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THE MANRING MOUNDS: A HOPEWELL CENTER IN THE MAD RIVER DRAINAGE, CLARK COUNTY, OHIO¹

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ABSTRACT. The Manring archaeological site is a Hopewell center located on Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Mad River, in Clark County, Ohio. Comparisons with other excavated sites show the Manring site to represent a substantial labor commitment; it includes one of the very largest known Hopewell mounds. The presence of such exotica as an obsidian spear, a copper breastplate, copper celts and marine shell beads are also noteworthy, especially given the site's hinterland location. The juxtaposition of major routes of travel is suggested to be a more important factor in explaining site location than any direct subsistence advantage. Cross-dating indicates that Manring was occupied shortly after A. D. 100, or coincident with the early Pike phase as defined in the Illinois Valley.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study describes a Hopewell site that was destroyed 40 years ago. Arthur R. Altick, the primary excavator of the site, had intended to publish the results of his investigations in the *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, and had submitted a manuscript in 1941 to H. C. Shetrone, then Director of the Ohio State Museum. The report was never

published, but was kept on file at the museum. It was discovered by the present authors in the Clark County file, Department of Archaeology, Ohio Historical Society, in 1980. The retention of Altick's manuscript was indeed fortunate since it, together with artifacts currently curated at the Clark County Historical Society, comprises the only remaining source of information on what was certainly an important Ohio Hopewell center. This site is named the Manring site after the owner of the property in 1941 where the mounds were located, George W. Manring.

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The importance of the Manring site resides in its potential for further documenting the distribution and intensity of Hopewell culture in southern Ohio. "Hopewell" refers to a cultural phenomenon extant in midcontinental North America circa 100 B.C. to A.D. 500, evidencing widespread interregional exchange and an elaboration of mortuary ceremony (Brose and Greber 1979, Seeman 1979). Despite interregional similarities, the present authors would emphasize the distinctiveness and complexity of southern Ohio Hopewell vis à vis all other regional manifestations (Seeman 1979:399). The rediscovery and description of the Manring material further documents the elaborate nature of the Ohio pattern.

The Manring site (33C119) is located in the Beaver Creek Valley, Harmony Township, Clark County, Ohio (fig. 1). Manring Mound-1 is located in the NE¼ of the NE¼ of Section 29, T6 R9, New Moorefield quadrangle. Manring Mound-2 is located in the NW¼ of the NW¼ of Sec-

tion 23, T6 R9. The mounds are approximately 91 m apart and lie at the northern edge of the Beaver Creek Valley on Wisconsin outwash. The elevation of the site is 332 m above sea level, or 8 m above the creek. Beaver Creek joins Buck Creek approximately 10 km to the west. Buck Creek joins the Mad River 10 km west of the Buck Creek/Beaver Creek confluence. The Manring site, thus, lies on a secondary tributary of a minor drainage system in southern Ohio.

Available environmental data fail to clarify the curious nature of site location. The average growing season in the vicinity of the Manring site is 159 days extending from 1 May to 7 October (Norris 1952). This is about 10 days shorter than the growing season at the Scioto River-Paint Creek confluence, that area in southern Ohio where Hopewell populations appear most concentrated (Gordon 1969:80). Local vegetational cover in the vicinity of the Manring site was probably wet prairie in the creek valley and open oak-hickory forest on adjacent till at the time of occupation (Forsyth 1970, Gordon 1966). These vegetation types correspond with the present distribution of Westland-Abington and Miami-Kendallville-Celina soil associations (Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1960).

Probably more important in understanding Manring site location than any relationship within the local Mad River drainage is the site's relationship to other drainages. The upper reaches of 3 other drainages, the Little Miami River, Paint Creek, and Deer Creek lie respectively within 3, 11, and 10 km of the site and across easily travelled ground. The site, thus, lies at a point with easy access to the Great Miami, Little Miami, and Scioto River drainages.

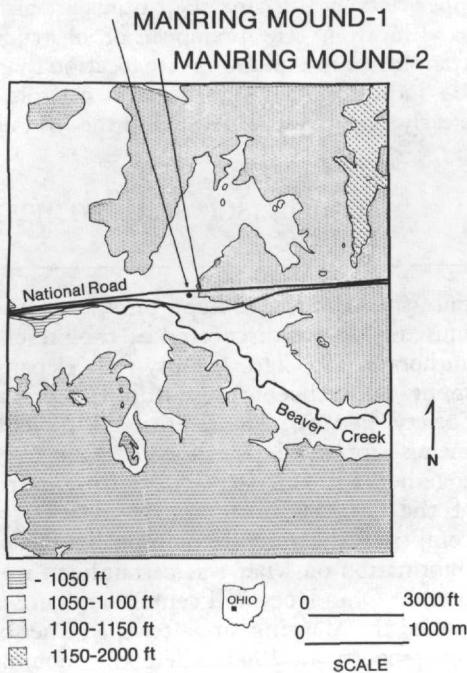


FIGURE 1. Location of the Manring site.

RESULTS

MANRING MOUND-1. The larger Manring Mound, designated Mound-1 by Altick, has been known since the early

nineteenth century. It was also known locally as the National Road Mound, and the northern portion of the mound was destroyed in conjunction with the construction of this road (now U.S. Route 40) in the 1830s. Despite this destruction, the mound was 7.6 m high, 76 m north-south and 61 m east-west when first visited by Altick. This represents roughly 14,000 cu m of earth. It is, thus, one of the largest Hopewell mounds anywhere.

In 1940 Charles A. Culp informed Altick that a local contractor was grading Mound-1. He reported that as the mound fill was removed, an area of dark, organic soil with associated human bone was revealed near the center of the mound. Culp and R. O. Kneisley immediately had begun digging and screening this organic soil for artifacts. Several days later, Altick and Edwin Dille began more systematic investigations. The organic feature was eventually shown to be approximately 4 m long, 3 m wide and 0.3 m thick. It was underlain by a compact stratum of white, calcined shell fragments 0.63 cm to 2.54 cm in thickness. Beneath this stratum was a culturally sterile zone of gravelly clay loam. Fifty-six post molds outlined this rectangular area. The posts varied from 15 to 20 cm in diameter, and extended to a depth of approximately 61 cm below the feature floor. Post mold fill was light brown.

It is impossible to say in what order or how many human burials were placed in the central feature of Manring Mound-1. The contractor's slipscraper and Culp's unsystematic digging had created considerable havoc. Altick's description suggests that only a few individuals were interred here, and he made it clear that none of them were cremated. No human bone from the site is currently in the Clark County collection.

The cultural material recovered from Manring Mound-1 is listed in table 1 by collector. Much of this material was donated to the Clark County Historical Society. The diagnostics indicate a clear Hopewell affiliation and merit further discussion.

A minimum of 7 copper celts and/or adzes were recovered from Manring Mound-1 (fig. 2). None of these artifacts exhibit striations or other indications of wear. This is a consistent pattern for Hopewell metal celts. All 7 have small particles of red ochre adhering to them. All have portions of woven fabrics preserved by cupric salts on their surfaces. The "adzes," with markedly plano-convex cross sections, have more fabric preserved on the flatter face. Measurements for these 7 artifacts are summarized in table 2. The copper was almost certainly derived from the Lake Superior source (Seaman 1979: 292-293).

TABLE 1
Cultural material from Manring Mound-1 by collector.

C. A. Culp	R. O. Kneisley	A. R. Altick & E. Dille
+* 1 copper breastplate	+* "several" copper adzes	##* shell beads
+* 1 copper celt	+* 1 rectangular stone gorget	+ drilled bear canines
+* "several" copper adzes	+##* cut and drilled animal jaws	+##* animal tooth beads
##* shell beads	+* 1 Ross Barbed spear	* sheet copper scraps
+##* animal tooth beads		+ 1 plain platform pipe
+ drilled bear canines		+ 1 copper bicymbal earspool
* drilled imitation bear canines		## copper awl tip
		* cut and drilled animal jaws
		* drilled imitation bear canines

+ specimen drawn in Altick's notes

specimen in Altick's photographs

* specimen currently in Clark County Historical Society collections

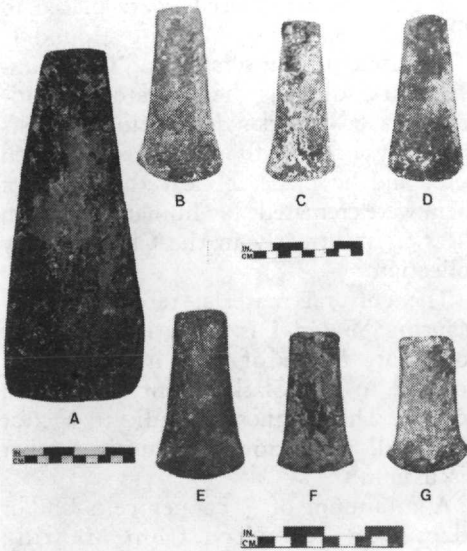


FIGURE 2. Copper celts, Manring Mound-1.

Celts of cold-hammered copper or meteoric iron are a widespread Hopewell artifact class (Seeman 1979:350–352). Despite this widespread distribution, about one-half of these celts have come from Ohio. The 7 examples from Manring Mound-1 represent only about 2% of the total or 4% of the Ohio sample. Nevertheless, the presence of 7 such celts in a single mound feature is unusual. Only the 66 copper examples found with Burials 260 and 261 in Hopewell Mound-25 represent a larger concentration (Moorehead

1922: 110, 115, Shetrone 1926, fig. 2). The 5 examples with Burial 39 at Seip Mound-1 constitute the 3rd largest deposit known for Ohio (Shetrone and Greenman 1931:465). By far the dominant pattern is a single celt with a given burial. Large “offerings” are uncommon.

Hopewell cold-hammered metal celts typically are not large. An available sample indicates an average (median) length of 130 mm (N = 112) a width of 60 mm (N = 148), and a weight of 340 gm (N = 78). Six of the Manring examples fall near the middle of these distributions; the 7th does not. It is one of the largest copper celts ever found. The 17.1 kg copper celt from Hopewell Mound-25, the 12.6 kg celt from Seip Mound-1, and the 7.65 kg example from Hopewell Mound-23 are clearly much larger than the large Manring example in this markedly skewed distribution (Moorehead 1922, Shetrone and Greenman 1931). So, too, are the 3.375 kg copper celt from Naples Mound-3 and the 3.178 kg example from F^o60, while at the same time representing what are possibly the largest such celts outside of the Ohio area (Henderson 1884, Schoenbeck 1947). The Manring celt may very well be the 6th largest Hopewell copper celt ever found.

The single copper breastplate from Manring Mound-1 is rectanguloid with rounded corners (fig. 3). It has a maximum length of 189 mm and a maximum thickness of 4 mm. The original width cannot

TABLE 2
Selected measurements, Manring Mound-1 copper celts.

No.	Maximum Length (mm)	Maximum Width (mm)	Bit Width (mm)	Poll Width (mm)	Maximum Thickness (mm)	Weight (gm)
1	283	112	105	50	17	2,514
2	143	63	63	37	11	420
3	136	62	62	35	12	388
4	129	59	59	33	11	339
5	104	54	54	32	10	205
6	86	48	48	32	10	217
7	83	51	51	34	10	147

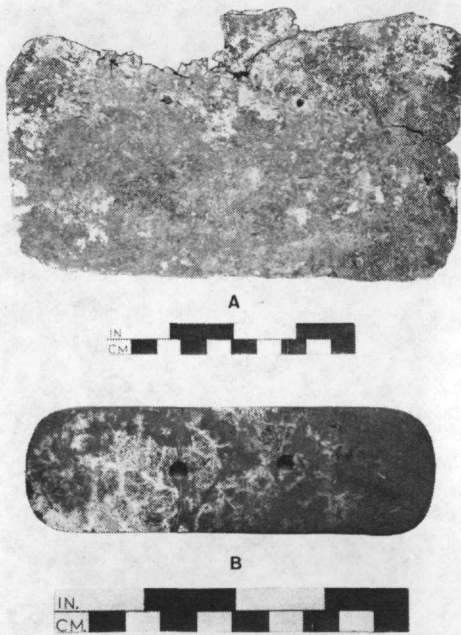


FIGURE 3. Manring Mound-1 artifacts: a. copper breastplate; b. rectanguloid gorget.

be determined since this artifact was incomplete when recovered. The weight of this incomplete plate is 154 gm. Two holes 7 mm in diameter and drilled from one side were used for suspension. There was no evidence of fabric on any surface. Copper breastplates of similar form have been found in a variety of Hopewell mortuary contexts, but are most frequent in the Ohio area (Seaman 1979:317).

Two additional copper artifacts were recovered from Manring Mound-1, the distal portion of a copper awl or pin and one-half of a bicymbal earspool. Neither is currently in the Clark County Historical Society collection.

Two ground stone artifacts, a rectangular gorget, and a plain platform pipe, were found in Mound-1. Only the gorget remains in the Clark County Historical Society collection (fig. 3). It has a maximum length of 116 mm, a maximum width of 36 mm, and a maximum thickness of 8 mm. It weighs 70 gm. The 2 suspension

holes were drilled from one side, a technique which disconcertingly has been labeled "Adena drilling." The raw material is blue-gray slate. All surfaces of this gorget evidence a white precipitate, presumably calcium carbonate, adhering to them. This specimen was broken into 2 pieces at some point prior to excavation, but has subsequently been reassembled.

The plain platform pipe, according to Altick's manuscript, was very small, with a maximum length of 41 mm, a maximum height of 19 mm, and a maximum bowl diameter of 10 mm. The bowl, roughly shaped like an inverted flower pot, was located at the apex of a curving base. The platform was markedly asymmetrical; the proximal section was notably shorter than the distal portion. This pipe conforms to none of the styles discussed in a previous study of Hopewell chronology (Seaman 1977).

A single Ross Barbed spear (Griffin 1965:117) was recovered from the burial feature in Manring Mound-1 (fig. 4). It is made of obsidian. All Hopewell obsidian is assumed to have been derived from the Obsidian Cliff area of Yellowstone Park (Griffin et al. 1969). The maximum length of the Manring specimen is 150 mm, the maximum width is 77 mm, and the maximum thickness is 9 mm. It weighs 86 gm. Both obverse and reverse faces exhibit a primary chipping pattern of long, shallow, expanding flake scars which regularly cross the midline. A "discontinuous" (Binford 1963:205) pattern of secondary pressure flakes is present on both faces of the blade. Pressure flaking is most concentrated and continuous on the stem. There is no evidence of wear, grinding or residues on any edges or faces. An approximately 15 mm portion of one of the lateral barbs was missing when the point was originally discovered. This has been accurately restored at some point subsequent to 1941. Ross Barbed spears nearly identical to the Manring example have been recovered from Mound City Mound-7 (Mills 1922), Hopewell Mound-25 (Shetrone 1926),

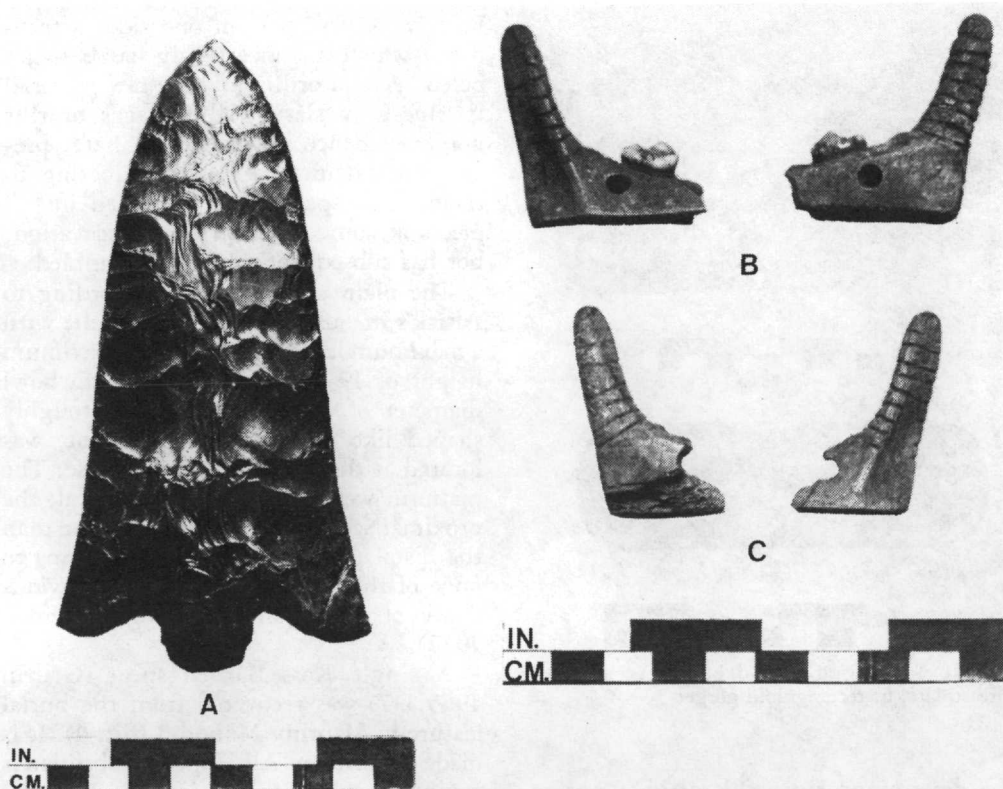


FIGURE 4. Manring Mound-1 artifacts: a. Ross Barbed spear; b-c. cut bear mandibles.

Hopewell Mound-17 (Shetrone 1926) and Snyders Mound-114 (Montet-White 1963). To these may be added a Ross Barbed spear of Knife River flint recently found in a Perry County, Indiana Mound, and currently in the collection of Mr. Edward Scheidigger of Cannelton, Indiana. A distribution/density argument suggests that these artifacts were made at the Hopewell site itself. Further, the stylistic specificity of these artifacts suggests their possible value for cross-dating the Manring specimen, and hence the site. This argument will be developed subsequently.

A variety of bone artifacts were recovered from Manring Mound-1. Those still in the Clark County Historical Society collection include one elk tooth bead, 2 cut, drilled and incised bear mandibles, one fragment of a split and drilled carnivore

(bear or wolf) canine ornament, and 3 cut, polished and drilled imitation bear canine ornaments of bone (figs. 4 and 5). The cut bear mandibles are the same size, anatomical opposites, and probably represent a single animal. The imitation canines have maximum lengths of 67 mm, 74 mm, and 68 mm; maximum widths of 25 mm, 24 mm, and 20 mm respectively; and maximum thicknesses of 5 mm, 5 mm, and 4 mm. Drilling is predominantly from one side. Altick's manuscript indicates that at least 5 additional bear canine ornaments and at least 2 additional imitation bear canines were recovered. Bear-related ornaments, and by extension, bear symbolism, represent a widespread and consistent animal association in northern Hopewell contexts. It is a relationship which should be further investigated (Hallowell 1926).

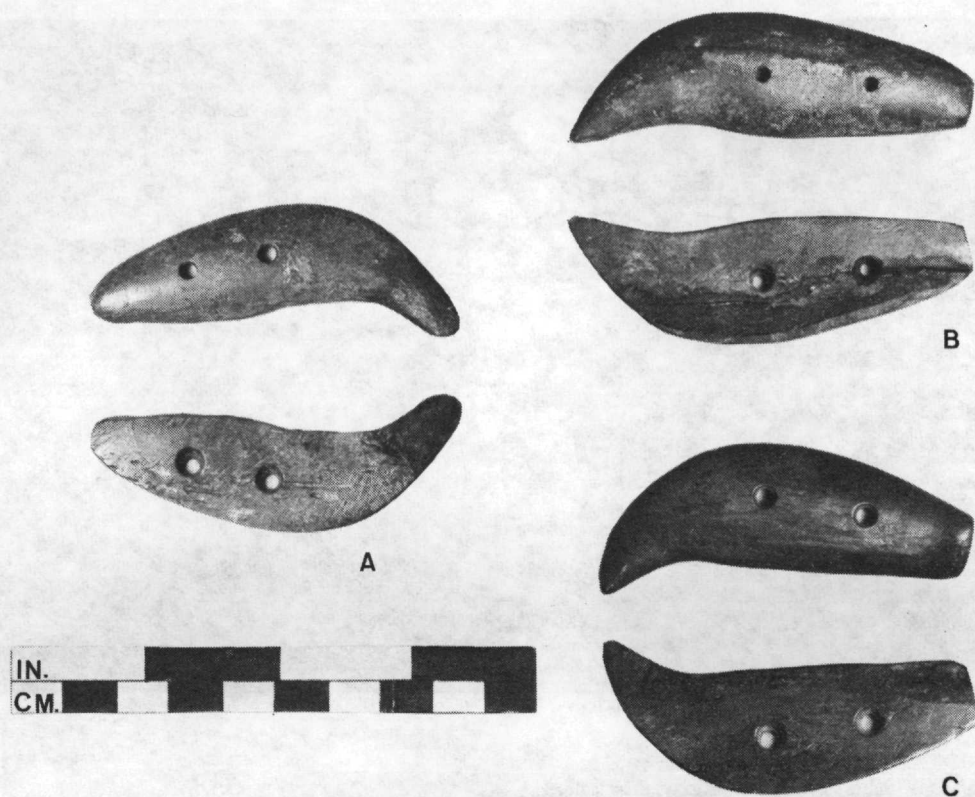


FIGURE 5. Imitation bear canines (obverse and reverse), Manring Mound-1.

Seven-hundred and fifteen shell beads from Manring Mound-1 are now in the Clark County Historical Society collection (fig. 6). The largest of these is 65 mm long and 20 mm wide. The smallest is 8 mm long and 8 mm wide. There is considerable variation in shape, but most can be classed as tubular. The large diameter of these beads indicates they were made from marine shell rather than local mussels.

MANRING MOUND-2. Manring Mound-2 was 91 m southeast of Manring Mound-1 and 63 m south of U.S. Route 40. In 1919 it was 1 m high and 11 m in diameter. What should have been the apex of the mound was sunken fully 20 cm below surrounding surfaces, possibly resulting from the collapse of internal structures. An earthen embankment

1.5 m wide and 0.3 m high could be traced south through the forest for 91 m from the western margin of the mound to an abandoned gravel pit.

In September 1946, George Manring scooped out the central portion of the mound with a power shovel. He found few artifacts. Altick arrived on the scene 9 September and noted that the power shovel had excavated an area 4.6 m long, 4.2 m wide, and 1.5 m deep. Altick troweled through the power shovel spoil piles and excavated 5 trenches radiating from the central cavity. The spoil piles yielded a few artifacts and the remains of a burned clay feature. Altick refers to the latter as an "alter" and describes it as follows:

Large chunks of the burned alter area were in both piles of earth. The thickness of the alter was determined from these, which averaged

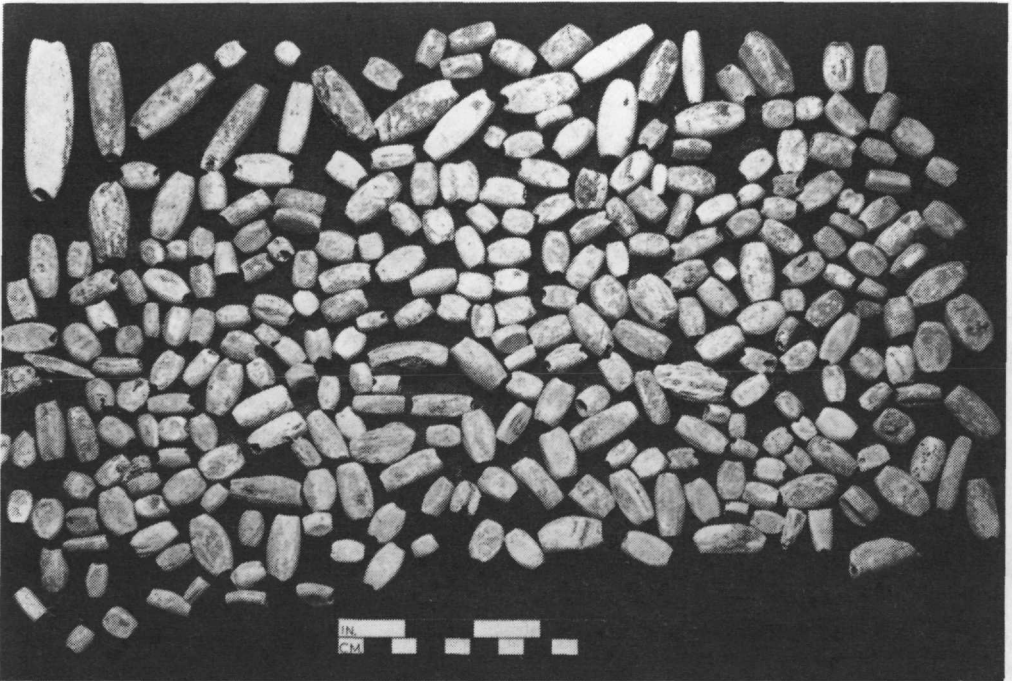


FIGURE 6. Shell beads, Manning Mound-1.

2 to 4 inches, composed of gray, ashy colored earth, impregnated with blotches of brickred, the clay forming a part of the alter turned that color from the intense heat of the fire which took place in the mound. Also, this material was stained in certain places a black color, and a few pieces of charred wood were noticeable.

The corner of a refined, undiagnostic ovoid biface of Flint Ridge flint was found embedded in a chunk of this burned clay. Other artifacts from the spoil piles included: one LeCroy point (Chapman 1975) of Flint Ridge flint, 3 irregular blocks of flint — 2 of Flint Ridge and one of indeterminate chert, and several flakes of Harrison County flint.

Altick's trenching revealed a single human cremation of indeterminate age and sex within 25 cm of the mound surface, and the presence of fire-reddened soil extending from the center of the mound to the periphery. None of the material from Manning Mound-2 could be located in the Clark County Historical Society collection.

DISCUSSION

The Manning site was a Hopewell mortuary located in a hinterland creek valley in southwestern Ohio. The size of the site and the array of exotica suggest it was an important center. "Reluctant Hopewell" (Vickery 1979) does not fit this situation. Why a site of this type should be located in the Beaver Creek Valley is an interesting question. This location is certainly not optimal for subsistence production, whatever the particular strategy. It does, however, lie directly on a potential route of travel of some significance. More specifically, travelers going northwest from Chillicothe via the Paint Creek Valley could walk to the Beaver Creek Valley without crossing a single stream. Indeed, the drainage pattern of the area neatly channels travel to the immediate vicinity of the Manning site. From Manning, one could move southwest to the Great Miami Valley, south to the Little Miami Valley, or via the

Miami-Auglaize trail, north to the upper Wabash Valley and/or the Lake Superior region (Wilcox 1970). The fact that the historic Shawnee-Miami trail from Circleville to Springfield passed very near to the site may also be relevant (Wilcox 1970). Certain important Hopewell sites were apparently located to dominate major routes of travel (Jefferies 1979). The Manring site fits this pattern. The issue of why this type of locational preference was an important consideration for Hopewell populations requires further investigation.

In the absence of radiometric determinations, the relative chronological placement of the Manring site hinges on cross-dating. The use of cross-dating in archaeology is, of course, not without hazards, particularly when the concern is with the relatively specific context of chronological placement within the Hopewell sequence (Hester et al. 1975:275-277). The stylistic specificity of the Manring Mound-1 Ross Barbed spear and the use of obsidian as a raw material would seem to hold the greatest potential for an adequate determination. Regarding obsidian, Griffin (1965:149) suggests that A.D. 100-200 should mark the period of obsidian importation to the eastern United States. This corresponds closely with the early portion of his Pike phase (A.D. 150-350) in the lower Illinois Valley (Griffin et al. 1970:4). Regarding style, we would note that certain obsidian projectile points found in Hopewell Mound-25/alter-2, and hence in direct association with Ross Barbed spears stylistically close to the Manring example, conform to such late Havana tradition (hence Pike) styles as Ansell and Marshall Barbed (Converse 1975:19, Griffin et al. 1970:94, Montet-White 1968:75, Moorehead 1922:132). Also, the association of a Ross Barbed spear with at least 10 highly stylized plain platform pipes in Hopewell Mound-17/alter 1 should be noted. It has previously been argued that these pipes should be nearly contemporaneous with similar examples from such Havana tradition sites as Gibson

Mound-4, Knight Mound-16 and Baehr Mound-2 (Seeman 1977). Ceramic attributes and radiocarbon dates would again indicate a Pike phase placement for these sites (Griffin et al. 1970:4).

In summary, it is argued that the Manring site was occupied sometime shortly after A. D. 100 and was an important Hopewell center. Site location appears related directly to important routes of travel in southwestern Ohio. As such, Manring represents yet another point in the distribution of sites that document the range and intensity of Hopewell exchange in the Ohio area.

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