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Lynn E. Howard

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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ARKANSAS' POSITION IN EASTERN UNITED STATES ARCHAEOLOGY*

LYNN E. HOWARD

University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville

Cultural continuity has become of paramount importance in the development of archaeology in Eastern United States in the last decade. No longer is the prehistoric picture a series of independent archaeological sites unrelated in time or space. Cultural dynamics can be shown by the archaeologist, not as well as by the social anthropologist, but enough to present the basic outline of the development of the American Indian.¹ This framework in Eastern United States is based on three major periods or patterns of cultural development. These are Archaic,² Woodland and Mississippi patterns.³ These main cultural patterns are a grouping of a number of basic cultural traits related to subsistence, housing, religion, mortuary customs, arts and crafts. There is a temporal sequence in these patterns and a basic continuity of ideas,⁴ but outside influences, as diffusion of peoples or ideas, tend to stimulate the beginnings of each period.⁵

Because of the anticipated accuracy of the Carbon 14 methods of dating archaeological material and its new dates for some of the cultures in Eastern United States, this paper will only give two estimated dates. These dates are the first introduction of maize into Northeastern Arkansas and the terminal date of the Mississippi pattern c.a. 1700 A.D. The main purpose of the paper is to place some of the known archaeological sites in the state in their proper temporal sequence with the accepted patterns for Eastern United States.

Archaic

The Archaic Pattern has been described as a hunting, fishing and gathering economy lacking pottery, agriculture and the bow. Archaic sites are located on waterways where there will be a constant supply of fish and shell food, and the Indians either lived on shell refuse mounds, in caves or in bluff shelters. To give an indication of the spread of the Archaic culture, sites have been reported from New York state, to Florida, to Louisiana, to Wisconsin.⁶

The best example of the Archaic Pattern in Arkansas has been found in the Northeastern part of the state in the Ozark Bluff Shelters. The Bluff Shelters show a considerable span of occupancy with the lowest levels in

¹ Ford and Willey, 1941; Griffin, 1946.

² Ritchie, 1944; Webb and DeJarnette, 1942, pp. 306-319.

³ Deuel, 1935.

⁴ Griffin, 1946, p. 42. Sears, 1948.

⁵ Griffin, 1946, p. 45. Spaulding, 1946, pp. 143-167. McKern, 1937.

⁶ Ritchie, 1944; Goggin, 1949; Webb, 1948; McKern, 1942.

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some of the shelters containing no pottery, no agriculture, but bone and stone artifacts of the Archaic Pattern. The preponderancy of perishable material from the shelters has overshadowed the Archaic similarities to the East. The extension of the same Ozark Bluff Culture into Missouri has been recognized by Chapman as of Archaic Pattern.⁷ There should be a distinction between the "Ozark Bluff Culture" with agriculture and pottery of a Woodland nature and the "Bottom Layer" material that is Archaic, just as there is a distinction between the "Ozark Bluff Culture" and the "Top Layer Culture" that is of Mississippi pattern.⁸ The three patterns represented in the Ozark Bluffs are: Archaic, "Bottom Layer," Woodland, "Ozark Bluff Culture," and Mississippi "Top Layer Culture." The complete development in the Bluffs has not yet been worked out, and there is at present a cultural break between late Middle Woodland and the Late Mississippi material found there.

There are other evidences of the Archaic Pattern in Arkansas and these will be mentioned. The first reference to an early non-pottery culture was by Harrington at his "deep site" at Hot Springs.⁹ Here on the McClendon farm he located a site that contained refuse material to a depth of over nine feet. Harrington pointed out its similarity with some of the open sites in the Ozark region and postulated considerable antiquity for the site. The material from the lower levels (5 to 9 feet) consisted of heavy stemmed and notched projectile points with ovate sides and a similarity to points found by Webb at the Chiggerville site.¹⁰ Plummets were also found, but no burials.

The work of Lemley and Dickinson on Bayou Macon¹¹ produced no archaic sites as such, but their presence is suspected. The work of Webb at Poverty Point to the south on Bayou Macon in Louisiana has demonstrated the presence of an Archaic Pattern there that is not native to the region.¹² The presence of the Steatite vessels that are of "Southern Appalachian" origin suggests a down stream movement of the Indians. Upstream in Arkansas at the Parnell and Medley sites Dickinson found surface material that included plummets, boatstones, and "clay balls"¹³ that suggest an occupancy of the site at Archaic times.

The Midden area under the "late Caddo house" at the Kirkham place in Clark County¹⁴ seems to have contained considerable Archaic material. The great quantities of shell, heavy stemmed points, chipped stone axes, plummets, boatstones, and fragments of a stone vessel, as well as the worked bone,¹⁵ all seem to have similarity to the Archaic of Kentucky, Northern Alabama, and Eastern Oklahoma.

⁷Chapman, 1948, p. 155.

⁸Griffin, 1937, p. 297; Dellinger and Dickinson, 1942, p. 289.

⁹Harrington, 1920, p. 104-108.

¹⁰Harrington, 1920, Plate CXVI, compare with Webb, 1939, p. 21, Fig. 72.

¹¹Lemley and Dickinson, 1937.

¹²Webb, 1948.

¹³Lemley and Dickinson, 1937, p. 30.

¹⁴Dickinson and Lemley, 1939.

¹⁵Ibid. Plates 32 and 33.

The presence of an Archaic Pattern in Oklahoma has been suggested by the University of Oklahoma as being in the Fourche Maline drainage of LeFlore County, Oklahoma.¹⁶ Here, in black refuse mounds were found pre-pottery levels, flexed burials with little grave goods, dog burials, boatstones and plummets, bone hair pins and heavy stemmed and notched points. A site was destroyed this winter at the town of Lavaca, Arkansas that contained long bone pins, conch shell gorgets and heavy stemmed and notched points.¹⁷ Burials were reported from the site in round pits, and the body flexed. These traits reported at the Lavaca site are similar to some of the traits present in both the Fourche Maline Archaic and the Green River Archaic in Kentucky.¹⁸ Also present at Lavaca was material of a Mississippi pattern similar to either the Middle Spiro or the Haley focus.

These sites begin to form a pattern in the western side of the state for Archaic material and extend around the southern part of the state. In the Northeastern and Eastern part of the state the overwhelming remains of the Mississippi Pattern has obscured any traces of the Archaic so far. It is hoped that with more controlled excavations in that region there will be found Archaic sites.

Woodland

The Woodland Pattern introduces into the Eastern United States, pottery, agriculture, and the burial mound complex. A certain development of Woodland from Archaic has been seen,¹⁹ but there are also cultural elements that are introduced from outside of North America.²⁰ This paper will not divide Woodland into periods, but will group sites that developed from the end of Archaic until Mississippi times. Agriculture is introduced into Arkansas during the beginnings of the Woodland Pattern. The type of corn first found in the Ozark Bluff Shelters is a type of Maize that belongs to the Hohokam-Basketmaker Maize complex. This corn developed in Mexico and spread into the Southwestern part of the United States, north to the Anasazi Area, across the plains to the Ozark Plateau, then on to the caves in Ohio. This development is believed to have taken place around 500 to 600 A.D.²¹ Maize is believed to have been present in the Woodland sites in the southern part of the State, but no actual maize has been found. The Hohokam-Basketmaker Maize is replaced by the Eastern complex Maize that comes in at early Mississippi times at the Davis Site in Texas, and spreads and becomes the dominant type of Maize in Eastern United States at the time of White Contact.²²

Maize is postulated for the Woodland Pattern in the southern part of the state, but no actual specimens have been found with the Marksville or other Woodland material.²³

¹⁶Newkumet, 1940.

¹⁷Visit to site, Nov. 1949.

¹⁸Webb, 1939, fig. 15; Webb, 1946, fig. 24; Newkumet, 1940.

¹⁹Sears, 1948, pp. 122-129.

²⁰McKern, 1937; Griffin, 1946, p. 45; Spaulding, 1946.

²¹Jones, 1949, pp. 241-247.

²²Ibid, p. 246.

²³Martin Quimby Collier, 1946, p. 406; Jones, 1949, p. 245.

During the Woodland times in the Bluff Shelters the dominant type of pottery is a "Baytown ware" that is similar to the basic ware type for the whole lower Mississippi drainage at this time period. Baytown plain ware is clay tempered with a dense, compact paste and a surface finish that is either polished or smoothed.²⁴ In Western Arkansas there is a continuation of "Baytown ware" into Mississippi times.²⁵ Also present in the bluff shelters with the Baytown ware is a limestone tempered ware of the Northern Woodland.²⁶ This limestone tempered pottery does not seem to be too common in the Bluffs, and does not extend to the Southern part of the state. The pottery found in the shelters with clay tempering, simple incising, and fabric impressions on the bases seems more closely related to the early pottery in the Fourche Maline Region than the Marksville pottery.²⁷

In the Southern part of the state there is found Woodland material in the Bayou Macon region at the Hog Lake, Westlake and Rohwr sites.²⁸ Woodland material is reported at the Kirkham²⁹ and Watermelon Island sites³⁰ in the Ouachita River drainage. Woodland material has been reported in the North Central part of the state on the White River.³¹ So far the Western part of the state shows a well developed occupancy in the Woodland Period. The presence of the material is only given in outline form and the local developments are of such a scope as to be outside limits of this paper.

In the Eastern part of the state the Woodland Pattern is not well reported. This is due in part to the number of large late Mississippi Village sites that have encouraged excavation because of their wealth in pottery. Also, the intensive agriculture in the region has tended to destroy the small burial mounds of the Woodland Period. The report of the Lower Mississippi Valley Archaeological Survey is awaited with considerable interest as the problem of Woodland and Early Mississippi Patterns in this region is dealt with in detail³²

Mississippi Pattern

The last major archaeological period extended until it was disrupted at historic times. It is characterized by a complex socio-religious development associated with the construction of large, flat-topped mounds, large villages and Eastern Complex Maize. The diagnostic pottery ware in the Eastern part of the state from early Mississippi times on was a shell tempered vessel. In the Southwestern part of the state in the Red River Region the Baytown clay tempered tradition continued to be important until late Mississippi times.

²⁴Griffin, M.S.

²⁵As late as Belcher.

²⁶Dellinger and Dickinson, 1942, p. 283.

²⁷Ibid., p. 283 and p. 280.

²⁸Lemley and Dickinson, 1937.

²⁹Dickinson and Lemley, 1939, Plate 38.

³⁰Hodges and Hodges, 1943, p. 68.

³¹Howard, M.S.

³²Phillips, Ford and Griffin, in press.

The Cultural development in the Southwestern part of the state in the "Caddo Region" is on a basic Mississippi cultural level, but can be easily distinguished from the Mississippi material of the Eastern part of the state. These differences are at least at an Aspect level. The Caddo sequence has been divided by Krieger into an early Aspect (Gibson) and a later Aspect (Fulton).³³ If Krieger's alternate sequence at the Davis site is correct, the second phase there is coeval with Copena which is late Hopewell or Middle Woodland times.³⁴ This will place the Gibson Aspect as the precursor of the temple mound building, pottery engraving and introducers of the Eastern Complex Maize into Eastern United States. The Haley focus material at the Crenshaw Site is then placed in the same general time period as the Coles Creek material that precedes it stratigraphically at the site.³⁵ The Gibson Aspect contains the Alto, Gahagan, Middle and Late components of Spiro, Haley and Sanders foci.³⁶ Of these, only the Haley focus has its type site in Arkansas.³⁷ Numerous sites in Arkansas are assignable to the Gibson aspect, such as the East Mound in Clark County, Ozan 1, Washington and Mineral Springs sites.³⁸ Coles Creek is reported at the Kirkham site and as far north as in the Ozark Bluff Shelters. The exact relation of Coles Creek in the Bluff Shelters is at present not clear. Analysis of these Bluff sites will clear up the picture of that region.

The Mississippi sequence in the Western part of the state can be briefly stated as follows. The Gibson Aspect material from the Caddo region is an early Mississippi Pattern that precedes and continues into the Troyville-Coles Creek periods of Early Mississippi in Louisiana.³⁹ The Coles Creek material at the Crenshaw site is earlier than the Haley material at the site, but both cultures overlap in the region. Other Coles Creek sherds in the Southern part of the state can be placed in this early Mississippi period. In the Northeastern part of the state the development in the shelters seems to continue from an early Woodland into a late Middle Woodland or early Mississippi without the addition of the Eastern Arkansas diagnostic of shell tempered pottery or small projectile points. There seems at present a cultural break between this early Mississippi time period and that of the "Top Layer" Culture which is culturally related to the Upper Phase of the Mississippi Pattern.

The Eastern part of the state is connected with perhaps one of the centers of development of early Mississippi of the type diagnostic of the Mississippi Valley. The development in the Saint Francis Region⁴⁰ has strong connections with the New Madrid region of Southeastern Missouri, as well as with the Tennessee Cumberland Region. The exact relationship of this section is one of the projects of the Middle Mississippi River Survey of Griffin and

³³ Krieger, 1947.

³⁴ Newell and Krieger, 1949, p. 224.

³⁵ Lemley, 1936; Dickinson, 1936.

³⁶ Newell and Krieger, 1949, pp. 193-224.

³⁷ Moore, 1912, pp. 527-564.

³⁸ Newell and Krieger, 1949, pp. 193-224.

³⁹ Newell and Krieger, 1949, p. 224.

⁴⁰ Moore, 1910.

Phillips to extend from the Cahokia region and to tie in with their study of the Lower Valley. At present the Saint Francis and Menard developments are of a late Mississippi Period.⁴¹

Menard influences pushed up the Arkansas River as far north as Carden Bottoms. Here, mixed in the graves with Menard material, has been found Mid-Ouachita vessels.

The Red River Region of Arkansas contains material from the Belcher, Bossier, McCurtain⁴² and Glendora Foci of the Fulton Aspect.⁴³ To the north the Glendora and Belcher influences are seen in the Mid-Ouachita Focus.⁴⁴ A re-examination of the material obtained by the University of Arkansas in the Garland and Hot Spring Counties will aid materially in untangling these late cultural influences.

This paper has raised perhaps more problems than it has settled but it is hoped that by placing Arkansas archaeology in the main framework of Eastern United States better temporal perspective can be obtained. Archaeological work in the Saint Francis Region this summer is hoped to aid in finding either middle Woodland material or early Mississippi material below the late Mississippi material of the Saint Francis culture.

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⁴¹Griffin, 1946, fig. 7.

⁴²Site located near DeQueen, Arkansas, Nov. 1949.

⁴³Webb, 1945, p. 73; Krieger, 1947, pp. 205-206.

⁴⁴Hodges and Hodges, 1945, pp. 104 and 109; Webb, 1941.

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