

as well as the related Aztalan and Trempealeau sites in Wisconsin that are thought to be destinations of Cahokia migrants. Other major Mississippian mound centers—including Angel (Indiana), Etowah (Georgia), Moundville (Alabama), and Shiloh (Tennessee)—are featured in comparison to and as having potential connections with Cahokia. Ironically, the comparisons include one example based on the discredited evolutionary scale used to measure degrees of social complexity. In this case, it is the “paramount chiefdom” of Coosa, as told by Spanish invaders of the sixteenth century, and for which many scholars studying Mississippian sites “from northeastern Tennessee south to northern Georgia” (p. 56) have found no supporting biological, chronological, social organizational, or material culture evidence for Coosa’s extent into the Upper Tennessee Valley (e.g., C. Clifford Boyd Jr. and Gerald F. Schroedl, “In Search of Coosa,” *American Antiquity* 52[4]:840–845; Lynne P. Sullivan, “Reconfiguring the Chickamauga Basin,” in *New Deal Archaeology in Tennessee: Intellectual, Methodological, and Theoretical Contributions*, edited by David H. Dye, 2016).

Cahokia and the North American Worlds is a generally useful book for an introduction to the archaeology of this highly significant ancient Native American city. It has some rough edges; the book would benefit from another round of copyediting. For someone wanting to learn some basic information about Cahokia, it is a fairly quick read, once one gets past the “-alities” and “-isms” lingo of postmodernist vocabulary. Baires is spot-on in her position that it is time for archaeology to stop using evolutionary scales of cultural complexity as the bases for cultural comparisons. This short book might be more interesting and relevant for its stated audience if there were less about these outdated classifications and more discussion, description, and analysis centered on the archaeological details of the remarkable ancient city of Cahokia itself.

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***Authority, Autonomy, and the Archaeology of a Mississippian Community.* Erin S. Nelson. 2019. University of Florida Press, Gainesville. xv + 186 pp. \$80.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-68340-112-4.**

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The Yazoo Basin in northwestern Mississippi is well recognized in the southeastern United States for having large numbers of Mississippian mound sites; in the northern Basin, Late Mississippian (ca. AD 1300–1550) mound sites are particularly numerous but not well investigated. *Authority, Autonomy, and the Archaeology of a Mississippian Community*, a revision of Erin S. Nelson’s dissertation, is focused on one Late Mississippian mound site—Parchman Place—and it presents the results of a well-defined and carefully constructed research project. One major contribution of this book is a methodologically rigorous analysis of ceramics and radiocarbon dates to refine the culture history into two sequential phases: Parchman I dating to the fourteenth century and Parchman II dating to the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This chronology makes it possible to examine changes in settlement layout and mound construction during the occupation of the site, from which inferences about the social relationships among the inhabitants of the site are made. Nelson concludes that these relationships included balance and difference, with a significant transformation in one social group’s status later in the occupation history of the site. A second major contribution is the use of ceramic vessel types and refined analyses of mound construction histories to build interpretations about persistence and variance in feasting and mound-building practices that contributed to the

establishment of the community, maintenance of a sense of community identity, and eventual divergence in social relationships within Parchman Place.

In Chapter 2, Nelson presents separate and combined analyses of surface-collected legacy collections with excavated assemblages. Correspondence analysis (CA) of the excavated ceramic assemblages led to the identification of two distinct clusters, and stratigraphy and a robust set of calibrated radiocarbon dates confirmed that the clusters represented two sequential phases: Parchman I and II. This chronological refinement makes significant methodological and cultural historical contributions that will be appreciated by all archaeologists who use the Lower Mississippi Valley's type-variety ceramic classification system, and it establishes the structure and foundation that guides the remainder of the book—an investigation of change through time.

In Chapter 3, Nelson presents the results of CA of rim sherds and vessel types that led to the identification of two behaviorally distinct ceramic assemblages: (1) a domestic assemblage found in both mound and nonmound contexts, and (2) two serving assemblages that are inferred to be associated with communal feasting events related to the founding of Parchman Place and annual renewal ceremonies that promoted and supported the sense of community shared by those residing at the site. Mound building, discussed in Chapter 4, was also an element of the founding of Parchman Place and efforts to build and sustain the community physically and socially into the mid-fifteenth century. By the latter half of the fifteenth century, one mound increased significantly in size compared to other mounds. Drawing on ethnographic and ethnohistoric analogy, Nelson suggests that the first 150 years of occupation at Parchman Place was characterized by relative autonomy and balance among the kin groups (clans) in the community, and that the significant increase in the size of one mound represented a shift in the relationships among the people in the community with one kin group or clan able to marshal greater labor and possibly other resources that set them apart from the other social groups.

Chapter 5 addresses the organization and use of space across the site, drawing on the results of a gradiometer survey and ground-truthing excavations. Nelson identifies four neighborhoods at Parchman Place that are distributed around a magnetically quiet area. Using ceramics and radiocarbon dates, Nelson identifies changes through time in the use of space at the site. Nelson also notes that excavations undertaken in Neighborhood 4 led to the discovery of structures that were not evident or identifiable in the gradiometer survey results. Terrestrial geophysical methods are a critical tool for archaeologists, especially those seeking to understand site organization and layout. Not all features or activity areas will be evident from geophysical survey data. These kinds of surveys need to be interpreted with a critical lens, because they may not capture all the residential architecture or full use of space at a site. This makes it important to ground truth not only anomalies, as Nelson did, but also magnetically quiet areas of the site to confirm that they were not areas of ancient activity, which Nelson did not do.

In Chapter 6, Nelson brings together all the lines of evidence from Parchman Place to interpret changing use of space at the site and connect the changes (and continuities) with social changes in relationships among kin groups at the site. The story of how Parchman Place fits into the broader region will need more studies like this one at other sites, and this book sets a strong example of how that kind of work could be done.

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