

TRANSITIONS

ARCHAIC

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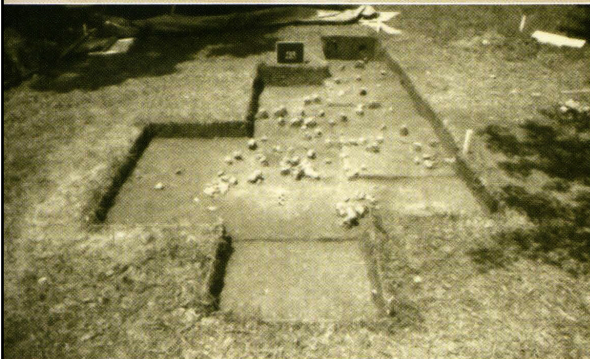
WOODLAND

RESEARCH

IN THE

OHIO

COUNTRY



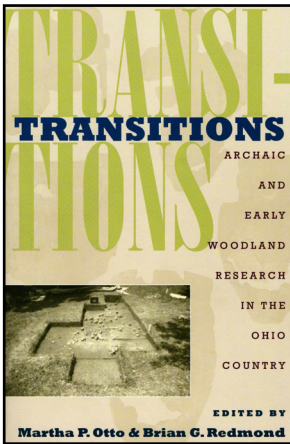
EDITED BY

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
CHAPTER 1: Archaic Manifestations in Southwestern Ohio and Vicinity <i>Kent D. Vickery</i>	1
CHAPTER 2: Cultural Resource Management and the Analysis of Land Use Patterns of the Archaic in North-Central Ohio <i>Craig S. Keener, Kolleen Butterworth, and Crystal L. Reustle</i>	29
CHAPTER 3: Down by the River: Late Archaic through Terminal Archaic Dynamics at the Davisson Farm Site (33LE619), Lawrence County, Ohio <i>Matthew P. Purtill</i>	41
CHAPTER 4: Early Woodland Prehistory (1000–1 BC) in the Western Lake Erie Drainage Basin <i>David M. Stothers and Timothy J. Abel</i>	79
CHAPTER 5: Three Early Woodland Occupation Loci in the Chartiers Creek Drainage, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania <i>James A. Robertson, Douglas C. Kellogg, and Robert G. Kingsley</i>	117
CHAPTER 6: The Early Woodland Component at 33RO583, a Multicomponent Site in Jefferson Township, Ross County, Ohio: Preliminary Results <i>Anne B. Lee, Andrew R. Sewell, M. Brooke Thompson, Steve Martin, and Tommy Y. Ng</i>	143
CHAPTER 7: Early Woodland Ceremonialism in Context: Results of LCALS Research at the Munson Springs Site (33LI251) <i>Paul J. Pacheco and Jarrod Burks</i>	159
CHAPTER 8: Upland Settlement in the Adena Heartland: Preliminary Evidence and Interpretations from Two Early Woodland Nonmortuary Habitations in Perry County, Ohio <i>John F. Schweikart</i>	183

CHAPTER 9: Political Complexity and Mound Construction among the Early and Late Adena of the Hocking Valley, Ohio <i>Elliot M. Abrams and Mary F. Le Rouge</i>	214
CHAPTER 10: Observations on the Early Woodland Cultural Landscape in the Central Muskingum Valley of Eastern Ohio <i>Jeff Carskadden</i>	232
CHAPTER 11: Smoking Pipes and Early Woodland Mortuary Ritual: Tubular Pipes in Relation to Adena <i>Sean M. Rafferty</i>	271
CHAPTER 12: The Dominion Land Company Site: An Early Adena Mortuary Manifestation in Franklin County, Ohio <i>Ann C. Cramer</i>	284
CHAPTER 13: The Adena Complex: Identity and Context in East-Central Indiana <i>Beth K. McCord and Donald R. Cochran</i>	334
References	361



Transitions: Archaic and Early Woodland Research in the Ohio Country

Martha P. Otto and Brian G. Redmond, Editors. 2008 (published 2008). Ohio University Press. 396 pp., 123 figures, 29 tables, bibliography. \$29.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Kenneth B. Farnsworth, Senior Research Editor, Illinois State Archaeological Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

It is always exciting to see a new overview volume that provides a summary update of regional archaeological research on a particular topic. Martha Otto and Brian Redmond have assembled just such a volume on Ohio Late Archaic and Early Woodland research, focusing on the much-debated question of Adena origins and culture change during the era from Late Archaic times to the Middle Woodland period, with its associated dramatic Ohio Hopewellian earthwork construction, mortuary ritual, and interregional acquisition of exotic raw materials and artifacts. The research focus of the present volume is primarily upon the first of these two *Transitions*: that between Late Archaic and Adena.

The editors have assembled 13 separately authored chapters for the volume. Eleven of the chapters evaluate Ohio archaeological remains, one discusses excavations at a cluster of Early Woodland habitation sites just across the state line in western Pennsylvania, and one interprets Adena and Hopewell earthwork sites in adjacent east-central Indiana.

The first three chapters in the volume focus on identifying regional and site-specific attributes of settlement patterns and subsistence at Late and Terminal Archaic habitation sites in Ohio. Kent D. Vickery's contribution (Chapter 1) summarizes the author's research on Archaic settlement patterns and chronology in southwestern Ohio for the entire Archaic period. In Chapter 2, Craig S. Keener et al. evaluate habitation remains and land-use patterns from 329 Archaic components located by CRM surveys along the proposed construction corridor for State Route 30. In Chapter 3, Matthew P. Purtill documents Archaic settlement remains and occupation chronology at a single excavated Ohio River floodplain site. The Purtill study comes closest of the three to providing any "connecting tissue" for the Archaic to Early Woodland transition, but it is more tantalizing than informative: "Although 1000 B.C. is often forwarded as the beginning of the Woodland

period...site occupants were essentially participating in a generalized 'Archaic' lifeway as late as 600 B.C. Typical Early Woodland vestiges such as stemmed points, thick-walled pottery, food items of the Eastern Agricultural Complex, and elaborate ceremonialism were limited, or entirely lacking, at Davisson Farm" (p. 77).

Chapter 4, by David M. Stothers and Timothy J. Able, puts a little more meat on these transitional bones. Their chapter is an important regional summary of Lake Erie-area settlement and mortuary ritual between ca. 2500 B.C. and A.D. 1 — including a grouping of "Transitional" period sites (ca. 1000–600 B.C.) between the Late Archaic and Early Woodland occupations there. The Stothers and Able study evaluates both ritual and subsistence elements of local societies during these three periods.

Chapters 5 through 8 summarize and evaluate habitation-site excavation data in regional context from Early Woodland floodplain and upland residential sites (Chapter 5 by James A. Robertson et al. and 8 by John F. Schweikart), from a residential site that includes a submound-like paired-post structure (with no mound covering) between two clusters of habitation features (Chapter 6 by Anne B. Lee et al.), and from stratigraphic excavations of habitation remains at the pre-Adena Munson Springs Early Woodland mound site (Chapter 7). As Paul J. Pacheco and Jarrod Burks note in Chapter 7 (p. 175), "pottery appears in the region well before 1000 B.C. and the first mounds predate Adena [*'firmly anchored to about 500 to 400 B.C.'*]. Munson Springs sits squarely in this emerging taxonomic void in central Ohio between 1000 and 500 B.C."

Chapters 9 and 10 focus on questions of regional Early and Late Adena political and ritual complexity and Early Woodland settlement-pattern trends. In Chapter 9, Elliot M. Abrams and Mary F. Rouge use estimates of labor expenditure for mound construction to model increased Adena political complexity. In Chapter 10, Jeff Carskadden uses an extensive eastern Ohio (Muskingum Valley) database to model Early Woodland settlement trends and earthwork construction over time, and uses C-14 dates to identify chronological indicators of regional Early and Late Adena settlement in the region. In an intriguing analysis with wider regional and temporal implications, Sean M. Rafferty summarizes Late Archaic and Adena tube-pipe data in Chapter 11 to evaluate the function and ritual associations of such artifacts.

Chapter 12 by Ann C. Cramer is a welcome summary of salvage archaeology at the poorly-known *Dominion Land Company* Adena mound site and circular embankment on the Olentangy River at Columbus. The description

of the site's submound structures and artifact assemblage, particularly its *Dominion Thick* vessels, represent a significant addition to the literature.

Chapter 13 by Beth K. McCord and Donald R. Cochran is a regional overview of Adena and Hopewell remains and radiocarbon dates from several earthwork sites in east-central Indiana. Much like these eastern Indiana earthworks themselves, this chapter seems somewhat isolated in the *Transitions* volume. There is the only study to bring Middle Woodland Hopewellian remains into the discussion, and their study's surprising conclusion that Adena and Hopewell are temporally indistinguishable is literally the "last word" in the book. The authors divide their research universe into six roughly contemporary subdivisions centered on earthwork-enclosure complexes, and conclude from their analysis of excavated remains that

the ambiguity between the Adena and Hopewell complexes is primarily the result of cultural history models that isolate the 'simpler' Adena complex as a precursor of the more 'elaborate' Hopewell complex. Our regional investigation of Early-Middle Woodland earthwork sites in east-central Indiana has shown that they were in use at the same time, that Adena and Hopewell artifacts were in direct association in these sites, and that they represent different parts of a single ceremonial system" [p. 359].

Overall, this volume represents a key contribution to the literature on emerging Woodland societies in Ohio. The editors' short overview discussion at the beginning of the book made the volume's contents more readily accessible to an outside (Illinois) researcher like me by summarizing the history of regional Adena research, major research questions addressed by each chapter's authors, and answers suggested by the published studies.

Decisions to omit indexes of the book's 29 tables and 123 figures made it difficult to relocate these key contents at need. In addition, the quality of photographic illustrations (especially artifact photos) varied by contributor, and some chapters would have benefited from more rigorous production controls on photo quality (e.g., Chapter 3). However, these are comparatively trivial considerations in light of the overall importance of the volume.