

## Archaeology of the American South Anthropology 550

### Week 6: Poverty Point

A unique site, Poverty Point has never fit comfortably in the overall scheme of Southeastern U.S. prehistory. Its enigmatic nature has led to decades of speculation and controversy about what it represents. Was it the capital of a centralized chiefdom or an example of monumental construction in an egalitarian society? Was it a permanently occupied town or a place of seasonal aggregation? And was it built by relatively few people over a long period of time, or by many people in a short period? These are the three questions on which to focus as you do the general readings.

#### *General Readings:*

Anderson, David G., and Kenneth E. Sassaman (2012). *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology: From Colonization to Complexity*, review pp. 76-81, 85-86. SAA Press, Washington, D.C.

Ortmann, Anthony L., and Tristram R. Kidder (2013). Building Mound A at Poverty Point, Louisiana: Monumental Public Architecture, Ritual Practice, and Implications for Hunter-Gatherer Complexity. *Geoarchaeology* 28(1): 66–86.

Gibson, Jon L. (1974). Poverty Point, the First North American Chiefdom. *Archaeology* 27(2): 96–105.

Gibson, Jon L. (2004). The Power of Beneficent Obligation in First Mound-Building Societies. In *Signs of Power: The Rise of Complexity in the Southeast*, edited by Jon L. Gibson and Philip J. Carr, pp. 255-269. University of Alabama Press.

Jackson, H. Edwin (1991). The Trade Fair in Hunter-Gatherer Interaction: The Role of Intersocietal Trade in the Poverty Point Culture. In *Between Bands and States*, edited by Susan A. Gregg, pp. 265-286. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Spivey, S. Margaret, Tristram R. Kidder, Anthony L. Ortmann, and Lee J. Arco (2015). Pilgrimage to Poverty Point? In *The Archaeology of Events: Cultural Change and Continuity in the Pre-Columbian Southeast*, edited by Zackary I. Gilmore and Jason M. O'Donoghue, pp. 141–149. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Hays, Christopher T. (2019). Feasting at Poverty Point with Poverty Point Objects. *Southeastern Archaeology* 38(3): 193-207.

#### *Optional Readings:*

Webb, Clarence H. (1968). The Extent and Content of Poverty Point Culture. *American Antiquity* 33(3): 297-321.

Jackson, H. Edwin (1989). Poverty Point Adaptive Systems in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Subsistence Remains from the J.W. Copes Site. *North American Archaeologist* 10(3): 173-204.

Kidder, Tristram R. (2002). Mapping Poverty Point. *American Antiquity* 67(1):89-101.

Sassaman, Kenneth E. (2005). Poverty Point as Structure, Event, Process. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12(4): 335-364.

Gibson, Jon L. (2006). Navels of the Earth: Sedentism in Early Mound-Building Cultures in the Lower Mississippi Valley. *World Archaeology* 38(2): 311-329.

Gibson, Jon L. (2007). "Formed from the Earth at That Place": The Material Side of Community at Poverty Point. *American Antiquity* 72(3): 509-523.

Gibson, Jon L. (2010). Poverty Point Redux. In *Archaeology of Louisiana*, edited by Mark A. Rees, pp. 77-96. LSU Press.

Kidder, Tristram R. (2010). Hunter-Gatherer Ritual and Complexity: New Evidence from Poverty Point, Louisiana. In *Ancient Complexities: New Perspectives in Precolumbian North America*, edited by Susan M. Alt, pp 32-51. University of Utah Press.