Valley contain display goods of possible Moundville origins. Excavations at the Halbert Camp site (22LO58) in the Tombigbee River Valley (Rucker 1974:86-92, Plate 4) recovered a fragment of an engraved oblong stone pendant (Figure 17) identical to those produced at Moundville. Also, a 2000 surface inspection by the author, Vernon J. Knight, John Blitz, and Scott Hammerstedt of the Fidor Mound, a plowed mound site in Pickens County, Alabama, recovered a single fragment of a formal notched and engraved Pottsville sandstone palette.

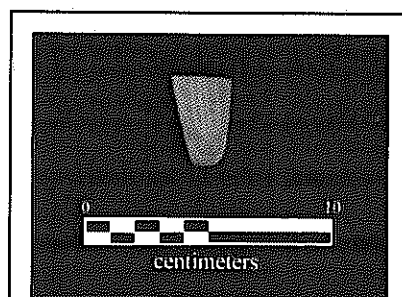


Figure 17. Bottom portion of an oblong tabular stone pendant that was recovered from the Halbert Camp site (22LO58).

Artifact Description	Moundville	Powers Site	Pride Place	Snows Bend	Mill Creek	Hemphill Bend Locality	Romulus Locality	Lubbub Site	Halbert Camp Site	Fidor Mound
Side-notched Symbol Badges	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Gorgets	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tabular Stone Pendants/Fragments	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Greenstone Gorget	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monolithic Axe Pendants	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Fishhooks	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chipped Stone Bifaces	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-utilitarian Greenstone Axes/Fragments	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carved Monolithic Axes/Fragments	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Sandstone Palettes/Fragments	57	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Eccentric Rimmed Vessels	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Moundville Engraved var. Hemphill	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Unknown	Unknown	Present	Absent	Present

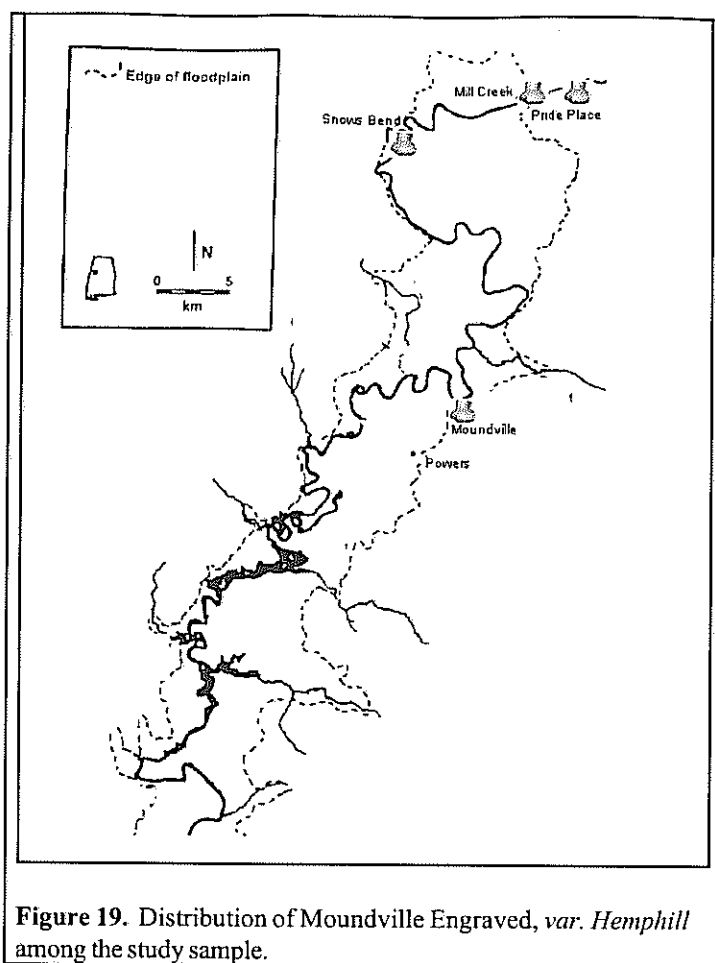
Table 6. Frequencies of items possibly manufactured within the Moundville polity and their distribution among the sites in the study.

Display goods possibly produced in the Moundville paramount center exhibit the same basic distribution pattern as non-local display goods (Table 6). A few notable exceptions



Figure 18. The Dorroh Axe. Notice the reground surfaces that appear to be the result of repairing the axe after a piece had spalled off. (From private collection)

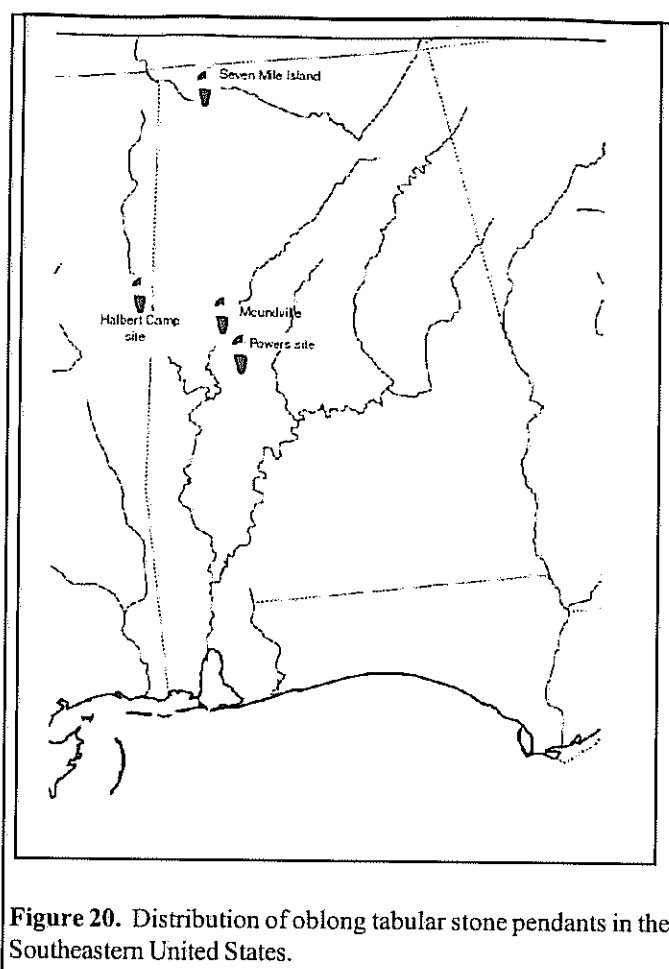
should be addressed however. The first is an ornately carved monolithic greenstone axe fragment, named the Dorroh Axe after its owner (Figure 18). Originally believed to be from an area near Fosters, Alabama (Miller 1956), the axe was actually found in a garden plot near Romulus, Alabama in an area where no mound has ever been identified. In fact, the location of the find is in an upland setting far from the floodplain of the Black



Warrior River. The other monolithic axe in the sample was reportedly recovered on the Moundville site (Moore 1996:133 [1905]). While a single occurrence is hardly grounds for basing conclusions, this find may help in filling the theoretical gap related to the locations and use-lives of display goods before being interred in burials.

Another interesting distribution pattern involves the pottery type known as Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* (Figure 19). This particular variety of Moundville Engraved bears engraved Southeastern Ceremonial Complex iconography such as the winged serpent and crested bird. Vessels and sherds of this type are present at all of the Moundville chiefdom sites (not isolated finds) considered in this study except for the Powers site.

Five other exceptions to the centralized distribution of locally made display goods exist. A fragment of an oblong stone pendant engraved with the six pointed star motif native



to Moundville was found at the Powers site southwest of the paramount center. The raw material used to make the pendant is a reddish stone, possibly hematite (Richard R. Krause, personal communication 2000). This raw material was also used to manufacture a pendant recovered from Moundville's Roadway excavations. The Seven Mile Island site in northwest Alabama also yielded a specimen of an oblong tabular stone pendant that was identified as identical to specimens from Moundville (Webb and DeJarnette 1942: Plate 58.2). Figure 20 gives the distribution of oblong tabular stone pendants throughout the region.

Two formal Pottsville sandstone palette artifacts were recovered from Pride Place some 30 km north of the Moundville center near the present city of Tuscaloosa. A notched and engraved sandstone palette was found in a burial at Pride Place and one palette fragment was recovered from a Moundville III phase midden deposit (Johnson 1999). These finds are not so extraordinary considering that the site is located within sight of a Pottsville sandstone

outcrop that is comprised of the fine-grained micaceous material from which the palettes are made. Considering this, it seems unusual that more of these palettes were not found at the site. Additionally, one formal Pottsville sandstone palette fragment was identified in a private collection (Scott Hammerstedt, personal communication 2000). This specimen is reported to have come from Hemphill Bend just across the Black Warrior River from Moundville. This find is also not surprising considering the location's proximity to the paramount site.

The distribution of formal notched and engraved sandstone palettes (Figure 21) can be used as an acceptable measure of elite distribution both within and outside the Moundville polity. An earlier study noted the distribution of paint palettes in the Southeast, but it included all palettes regardless of material of manufacture (Webb and DeJarnette 1942:287-290). As our production evidence demonstrates, Pottsville sandstone palettes are most likely produced at the Moundville center, and are one of the only artifact categories classified as display

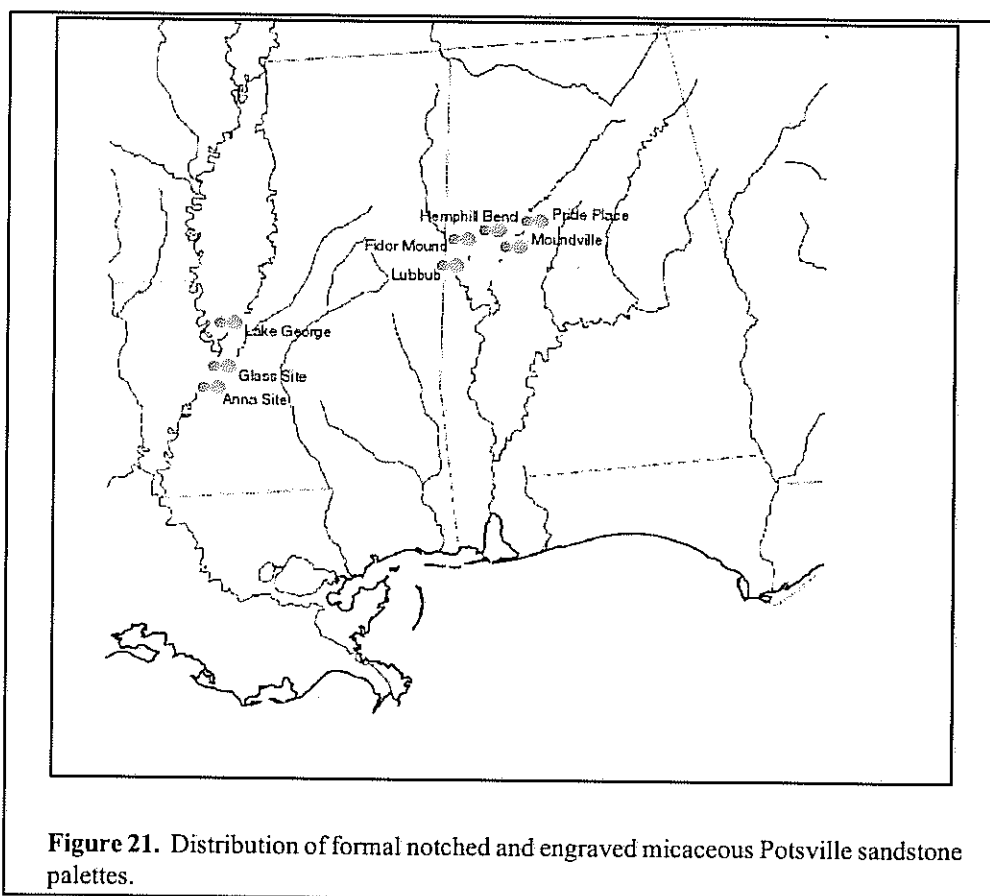


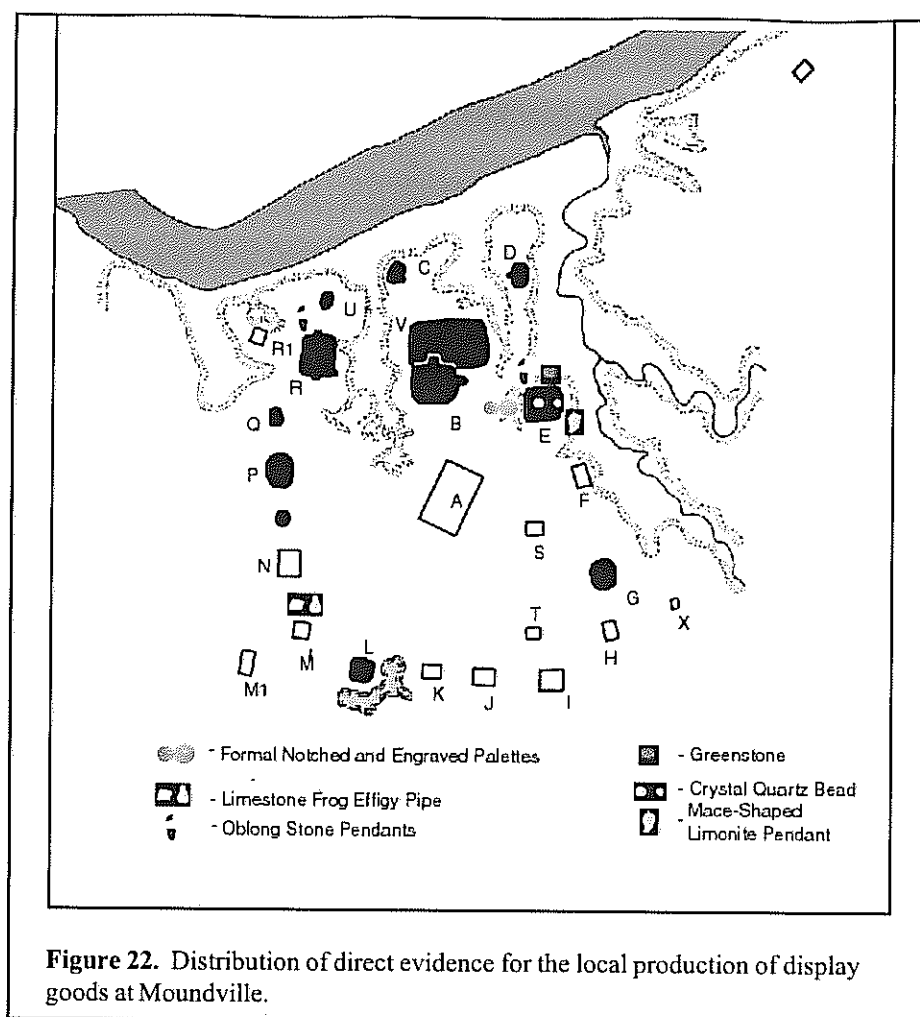
Figure 21. Distribution of formal notched and engraved micaceous Pottsville sandstone palettes.

goods that are found in any substantial numbers. These palettes comprise about 20 percent of the locally produced items in the sample. The function of these palettes is presumed to be ritual, probably involving the grinding of pigments for bodily decoration (Moore 1996:43-45 [1905]).

Figure 21 shows the distribution of known Pottsville sandstone palettes throughout the southeastern United States. As discussed above, distribution within the chiefdom is restricted to Moundville (n=57), one non-mound context (Pride Place) (n=2), and an isolated find north of Moundville (n=1). Other than the Lubbub region where a total of three fragments were recovered, only three sites outside the Moundville polity are known to have had these formal micaceous sandstone palettes. According to a cursory mineralogical assessment, Steponaitis (personal communication 2000) states that one whole example of a notched and engraved palette from the Glass site, two fragments of notched and engraved palettes from the Lake George site (Williams and Brain 1983:265), and an example from the Anna site are the only specimens of fine-grained, micaceous Pottsville sandstone that have been encountered at any great distance from the Moundville chiefdom.

Discussion

The results of the display goods analysis presented here provide some interesting patterns that bear directly on both of the aims of this work. First, this study finds that the overall geographic distribution of display goods production differs little from the findings of Welch (1991). All direct and indirect evidence for display goods production ca. A.D. 1300-1450, occurs at the Moundville paramount center. Direct evidence of production was established for two isolated finds (i.e., a crystal bead and a limestone pipe), tabular stone pendants, non-utilitarian greenstone artifacts, and formal notched and engraved micaceous Pottsville sandstone palettes (Figure 22). There is also indirect evidence of late Moundville II / early Moundville III production of certain copper artifacts, exotic chert bifaces, and Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* pottery. Also the artifact assemblages found with sawn



and snapped greenstone and sandstone pieces establishes new manufacturing loci for greenstone display goods (Wilson 2000) and sandstone palettes near Mound E.

The direct evidence also provides information regarding the manufacturing process behind the tabular stone pendants and some greenstone display goods. In the first stage of pendant manufacture a rough form is cut from slabs of stone such as hematite or limonite using a groove and snap method. After the edges of the specimen have been ground smooth, holes are drilled for suspension and to create the upper decoration on oblong pendants. Finally, the blank is engraved with SECC motifs. The early stages of greenstone display goods production involve the same process of creating rough forms using a groove and snap technique on ground, tabular pieces.

While the comparison between Mound Q and Pride Place did not demonstrate drastic differences in production evidence between contexts, some comments may provide additional insight. The similarities in frequencies of sandstone related manufacturing items is quite surprising considering the fact that Pride place is located at the Pottsville sandstone source while Mound Q is some 30 km away. Also, considering its location, the abundance of brown sandstone and the absence of any substantial quantities of tabular fine-grained micaceous Pottsville sandstone at Pride Place is telling. Manufacturing evidence of sandstone artifacts at the site is surprisingly lacking in general. Only one saw was recovered from the Moundville III midden, and the small sandstone discoidals are found throughout the Black Warrior River valley. In sum, these findings demonstrate that the production of display goods made from fine-grained micaceous Pottsville sandstone is centered at Moundville for reasons other than proximity to the source.

The archaeological distribution of exotic raw materials and finished display goods is also concentrated at the Moundville center. The sources of manufacturing materials for display goods production at Moundville ranges from approximately 20 km to over 1,500 km. The distant sources of galena, copper, and obsidian would make it difficult to maintain constant supplies. Marine shell sources located in the southern Gulf of Mexico would be expected to provide a more stable supply than galena, copper, and obsidian. Why then, are shell display goods, other than beads, so rare at Moundville? Perhaps it is because the production of engraved shell artifacts took place away from the source of the raw material. This scenario would concur with the various manufacture locations posited by Brown (1989), Muller (1997) and Brain and Phillips (1996).

Greenstone and mica are the two raw materials whose sources are close enough to Moundville to provide a stable supply. Mica appears to have been quite abundant in isolated contexts early in Moundville's history, but data from the sites in this study suggest that mica was not as prevalent by late Moundville II/early Moundville III phases. Ornaments made from this material are very rare for any period at Moundville. This may be a reflection of

poor preservation, but it may also speak to alternative functions of this mineral, possibly as a pigment.

The scale of circulation for greenstone must have been substantial, as evidenced by the abundant presence of greenstone at the Moundville center and surrounding sites. Its use in both utilitarian and non-utilitarian items is interesting, particularly when one considers how the relative “values” of display goods are determined in prestige goods economies. If greenstone display goods represented a form of wealth, one would expect very little greenstone in any form to be in the hands of the average farmer. Clues to the form of greenstone circulation lie in Wilson’s (2000) findings that no substantial evidence exists for early manufacturing stages of utilitarian greenstone artifacts at Moundville. One is left to assume that at least the initial working of greenstone occurred outside the center and perhaps outside the polity (Wilson 2000).

The identity of the people who actually performed the initial production stage is very difficult to determine at this point; however, the quantities of greenstone that were flowing into Moundville make it difficult to justify the notion that simple exchange between households could account for the data. It tentatively appears as though some form of controlled concentrated movement of greenstone was occurring either through exchange or long-distance acquisition by Moundville groups. Further excavations are necessary around the Hillabee sources of greenstone in order to determine the nature of procurement and production activities at the source end.

The intra-polity circulation of finished exotic display goods in the Moundville region appears strongly centralized at the paramount center. The chiefdom’s control over inter-polity circulation in the region, however, appears to be much less secure. This is evidenced by the presence of marine shell and copper display goods in burials at the Lubbub cemetery. This relatively small, weakly centralized neighbor of Moundville contains more non-local display goods than all of the Moundville sites put together with the exception of the paramount center. It even contains quantities of certain goods (i.e., Cemochechobee-style symbol

badges, engraved marine shell gorgets, embossed sheet copper plate) that rival the paramount center. One can only assume that either the Lubbub polity had a special relationship with Moundville, or Moundville's sphere of influence did not extend far beyond its own borders.

The distribution data regarding locally produced display goods mirror the conclusions drawn above. The distribution of tabular stone pendants and formal Pottsville sandstone palettes throughout the chiefdom suggests these goods may provide Moundville's best examples of prestige goods. Distribution of display goods in the prestige goods models, however, imply that locally made display goods should be found in contexts outside the political boundaries of the local polity. Inspection of the data reveals that these items are largely restricted to the Moundville chiefdom. The concentration of palettes and pendants at Moundville may be the result of their use in internal distribution, but the lack of appreciable quantities of these or any other locally made goods in external polities adds support for arguments against the applicability of "prestige goods" models to Moundville's economy.

The distribution of Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* vessels and sherds can provide some insight into the mechanisms behind the spread of ideology. The most that can be said regarding the production locations of these vessels is that it is equally possible for production to have occurred at the household level or at the paramount center. The observed pattern of distribution for Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* is exactly what would be expected if the "communalization" of sacred, formerly restricted elite symbols by commoners were to occur (Knight 1986:682). According to Knight (1986), "communalization" occurs as a result of the decline of chiefdoms during late Mississippian times. At this time, he (Knight 1986) argues that the religious beliefs and practices underwent a change as the formerly restricted symbols of the elites (i.e., SECC iconography) were co-opted by the general population and transferred to mundane, local media such as ceramics. Late Moundville II through early Moundville III phases, however, are believed to represent the height of political centralization in the chiefdom; therefore, the widespread distribution of this type of pottery appears to be the result of other processes such as hegemony as argued by Pauketat (1994).

Overall, the impression that one gains from a quantitative perspective is that these display goods are not terribly ubiquitous. The distribution of production evidence, while consistent with models calling for centralized control, is still very rare even at the Moundville center. Also, only 17 percent of the total number of finished display goods artifacts in this study ($n=475$) are from non-local sources. This does not appear to be sufficient to demonstrate the importance of non-local display goods to the maintenance of political and social hierarchies in chiefdoms.

Considering the fact that the height of the paramountcy lasted about one hundred and fifty years and included perhaps thousands of people (the center itself is estimated to have included over 1,000 people during earlier phases [Steponaitis 1998]), the total amount of display goods within the chiefdom is miniscule. Even within the center itself, relatively few burials can be called lavish, the exceptions being a handful found in Mound C, Mound H, Mound D, and the Rhodes site (Moore 1996 [1905, 1907]; Peebles 1979). That does not amount to much when compared to the over 3,100 burials excavated at the site since C.B. Moore's 1905 investigations (Steponaitis 1998). These data seem to cast doubt upon the use of display goods as "wealth finance" in strategies to attain power. The frequencies simply do not measure up to what one would expect from systemic strategies that encourage wealth accumulation and competition.

What does the empirical evidence have to say about the applicability of "prestige goods" models and the degree of elite control over the display goods sector in the Moundville chiefdom? Moundville's display goods do incorporate some of the principles of the "prestige goods" models, but it appears that there is a quantitative and qualitative difference between the models and the archaeological data. Display goods exhibit a lot of the qualities used to define prestige goods such as the use of exotic materials and ornate crafting. Also, these goods do appear to be concentrated in elite contexts and exchanged over long distances.

What evidence we do have of the production and circulation of these goods throughout the Moundville chiefdom does not fully support "prestige goods" models. First, it appears

that display goods in the Moundville chiefdom do not represent a primary fund of power for elites. The very low frequency of production evidence for these artifacts does not support the notion that they were used as items in routine social transactions. If display goods do not represent wealth finance activities, then the essential basis for “prestige goods” models does not apply to the Moundville chiefdom, at least in canonical form.

Furthermore, theoretical debates over the degree of Mississippian elite control over display goods might be seen as a result of the misapplication of these models, particularly in assuming aspects of the model such as the importance of wealth accumulation. If this is the case, then the data visited here do provide evidence of centralized location of display goods production, but the contexts in which these activities took place appear qualitatively different than those posited by “prestige goods” models. It is in that difference that an answer to the current debates is to be found.

CHAPTER 6

THE FUTURE OF DISPLAY GOODS STUDIES AT MOUNDVILLE

This project should be seen as a small part of an ongoing process involving model formulation, testing, and reformulation. The extended literature review was meant to establish the historical processes that led to the current study. This study follows in the established tradition by testing the applicability of popular prestige goods models with a Mississippian case study. The results of the empirical test provided archaeological evidence that contradicts what is expected from prestige goods models. This outcome is similar to that of Peebles and Kus (1977) and Earle (1977), who found evidence to refute the application of Service's (1962) redistribution model. While the author does not claim to address the current use of prestige goods models outside of the Moundville chiefdom, the study does provide reasonable evidence to warrant serious reconsideration of the current use of prestige goods models to explain the role of display goods within the Moundville polity.

The results of this study should be seen only as a preliminary discussion, for some weaknesses are evident in this work, as stated in the previous pages. The format of the work can be described as an artifact study. As such, it does not give tremendous attention to the archaeological contexts in which production and circulation of display goods occurred. Also, the study was a static comparison between contemporaneous contexts. A diachronic approach (e.g., Steponaitis 1991) would be better in order to achieve a solid understanding of the development of Moundville's display goods economy.

The most damaging weakness that appears in the paper stems from the tremendous disparity between excavations at the Moundville center and surrounding sites. This observation relates to Steponaitis's (1991) demonstration that the burial population at Moundville continued to increase during Moundville II and III phases while the resident

population decreased. This has serious implications that affect the interpretation of spatial concentrations of display goods at the Moundville center. Particularly, the possibility exists that some of the display goods interred at Moundville saw usage outside of the paramount center. This results in the Mississippian dilemma mentioned in the title of this paper.

The dilemma occurs because of the strict application of models that equate a hierarchical settlement pattern with a hierarchical political structure. We have strong evidence that production and circulation of display goods was spatially centralized at the paramount center ca. A.D. 1300-1450. The lack of excavations outside the center combined with the demographic situation suggests that the observed centralized pattern of display goods distribution is not necessarily a manifestation of strong political centralization. In other words, the spatial distribution of political power does not necessarily have to follow the established settlement pattern of farmsteads, regional administrative centers, and paramount center.

Suggestions for Future Archaeological Research

Additional excavations in areas surrounding the paramount center will no doubt provide information to address the dilemma. Excavations outside the center will benefit future models by determining the distribution and function of display goods in the periphery. Both negative and positive evidence of display goods in these areas can be used to discern the function of the paramount center. It is clear that the lands surrounding Moundville hold valuable information regarding the lives of the majority of the population at the height of the chiefdom (Knight and Steponaitis 1998)

The results of this work suggest that the display goods in the sample did not act as prestige goods in a system of wealth finance. Instead, these artifacts appear to have functioned as costumery and display objects perhaps used in religious contexts. The centralized distribution of these goods and the uniformity of their forms indicate that they were possibly used as markers of status or badges of political office. The lack of sufficient quantities of

these goods, however, precludes the possibility that they were a primary source of power for the political and/or social status they marked.

Future archaeological research needs to focus on particular artifact categories in order to better determine their function. For example, production and circulation data regarding formal Pottsville sandstone palettes and tabular stone pendants suggest that these artifacts may have been produced under the auspices of the Moundville center and distributed locally. The same can be said of the local distribution of items such copper gorgets, copper fishhooks, and copper symbol badges. Marine shell beads were excluded from this study because they deserve more attention than this work would be able to provide. These items may very well represent some form of wealth, but an in depth analysis of Moundville burials and excavation data is required to determine the role of marine shells in burial treatment and the chiefly economy.

An in depth study of the use of exotic raw materials in utilitarian goods is also necessary. Wilson's (2000) work with greenstone provided useful evidence regarding both the circulation and production of this material. Also, Welch (1991:149-163) has attempted to quantify the distribution of non-local chert in the chiefdom. Maxham (2000) also has contributed knowledge regarding the distribution of non-local chert during the Moundville I phase. Maxham found that the archaeological distribution of non-local stone was not as centralized as Welch found during later phases. This work needs to continue in order to determine if a dual structure exists in the distribution of utilitarian and non-utilitarian goods (e.g., Cobb 1996; Wilson 2000).

Suggestions for Future Ethnohistorical Research

While prestige goods models may not be effective at explaining the mechanisms of display goods production and circulation in the Moundville chiefdom, this does not mean that these models are of no value. As stated at the beginning of the thesis, these models are very important in conceptualizing political economy and the role display goods play in societies

with unequal power relations. The problems occur when these abstracted models are rigidly applied to archaeological data. Therefore, in order to achieve an accurate understanding of the cultural systems involved with the production of display goods, the application of political-economic models must be informed by the particular social, political, and economic systems of societies in which they operate.

Future research into display goods in the Moundville chiefdom needs to incorporate the wealth of ethnohistoric information that is available. Even though European contact with Native American polities drastically altered the cultural systems of some regions, the analogies one can make to these societies seem far more effective than analogies made to abstract cross-cultural constructs.

Current examples of ethnohistorical research demonstrate the utility of incorporating first hand accounts of Mississippian cultures into theories regarding the structure of socio-political systems in the southeastern United States. Schambach (1999) and Dye (1995), for example, combine archaeological evidence with the accounts of Spanish explorers to comment on the circulation of display goods. Based partly on the accounts of the DeSoto expedition, Shambach (1999) argues that the Mississippian peoples of Spiro were professional traders who transported goods between the societies of the Great Plains and Mississippian societies to the east. Dye (1995) uses ethnohistoric evidence from Spanish accounts to suggest the importance of diplomacy in the circulation of Mississippian display goods. This is a very interesting perspective that needs to be addressed for Moundville.

The social organization of Mississippian societies is another topic that would be of invaluable use in the construction of models for display goods. Ethnohistoric information provides clues regarding Mississippian social organization that cannot be found in the archaeological record. Knight (1997) uses historical accounts of Native American social structure to address the problems associated with applying social structures derived from cross-cultural ethnographic studies to Mississippian groups. He argues that very little evidence exists in historical accounts for the highly developed descent systems and rank structures

(i.e., conical clan) applied to Mississippian societies. This is important because corporate descent groups and elaborate ranking of individuals are foundational concepts in prestige goods models.

Knight (1990), Scarry (1999), and Wyckoff and Baugh (1980) use ethnohistoric information to suggest the possible form of Mississippian social organization. These works all provide valuable information regarding the structure and nature of hierarchical political relations in Mississippian chiefdoms. These works can all be used to generate archaeologically testable statements about the form and function of Mississippian political structure.

Hopefully, these concluding remarks have provided a good starting point for future research into the display goods economy of Moundville. It must be acknowledged that prestige goods models fail at adequately explaining the role of prestige goods in the Moundville chiefdom. Now, future work must address the discrepancies that arise between Welch's (1991) model and newly generated archaeological data. While Welch's model of the display goods economy is a sound foundation, a better understanding of the political, economic, and social development of the Moundville chiefdom is always possible.

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Appendix A

Tabulation of the Study Sample for the Moundville Center (n=470)

Artifacts are listed as counts unless noted. Otherwise, unfinished artifacts are excluded from counts.

Material of Manufacture	Artifact Category	Artifact Counts
	Costumery	
Objects of Copper	Copper Clad Wooden Ear Disks	99
	Copper Gorgets	32
	Copper Headdress Elements	6
	Cemochechobee Copper Symbol Badges	19
	Side-Notched Copper Symbol Badges	7
	Copper Bead	1
	Copper Clad Wooden Beads	72
	Unidentified Copper Ornaments	28
	Copper Clad Shell Bead	1
Objects of Marine Shell	Shell Bracelet	1
	Engraved Shell Gorgets/Fragments	14
	Shell axe Pendants	2
Objects of Stone	Oblong Tabular Stone Pendants/ Fragments	6
	Mace-Shaped Tabular Stone Pendant	1
	Human Head Effigy Tabular Stone Pendant	1
	Greenstone Gorget	1
	Monolithic Axe Pendant	2
	Mica Ear Ornaments	1
	Amethyst Pendant	1
	Galena Beads	31
	Mica Cutout Ornament	1
Objects of Other Materials	Shark Tooth Pendant	1
	Pearl (Occurrences)	12
	Resin Bead	1
	Display Objects	
Objects of Copper	Copper Bladed Axes	11
	Plain Copper Plates	2
	Copper Fishhooks	11
	Unidentified Copper Object	1
	Copper Clad Wooden Effigy Rattle	2
	Copper "Dagger"	1
Objects of Stone	Ornate Chipped Stone Bifaces	5
	Non-utilitarian Greenstone Axes/Fragments	9
	Carved Monolithic Axes	1
	Notched and Engraced Stone Palettes	37
	Notched and Engraved Stone Palette Fragments	20
	Obsidian Biface	1
	Stone Effigy Pipes/ Fragments	11
Objects of Pottery	Eccentric Rimmed Vessels	7
	Moundville Engraved, var. <i>Hemphill</i> Vessels	138
Objects of Marine Shell	Decorated Shell Cups	3
	Undecorated Shell Cups/Fragments	7

Appendix B

List of Moundville Display Goods and Accompanying Page References and Illustrations
From Moore (1905, 1907). List Excludes Pottery Vessels.

Artifact Description	Year of Work	Page #	Figure #	Comments
Amethyst Head	1905	165	46	head effigy
Ceremonial Chipped Stone Axe	1905	212	127	
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	152	27	part of handle still in place
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28a	long w/ spatulate head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28b	long w/ spatulate head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28c	w/ spatulate head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28d	rounded slightly flaring head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28e	slightly rounded head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	153	28f	rounded slightly flaring head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	156	33	long w/ spatulate head
Copper Ceremonial Axe	1905	174	61	long w/ spatulate head
Copper Covered Ear Plug	1905	162	40	
Copper Covered Ear Plug	1905	162	40	
Copper Covered Ear Plug	1907	402	106	w/ no pictures
Copper Fishhook	1905	233	164	illustration only
Copper Gorget	1905	155	29	scalloped w/ swastika
Copper Gorget	1905	160	38	swastika w/ pearls
Copper Gorget	1905	164	42	circular "O" ring shape
Copper Gorget	1905	165	43	circular w/ 8 pointed star
Copper Gorget	1905	195	102	circular w/ 6 pointed star
Copper Gorget	1905	216	134	circles and swastika
Copper Gorget	1907	402	105	swastika w/ pearl
Copper Hair Element	1905	165	44	
Copper Hair Element	1905	165	45	
Copper Hair Element	1905	197	105	repousse mace head design

Artifact Description	Year of Work	Page #	Figure #	Comments
Copper Ornament	1905	198	106	small circular w/ 5 pointed star
Copper Ornament	1905	219	139	small circular w/ 6 pointed star
Copper Pendant	1905	156	32	swastika
Copper Pendant	1905	163	41	swastika
Copper Pendant	1907	399	100	6 pointed star
Copper Pendant	1907	401	103	repousse swastika
Copper Pendant	1907	401	104	swastika w/ pearl
Copper Pendant	1907	401	102	swastika
Copper Symbol Badge	1905	197	104	
Copper Symbol Badge	1905	197	104	
Monolithic Axe	1905	135	6	
Shell Gorget	1905	158	34	fragment w/ warrior motif
Shell Gorget	1905	228	149	fragment w/ decoration
Shell Gorget	1905	233	163	full w/ cross
Shell Gorget	1907	396	94	full w/ design
Shell Gorget	1907	397	96	full w/ head design
Shell Gorget	1907	398	98	full (illustration only)
Shell Pendant	1907	398	99	axe
Stone Ceremonial Axe	1905	151	26	"plutonic rock, with flaring edge"
Stone Ceremonial Axe	1907	393	90	
Stone Palette	1905	133	4	elaborate design composition
Stone Palette	1905	136	7	rattlesnake disk
Stone Palette	1905	146	19	notched and incised
Stone Palette	1905	149	23	surface scalloping and incised
Stone Palette	1905	150	24	rectangular notched and incised
Stone Palette	1905	177	65	scalloped and incised
Stone Palette	1905	179	66	notched and incised
Stone Palette	1905	196	103	surface scalloping and incised
Stone Palette	1905	200	107	illustration only
Stone Palette	1905	202	110	rectangular notched and incised
Stone Palette	1905	203	111	notched and incised
Stone Palette	1905	207	116	notched and incised
Stone Palette	1907	391	87	scalloped w/ incised design