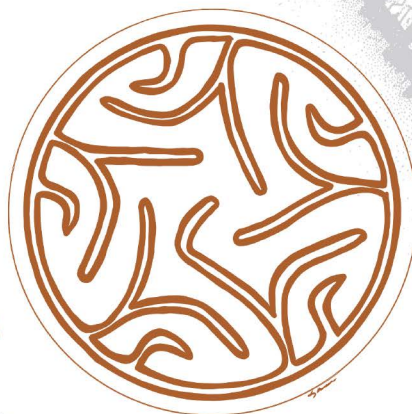
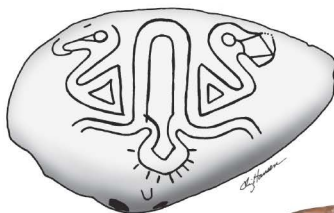


*Illinois State Archaeological Survey Research Reports*

# **Excavations at the Blue Island and Naples-Russell Mounds and Related Hopewellian Sites in the Lower Illinois Valley**

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**T**his report presents and evaluates the results of mound-restoration projects carried out in 1986 and 1990 at Blue Island Mound 6 (11PK1384) and Naples-Russell Mound 8 (11PK513)—two bluff-top early Hopewellian burial mounds located about 3.5 km apart along the western bluff line of the Illinois River valley in northern Pike County, Illinois. The singular internal mound structures and mortuary artifacts documented by these two excavation projects are evaluated in light of several smaller-scale surveys and excavations at nearby Middle Woodland mortuary sites and ritual-staging areas in an effort to chronicle the early development of Hopewellian mortuary ritual in the lower Illinois Valley.

From the published evidence of 36 modern calibrated radiocarbon dates, Hopewellian mounds were first constructed in northern Pike County during the early Mound House phase [ca. 50 B.C.–A.D. 100]. Several independent lines of research suggest that, following regional population depletion in the lower Illinois Valley during Early Woodland times, early Mound House phase mortuary sites were established in the lower Illinois Valley area as the result of an expansion of Hopewell mound structures, mortuary ritual, and symbolically important artifact styles out of a “Hopewellian heartland” in the central Illinois Valley about 90 km upstream, at or near the end of an Initial Havana Morton-Caldwell phase there [ca. 150–50 B.C].

The early Mound House phase was also an era of far-reaching and diverse interregional exchange in exotic artifacts and raw materials associated with Hopewellian mortuary ritual—an exchange pattern that may largely predate the advent of village-based bluff-top mound cemeteries of the later Mound House phase [ca. A.D. 100–350]. Thus, our study also evaluates regional origins and distributions of distinctive symbolic artifacts associated with early Hopewellian mortuary ritual at the Naples-Russell and Blue Island mounds and at ritual-staging areas near the mounds to aid recognition of other regional ritual and mortuary sites that date to the time of the first appearance of Hopewellian mortuary ritual in the lower Illinois Valley.

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