



*The Cahokia Mounds.* Warren K. Moorehead. Edited and with an Introduction by John E. Kelly. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 2000. xvii + 432 pp., appendices, plates, figures, maps, tables, index, \$29.95 (paper).

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This paperback volume, another in the outstanding series *Classics in Southeastern Archaeology* from the University of Alabama Press, presents the account of the first excavations at what is arguably the most famous mound complex in North America. Charles King Moorehead (1866-1939) had an incredible archaeological career marked by prolific authorship and editing, which was punctuated with extensive fieldwork at most of the major archaeological sites of his day. He excavated at Fort Ancient in Ohio, led an expedition to study the cave dwellings in the San Juan Valley of New Mexico, directed the excavations of the Hopewell site for the World's Columbian Exposition and Cincinnati Centennial Exposition of 1888, and for good measure, he even managed to work at Etowah and Chaco Canyon. He also worked at the Smithsonian, studied the Ghost Dance and the Sioux uprising in Dakota's, served on the Board of Indian Commissioners for 24 years, held the position of Curator of the Museum of Ohio State University, and founded the department of Archaeology at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

This 432 page text presents the results of his most famous work, his excavations at Cahokia. Cahokia is a Mississippian complex consisting of over 100 mounds spread over a five square mile area. The volume is divided into five major sections containing the bulk of Moorehead's 1922 and 1923 reports, as well as all of his 1929 report; this edition represents the first time that the bulk of the Cahokia excavation data has appeared in a single work. All original illustrations and photographs are reproduced, and a new index is also provided for the reader. While his work lacks the contextual data the modern archaeologist is required to include, his work was conducted more in the vein of a nineteenth century antiquarian than a twentieth century archaeologist. His emphasis was focused upon recovering exceptional artifacts, in quantity, from sites that he was painfully aware were being threatened.

The first section consists of an extensive, 60 page introduction by John E. Kelly. Kelly's introduction provides an excellent contextual backdrop. Kelly has conducted archival research, tracing the course of each field season, and he provides the necessary historical framework for assessing Moorehead's work at Cahokia. Several reproductions of newspaper headlines and advertisements provide graphic illustration that much of Cahokia was threatened by development in the 1920's, and that Moorehead felt there was "something abnormal in the brain of either man or woman who prefers to see this heritage of the ages destroyed and two or three bungalows or a filling station or hot dog stands erected in its place" (p.42). Ultimately, Kelly concludes that

the most significant contribution of Moorehead's work at Cahokia was his determination that the mounds were not a natural phenomenon, and should therefore be preserved. Moorehead's true legacy lies in the preservation of Cahokia, which is recognized today as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The second section of this volume is drawn from Moorehead's 1922 publication *The Cahokia Mounds: A Preliminary Paper*. As preliminary reports go, at 39 pages, it is more detailed than your average preliminary report of today. While Moorehead employed somewhat dated, archaeological techniques such as horse-drawn plows, it must be noted that he produced two preliminary progress reports and a final report on his archaeological excavations at Cahokia within a span of only seven years. Moorehead's prompt publication record is a model for the modern archaeologist.

Portions of *The Cahokia Mounds: Part I, A Report of Progress* and *Part II, Some Geological Aspects* (1923) comprise the third portion of this volume. Moorehead's second progress report builds upon his original 1922 report, and provides a wealth of additional information in the form of more detailed text and additional mound discoveries. Dr. Morris M. Leighton of the Illinois Geological Survey is the author of the geological report; this geological report reviews the early interpretations of the mounds, and provides a definitive that the mounds are not a natural phenomenon. Moorehead was one of the first archaeologists to employ experts from outside the field of anthropology in a truly interdisciplinary approach to understanding archaeological sites. The use of a geologist by Moorehead foreshadows the current emphasis placed upon geoarchaeology.

The fourth section of this work presents the final report, *The Cahokia Mounds*, published in 1929. Moorehead offers more measured interpretations in this final selection, and the text is less choppy than the preceding excavation reports. The *Mound Technique* section by Jay L. B. Taylor offers a fascinating, daily account of attempts to determine mound stratigraphy through augering. Taylor is painfully aware of the difficulties inherent to testing mounds, and he laments the small size of his augers that produce only a 0.0013 percent sample of the entire volume of the mound. Dr. Leighton's 1923 geological report is also included in the final report with only minor changes; he adds only one additional conclusion to his original list of seven conclusions. Overall, my only problem with this section of the volume was the difficulty I had determining where one section of text by a certain author ended, and another section by different author began.

The fifth and final section consists of photographic plates. Kelly has sorted through all the plates from the various reports, making sure that all plates are included and that there are no duplications. A key is provided so that the reader may carefully navigate to the desired image. Overall, the graphical reproductions are excellent. Large, fold-out maps and soil profiles are even provided as inserts within the body of the text, giving the book a nice, nostalgic feel.

It is difficult to "review" a book of such well-established bona fides; a more suitable question is whether or not the text would make a worthy addition to one's library, and to this

question I can answer wholeheartedly in the affirmative. There is no doubt that archaeologists, historians, and the public will find this volume entertaining in terms of the light it casts upon the American archaeological process during the early twentieth century. While the text is indeed a golden oldy, it is also still useful to the archaeologist of today. The illustrations alone provide images of artifacts the modern archaeologist is unlikely to excavate, and the section on mound techniques is still germane. All in all, *The Cahokia Mounds* is an excellent book, which like its namesake, has survived the test of time.