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The ancient rulers of Mesopotamia, China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome were sometimes buried with pomp and splendor, yet many royal funerals have left little or no trace. Sometimes rulers are buried in a fashion similar to their subjects. Religious or political ideologies may be strong influences. Much also depends on whether the power of the leadership is threatened. Lavish ritual performances have often been staged to establish or reassert political stability.

Fashions of funerary ostentation or simplicity can be traced in archaeological evidence. The adoption of Christianity in northern Europe was linked to a brief flourishing of elaborate pagan burials (such as the ship burials at *Sutton Hoo, England) and a subsequent change toward simple burial. Often the innovative funeral fashions of a ruling group have been emulated by lower social groups. Within 200 years of Emperor Nero's decision to bury his wife rather than to cremate her, inhumation was common throughout the Roman Empire.

Mortuary analysis also attempts to relate the dead to the living through the placing of the dead. The change from burial under house floors to cemeteries away from settlements in the southeastern European Late Neolithic-Copper Age (4th millennium B.C.) has been interpreted as a power shift from community identity to individual prestige in the exterior domain of hunting and warfare. The places of the dead may also mark political centers or boundaries, thereby demonstrating claims to ancestral land.

In recent years there has been a conflict over *reburial and repatriation of human remains. In many postcolonial countries, particularly North America and Australasia, where living traditions link indigenous communities to distant dead, archaeologists have been asked to rebury or to return collections of human remains. In Australia, 15,000-9,000-year-old bones from Kow Swamp were reburied by Aborigines, preventing further study. Reconciliation is sometimes possible, however, for example by the provision of "keeping places" where bones are curated by indigenous representatives.

[See also BURIAL AND TOMBS; PALEOPATHOLOGY; RANKING AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY, THEORIES OF.]

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Michael Parker Pearson

MOUNDS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA. Earthen mounds built by ancient Native American peoples are nowadays found throughout the Eastern Woodlands of North America, from the Gulf coast in the South to the Great Lakes in the North. Particularly large concentrations of these earthworks occur in the Midwest and South, often in or near the valleys of major rivers such as the Mississippi, the Illinois, the Ohio, and the Tennessee. The mounds themselves were made in a variety of forms, usually round or rectangular. In some cases they attained monumental proportions: The largest such earthwork built in pre-Columbian times, the so-called Monks Mound at the *Cahokia site near St. Louis, is some 98.5 feet (30 m) high and 985 feet (300 m) long.

Not surprisingly, these mounds have been the subject of

archaeological interest for quite some time. Through most of the nineteenth century, the prevailing opinion among Euro-American antiquarians was that the local natives were too uncivilized to have built such grand earthworks; instead, the mounds were attributed to a vanished race of Mound Builders. There was much speculation as to the identity of these mysterious people: Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Toltecs were all mentioned as possibilities. It was not until the end of the century that this myth was finally demolished. In 1894, Cyrus Thomas, a scholar at the Smithsonian Institution, published the results of his extensive research, which proved beyond reasonable doubt that the mounds had indeed been built by indigenous peoples, ancestors of the historic Native American tribes. Thomas's work was extremely important, for it ended the rampant (and often racist) speculation, and marked the emergence of archaeology as a scientific discipline in North America.

By the middle of the twentieth century, archaeological attention had turned to questions of culture history. Many were struck by the general similarities between mound-building practices in North America and those in Mexico, particularly after A.D. 1000. Some proposed that eastern North Americans had been strongly influenced by Mexicans in pre-Columbian times, and that mound-building traditions had been adopted by the former from the latter. While this theory was popular for a time, it has, over the past thirty years, fallen out of favor, largely for lack of evidence. Not one Mexican artifact has ever been found in eastern North America (or vice versa), a strong indication that sustained contact never occurred between the two areas. Moreover, we now know that mound building in the Eastern Woodlands goes back thousands of years, long before the alleged Mexican similarities appeared. Hence, this tradition is best understood as an indigenous development, which, at various times, incorporated ideas that were widely distributed among the native people of the Americas. The broad similarities that exist between eastern North American and Mexican mounds (and indeed among mounds throughout the New World) seem now to be more the result of shared heritage than direct contact.

Archaic Period Mounds (5500-500 B.C.). The Archaic Period inhabitants of eastern North America were hunters, fishers, and gatherers who followed many different life-ways adapted to local conditions. Over time, certain regions showed signs of increases in population, sedentism, and territoriality. Such factors may have played a role in the building of the earliest mounds.

The oldest mound yet discovered dates to about 5500 B.C. and was located at L'Anse Amour on the Labrador coast. It was a low circular pile of boulders, just over 1.6 feet (.5 m) high and 29.5 feet (9 m) in diameter, that covered the grave of a child.

Somewhat later, during the third millennium B.C., burial mounds started to appear in the central Mississippi Valley and neighboring drainages, mostly in Missouri and Illinois. Generally located on hilltops, these low earthen mounds typically contained the graves of one or more individuals.

Farther south, in the Lower Mississippi Valley, considerably larger mounds, sometimes in groups, were being built at around the same time. These earthworks were generally conical or loaf-shaped, generally 6.5 to 23 feet (2 to 7 m) high. Limited excavations have not revealed any burials, so the function of these early mounds is still unknown.

This southernmost tradition eventually produced the largest Archaic Period earthworks ever built: the *Poverty

Point site in northeastern Louisiana, which was used between 1800 B.C. and 500 B.C. The site is today marked by a large pear-shaped mound some 69 feet (21 m) high, a smaller conical mound 20 feet (6 m) high, and six concentric ridges that form a semicircle slightly more than .6 mile (1 km) in diameter. The function of the bigger mound is a mystery. The smaller mound may have been a funerary structure in that it was built over a burned layer that contained human bone. The ridges were used for habitation, as evidenced by postholes, pits, and associated middens. Some archaeologists believe that Poverty Point was a large, permanently occupied town; others believe it was a sacred site where people who lived in the surrounding region would sometimes congregate. Whatever the case, these Archaic mounds bespeak a growing level of social complexity among the hunting and gathering peoples who built them.

Woodland Period Mounds (500 B.C.–A.D. 1000). The Woodland Period was marked by several trends. One was the spread of agricultural economies, largely based on the indigenous plants of the Eastern Agricultural Complex. A second was the emergence in some regions of pronounced social inequality, marked archaeologically by the elaboration of graves. And a third was the appearance of large-scale interaction spheres (such as Adena and Hopewell), which facilitated not only the exchange of material goods but also the spread of rituals, symbols, and beliefs. It was in this context that mound building became commonplace across much of eastern North America.

The most typical Woodland Period earthwork was the dome-shaped or conical burial mound. Sometimes such mounds had a relatively simple internal structure, containing little more than earthen fill with one or more burials interspersed. More often, however, they consisted of a ritual facility that had been used for some time and then sealed under a cap of earth. The nature of the facility itself was variable: Some were wooden buildings that were dismantled prior to being capped; others were cryptlike enclosures built of earth and logs; yet others were low earthen platforms usually less than 3 feet (1 m) high; and many were specially prepared surfaces that had been stripped of topsoil, burned, floored with clay, or enclosed by screens or embankments. Whatever form they took, all these facilities were connected in some way with rituals involving the dead, used either as places where corpses were cremated or defleshed, or as mortuaries where human remains were stored. Before the facility was sealed, remains of the dead were typically placed on the floor or buried beneath it. Burials were also commonly placed in the overlying earthen cap. Some mounds contained only one facility and cap, while others grew larger through many such cycles of use. The largest examples were more than 66 feet (20 m) high. Overall, the mounds shared many characteristics, but these characteristics were combined in myriad ways, as though a common pool of symbols and ritual practices were drawn upon to create a wide range of local manifestations.

In some areas, burial mounds were accompanied by large earthen embankments. By far the most elaborate expression is attributed to the *Hopewell culture of southern Ohio (ca. A.D. 1–500), who used embankments to build huge geometric enclosures—often square or circular in shape—that were grouped with mounds in a variety of ways and typically encompassed dozens of hectares.

Square or rectangular platform mounds were also constructed during this period, mostly in the southern states. In some cases these seem to have been used as ritual plat-

forms, similar to the platforms found inside some burial mounds except that they were never capped. In other cases, however, the platforms were surmounted by buildings, either temples or elite residences. By A.D. 800, this pattern was common in the Coles Creek cultures of the Lower Mississippi Valley, where it presaged later Mississippian developments.

The western Great Lakes area saw the appearance of a distinctive Effigy Mound culture after A.D. 300. Burial mounds of this culture were shaped like birds, mammals, turtles, and other creatures. Such earthworks were generally less than 3 feet (1 m) high, but often more than 328 feet (100 m) across.

Mississippian Mounds (A.D. 1000–1700). The end of the first millennium A.D. was a time of profound change, as people throughout the Eastern Woodlands turned to maize agriculture for sustenance. Sedentary hamlets and villages became the typical settlements. In the North, communities remained largely egalitarian. In the South, however, the social inequality seen in Woodland times grew more pronounced, as centralized hierarchical polities became the norm. These southern cultures, collectively called Mississippian, elaborated the practices of mound building that had pervaded the area for centuries.

Although burial mounds continued to be made in many places, the dominant form of monumental earthwork was now the rectangular platform mound with a wooden building on its summit. This building was usually a temple or the residence of a chief. Most Mississippian mounds were not constructed in a single episode but rather in multiple stages: After a mound had been used for a time, the building on its summit would be dismantled and another layer of earth would be added; a new building would then be erected on top. As this cycle was repeated, the mound's dimensions would grow. Mounds 10 to 39 feet (3 to 12 m) high were common; occasionally they reached heights of 66 feet (20 m) or more.

Mississippian mounds sometimes occurred singly but were often grouped around a plaza that served as a venue for ceremonies and other public events. A large civic-ceremonial center could have well over a dozen mounds and cover dozens of hectares.

Building such mounds and mound centers required considerable labor, which was mobilized by chiefs through tributary and other obligations. Indeed, the mounds themselves were powerful religious symbols; not only were community rituals held there, but constructing a mound was a ritual act accompanied by appropriate ceremonies and offerings. While it is impossible to reconstruct fully the nexus of meanings associated with mounds, it is a reasonable guess that the placement of residences atop such powerful icons legitimated the authority of the chiefs who lived there.

[See also ADENA CULTURE; MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE; MOUNDVILLE; NORTH AMERICA: THE EASTERN WOODLANDS AND THE SOUTH; SOUTHERN CULT.]

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Vincas P. Steponaitis

MOUNDS OF THE AMAZON. Five types of archaeological mounds have been noted in the Amazon region: shell refuse mounds, artificial earth platforms for villages, earth mounds and ridges for cultivation, causeways and canals, and figurative mounds.

The shell mounds of the Amazon region are found on both flooded and unflooded land at rivers and estuaries in the Guianas, mouth of the Amazon in Brazil, mainstream of the Amazon in Brazil, along tributaries in the Bolivian Amazon, and at the mouth of the Orinoco. The mounds are piles of human refuse that accrued mainly between 7500 and 4000 B.P., although later cultures are known to have established dwellings and/or cemeteries on top of the earlier shell mounds. Nine early shell mounds in the eastern Amazon have been dated, and all share the same general chronological range. All of these are of pottery-age cultures. So far, no preceramic shell mounds have been documented. This has been a great surprise to archaeologists, who expected the tropical forest habitat to have limited sedentary settlement in the Amazon. The shell mounds appear to have been created by the activities of aquatic foragers who did not use agriculture to any great extent. Plant remains and plant organic matter are very scarce in the mounds, although abundant in both earlier and later sites. The mounds are primarily composed of fishbones, turtle shells and bones, and freshwater pearly mollusks. Traces of postholes, hearths, and wall trenches indicate simple habitations, and there are unaccompanied burials. Other cultural remains are use-worn rock grinders, hearth rocks, simple stone flakes, shell and bone tools and ornaments, and sherds of simple bowls. The rare decorated pottery is incised and punctated on the rim, a tradition that has continued in use in Amazonia up to today. The earliest pottery tends to be sand tempered. In some areas shell tempering is also used.

The next type of mounds are the large earth platforms best known for the polychrome culture of Marajo Island at the mouth of the Amazon in Brazil. Several hundred have been discovered, but only two have been mapped: Teso dos Bichos and Guajara. The average mound appears to be 16 to 32 feet (5 to 10 m) high, and covers roughly 7.4 acres (3 ha). All are in the seasonally flooding savanna and gallery forest of eastern Marajo, an area of about 7,700 square miles (20,000 sq km).

Because the mounds were repositories of cemeteries and because it was assumed that large, sedentary populations could not live in Amazonia, archaeologists in the mid-twentieth century assumed that the mounds were purely ceremonial, but recent excavations have encountered many superimposed levels of house-floors, domestic hearths, and garbage heaps in the mounds. The mounds, thus, were essentially platforms built to raise villages up out of the reach of flooding. Defense may also have been a concern since the mounds are much higher than flood levels. Early research suggested that the subsistence of the society must have been based on maize and manioc agriculture, due to the elaboration of its culture. Paleodietary studies, however, have revealed a broad-spectrum mixed subsistence of fishing, collecting, and part-time cultivation. Carbonized maize was present but in very small quantities, and manioc

griddles were rare. The most common seeds in the sites were from cultivated trees and unidentified herbs.

The material culture in the mounds includes elaborate and sometimes large art objects: white, red, and/or black-brown, painted and incised and modeled pottery wares, large and small human figures, stools, spindle whorls, and finely ground axes and other cutting tools. The practices of mound building and making of fine art were thought at first to be limited to state-organized societies with social stratification and occupational specialization; such societies were not expected in the Amazon, where most soils are poor, and modern Indian societies are small and simply organized. Consequently, archaeologists hypothesized that the culture was an Andean offshoot that must have decayed rapidly in the hostile environment. However, this was before radiocarbon dating, which subsequently showed that the Marajoara culture existed many hundreds of years earlier than related cultures from the Andean foothills. The thirty radiocarbon dates from the mounds show the culture to have flourished between about A.D. 400 and 1300. In addition, no related cultures have ever turned up in the Andes, and the genetic features of the Mound Builders' skulls are affiliated much more with Amazonian Indians than Andeans. Thus, the culture must be interpreted as a native development.

In addition, the Polychrome Horizon mound builders do not seem to have been highly stratified or centralized polities. Their lack of central places and political art suggests that they were "complex tribes." Ethnohistoric studies of nonstratified societies in Africa and Asia suggest that constructing large earthworks and making fine art are activities well within the powers of such societies.

The Polychrome Horizon is found from Marajo in Brazil to the Andean foothills in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia. Its place of origin in the Amazon is as yet unknown, although the earliest dates so far come from Marajo. Mounds similar to those of Marajo are found in the floodplains of the Bolivian Amazon, Middle Orinoco, and Guianas, but elsewhere, most polychrome sites are nonmound sites. Several mounds on Marajo Island and several in Bolivia have yielded radiocarbon dates as early as 500 B.C., suggesting that the first mounds were built at the end of the Formative, the period when horticulture appears to become widespread for the first time.

The remaining three types of mounds, figurative mounds, agricultural mounds, and canals and causeways, as well as house-platforms were built by the late prehistoric chiefdoms of Amazonia around 1500 to 1000 B.P. These mound-building cultures belong to the Incised and Punctate Horizon, which is also found at nonmound sites. The house platforms are low mounds of 2.5 acres (1 ha) or less. They appear to be the remains of platforms of large, multifamily houses. They have been noted at sites in many areas of the terra firme (dry land), from the Guianas and Marajo Island, the mainstream Amazon banks, the Altamira region on the Xingu River in Brazil, and in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The figurative mounds have been found only in the Ecuadorian Amazon in the terra firme Faldas de Sangay site. Shapes discerned in the mound sculptures include men, women, and a feline. These images occur at the center of a large field of mounds, most of which appear to be residential. The area of the Ecuadorian mound fields is considerable; fully 4.6 square miles (12 sq km) near Sangay are covered with mounds.

Agricultural mounds occur in several areas of Ama-