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Gender, Tradition, and the Negotiation of Power Relationships in Southern Appalachian Chiefdoms

Lynne P. Sullivan and Christopher B. Rodning

Traditions are those cultural practices and perspectives that are passed from generation to generation, always with some revision or conscious manipulation, but commonly with references to the perceived past of a people. Tradition affects the ways that people actively create their own social identities, their roles within their communities, and their relationships with other people and other groups (Hobsbawm 1983:9–12; Peacock 1986:4–7). Gender and the place of men, women, and children within families and communities is one aspect of identity for which most if not all societies have cultural conventions or traditions (Brumfiel 1992:554–555; Conkey and Gero 1991:16–23; Conkey and Spector 1984:6–7; Hodder 1992:258–259; S. Jones 1997:134–135; Joyce and Claassen 1997:2–8; Kent 1998:15–20; S. M. Nelson 1997:15–17; Spielmann 1995; Whelan 1995). Leadership roles likewise are tied to traditions. Gender conventions and other traditions guide the pathways of aspiring leaders to power and prominence in their communities. Aspiring leaders can materialize their status through the display and exchange of prestige goods (Dye 1995; Emerson 1997a; Pauketat 1994; Steponaitis 1991), through competitive feasting and the hosting of other kinds of public events (Blitz 1993b; VanDerwarker 1999; Welch and Scarry 1995), by mobilizing tribute and hoarding surplus resources and wealth goods (Anderson 1994a; Pauketat 1994; Wesson 1999), by building and preserving monumental architecture and other kinds of landmarks (Hally 1996; Knight 1986; Rudolph 1984; M. T. Smith and Williams 1994; Williams and Shapiro 1996), and by creating whole landscapes that communicate differential social standing and claims to power (Earle 1997; Knight 1998; Wesson 1998). Gender conventions shape the ways that people achieve different kinds of power and prestige through these or other activities.

These traditions and their effects on power and leadership can become visible in the landscape in which people live.

Our main goal in this chapter is to outline the ways that perceptions of traditional gender and power relationships within native communities shaped cultural landmarks and landscapes of the greater southern Appalachians from the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries. Our thesis is that different kinds of power within the native chiefdom societies of this region were vested within the male leadership of towns and female leadership of kin groups. Relationships between gender groups would have been continually negotiated and renegotiated by women and men, drawing from their distinct and complementary sources of power and status. This gender ideology formed an abiding regional tradition that structured social dynamics and community leadership throughout the southern Appalachians and influenced mortuary ritual and the relationships between people and their surrounding landscapes.

This chapter offers some comments about the interrelationships of tradition, power, gender, and the spatial arrangements of burials and buildings. We first review ethnohistoric evidence about traditional gender roles within native societies of the southern Appalachians. We then reconstruct the ancient history of these gender distinctions with reference to archaeological evidence from different areas of the greater southern Appalachians. Our conclusions apply this evidence toward an outline of the relationship between gender and power in the history of native societies in this region, with an interest in spurring further study of this relationship in chiefdoms elsewhere.

Gender and Architecture

Architectural landmarks can become associated with different groups within communities, and they can serve as spatial referents to these community members and their access to different kinds of power. Quite often monuments are related to ancestors, demarcating mortuary spaces or other kinds of sacred space, and aspiring leaders often try to claim different forms of ownership and connection to them to legitimate their status and to differentiate themselves from other people or groups (Charles 1992, 1995; Goldstein 1980, 1995; Hodder 1984; Knight 1989a). As are power relations, gender is an axis along which people and groups are differentiated from and bound to each other, and gender can structure spatial arrangements within communities (Gilchrist 1994:150–152; Spain

1992:26–29; Spector 1993:67–77). This last point is fundamental to our study of mortuary programs in southern Appalachian chiefdoms.

Distinct spatial domains can offer members of different gender groups visible architectural anchors for their roles, identities, and status within their communities.[1] If certain architectural spaces are widely known as spaces reserved at times for activities of one or another gender group, this local knowledge likely would attach itself to architectural forms visible in the cultural landscape. Across the cultural landscape of the Mississippian period, for example, both platform mounds and menstrual huts would have served as architectural reminders of the very different kinds of rites conducted within them, even when there were not ritual events underway in those spaces (Anderson 1994a; Galloway 1997b; Knight 1989b).

Gender ideologies can thus become embedded within landscapes and architecture, as can other kinds of ideologies.[2] Visible architectural forms of course can preserve and communicate ideas about how different members of communities should relate to each other, especially when there are certain kinds of events and activities that take place within them. Such is the case in the history of medieval English monasticism—monks and nuns tended to develop different relationships with people in surrounding communities, and these contrasts became visible in the architecture of monasteries and nunneries and their placement within landscapes of town and countryside (Gilchrist 1994).

One premise of our argument here is that the placement of graves in architectural spaces that serve as dwellings, ceremonial places, or both, represents the deliberate connection of ancestors to living members of the community associated with those architectural spaces.[3] Individuals and their grave goods obviously were not visible after being placed in the ground, but related architecture served as a landmark for people given ancestral status through mortuary ritual and interment.

Another of our premises is that social structures and power relationships are embedded in the landscapes in which people live and interact with each other. Landmarks and monuments reflect attempts to establish ownership or other relationships to landscapes and ancestors (Earle 1997:161–166; Goldstein 1995; Mainfort and Sullivan 1998:13–16). Architecture also can serve as a prominently visible reminder of social differentiation and power relations within communities (Knight 1998; Pauketat 1994:105–107; Pauketat and Emerson 1997a:10–18). The structure of power relationships within communities is visible through individual landmarks and their associations to broader cultural landscapes that en-

compass houses, mounds, palisades, poles, henges, and mortuary spaces.[4] The manifestation of such relationships in architecture and landscapes shapes the ways that people interact with each other in ritual and routine settings, and the ways that traditions are passed from one generation to younger generations.

In sum, we would argue that gender traditions, social structure, and power relationships are visible in cultural landscapes to the people who create, interpret, and live in them. With this in mind, we now turn to ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence of gender and power within native chiefdoms of the southern Appalachians.

Traditional Gender Roles in Southern Appalachian Chiefdoms

Ethnohistoric evidence of gender traditions among the Cherokee and among more northern Iroquoian speakers, as well as some Muskogean groups of the eighteenth century in the greater southern Appalachian region, indicate that native men and women lived rather different lives. Some scholars have even wondered if men and women spoke different languages or at least knew some words that were specific to either gender group (Bell 1990:332; Perdue 1998:4). They certainly seem to have lived much of their lives in different social spheres and to have moved through different spatial domains (Braund 1993:14; Fenton 1978:309; Hudson 1976:260; Trigger 1978:802). Children almost certainly were introduced to these gender distinctions at a young age. From that point forward many people followed one of several tracks toward social prestige in their communities. Men gained status primarily as warriors, traders, hunters, and diplomats—outwardly negotiating with their peers in other towns or other chiefdoms and tribes and spending considerable lengths of time away from their own hometowns (Braund 1993:14–16; Gearing 1958, 1962; Hudson 1976:260–269). Women gained status primarily through farming, performing dances and other communal rituals, and most significantly, through controlling access to the resources of and membership within matrilineal kin groups (including households, more extensive matrilineages, and clans), and so providing the social glue that bound communities together (Hatley 1991:37–40, 1995:8–10; S. H. Hill 1997:27–34; Sattler 1995:221–229).

The circumstances of matrilineal kinship and matrilocal residence made the male presence in Cherokee households in southeastern North America irregular and unstable. Men often were found in council houses or other communal spaces within their towns, in the presence of other men

(see Perdue 1998:45–46; Schroedl 1986:219–224). Houses and households were the domain of Cherokee women (see S. H. Hill 1997:27–28; Perdue 1998:42–45). Gardens and other resources associated with a Cherokee household may well have been managed primarily if not solely by women who were members and leaders of that household. It is worth noting that this distinction between the social spheres navigated by native southeastern men and women is not at all comparable to European distinctions between public and private sectors of society (see S. M. Nelson 1997, 1998, 1999; Rodning 2001; Sullivan 2001). There evidently was a different kind of balance among gender roles in native southeastern societies that offered complementary tracks to social prominence and influence for men and women, rather than placing some gender groups necessarily subordinate to others (see Levy 1999; Sattler 1995; Trocolli 1999). Women's control over domestic matters stemmed partially from male abdication of authority in this realm, but matrilineality also gave women the sole ability to convey the kinship ties "essential to a Cherokee's existence," and indeed to being Cherokee (Perdue 1998:46).

This balance is not unique to native North Americans in the Southeast. Women seem to have held comparable status within Iroquois households and villages in northeastern North America during the seventeenth century and likely well before that (Prezzano 1997:99). Women's power derived from their influential roles as heads of households and kin groups. Men's power meanwhile derived from their roles as relatively mobile hunters and warriors. This gender distinction in Iroquoia strikes us as comparable to the distinction between leadership of Cherokee towns and clans (Perdue 1998:159). This distinction also was present in historic Choctaw communities in the lower Southeast (Galloway 1989:255–256) and may well have been present in many Mississippian societies long before the arrival of Europeans (Levy 1999:70–74). Women in many Native American societies also are considered to have been tradition bearers and, as such, central to the spiritual well-being of everybody within their communities (Bataille and Sands 1984:18–24). Women in native North American societies were prominent as leaders within their families—in many different kinds of family structures—and, significantly, families represented the heart of these native communities, not a social entity subordinate to the structures of tribal and chiefdom leadership by warriors and traders (Klein and Ackerman 1995:14–15).

We do not argue that gender roles were static or that individual native men and women in southern Appalachian chiefdoms were restricted to specific sets of activities and relationships during different stages of their

lives. For example, there are numerous accounts of female chiefs and warrior women (L. Thomas 2000; Trocolli 1999; White 1999). Nonetheless, we do argue that traditional gender roles typically allowed native women to claim significant authority within their communities by referencing their relative status in kin groups, if indeed these kin groups were matrilineal, as were eighteenth-century Creek and Cherokee clans. Men usually found room to advance their own social standing through the structures of town governance, in which male warriors and traders were predominant, much as they were in eighteenth-century Creek and Cherokee communities. These conventions, although flexible and malleable though time and in individual circumstances, formed long-held traditions that continue to shape and structure gender and power relationships in native communities of this region.

The social spheres in which men and women were prominent were not necessarily superordinate or subordinate to each other. The distinction between them may have been one in which the power associated with each social domain complemented and perhaps in some cases contested the other. Archaeological evidence of mortuary practices in this part of the Southeast allows us to consider the antiquity of these gender distinctions.

Archaeology of the Southern Appalachians

Southern Appalachia includes contiguous areas in eastern Tennessee, northern Georgia, and the western part of the Carolinas (see fig. 7.1). The Cherokee and several groups of Muskogean speakers lived in these areas in the eighteenth century (Booker, Hudson, and Rankin 1992; Braund 1993:3–10; S. H. Hill 1997:67–69; Hudson 1976:3–14, 1990:67–109, 1997:185–218; Levy, May, and Moore 1990; Muller 1997:61–62; M. T. Smith 1987:20–22). The interrelationships of pre-seventeenth-century archaeological phases in northern Georgia and eastern Tennessee with these post-seventeenth-century tribal groups are in some cases unclear (Hally 1994:173; Schroedl 1998:64; Sullivan 1995:100).

In northeastern Georgia, eighteenth-century Lower Cherokee towns often were located at earlier Mississippian mounds, including Tugalo and Chauga (Anderson 1994b:205–217, 302–307). In eastern Tennessee, eighteenth-century Overhill Cherokee towns often were built in the same localities as earlier Mississippian settlements, including Toqua and Citico (Schroedl 1986:548). Native residents of southwestern North Carolina from the eleventh through fifteenth centuries lived in villages spread across river valleys in which there were often one or more mounds (Dick-
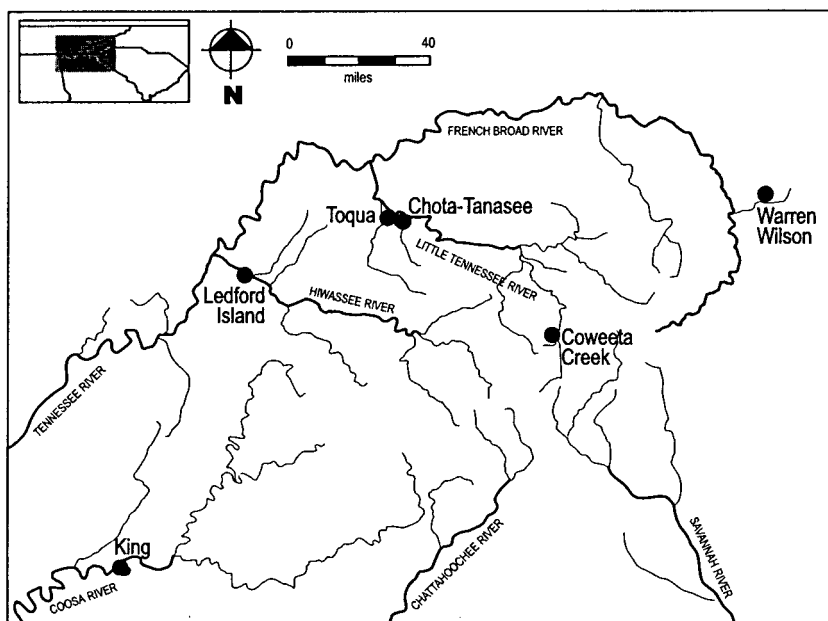
Fig. 7.1. Selected archaeological sites in the greater southern Appalachians.

ens 1976:205–206; Keel 1976:217–218; Ward and Davis 1999:158–178). These areas were home to Middle Cherokee towns as well as the Cherokee Out and Valley towns during the eighteenth century (Dickens 1976:99–101; Keel 1976:215–216; Ward and Davis 1999:178–190). Mortuary patterns visible at significant sites in these areas are described in the archaeological literature and are only briefly outlined here for the purposes of our argument about gender and power in southern Appalachian chiefdoms.

Hally and Kelly (1998) have reviewed the architectural layout of the King site along the Coosa River in western Georgia (see also Hally 1994:156; Hudson 1997:226). King dates to the sixteenth century. The site includes dwelling houses placed around a central plaza and communal buildings. The residential houses and public area were surrounded by a wooden stockade. Clusters of burials are placed within and beside both communal and residential buildings. Of interest here is the fact that eight of ten burials associated with the pair of communal buildings are the resting places of relatively old men with a variety of mortuary goods. These men likely were interred in these public buildings because their gender roles were related to the community significance of this architecture.

Members of all age and sex groups are represented in the graves placed beside or within residential houses. Hally and Kelly (1998:60–61) have not been able to identify the significant family or clan member whose death may have occasioned the rebuilding of these houses. They (Hally and Kelly 1998:61–63) nevertheless argue convincingly that the placement of graves within and beside households at King served to preserve and communicate household identity and membership to the broader community. The mortuary spaces at the King site—which are embedded within the architecture of household and communal space—serve to create a link between ancestors and the buildings associated with them.

Schroedl (1998) has described six significant characteristics of Mississippian town plans in eastern Tennessee: (1) a general town plan including a communal building with or without a mound and a village nearby; (2) a conscious partitioning of space within a town; (3) a shift through time from spatially discrete burial mounds to placement of mortuary spaces within and beside different kinds of buildings; (4) through time, the decline in the number of buildings placed atop a mound summit; (5) through time, the construction of communal council houses away from mounds altogether; and (6) fundamental changes in the social structure of the communities represented by these archaeologically known towns. Schroedl (1998:86) argues that burials associated with households reflect a public acknowledgement of the ancestors linked to certain household groups, and that this Mississippian pattern reflects a significant change from earlier communal burial mounds placed at the outskirts of Woodland period villages.

Sullivan (1995) has compared and contrasted the plans of different Mississippian towns in eastern Tennessee: (1) fifteenth-century Dallas phase towns such as Toqua include mounds, courtyards, and paired seasonal residential structures often enclosed within wooden stockades; (2) sixteenth-century Mouse Creek phase towns such as Ledford Island are comparable in their delineation of communal and residential space but are not built around mounds; and (3) Overhill Cherokee towns show a much looser spatial structure than their predecessors but nevertheless include a clearly visible communal council house distinct from household pairs of winter lodges and summer houses. Sullivan (1987, 1995:119, 2001) notes the widespread associations of male burials with "public architecture" and female burials with "residential architecture," although there are some differences in the composition of grave clusters associated with these architectural spaces through time.

This patterning is especially clear at the neighboring archaeological sites representing the historic Overhill Cherokee towns of Chota and Tanasee in the lower Little Tennessee Valley (Schroedl 1986:203–204; Sullivan 1987:26–28, 1995:115–123). The majority of graves in household cemeteries are those of women and children. The graves within and beside the council house are those of men (see fig. 7.2).

An earlier form of this patterning is apparent at Toqua and other Mississippian sites in the upper Tennessee Valley (Hatch 1987:10–12; Polhemus 1987, 1990:128–132; G. Scott and Polhemus 1987; Sullivan 2001). The majority of burials close to and within the platform mounds at these sites were adult male graves (see Claassen 1997:70–71). Rather than reflecting male dominance within the chiefdoms centered at these and other mounds, this pattern may instead reflect the relationship between men and the specific kinds of power related to those architectural spaces within the cultural landscape. Concentrations of female graves in village spaces, on the other hand, may reflect their access to different kinds of power anchored to those architectural spaces within their communities.

Spatial arrangements of burials and buildings are archaeologically visible at the Warren Wilson and Coweeta Creek sites in the Appalachian Summit region of western North Carolina (Dickens 1978:123–131; Ward and Davis 1999:162–163, 184–186; H. Wilson 1986:61). Warren Wilson represents a fifteenth-century palisaded village along the Swannanoa River; houses and the surrounding stockade were rebuilt several times. Graves of old women are most commonly placed within household cemeteries, as at the King and Toqua sites. Graves placed in the ground between houses at Warren Wilson are commonly those of men who died as young adults during what was probably the prime of their lives, although there is not a communal building at the site. Coweeta Creek includes a protohistoric period communal council house and associated village and town plaza at the confluence of Coweeta Creek and the upper Little Tennessee River. Rodning (2001) has argued that most of the graves in the council house are the resting places of male town leaders, and that adult women tend to be buried in graves associated with what are probably clan buildings in the village (see fig. 7.3).

This trend may characterize archaeologically visible mortuary programs at other southern Appalachian sites. Rudolph (1984:43–44) hints at this gender distinction in the placement of graves in the platform mound at Beaverdam Creek in the upper Savannah Valley, although the pattern is not characteristic of burials associated with the earth lodge that preceded the fourteenth-century platform mound. Anderson (1994b:217–218) like-
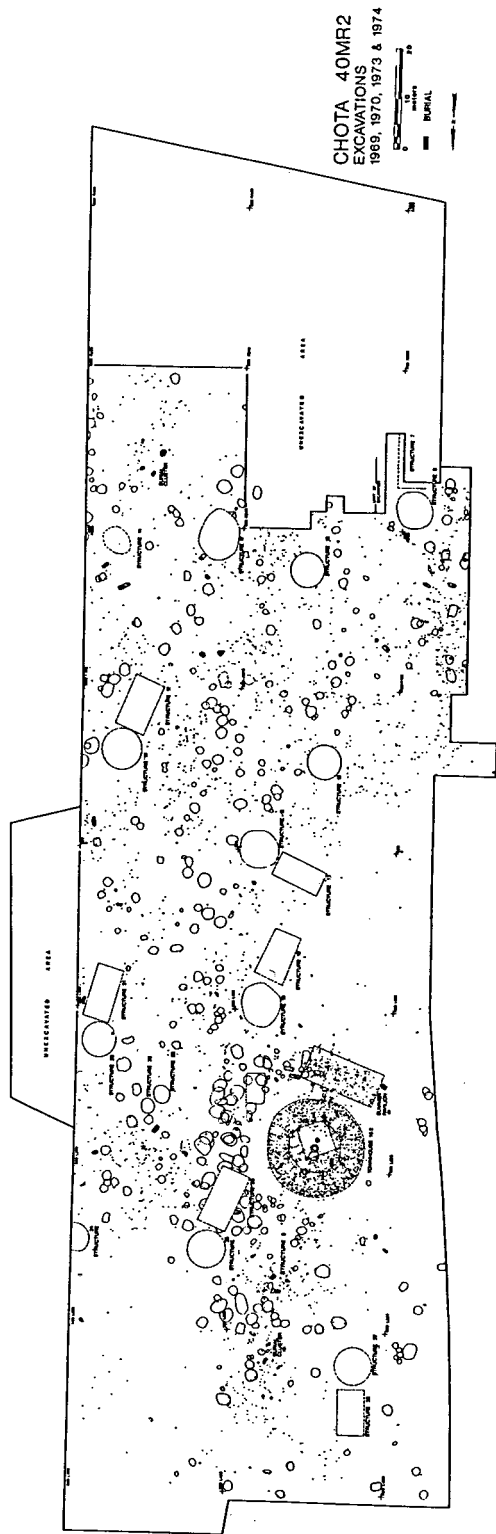
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Fig. 7.2. Archaeological map of the Overhill Cherokee settlement at Chota-Tanasee, A.D. 1700–1800. From Schroedl 1986:36–37 (see also J. Chapman 1985:111 and Sullivan 1995:106).
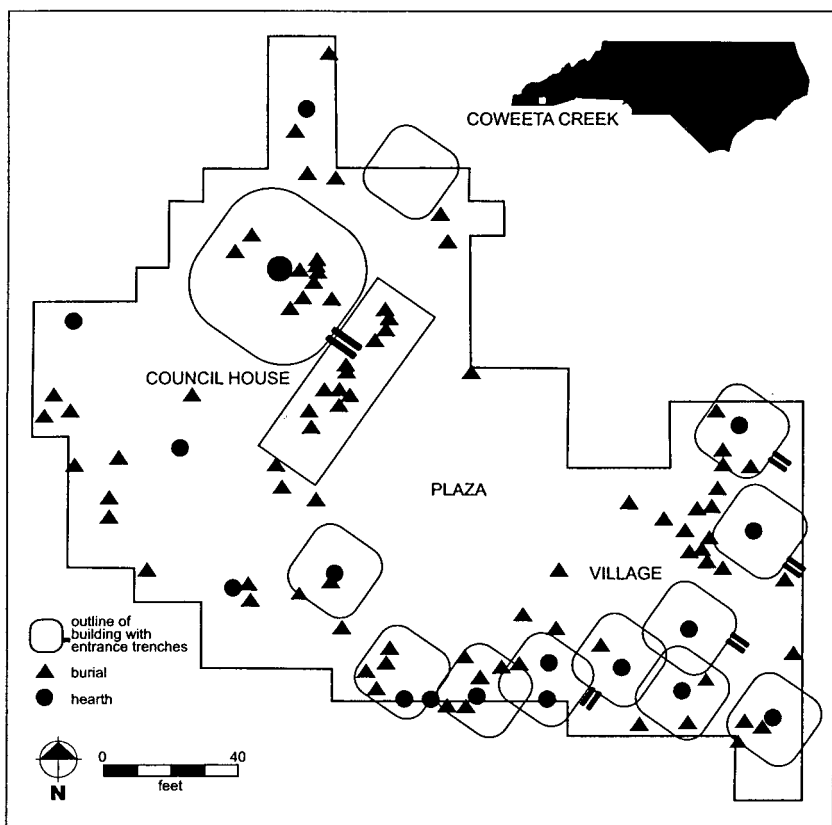
Fig. 7.3. Archaeological map of the Coweeta Creek site, A.D. 1600–1700. From Rodning 1996 (see also B. J. Egloff 1967:9 and K. T. Egloff 1971:44). Map courtesy of the University of North Carolina Research Laboratories of Archaeology, Chapel Hill.

wise hints at this kind of patterning at the I.C. Few site near the headwaters of the Savannah River, where burials in a fourteenth-century mound were primarily those of men and burials in the adjacent village were mostly adult women. Our suggestion from all this evidence is that gender distinctions in the spatial dimension of mortuary patterns have an ancient history in southern Appalachian cultures.

Our further argument is that these gender distinctions at death relate to comparable gender distinctions made during the lifetimes of native people, forming cultural traditions that persisted for several centuries in the greater southern Appalachian region. The consistency of the general spatial pattern outlined here at several southern Appalachian sites and the

ethnohistoric evidence about gender ideologies in native societies of this region both support this conclusion.

Gender distinctions are thus a major dimension of the social identities that are communicated through mortuary ceremonialism at late pre-Columbian and early post–contact period sites in eastern Tennessee, northern Georgia, and western North Carolina. This phenomenon is most clearly visible at the archaeological site representing the historic Cherokee towns of Chota and Tanasee in the lower Little Tennessee Valley of eastern Tennessee. Historic accounts of eighteenth-century Cherokee culture also allow us to infer connections between observed, contemporary behavior with these archaeological patterns.

Architecture and Power in Southern Appalachian Chiefdoms

Our proposal is that the spatial relationships between different kinds of architecture and the graves of men and women reflect traditions of complementary gender domains within the social structure and cultural landscape of southern Appalachian chiefdoms. Many men were buried in association with council houses, which were sometimes built atop older mounds. Graves of women commonly were associated with buildings that likely served residential and other purposes, including housing the local members of certain matrilineages and clans, and the resting places of ancestral kin group leaders. These architectural forms represent the spaces associated with leaders of southern Appalachian towns on one hand, and kin groups on the other. People in southern Appalachian societies were members of both a matrilineal kin group and of one town or another. These different social entities within southern Appalachian communities were represented in the cultural landscape by different architectural forms.

Reconstructing the social dynamics and rituals centered at these landmarks can lead to an understanding of how town and kin group leaders negotiated their own power and status within southern Appalachian chiefdoms. Our vision of gender and power within southern Appalachian societies compares favorably with ideas about heterarchy—the presence of multiple hierarchies within communities (Brumfiel 1992:554–555, 1995:129–130; Crown and Fish 1996:811–812; Crumley 1979:157–165, 1987:163–165, 1995; Crumley and Marquardt 1987:612–615; Earle 1997:210–211; Levy 1995:46–49, 1999:74–75; Marquardt and Crumley 1987:11–12; S. M. Nelson 1999:188; Trocolli 1999:53). Gender identities within these societies connoted *differential* access to *different* kinds of

power. Gender traditions empowered men to become town leaders and women to become leaders and lynchpins in the social fabric of their kin groups, creating dynamics that would have served to keep the power of the other in check.

Did men actively resist the traditional kin-based power of women by building council houses on or beside platform mounds, as refuges from architectural domains over which women presided? How did women resist the power of male warriors, hunters, and traders, who moved relatively freely across broad geographic and cultural provinces?

We think the answers to these and other questions about the diversity of Mississippian and protohistoric chiefdoms in eastern North America relate to the ways that men and women attached themselves to traditional gender groups and gender ideologies, and through which they actively negotiated the differences and common ground between them. We also think the role of gender as a structuring principle in Mississippian chiefdoms in other parts of eastern North America is worth exploring further, through studies of mortuary contexts and other facets of the abundant archaeological record. We suspect that a gendered tradition of complementary pathways to social status, prestige, and political influence within southern Appalachian societies is one significant social aspect that may differentiate them from more rigidly hierarchical chiefdoms elsewhere across the late pre-Columbian and postcontact Southeast.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Gender identities are the ways that individuals relate to gendered expectations of their place within communities (Conkey and Spector 1984:15; Gilchrist

1994:8); people can follow, resist, and creatively bend these expectations in a variety of ways.

2. Gender ideologies are the meanings attached to the ways that members of different gender groups within a community relate to each other (Conkey and Spector 1984:15; Gilchrist 1994:8); these ideologies are closely related to structures of political power, economic power, and kinship networks.

3. Several archaeologists have argued convincingly that there is considerable cultural meaning embedded in the spatial arrangement of burials and more visible architectural monuments to the past at pre-Columbian and protohistoric localities in North America—whether rows or clusters of graves for clan or kin group members (Howell and Kintigh 1996:552; Mainfort 1985:558), clusters of graves associated with household architecture (Hally and Kelly 1998:58; Sullivan 1987:28), or placements of graves in or near courtyards and council houses or mounds (Beck 1995:183; Charles 1995:88; Goldstein 1995:114; Schroedl 1998:91; Sullivan 1995:119; Tainter 1978:134).

4. In his comparative study of chiefdoms in Hawaii, Peru, and Neolithic Denmark, archaeologist Timothy Earle (1997:174–182) has shown that whole landscapes can reflect the structure of hierarchical relationships within a chiefdom, especially through his description of the monuments, canals, and fields comprising the cultural landscape of chiefdoms in the Hawaiian Islands.
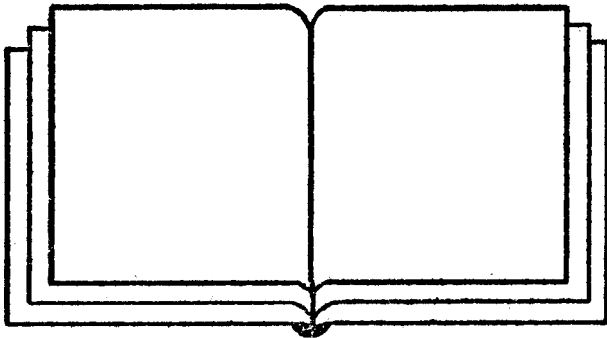
The Archaeology of Traditions

Agency and History Before and After Columbus

Edited by Timothy R. Pauketat

Foreword by Jerald T. Milanich, Series Editor

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Foreword

Archaeologists long have divided themselves into two camps, historical archaeologists and nonhistorical archaeologists, those who studied pre-Columbian cultures. As Timothy R. Pauketat of the University of Illinois notes, historical archaeologists, blessed with written records as a source of data, had the luxury of examining documents to help them document historical processes and determine "what regularities owe their origins to common historical linkages." On the other hand, archaeologists studying the pre-Columbian past searched for those common processes that explain "all people in all places."

In recent years the theoretical schism between historical and "prehistorical" archaeologists has begun to blur as a new paradigm dubbed "historical processualism" has emerged, one which recognizes that we can better understand the past in terms of history, defined here as "cultural construction through practice." What people and groups did in the past is best understood within the context of their histories and cultures, within their traditions. History defined in this fashion is not the purview solely of historians or of historical archaeologists, and the archaeology of historical process becomes an important guide to explaining the past.

In his introductory chapter, Pauketat offers a cogent discussion of this theoretical approach, which is then amplified and demonstrated in twelve case studies, each penned by an archaeological scholar working in the southeastern United States.

Kent Lightfoot supplies a commentary that assesses how well the volume's individual authors accomplished their task, focusing in part on their multiple uses and multiscalar approaches to cultural/historical traditions. He also examines the concepts of traditions and historical processes beyond the Southeast.

Archaeology continues to evolve as a discipline, refining new theoretical approaches that help us to model the past in novel ways. These are exciting times that are providing fresh tools for understanding all of human history and the dynamics that have made the world what it is today. The *Archaeology of Traditions: Agency and History Before and After*

Columbus is at the forefront of applying this paradigm shift to archaeological data sets. I am pleased that the University Press of Florida and the Ripley P. Bullen Series can share in what is certainly an important challenge for the discipline of archaeology.

Jerald T. Milanich
Series Editor

Preface

This book spotlights a part of the world, southeastern North America, as a means to an end. That end can be summed up as the search for how history happened, a search with considerable relevance beyond the Southeast. Figuring out *how* change in human identities and relations happened, more than *why* change may have happened, is the guts of American archaeology at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In point of fact, I am not altogether certain that *why* questions can be resolved without bringing a truckload of metaphysical baggage to the table.

In archaeology, answers to such *why* questions have tended to do little more than reify their initial assumptions about how human beings "behave." *How,* in that case, is an unchanging quality of humanity that *why*-researchers believe to be true. It is not the subject of investigation, and that is a mistake. Permit me a brief digression to explain what I mean. Someone at a Southeastern Archaeological Conference recently asked me *why* people built pyramids of earth, stone, or mud brick around the world throughout history. My response went something like this: perhaps there is some innate human tendency to build toward the sky, but that's a question of human nature, not human culture. It is a question for a psychologist, a biologist, perhaps a theologian, but not an archaeologist. What do we learn from this answer that we didn't already accept or reject in the beginning? Not much.

It is more satisfying to compare *how* cultural phenomena happened at various points in time and across space. That is what this book is all about. The Southeast is well suited to the investigation of what we label "historical processes" and exemplifies a direction in which archaeology in general must move. Perhaps, if we try to figure out how history happened, we may one day be able to answer the ultimate metaphysical questions of our day (emphasis on "our day"). However, this will come only after dealing with the proximate *how* questions that archaeology has asked too infrequently and too timidly. Moreover, the relevance of those *why* questions may have faded before we get a chance to answer them.

This volume is an outgrowth of a symposium titled "Resistant Traditions and Historical Processes in Southeastern North America" at the 64th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Chicago, March 1999. I would like to thank the original participants of that session, all of whom are represented in the present volume except for Kathleen Deagan, who served as a discussant alongside Kent Lightfoot. The original idea for the session was the study of resistance before and after Columbus. However, that theme began to drift almost immediately toward a broader focus on tradition and tradition making. In this regard, the Southeast and all things traditional go together remarkably well. Archaeologists in the Southeast are fortunate to have a wealth of data that speaks directly to issues of an archaeology of traditions, and for this many individuals, private foundations, and public organizations are owed debts of gratitude. Of those directly supportive of my own research (spilt into this volume just a little), I would like to thank the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Transportation Archaeological Research Program, and Cahokia Mounds Museum Society.