Abstract

The SCHoN project analyzed curated collections from over 30 Hopewell sites in the Scioto Valley of central Ohio. We systematically analyzed ceramic, lithic, and copper artifacts from each site to begin to piece together the multi-layered networks that make up the phenomenon we refer to as “Hopewell.” Results from six different analyses are summarized here. We shed light on the relationships between two adjacent households (Brown’s Bottom and Lady’s Run), the distribution of copper sources used by Scioto Hopewell, the nature of social connections symbolled by copper procurement, the structure of lithic procurement networks, a descriptive summary of overall relations in the analysis, and the timing of the Hopewell phenomena in the Scioto Valley. To- gether these analyses are refining and reshaping our collective understanding of Scioto Hopewell.

Copper Procurement (Hill et al. 2018)

Artifacts of copper occupy a position of prominence and also represent social contacts and long-distance interactions. We begin to develop the foundation for understanding these important social issues by analyzing the elemental variability of Hopewell copper through the use of laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry. We analyze 24 samples from four known copper source regions and 52 samples from 6 prominent sites in the Scioto Valley. Results suggest that a majority of the artifacts are consistent with sources in the Great Lakes, with a plurality classified in Isle Royale. However, 21% of Scioto Hopewell copper artifacts were most consistent with southern Appalachian sources. Our results suggest that instead of being derived from the struggle to access a specific source, value is derived from the social relationships represented by the copper and the connotation of exotic connection embodied in both style and material.

Social Lithics (Hill et al. under review)

The communities that made up “Hopewell” constructed elaborate mound landscapes, participated in continental social networks that brought exotic materials from all directions and great distances to the Ohio Valley. Scales of participation range from the household level, to regional scales, and broader scales that combine these diverse societies into an amorphous “Hopewell.” We must engage explicit methods of analysis, such as Social Network Analysis (SNA) to understand “Hopewell.” We use SNA to examine the structure and distribution of the multi-scale lithic material patterns that are the objectification of the underlying relations that unite and define these communities. We reveal an interaction structure built from the household level upwards, not cen- tered, or dependent upon the large workshop complexes. This requires a re-evaluation of the nature of “Hopewell” in the Scioto Valley and beyond.

Copied from Hill et al. 2018:Figure 6.


received 2 June 2018, accepted 19 October 2018.

A SCHoN Summary (Nolan et al. in press)

In the earthwork sites, Flint Ridge and Wyandotte are represented by much larger diagnostics than in non-earthwork locations, but notably not Upper Mercer, representing a distinct pattern of production for activities at earth-works. Flint Ridge, Upper Mercer, and Unknown are proportionally greater in quantity at non-earthwork sites. The rest of the categories are larger and proportionally over-represented at earthworks. For non-diagnostic lithics only “Other,” Upper Mercer, and weight of unknown material show a larger proportional representa- tion for non-earthworks due to the extreme reliance on Delaware. The similarity in material among site types for diagnostics indicates preference of display of certain material types. Sherd thickness is fairly consistent across sites, generally between 5 and 6 mm, except Ater, Hopeton, and especially Rockhold. Earthwork on the relationships between two adjacent households (Brown’s Bottom and Lady’s Run), the distribution of copper sources used by Scioto Hopewell, the nature of social connections symbolled by copper procurement, the structure of lithic procurement networks, a descriptive summary of overall relations in the analysis, and the timing of the Hopewell phenomena in the Scioto Valley. Together these analyses are refining and reshaping our collective understanding of Scioto Hopewell.

Social Copper (Seeman et al. under review)

Copper was the most important metal used by Scioto Hopewell societies. Here we interpret our sourcing analysis above within the general theoretical frame of the new animism. We argue that the actors participating in the social networks that brought copper to Ohio Hopewell societies understood and creatively maintained multiple kinds of links to this material based on patterned distribution in archaeological contexts, and we especially highlight the association of large copper objects with the Isle Royale and Michipicoten sources in the Lake Superior basin. We further suggest that southern Appalachian copper and Great Lakes copper were part of different kinds of extra-regional social networks with implications for interpreting the range of potential Hopewell relations in the Midwest.


References

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In press. Social models and histories based on these leg- enes must be re-inherited and creatively maintained multiple kinds of links to this material based on patterned distribution in archaeological contexts, and we especially highlight the association of large copper objects with the Isle Royale and Michipicoten sources in the Lake Superior basin. We further suggest that southern Appalachian copper and Great Lakes copper were part of different kinds of extra-regional social networks with implications for interpreting the range of potential Hopewell relations in the Midwest.

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