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William G. Haag, Editor

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ELEVENTH SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
MOUND STATE PARK, MOUNDVILLE, ALABAMA
12-13 November, 1954

Program subject: The Mississippian Cultures and the Southern Death
Cult

ARKANSAS

Stephen Williams: The Moundville Horizon in Northeast Arkansas.

MISSISSIPPI

Robert L. Rands: Cult Motifs on Walls-Pecan Point Pottery.

Philip Phillips: Cultural Sequence in the Lower Yazoo River Region.

LOUISIANA

Clarence H. Webb: Elements of the Southern Cult in the Belchér Focus.

William G. Haag: Evidence of the Southern Cult in Coastal La.

TENNESSEE

T. M. N. Lewis: Southern Cult Elements in the Dallas Culture.

Madeline Kneberg: A Comparison of Cherokee, Yuchi, and Muskogean
Ceremonies in Relation to the Southern Cult.

GEORGIA

A. R. Kelly: Mound B, Plaza Stratigraphy at Etowah.

Lewis H. Larsen, Jr.: Preliminary Report on Mound C, Etowah.

Joseph R. Caldwell: The Stratigraphy of Georgia, Mississippian
Influences, and the Southern Cult.

ALABAMA

Stephen Wimberly: A Review of Moundville Pottery.

FLORIDA

John Goggin: Archaeological Cults, Southern End of Florida.

COMPARISON, SUMMARY, AND SYNTHESIS

Robert L. Rands: The Eye-in-Hand and Related Motifs: A Comparative
Note.

Stephen Williams: Some Engraved Shell Buttons.

Robert Wauchope and A. J. Waring, jr.: Summary and Status.

David L. DeJarnette, Secretary.

Following are papers and abstracts received for publication.

Abstract

A REVIEW OF MOUNDVILLE POTTERY

Steve B. Wimberly
Birmingham, Alabama

At the large mound and village site at Moundville, Alabama, cult motifs as defined by Waring and Holder¹ are represented principally by engraved motifs occurring on the pottery vessels of the type Moundville Filmed Engraved, a shell-tempered ware having a black surface through which engraved lines penetrate into the underlying gray paste. Occasionally such motifs are expressed in the pottery type Moundville Filmed Incised which is also shell-tempered, and on shell-tempered water bottles decorated by negative painting. Vessels bearing engraved cult motifs are of water bottle form with the exception that a few bowls are represented. The few incised cult motifs occur on cups and bowls.

The occurrence of cult motifs on the pottery vessels from Moundville is shown in the following table:

TABLE A

	<u>Water Bottles</u>		<u>Bowls and Cups</u>	
	<u>Engraved</u>	<u>Painted</u>	<u>Engraved</u>	<u>Incised</u>
Greek Cross	X	X	X	
Swastika	X	X		
Sun Circle	X	X	X	
Bi-Lobed Arrow	X		X	
Open - <u>Eye</u>	X			
Forked	X			
Barred Oval	X		X	
Hand	X	X	X	X
Hand-And-Eye	X		X	
Skull	X	X	X	X
Forearm Bones	X		X	
Forearm Bones-Hand Appended	X			
Winged Rattlesnake	X			
Pileated Woodpecker	X		X	
Eagle	X			
Bird Tails	X			
Wings	X			

¹ Waring, Antonio J., Jr., and Preston Holder
1945. "A Prehistoric Ceremonial Complex in the Southeastern
United States." American Anthropologist, Vol. 47,
No. 1, pp. 1-34, Menasha.

Motifs presented in the foregoing table occur on Moundville pottery vessels either singly or in combination as shown in the following listing:

Greek Cross (appearing alone)	Pileated Woodpecker (appearing alone)
Swastika (appearing alone)	Pileated Woodpecker-Greek Cross
Sun Circle (appearing alone)	Pileated Woodpecker-Barred Oval
Bi-lobed Arrow (appearing alone)	Skull-Hand
Open Eye (appearing alone)	Skull-Hand-and-Eye
Hand-and-eye (appearing alone)	Skull-Forearm Bones
Skull (appearing alone)	Skull-Greek Cross-Sun Circle-Hand
Birds Tails (appearing alone) ²	appended to Forearm Bones
Wings (appearing alone) ³	Hand-Sun Circle
Winged Rattlesnake (appearing alone)	Bi-lobed Arrow-Sun Circle-Greek Cross
Winged Rattlesnake-Crested (horned antlered or plumed)	Bird Tails-Sun Circle
Winged Rattlesnake-Crested-Forked Eye	Bird Tails-Swastika
Eagle (appearing alone)	Hand-Open-Eye (separate motifs, not Hand-and-Eye)
Eagle-Forked Eye	Hand-Hand appended to Forearm Bones
Eagle-Forked Eye-Hand-and-Eye	Greek Cross-Swastika

During the late 1930's when the Civilian Conservation Corps was developing the physical aspects of Mound State Monument (Moundville), archaeological excavations were carried out in the Roadway Area, a strip fifty feet wide meandering through the mound area for a distance of one mile or so. From these excavations, 98,850 pottery sherds were recovered. They were taken mainly from the plowed zone and from burial and midden pits, with a few from shallow midden areas. The sherds were classified during 1941 as follows:

(See Table B on the Next Page)

The presence of a fairly large Middle Woodland village site bordering the western limits of Moundville probably accounts for the bulk of the sand-tempered, clay-grit-tempered and limestone-tempered sherds in the roadway excavations. Studies so far have revealed no close typological links between the shell-tempered sherds from the roadway excavations and sherds containing other tempering materials from the same excavations.

The classification of the shell-tempered sherds from the roadway excavations indicates, as we may expect, that black filmed engraved ware was a special ware made for ceremonial purposes and finding its final disposition as burial offerings. This is clearly implied by the fact that from the roadway excavations only 397, or less than one-half of one percent, of the shell-tempered sherds were of the type Moundville Filmed Engraved, whereas at least twenty or thirty percent of the vessels found as burial offerings at Moundville are of that type.

²⁻³ While not listed by Waring and Holder as individual cult motifs, wings and bird tails of identical style appear elsewhere as portions of typical cult motifs.

TABLE B

Pottery Sherds From the Roadway Excavations
Moundville, Alabama

	No. of <u>Sherds</u>	Percent By Type Within Temper <u>Group</u>	Total By <u>Temper</u>	Percent By <u>Temper</u>
Fiber-Tempered				
Alexander Dentate Stamped	1	100.00	1	.04
<hr/>				
Sand-Tempered			143	.14
Plain	114	79.70		
Complicated Stamped	24	16.80		
Pinched	1	.70		
Cord Marked	1	.70		
Incised	1	.70		
Unclassified	2	1.40		
<hr/>				
Limestone-Tempered			12	.01
Plain	11	91.67		
Fabric Marked	1	8.33		
<hr/>				
Clay-grit Tempered			1,133	1.15
Plain	1,078	95.14		
Punctated	16	1.41		
Incised	16	1.41		
Cord Marked	7	.62		
Fabric Marked	8	.71		
Check Stamped	2	.18		
Unclassified	6	.53		
<hr/>				
Shell-Tempered			97,561	98.70
Plain	79,442	81.41		
Moundville Incised	4,116	4.27		
Moundville Black Filmed	8,918	9.14		
Moundville Filmed Engraved	397	.41		
Moundville Filmed Incised	1,752	1.80		
Red Filmed	529	.54		
Painted-Red on Buff	15	.02		
Salt Pan Fabric Marked	33	.03		
Negative Painted	8	.01		
Effigy	9	.01		
Applique	5	.01		
Noded	5	.01		
McKee Island Incised	145	.15		
McKee Island Brushed	91	.09		
McKee Island Cord Marked	19	.02		
Unclassified	2,027	2.08		

The foregoing classification indicates also that the marker pottery types for comparing Moundville surface and midden pottery collections with those from other Middle Mississippian sites are Moundville Incised (a gray or buff shell-tempered ware decorated on the shoulder area with incised arches bordered by punctations or gashes) and Moundville Black Filmed, as well as Moundville Filmed Engraved and Moundville Filmed Incised.

McKee Island pottery types (resembling Ocmulgee Fields pottery types and often found at historic sites) are represented in the foregoing classification in small amounts and suggest limited historic occupancy of Moundville. So far, no vessels of McKee Island ware have been found accompanying burials at Moundville and neither has historic trade material been found at the site.

In summary, it may be said that the cult is well represented at Moundville, especially by the motifs displayed on pottery vessels occurring as burial offerings. In fact, if the definition of cult motifs were broadened to include concomitant traits such as "stepped" vessels, "plumed" scrolls and meanders, engraved cross-hatched backgrounds, "dimples and scrolls", and other abstract motifs, the black filmed vessel assemblage from Moundville would be dominated by vessels representing cult expressions.