

## BOOK REVIEW

*Ocmulgee Archaeology, 1936–1986*, edited by David J. Hally. University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1994. xiii+237 pp., illus., tables, biblio., index. \$40.00 (cloth).

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Archaeology at Macon Plateau and surrounding areas of central Georgia began during the Great Depression as the most extensive field project of the federal archaeology program in the Southeast. Excavation projects designed primarily to provide jobs produced an abundance of collections but allowed limited time for analysis, and the pace of digging sites contributed to gaps in field notes and provenience information. Since then, little excavation has been conducted at Macon Plateau, and more recent publications refer sparingly to the 1930s undertakings. The federal archaeology program at Macon Plateau also included the establishment of the Ocmulgee National Monument in 1936, and a conference in 1986 commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of that event. The book *Ocmulgee Archaeology*, an outgrowth of this conference, is a testament to the many important lessons to be learned from the excavations at Macon Plateau and nearby sites, and from the scholars who have creatively and insightfully evaluated their significance.

The five historical chapters of the book examine the intellectual background to fieldwork as well as the daily routine of those involved in excavating the Macon Plateau mounds, the Stubbs mound, the Lamar site, and the several other localities investigated by crews stationed at Macon. Although the Macon excavations began as a federal relief project designed primarily to provide jobs, local interest in the area's prehistory preceded the Great Depression. As John Walker writes in his daily account of the routine of decades of Ocmulgee archaeology, several Macon residents were responsible for creating the Society for Georgia Archaeology in 1933 and also were early advocates for the study and preservation of prehistoric sites in central Georgia. Stephen Williams guides the reader through the intellectual developments that led to the arrival of a cadre of young archaeologists who would serve as catalysts for the unfolding of the early stages of Ocmulgee archaeology. This group included scholars such as James Ford, Gordon Willey, Preston

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Holder, Antonio Waring, Jesse Jennings, Charles Fairbanks, and others who would spend some of the formative years of their distinguished careers enmeshed in the archaeology of Macon Plateau and nearby sites. Gordon Willey writes fondly of his experiences as a student of Macon director Arthur Kelly and later as field supervisor at Ocmulgee, and of the productive discussions among the various scholars who were directly and indirectly involved in excavations in the region. As he is well known for his contributions to archaeology elsewhere in the world, it is interesting that Willey writes that "I look back upon Macon as the place where I came of age—professionally and emotionally" (p. 46). Jesse Jennings, who began his year-long tenure as park superintendent in 1938, also writes fondly of his initially frustrating attempts to give some sense of direction to the various construction projects at the new park. As discussant for the conference, James Griffin parallels his earlier role as a significant outside influence on the archaeologists who were developing ceramic classification systems for Ocmulgee collections in the 1930s. From these historical essays, it is readily apparent that Macon was a gathering point for many of the leading figures in Southeastern archaeology of that day and of later generations. It is also clear that broader contemporaneous interests among archaeologists in ceramic classifications and chronologies, as well as Southeastern cultural distributions, found a testing ground at Ocmulgee from the outset.

A group of 10 essays examines the entire continuum of aboriginal culture history in central Georgia, beginning with the earliest settlement of the region. David Anderson and colleagues describe the significance of a number of Paleoindian and Archaic sites in Georgia and the Carolinas, and the great advances made since the discovery of a fluted Paleoindian point at Macon Plateau in 1935. They also review several models which archaeologists have developed more recently to explain Early Archaic settlement strategies.

Three of these essays concentrate on construction practices during the Woodland and Mississippian periods. Richard Jefferies discusses the differences between Woodland and Mississippian mound building and use. He describes several Woodland mound sites across the greater Southeast, with emphasis on the Swift Creek and Cold Spring mounds on the Georgia Piedmont. His chapter is a good reminder that earthen mounds are not temporally restricted to the Mississippian period. Mark Williams and David Hally examine the layout of the Mississippian mounds at Macon Plateau, suggesting a span of occupation long enough to allow for significant changes in the configuration of the mounds,

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lodges, and ditches found at the site. Lewis Larson discusses so-called "earth lodges" at Macon Plateau and elsewhere, raising doubts that such structures represent a common architectural feature in the prehistoric Southeast. Larson notes the confusion in terminology employed by scholars who have loosely applied the "earth lodge" label to earth-covered structures, earth-embanked structures, or both. Drawing from descriptions of aboriginal architecture in the historic Southeast by Adair, Bartram, Hawkins, and Swanton, Larson offers alternative explanations for the "earth lodges" described at the Macon Plateau, Harris Farm, Garden Creek, and Wilbanks sites. His point is that "earth-embanked" structures are a common architectural style in the Southeast, but "earth-covered" lodges are not.

Two essays offer some insight into nutrition and the subsistence practices of those responsible for the Mississippian and historic sites at Macon Plateau. Thomas Riley discusses the implications of subsurface archaeological features identified as ridge-and-furrow fields in his chapter on agricultural field systems in eastern North America. He describes these features at Macon Plateau and midwestern sites such as Cahokia, Kincaid, and Sand Lake, and argues that the excavation of such archaeological features is crucial to understanding the coevolution of maize crops and the prehistoric farmers who tended them. Another dataset for evaluating the agricultural practices of Macon Plateau residents consists of the human remains from excavated burials in Mound D and at the Trading House at Macon Plateau. Mary Lucas Powell reviews records and collections of human remains and associated grave goods, and she recognizes mortuary patterns that are typical of Mississippian groups elsewhere. She suggests that the Macon Plateau osteological collections are sufficiently intact for isotopic studies which could contribute greatly to an understanding of dietary regimes of the past.

David Hally offers an exhaustive synthesis of several aspects of Lamar material culture, the expression of late prehistoric settlement throughout much of the interior Southeast and a precursor to the material culture typical of historic Native American traditions in the region. His chapter includes sections on Lamar ceramics, chronology, origins, geographic distribution and variability, subsistence, settlement patterns, mortuary practices, and ethnic correlates between Lamar assemblages and Muskogean groups of the early historic Southeast. The maps, charts, and illustrations in this chapter are valuable and helpful inclusions in the book.

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Two essays are thematically oriented and address the topic of Mississippian origins. Mark Williams advocates migration as an explanation for this development at Macon Plateau. He comments on the limited distribution of Macon Plateau ceramics across a very restricted area immediately around the mound center itself. Given the extensive fieldwork that has been undertaken in this area, Williams expresses doubts that additional investigation will uncover the ceramic assemblages that represent the local transition between Late Woodland and Early Mississippian period settlement. Furthermore, he suggests possible continuities between local Late Woodland ceramics and Lamar assemblages postdating the A.D. 950–100 occupation of the mounds at Macon Plateau. Similarities between ceramics that predate and postdate the occupation of the Macon Plateau mounds lend support to his conclusion that those who constructed the site must have migrated from elsewhere and were not the descendants of later Lamar residents of the region. Gerald Schroedl presents the opposite view in his chapter, emphasizing parallels between Mississippian origins in central Georgia and eastern Tennessee. Schroedl proposes an application of the lessons learned from the development of research on this topic in eastern Tennessee. Scholars originally espoused migration as an explanation for the appearance of Mississippian groups in this region but have since constructed models of gradual development of Early Mississippian traditions from indigenous Late Woodland precursors. Schroedl suggests the possibility that Macon Plateau ceramics represent the local expression of this transition, as has been proposed for ceramics at the Martin Farm site and in submound deposits at Hiwassee Island in eastern Tennessee. As James Griffin and William Webb did during a visit to Macon years ago, Schroedl recognizes the "fundamental stylistic similarities, especially in the ceramics, between the Macon Plateau and Hiwassee Island cultures" (p. 142), and he suggests that both assemblages represent an Emergent Mississippian style. To conclude, Schroedl advocates employing an evolutionary framework to develop a single model of Mississippian origins applicable to datasets from the Macon Plateau, Hiwassee Island, and Martin Farm sites.

Three essays concentrate on historic native settlement at Ocmulgee. Charles Hudson draws from historic references and archaeological information to present a case for the identification of the Lamar site as the capital of the chiefdom of Ichisi, mentioned in accounts of the Hernando de Soto expedition from A.D. 1539–1543. He also suggests that the historically known chiefdoms of Coosa and Cofitachequi may be helpful

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guides for understanding social and political organization in the prehistoric Southeast.

The Ocmulgee Fields culture was first identified from excavations at the Macon Plateau Trading House as historic Creek. In his essay on the development of Ocmulgee Fields culture and its connection to Creek ceramics, Vernon Knight defines several regional Lamar subtraditions. All of these subtraditions evince common trends leading towards a coalescence of the characteristics typical of historic Creek pottery. As an appendix to his chapter, Knight provides pottery type descriptions which complement his essay and his chronological chart of these Lamar subtraditions.

In his chapter on contact-period archaeology at Macon Plateau, Gregory Waselkov evaluates the Creek presence at the Macon Plateau Trading House between A.D. 1690 and 1716. He also commends the landmark efforts of archaeologists at Macon Plateau who from the outset undertook serious studies of historic Native American settlement at the site. As Waselkov writes, these scholars recognized a theme still significant to archaeologists, that of the cultural continuities and resiliency of native adaptations to increasing contact with European colonial groups.

Each chapter provides its share of stepping stones for further investigations. In drawing together his introduction to the volume, Hally comments that 50 years of archaeology have expanded and answered many of the questions asked by the first archaeologists who worked at Ocmulgee. He also puts forth two major questions that are still unresolved: what was the nature of Macon Plateau community patterning; and where did those responsible for the layout and construction of the Mississippian earthworks at Macon Plateau come from?

*Ocmulgee Archaeology* is a well-organized collection of clear and insightful essays covering the entire span of aboriginal human occupation in central Georgia, and it addresses several themes of primary concern to archaeologists throughout the history of fieldwork in the region. Investigations along the Ocmulgee River near Macon have played a significant role in the historical development of Southeastern archaeology. The problems and solutions of archaeology in this region have paralleled, and in some cases initiated, those of other localities across the greater Southeast. I strongly recommend this book as thoroughly enjoyable and essential reading for anyone interested in Southeastern archaeology and ethnohistory.