

Ohio Hopewell Depictions of Composite Creatures: Part II—Archaeological Context and a Journey to an Afterlife

CHRISTOPHER CARR

Arizona State University, USA

ROBERT MCCORD

Arizona Museum of Natural History, USA

Archaeological contextual analyses of four artifacts that depicted composite creatures and that were recovered from the Turner earthwork in southwestern Ohio are integrated here with a biological identification of the creatures' component animals and a survey of historic Woodland–Plains Indian knowledge about their roles in Woodland–Plains life (previously reported in this journal). Together, the three studies reveal that the creatures were likely employed in a ritual drama concerned with the welfare of recently deceased persons on their journey to an afterlife through underwater–underground realm(s), where they encountered the creatures. The location of the journey to an afterlife through Below realm(s) differs from that of nearly all historic Woodland–Plains Indians, who knew the journey to take place on the earth-disk or to occur by ascension. Implications of the ritual drama at Turner for some recent interpretive trends in Woodland archaeology are explored, including an overemphasis on “world renewal” as the primary motivation behind Ohio Hopewell ceremonialism, the scarce attention given to eschatological matters, and the misleading notion that all agentive behaviors, including mortuary rites, are political.

KEYWORDS Ohio Hopewell, mortuary practices, religion, eschatology, ritual drama

For Robert L. Hall, with thanks for opening the path.

One central goal of archaeology is to “understand what peoples of the past found worthwhile to live for” [Hall 1977:499].

Understanding prehistoric Woodland peoples from their own perspectives, including their motivations and values that impassioned their lives, is more achievable now than forty years ago, thanks in great part to the methodological approaches and cultural findings pioneered by Robert Hall over his career (Hall 1977, 1997, 2006a, 2006b). Following Hall, this article and its complement published previously in this journal (Carr and McCord 2013) combine extensive systematizing of ethnohistorical literature, biological identification of animals represented in iconography, and detailed analysis of archaeological contexts in order to distill the motivations behind certain ceremonies performed by Ohio Hopewellian peoples. The previous article documents the biological identities of animals, parts of which were combined by Ohio Hopewell peoples in depicting six kinds of multi-animal, composite creatures in artworks used as ceremonial paraphernalia. All the animals, surprisingly, were found to inhabit or be associated with the lower, earth–water realms of historic Woodland–Plains Indian cosmoses: rattlesnake, primitive fish, alligator/caiman, crocodile, salamander, and bear/badger/wolverine. None of the composite creatures combine birds or insects of the upper realms of Woodland–Plains cosmoses with the animals of the earth–water realms. No concern for balancing the sky and earth–water realms—a theme found widely in historic Woodland–Plains ceremonies for healing and world renewal—was expressed, in contrast to the emphasis on world renewal placed in current literature when interpreting the meaning of Ohio and Illinois Hopewell ceremonial artifacts and architecture. A broad survey of ethnohistorical literature on Woodland and Plains Indians’ knowledge of the component animals and analogous composite creatures revealed that they impacted Woodland–Plains Indian life in both helpful and harmful ways, contrasting with the uniformly harmful characterizations of them made in some influential, secondary ethnohistorical literature (Feest 1986; Hudson 1976; Ritzenthaler and Ritzenthaler 1970) and some primary ethnographic literature on heavily Christianized native communities (Dewdney 1975; Landes 1968; Smith 1995). Earth–water animals and composite creatures were found to have affected a wide range of domains of Woodland–Plains Indian life, including hunting, warfare, safe travel in life and in death, courtship, marriage, healing, longevity, divining, moral-spiritual development, and rarely, the creation of the world and world renewal. This range prohibits attributing to the six composite creatures, based on their forms alone, their specific roles in the cosmoses, social lives, and rituals of Ohio Hopewell peoples.

More particular understandings of the Ohio Hopewell composite creatures can, however, be derived by integrating what is known about them from our biological and ethnohistorical studies with analyses of their archaeological depositional and spatial contexts. This we do here for four of the six depictions of composite creatures—those excavated from the Turner earthwork in southwestern Ohio. These include:

- *Creature 1*, a combination of a carnivore, a massasauga or possibly pygmy rattlesnake, and possibly a larval salamander from the Turner earthwork, Mound 4, Central Altar (Carr and McCord 2013:Figure 1A);



FIGURE 1 Model of the Turner earthwork, Ohio, with elevated circle and lower oval. Arrows point to Mounds 3 and 4 within the conjoined mound complex. (Source: Willoughby 1922:6, Figure 2.)

- *Creature 2*, a combination of a primitive fish and an alligator/caiman from the Turner earthwork, Mound 4, Central Altar (Carr and McCord 2013:Figure 1b);
- *Creature 3*, a combination of a salamander/primitive fish and a rattlesnake, from the Turner earthwork, Mound 3, Feature 10 Cremation Chamber-Tomb (Carr and McCord 2013:Figure 1c); and
- *Creature 4*, a combination of a rattlesnake and unknown protrusions on the head, from the Turner earthwork, Mound 4, Central Altar (Carr and McCord 2013: Figure 1d).

Analysis suggests that the artworks likely portray powerful underwater–underground beings that Hopewellian Indians thought the spirits of their recently deceased encountered on a journey to an afterlife through the underwater–underground realm(s). The artworks, along with depictions of other key characters in the journey, appear to have been used in a ritual drama that enacted the trip, perhaps to instruct the deceased about it and to ensure the deceased’s safe passage. Among the implications of these findings for current interpretive trends in Woodland archaeology are the undue, scarce attention paid by archaeologists to eschatological concerns in Ohio and Illinois Hopewell mortuary rites in mound and earthwork centers; an overemphasis on “world renewal” as the primary motivation behind Ohio Hopewellian ceremonialism; a need for moderation in the view of tribal-scale funerary and other mortuary rites as political theater and of all agentive behavior as political; and the fairly unique eschatological knowledge of the Hopewell peoples who gathered at the Turner site, compared to historic Woodland and Plains groups, in placing the journey to an afterlife in the Below, underwater–underground realm(s).

Archaeological contexts of the Turner site

The Turner site (Figure 1) was located in the Little Miami river valley, approximately eight miles from its junction with the Ohio river valley, in Hamilton County, Ohio. Turner was composed of a circular enclosure on the third terrace of the valley some 50 feet above the river, an oval enclosure on the second terrace of the valley about

15–25 feet lower, and a causeway that connected the two enclosures (Willoughby 1922:2–5). The upper-lower structuring of the earthwork resembles that of three other earthworks or paired earthworks within fifty miles of each other up and down the Little Miami valley, with the upper earthwork being circular to circle-like and the lower earthwork rectangular to oval (Riordan 2004:238–239; 2010:221–228). The pattern possibly represents the sky and underwater–underground halves of the cosmos known to many historic Woodland Indians (e.g., Bailey 1995:33, Figure 3.1; Coleman 1947:12; Mails 1991:104–105; Mann 2003:205–207, Figure 4.3; Paper 1987:301), who variously used circles and squares to signify and contrast the two realms (DeBoer 2010:195). Significantly, all four composite creatures, with their Below, water–earth realm association in the minds of historic Woodland and Plains Native Americans, were found in mounds in the lower enclosure at Turner.

Creatures 1, 2, and 4 were excavated from the Central Altar of Mound 4, while Creature 3 came from the Feature 10 tomb within Mound 3. The two mounds were conjoined with five others (Figure 2), forming a bilaterally symmetrical shape that is probably zoomorphic, with a head, a neck, fore-appendages, and a segmented body–tail. Having only the outline and no internal features to work with, only a suite of possible identities of the creature can be suggested. However, it does appear to be a composite of animals, and nearly all of the possible component animals have underwater–underground associations and comprise Creatures 1, 2, 3, or 4. The lobe-like fore-appendages are similar in shape and position to the fins of the fish component of Creature 2. The presence of forelimbs without aft limbs could signal a frog or salamander, which develop front legs before rear ones, but the appendages lack the digits of a frog’s or salamander’s leg. This omission may, however, reflect only the generalized nature of the representation. The appendages might alternatively or complementarily represent the external gills of a salamander, since they emerge from the back of the head rather than from the body, as would fins or legs. The segmented body–tail might reference an insect or the rattles of a rattlesnake, although the shape of the segments does not conform fully with that of a rattlesnake’s rattles.

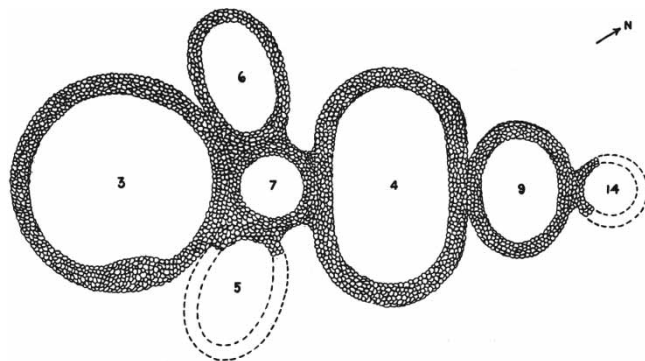


FIGURE 2 The conjoined mound complex, Turner site, Ohio. (Source: Willoughby 1922:33, Figure 15.) Numbers within enclosures are mound numbers.

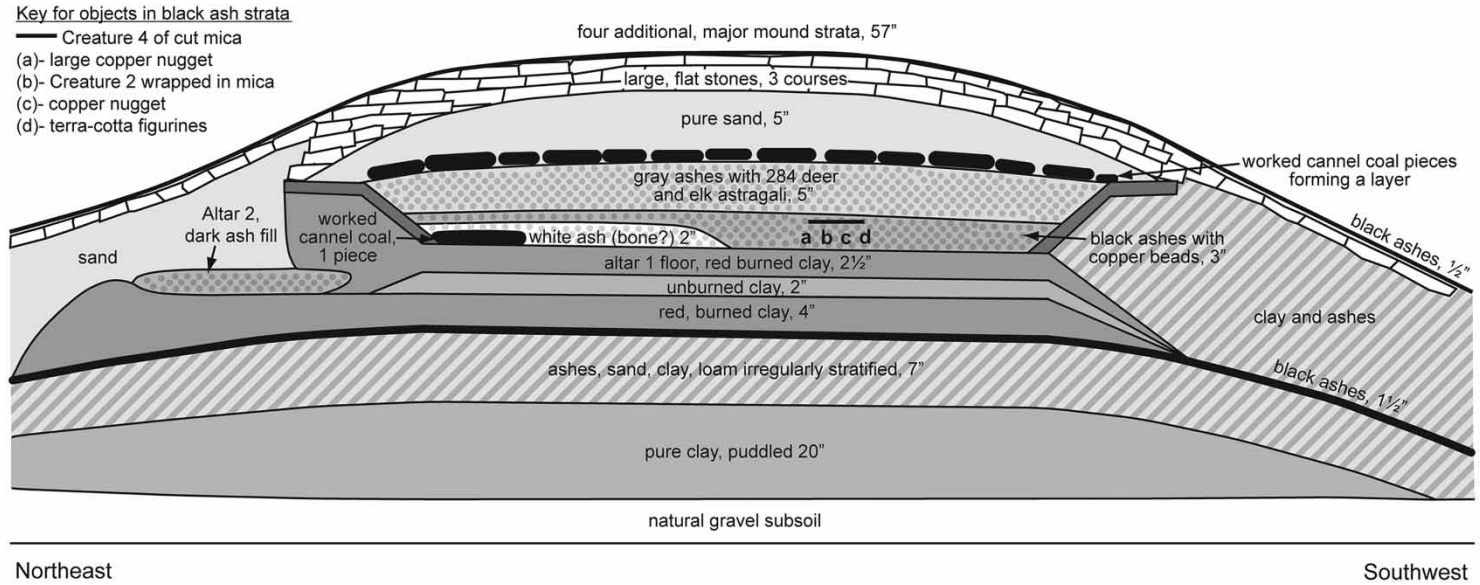


FIGURE 3 Turner site, Mound 4, Central Altar stratigraphy. Not depicted here or in the corresponding field drawing are the ends of the mound flanks, which would show the shallow basin dug into the natural ground on which the mound was erected. See note 1. Original artwork of Christopher Carr and Rebekah Zinser.

Thus, the identities of Creatures 1 through 4, their locations in mounds in only the lower section of the Turner earthwork, and the form of the conjoined mound complex in which they were deposited, all reference the Below realm(s).

The feature and stratigraphic contexts of Creatures 1 through 4, and the artifacts associated with them (Figure 3), help to suggest more specific interpretations of the effigy creatures. The Central Altar of Mound 4 was a large clay basin almost square in form with rounded, protruding corners oriented in the cardinal directions. In it had been made an intense fire, indicated by its clay floor burned red and hard to a depth of 2.5 inches. The fire consumed ceremonial artifacts, the pieces of which were found in deposits on and above the burned floor, and possibly bones, indicated by a white ash layer on the floor. The altar—about 6 feet on the diagonal—was large enough to contain either a dismembered or whole corpse. On the burnt floor near the northeast edge of the altar was laid a worked piece of cannel coal. Southeast of the cannel coal and the basin's centerline were sequentially placed a large copper nugget, Creature 2 surrounded by pieces of mica that apparently had wrapped it, another copper nugget, and the broken pieces of 12 to 13 clay figurines of humans (Willoughby 1922:Plates 20, 21). Above the cannel coal and southeast to the centerline, but not above the other objects, was placed a 2-in. layer of white ash, possibly from bones according to Willoughby (1922:63). Over the copper nuggets, Creature 2, and the figurines was laid Creature 4, the mica "horned" rattlesnake. All of these objects and the layer of white ashes were then covered sequentially by a layer of dark ashes containing numerous copper beads (1-in. thick above the half of the basin covered with white ash, 3-in. thick elsewhere), a 5-in. layer of gray ashes containing 284 deer and elk astragali, a layer of worked cannel coal pieces arranged singly end to end, a 5-in. layer of pure sand, and a layer of large flat stones laid three courses deep. The location of Creature 1 within the altar is not reported. Also taken from the altar, but without information on location, were the ritual paraphernalia of one or a few probable shaman-like practitioners: at least 15 fossils (brachiopods, horn coral) and 10 water-smoothed concretions and stones of odd shapes, plus 1 meteoric iron nugget, 44 hollow cone tinklers of antler and 24 hollow cone tinklers of copper (see Carr et al. 2008:515, 519, Table 11.3, for the use of some of these items by historic Woodland and Plains medicine persons). A copper bracelet and several copper beads were found near one corner of the altar in a shallow basin covered with water-polished quartz pebbles.¹

The altar was located about halfway up the mound's height, with strata above and below it of varied composition, color, and lightness–darkness in no clear pattern. However, a layer of black ash consistently capped major mound and altar building stages, including below the altar, the floor of the altar, and the three layers of flat stones at the top of the fill of the altar. An analogous layer of black, worked

¹This summary is a composite of information from Willoughby (1922:63–74) and the following records in the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University: six field Diagrams 2–7 in Glassine Envelope for Turner Group 1882-35, Mound 4; two field Diagrams labeled "Section of Mound 4, September 11, 1882" and "Mound 4" in Glassine Envelope for Turner 1883-44A; correspondences from C. L. Metz to F. W. Putnam on September 9 and October 6, 1882, in the X-file for accession no. 82-35A(2) Turner Mounds and Other Ohio Sites; and 6 pages of field notes "Exploration of Mound 4 of Turner Group" in Glassine Envelope.

pieces of cannel coal separated the lower artifact-bearing strata and upper nonartifact-bearing strata that filled the altar.²

The human figurines from the altar all represent adults, including five males, three females, and the remainder of unknown sex. Individuals of a variety of key social roles and degrees of prestige are marked by the presence or absence of earspools and by different styles of hair ornamentation. One male figure was interpreted by Willoughby (1922:73) as a warrior based on his haircut, which resembles that of historic Sauk, Fox, Pawnee, and other northern Woodland and Plains warriors. All of the figurines were broken—by a decommissioning process, the heat of the fire, or possibly both (Willoughby 1922:72). Intentional breakage could have re-enacted dismemberment before cremation. Four of the figurines may represent corpses. The largest figurine by far (Willoughby 1922:Plate 21g), which may have been central to a theatrical arrangement of the figurines, lies prone with his arms crossed over his stomach as if laid out for burial (Keller and Carr 2005:433, Figure 11.2A). A second (Willoughby 1922:Plate 21a) has his arms stiff at his side, as if in rigor mortis, rather than loose and slightly bent like the hanging arms of a live, standing person. A third (Willoughby 1922:Plate 21c) has its knees drawn tightly to its chest, resembling a flexed burial (Keller and Carr 2005:433, Figure 11.2B). All three corpse layouts are common among prehistoric and historic Woodland groups. The second figurine and another have feet that are not flat as when standing but, rather, that droop at an angle (Willoughby 1922:Plate 21a, 21b), which Romain (2009:83) interprets as the relaxed feet of a corpse lying down. That some of the figurines depict corpses accords with their association with the altar's white ash layer, which may have been incinerated human remains—perhaps even the remains of the persons who the figurines depicted. Alternatively, or complementarily, all or some of the figurines may be in trance postures of kinds documented across cultures (Goodman 1990), or may have represented deceased ancestors or living persons somehow connected with the possibly cremated person (s) or the ceremonial participants.

Creature 4, the mica rattlesnake with “horns,” was likely broken into several major pieces before it was placed in the Central Altar. Some parts uniformly show discoloration from intense burning whereas other parts uniformly do not, suggesting their different placements relative to the fire in the altar. The body position of the snake is Z shaped, perhaps suggesting its lateral movement on the ground. The body is not coiled in a spiral, as if to strike, nor is the mouth wide open, as if to bite. Creature 4 contrasts with the rattlesnake carving that comes from Mound 1 of the Hopewell site and does have a very wide-open mouth (Squier and Davis 1848:276, Figure 196; see also Carr and McCord 2013:24–25, Creature 5), and with the snake-shaped boulder mosaic that was found under Mound 25 of the

²Below the Central Altar, on top of the natural gravel subsoil, were sequentially placed 20 inches of puddled clay; 7 inches of irregularly stratified ashes, sand, gravel, clay, and loam; 1.5 inches of black ash; burned clay 4 inches deep; unburned clay 2 inches deep; and the burned clay forming the base of the Central Altar. The first two-mentioned clay layers were associated with another altar built prior to, below, and adjacent to the one of interest here. Above the Central Altar and its fill and cap of flat stones were a one-half inch deep layer of black ashes; 8 inches of stratified ashes, sand, loam, and gravel; 8 inches of gray ashes with many animal bones and occasional pottery and mica fragments; 20 inches of darker clay with traces of ashes and charcoal and occasional animal bone fragments; and 21 inches of clay with numerous charcoal flecks.

Hopewell site and was coiled (Moorehead 1892:137; see also Case and Carr 2008: Appendix 7.2, Hopewell Earthwork and Mound Group, Mound 25 Cuts 3, 5, 6).

Creature 3 was excavated from what appears to have been a cremation chamber and tomb (Feature 10) within the outside wall of Mound 3. The chamber was large enough to have held an undismembered human corpse before its cremation (10 ft. × 2 ft. × 30 in. high). Significantly, the wall, the floor, and the cover of the chamber consisted of flat river stones “probably brought from the shores of the Little Miami River” below the site (Willoughby 1922:34). The construction of the chamber and its stratigraphy are analogous to that of the Central Altar of Mound 4. Three courses of large flat river stones covered both, and the three courses of flat river stones that comprised the floor of the chamber recall the three layers of clay that constituted the floor of the altar. In both cases, the floor was burned, and the chamber’s cover was heavily burned, indicating an intense fire. On top of the chamber’s floor was a layer of black ashes and charcoal 2- to 4-in. thick, like the 4-in. layer of black ashes on top of the altar’s floor. Within the black ash stratum of the chamber were about two quarts of burned human bone (roughly the amount expected from one individual), analogous to the layer of white ash within the black ash stratum of the altar. Creature 3 was placed on top of the black ash layer of the chamber, while Creatures 2 and 4 were placed below and surrounded by the black ash of the altar. Near Creature 3 were placed fragments of copper earspools (perhaps a pair), analogous to the two copper nuggets placed near Creature 2 in the altar. Both Creatures 3 and 2 were accompanied by another underwater–underground item—the rattlesnake with six “horns” and a large marine shell, respectively—and lack any associated artifacts referencing the Above realm(s). These close parallels between the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb in Mound 3 and the Central Altar of Mound 4 imply that their contents and structure were intentional rather than random happenstance, and are candidates for cultural interpretation.

Interpretations

A fairly specific reconstruction of the roles of Creatures 1 through 4 in the cosmoses, social lives, and rituals of the Hopewell people(s) who gathered at Mounds 4 and 3 for ceremonies can be triangulated from their feature and stratigraphic contexts, the artifacts associated with them, their placement in the zoomorphic conjoined mound complex and within the lower half of the Turner earthwork, their underwater–underground biological nature, and historic Woodland and Plains Native American narratives. Our interpretation elaborates one begun by David Penney (1985:185). We conclude that the creature effigies were used in ritual dramas that enacted journeys of deceased persons, as represented by the cremations and/or figurines, through the Below realm(s) to a land of the dead and encounters of the deceased with powerful composite creatures, both helpful and harmful. The aim of the dramas was to ensure the deceased’s safe passage and possibly to teach the deceased about the journey and guide them as a part of this process. Our logic develops as follows.

The Central Altar of Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb within Mound 3 appear to have been the scenes of “ritual dramas,” in the cross-cultural, comparative sense of the term (Carr 2015; Carr and Novotny 2010, 2014, 2015; Raglan 2003:278–288). A ritual drama is a *performance*, largely set in form and content—that is, *ritualized*—that relates a story with a *mythic* or historical plot about characters from primeval time. The story is set in the *cosmos* at large and pertains to the place of a *social collective* and its individuals within the cosmos; that is, the rite is a “cosmogram” (Brown 2003:93, 97). For social groups of a reasonable size, all group members usually participate and take roles in the drama (Ortiz 1972:139; see also Frisbie 1980; Holm 1972; MacNair et al. 1998). Commonly around the world, ritual dramas are part of *funerals* and extended mortuary rites (e.g., Brown 2003, 2006, 2010; Gillespie 2001:96–99; Metcalf and Huntington 1991:87–89, 166).

Each of these characteristics of a ritual drama is found in the remains of the altar and the chamber-tomb. A theatrical performance is evident in the altar’s and chamber-tomb’s occurrence within the Turner site as a place for congregation easily accessed by river and in their situation within the conjoined mound complex. Also, the conjoined mounds are directly in line with the causeway that links the upper circle and lower oval of the Turner earthwork and that probably was a processional pathway. The intense fires that burned in the altar and chamber-tomb would have been dramatic and visible to a fairly large audience. So, too, would have been the large, shiny, mica horned rattlesnake effigy, about a foot square in size.

The ritualized nature of the performances is seen in the close parallels in the contents and structure of the altar and the tomb enumerated above. The cosmic scale and subject of the performances are suggested by at least three conditions: the partitioning of Turner into a circular upper half and an oval lower half that may have referenced the Above and Below realms of the cosmos known by historic Woodland and Plains Indians; the multiple strata of Mound 4 that both covered and underlaid the altar and that may have recapitulated the multi-layered nature of the Below portion of the cosmoses of some Woodland and Plains tribes; and the orientation of the altar to the cardinal directions.³

The socially collective nature of the performances in participation and meaning are harder to assess, but are implied by the potentially large number of participants and/or observers. A large number of people is suggested by the geographic and intra-site locations of the altar and chamber-tomb and by the visibility of some of the actions and props (see above), as well as by the large sizes of Mounds 3 and 4 and the conjoined mound complex of which they were parts (respectively 100 ft diameter × 14 ft high; 108 × 66 × 6 ft. high; 288 × 160 ft max.). The funerary context of the performances that involved Creatures 1 through 4 is evident in the cremated human bones that Creature 3 directly overlaid in the chamber-tomb, perhaps in the analogous white (bone?) ashes that laid adjacent to Creatures 2

³Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb in Mound 3, like most of the other features of the mound, was oriented about 25° east of north.

and 4 in the altar, and in the dimensions of the tomb-chamber and altar, each of which could have accommodated a human body.

The specific location in the cosmos that the ritual dramas portrayed was the Below, underwater–underground realm(s). This is evident in at least 10 ways that coincide. (1) Creatures 1 through 4, which had parts to play in the dramas, are underwater–underground beings. Almost all, and perhaps all, of the animals that comprised the creatures were associated with the Below realm(s) by historic Woodland and Plains Indians: rattlesnakes, a crocodylian, a primitive fish, salamanders, and a carnivore that may have been a bear or badger (see references above). (2) The one composite creature that, in its entirety, can be connected most firmly with a being known to historic Woodland–Plains Indians is Creature 4. It closely resembles the widely known “horned serpent”—an underwater–underground creature and the master of waters (Hultkrantz 1983:5, 14) who could both agitate and calm them (Carr and McCord 2013:Table 2). (3) Creature 4 was made of muscovite mica, Creature 2 was carved from “a mica schist thickly interspersed with particles of gold-colored mica” (Willoughby 1922:71), and Creature 2 was also surrounded by or wrapped in mica. Mica has the appearance of water and seems from contextual evidence to have been associated with water by Hopewellian peoples of Ohio (Carr 2008a:300–303; see also Hall 1976:362). (4) Stratigraphically, in the Central Altar, Creature 2 (the fish-crocodylian) and the human figurines were overlain by Creature 4, the “horned” rattlesnake, implying their location below the waters in the horned serpent’s domain. (5) In the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb, Creature 3 was placed next to a marine shell, which also suggests an underwater environment. (6) All the creatures with known location were associated with a black ash stratum, suggestive of the darkness of the Below realm(s). Creatures 2 and 4 were enveloped in the black ash stratum of the altar, and Creature 3 was placed directly on the black ash stratum of the chamber-tomb. (7) The chamber-tomb’s walls, ceiling, and floor were comprised of flat, water-worn rocks. Water imagery literally surrounded Creature 3, the human remains, and the other items in the chamber. Likewise, the altar and its contents, including Creatures 1, 2, and 4, the figurines, and the possible human remains, were submerged below water-ground imagery: a layer of pieces of cannel coal, which is derived from within the earth; a thick layer of river sand; and three layers of flat, water-worn rocks. (8) The copper bracelet and bead personal belongings of the individuals possibly cremated and/or represented in the Central Altar were placed in a subsurface basin rather than on an elevated platform, and the basin was covered with water-polished quartz pebbles, suggesting an underwater–underground location. (9) Both the Central Altar and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb were situated literally within the body of an apparently underwater–underground creature—the conjoined mound complex. It was a composite animal, nearly all the possible component animals of which reference the underwater–underground realm(s) in historic Woodland and Plains Indian thought and comprise underwater–underground Creatures 1 through 4. (10) The altar, chamber-tomb, and conjoined mound complex, as the stages for the ritual dramas, were all located in the lower, oval part of the Turner earthworks that, like the lower-elevation sections of other two-part earthworks or paired earthworks in the region, may have referenced the

Below realm(s). In all, the pattern of Below realm symbolism is strong—from the smaller scale of the artifacts and raw materials to the larger scales of the feature, mound, mound complex, intra-earthwork layout, and its regional repetition among earthworks nearby. No bird imagery or other references to the Above realms is incorporated in the corpus of four creatures or their Central Altar and Feature 10 archaeological contexts.⁴

What might have been the mythic plot of the ritual dramas that took place at the altar and chamber-tomb? Some kind of interaction between specifically *deceased* persons and the composite creatures seems to have been central to the plot, considering the layouts of artifacts and deposits. In the chamber-tomb, Creature 3 was placed directly over the cremated human bones. In the altar, Creatures 2 and 4 were placed adjacent to the deposit of white (bone?) ashes that possibly were the remains of one or more deceased human beings, and the creatures were respectively positioned adjacent to and above the human figurines, some of which may have depicted corpses (see above). Also significant is the fact that the figurine that is largest (by quite a bit), and that could have been a focal point in the staging of the drama involving the altar, does appear to depict a corpse.

What might have been the specific relationships that were portrayed between the deceased and the composite creatures in the ritual dramas? Considering only the forms of the four creatures, there are very many possibilities suggested by analogy to creatures told of by historic Woodland and Plains Native Americans, as enumerated in Carr and McCord (2013:Table 2). However, by also considering the performance of the ritual dramas in the context of funerary rites and the underwater-underground setting of the dramas, the range narrows. Three of the entries in Carr and McCord (2013:Table 2, Notes 18, 48, 59) pertain to a suite of closely similar Woodland Indian narratives about the journey the deceased must take to an afterlife. In these narratives, commonly the deceased's soul must cross a rushing river on an unstable log. In some tellings, the "log" rises and falls because it is in fact a wiggling serpent or a horned serpent, which the deceased realizes as he or she attempts to cross over it or when he or she looks back after having crossed over. A more widely distributed theme tells that if a soul slips off the bridge and falls in the river, it is lost—either drowned; mired down; eaten by an alligator or great fish; or turned into a fish or crayfish. Whether or not the deceased passes safely over the bridge is sometimes linked to the moral character of the person, sometimes not (for the snake bridge, see Barnouw 1977:18; Jenness 1935:109–110; Skinner 1910, 1913a:85–86; Warren 1885:72; Yarrow 1881:199; for a bridge and dangerous river in general, see Dorsey 1906:412; Hilger 1992:78–80; Joffe 1940:273–274; Mason 1967:58; Mickelson 1925:358; Skinner 1913b:73; Thwaites 1896–1901:10:2:143–147; Waugh 1916:83; Yarrow 1881:95).

⁴The setting of the ritual drama in the Below realm(s) could imply that the social group that orchestrated the ceremony was a clan, phratry, dual division, or sodality with a water-related eponym, like those that existed in historic Woodland Indian tribes (e.g., fish or alligator clan, fish or water phratry, lower dual division; Thomas et al. 2005:344–351, Tables 8.1–8.3). However, the sizes of the ceremonial gatherings around the Central Altar of Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb were probably much larger and involved multiple local symbolic communities (sensu Ruby et al. 2005), given the easy access to river travel afforded by the Turner site's location and the large labor force required to build Mounds 3, 4, and the conjoined mound complex.

The following accounts exemplify these elements of the journey.

The soul is supposed to stand immediately after the death of the body, on a deep beaten path, which leads westward; the first object he comes to in following this path, is the great Oda-e-min (Heart berry), or strawberry, which stands on the roadside like a huge rock, and from which he takes a handful and eats on his way. He travels on till he reaches a deep, rapid stream of water, over which lies the much dreaded Ko-go-gaup-o-gun or rolling and sinking bridge; once safely over this as the traveller looks back it assumes the shape of a huge serpent swimming, twisting and untwisting its folds across the stream. After camping out four nights, and travelling each day through a prairie country, the soul arrives in the land of spirits... (Ojibwa) [Warren 1885:72].

The Chippewas believe [the soul] quits the body at the time of death, and repairs to what they term *Chekechekchekawe*. This region is supposed to be situated to the south, and on the shores of the great ocean. Previous to arriving there they meet with a stream which they are obliged to cross upon a large snake that answers the purpose of a bridge; those who die from drowning never succeed in crossing the stream; they are thrown into it and remain there forever. Some souls come to the edge of the stream, but are prevented from passing by the snake, which threatens to devour them; these are the souls of the persons in a lethargy or trance. Being refused a passage these souls return to their bodies and reanimate them. (Ojibwa) [Yarrow 1881:199].

The soul of a dead man...carrying in its hand a little tobacco to pay for its passage over the river of death...comes to a river spanned by two logs that move alternatively up and down. There it offers up its tobacco, and essays a passage when the logs draw together side by side; but if it slips and falls into the water it becomes one of the crayfish that swim in numbers beneath...frogs devour those who cannot pay the tribute of tobacco, although *Nanibush* himself rescues the little children who slip off the logs. (Ojibwa) [Jenness 1935:109-110].

The souls must pass over a long trail from the world to the sky country. This journey requires four days, and a number of tests, consisting of tempting food placed at intervals beside the path, are encountered. If the ghost partakes of any of this food, some unknown misfortune will overwhelm it. At length the wanderer arrives at a river, over which a slippery log gives access to the village of the blessed. The bridge is guarded by a dog, and if the wayfarer has led an evil life, the animal shakes the log and hurls the unfortunate being into the stream, where it is devoured by an alligator or a great fish. The writer has collected data similar in almost every detail from the Menomini of northern Wisconsin [Skinner 1913a:86] and the Seneca of New York. (Seminole) [Skinner 1913b:73].

After the corpse was lowered into the grave some brave addressed the dead, instructing him to walk directly westward, that he would soon discover moccasin tracks, which he must follow until he came to a great river, which is the river of death; when there he would find a pole across the river, which, if he has been honest, upright, and good, will be straight, upon which he could readily cross to

the other side; but if his life had been one of wickedness and, sin, the pole would be very crooked, and in the attempt to cross upon it he would be precipitated into the turbulent stream and lost forever. (Sac and Fox) [Yarrow 1881:95].

Some other actions of underwater–underground creatures that were told of by historic Woodlands and Plains Indians (Carr and McCord 2013:Table 2) are formally similar to those that they knew to occur on the journey to an afterlife but are not specifically involved with the journey. These actions include horned serpents and underwater bulls transporting moral people across rivers to escape dangers but drowning malevolent persons; rattlesnakes without horns saving travelers from drowning; and horned serpents, snakes without rattles or horns, and great fishes blocking passage through ceremonial lodges while bulls and bears hold back those creatures from doing so (Carr and McCord 2013:Table 2). Note that some of the historical creatures were helpful, others harmful, and some varied their responses situationally.

Creatures 1 through 4 from the Central Altar of Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb in Mound 3 fit very well with these historic accounts, in spite of the millennium and a half that separate them in time. The mica horned rattlesnake (Creature 4) could have played a role analogous to the historic horned serpent bridge. The S-shaped body posture of the mica horned rattlesnake (Creature 4) may indicate the twisting and untwisting, wiggling, or rising and falling body of the snake-bridge told of in historic Woodland Indian narratives.⁵ The fish-alligator/caiman (Creature 2), and possibly the fish/salamander-rattlesnake (Creature 3), may have acted like the devouring great fish or alligator in the river to be crossed. The carnivore-rattlesnake (Creature 1), if one accepts its bull-like gestalt, may have helped transport the deceased across the river. The role of the carnivore-rattlesnake is perhaps least secure, given the ambiguity in the biological identification of its component animals. It may have been uniquely Hopewellian in its place in the death journey. However, it would have been recognized in form by a wide array of historic Woodland and Plains Indians and seen as powerful, as from the Below realm(s), and perhaps as both harmful and beneficial. It does resemble the underwater buffalo snake of the Naudowesee Dakota (see Carr and McCord 2013:50–52). One or more of these specific interpretations of the roles of the composite creatures may be wrong; however, the total suite of composite creatures, in their forms and contexts, easily recalls the historic accounts. Additional support is found in a third provenience within the conjoined mound complex, where an analogous suite of creatures was placed in an analogous stratigraphic context.⁶

⁵Also, the creature's mouth is not wide open to bite, and in no historic narrative of which we are aware does the snake harm the deceased journeyer by biting.

⁶A third provenience that probably indicates a journey to an afterlife that passed through the Below realms and that was similar to the journeys represented in the Central Altar of Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb in Mound 3 is the Central Altar of Mound 3. Among the artifacts it contained were those pertaining to three kinds of creatures analogous to the three found in the Central Altar of Mound 3: four copper, g-clef-shaped cutouts (Willoughby 1922:Plate 11-a) that mimic, to us and Willoughby (1922:48), the shape of the four horns of Creature 1, the rattlesnake-carnivore; 12 alligator teeth that recall Creature 2, the primitive fish and alligator/caiman composite; and five mica cutouts of the upper halves of bears, apparently swimming, partially submerged in water (Willoughby 1922:56, Plate 15), which replace the horned rattlesnake and recall the underwater–underground bears known by historic Woodland

The events that historic Woodland and Plains Indians knew to occur along the journey to an afterlife were of great societal concern to them. They would have been for Ohio Hopewell peoples as well, and would have been worthy of a ritual drama to ensure the safe passage of a soul and/or to help guide it. The dramas at the Central Altar and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb may have given the deceased very precise instructions about the nature of the journey to the afterlife, its challenges (e.g., certain composite creatures), and the protocols for handling them, and may have encouraged the deceased through those challenges, given the traveler strength, provided him or her with food, warmth, and light for the journey, and/or cleared the way, as did speeches to the deceased in the Four Nights Wake of the Medicine Rite of the historic Winnebago and the death rites of many other tribes (e.g., for instruction and encouragement, see Densmore 1929:74; Grant 1960:364–365 [1889]; Hilger 1992; Radin 1945:13–16; 1970:94–99, 101, 104–106; Skinner 1920:243–244; Yarrow 1881:95; for provisioning and aiding, see Harrington 1921:183; Shkilnyk 1985:90; Skinner 1913b:73; Yarrow 1881:95). Instructing or reminding the deceased about how to get to an afterlife is also a common practice crossculturally (e.g., Evans-Wentz 1960; Faulkner 1990; Metcalf and Huntington 1991:85–90; Nicholson 1891). The dramas also might have involved the living or shaman-like practitioners pleading with the composite creatures to “pity” the deceased and to allow his or her safe passage or to help the deceased on his or her journey, as in the Blackfoot story of an underwater buffalo who took pity on a girl and her infant brother and transported them across a stream (Grinnell 1972:53; Wissler and Duvall 1908:138–141). Pity is a very common historic Woodland Indian ethic for relating to more powerful persons and beings (e.g., Hallowell 1960:46; Jones 1919:561; Landes 1968:21; Overholt and Callicott 1982:76, 77, 144, 151, 155; Peers and Brown 2000:537; Radin 1945:10, 11, 30, 33, 82, 86, 91, 94, 95, and throughout), often tied to the creation of human beings—the last made and weakest of all creatures (e.g., Harrod 2000:28; Moore 1974:178; Radin 1970:302). The pity that a vision quester seeks from a guardian spirit (e.g., Miller 1991:19–21) is a strong theme in the Woodlands. Pity of a guardian is also evoked in naming ceremonies for

and Plains Indians (Carr and McCord 2013:43, 52–53, Table 2). Like the Central Altar of Mound 4, that of Mound 3 and its contents were covered by strata having water associations, implying the location of the creatures in an underwater–underground realm. From bottom to top, the strata in the altar were three large sheets of mica, 4 inches of clean sand, and flat water-worn stones. However, the altar in Mound 3, in contrast to the Central Altar of Mound 4, appears to have been the place of decommissioning of paraphernalia from multiple ceremonies of varied purposes, only one of which might have dealt with the death journey through the Below realm(s) and encounters with powerful creatures. The multiple ceremonies are suggested by the great diversity and number of artifacts within the Central Altar of Mound 3. Also, the altar contained artifacts associated with the Above realm(s)—two mica cutouts of human faces with bird noses, that is, bird-persons, and one copper cutout with bird talons (Willoughby 1922:56, Plates 10e, 15c)—in addition to the g-clefs, alligator teeth, bear effigies, and other artifacts associated with the Below realm(s). Finally, the altar included three artifacts, at least one of which represents the cosmos at large rather than only the Below realms. One (Willoughby 1922:Plate 10e) is a copper cutout composed of a circle—at once the whole cosmos and the axis mundi in cross section (Carr 2008a:295–297, Figure 5.2B)—with points in the eight cardinal and semicardinal directions, and two bird talons suggesting the spin of the cosmos. The other two artifacts are human pectorals, each again circular and possibly referencing the entire cosmos, and carved with a turtle (elements of a map/sawback turtle and/or snapping turtle) indicating the earth-turtle island. The carina on the turtle’s back may double for bird feathers, indicating an Above realm, while the turtle’s legs may double for those of a feline, indicating an underwater panther and a Below realm (Carr 2008b:55, 59, Figures 2.9a, 2.9b).

infants and in healing and divinatory ceremonies (Peers and Brown 2000:537). Alternatively, a reciprocal relationship with the composite creatures may have been sought by the living participants and/or shaman-like practitioners on behalf of the deceased, similar to common historic Woodland and Plains Indian narratives of reciprocal relationships having been sought with horned serpents for safe passage across waters (Barnouw 1977:136; Bowers 1950; Grinnell 1972:50–60; Mooney 1900:458) or for aid in sorcery (Jenness 1935:259; Mooney 1900:460–461; Skinner 1915:183; Swanton 1928:494), and similar to the reciprocal relationships sought with helpful spirits generally (e.g., Flannery and Chambers 1985:7–8; Hallowell 1960:46). In some historic narratives of the journey to an afterlife, the deceased must give the serpent bridge a tobacco offering in exchange for safe crossing (Jenness 1935:109–110; see above). Finally, the dramas might have involved the living participants and/or shaman-like practitioners asking ancestors to be present and to help the deceased find his or her way and face challenges (e.g., Radin 1970:10–16, 26, 32–33, 81, 86–87, 88, 91, 92, and throughout), or might have given stage to community warriors to command the souls of their war victims to aid the deceased in overcoming obstacles of the journey. For example, in the Winnebago Four Nights Wake Rite, warriors would recount their deeds of valor and the persons they had killed and captured in battle, and then command those souls, who were at their mercy, to help the deceased by clearing the road, carrying a light by which to see the way, carrying food for the journey, and overcoming any obstacles (Radin 1970:15, 94, 96–97, 100, 103). Potawatomi braves performed analogous rites to aid the deceased’s journey (Ritzenthaler 1953:145). The male figurine in the Central Altar, which Willoughby (1922:73) identified as a warrior from his haircut, may be relevant in this regard. Other of the figurines might have represented ancestors whose help was sought. In all, the above range of possible responses of Hopewell peoples to the four composite creatures in the course of the ritual dramas around the Central Altar and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb would not all be suspected by archaeologists and ethnologists who consider the underwater–underground composite creatures of historic Woodland and Plains Indians to be only harmful—an idea that contradicts historical accounts (see above).

Who the participants in the ritual drama and the audience were specifically, if not everyone was involved, is unknown.

Ambiguities

The roles and meanings of the probable salamander and possible salamander components of, respectively, Creature 3 from the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb and Creature 1 from the Central Altar are unclear. One might pose that the salamander components referenced world renewal and fertility, as Job (2009) has interpreted the salamanders depicted on pottery from a late prehistoric, northern Plains burial complex. Across the eastern Plains and midwestern Prairies and Woodlands, tiger salamanders emerge from hibernation and migrate within locales in great numbers simultaneously to vernal pools to breed early in the spring season, “ushering in the replenishment of the earth’s vegetation and the rejuvenation of animal

herds" (Job 2009:78). This would be one reasonable interpretation for the salamander and possible salamander imagery in the Feature 10 and Central Altar assemblages, if the ritual dramas at these features had plots that took place on the surface of the earth-disk, with its game animals and plant life. However, ten lines of evidence indicate that the dramas portrayed scenes in the Below realm(s) rather than on the earth's surface (see above). Further, the ceremonial assemblages contain no food remains that might indicate attention on food, the productivity of the earth, and/or feasting. Finally, we know of no historic Woodland or Plains Indian references that tie salamander-composite creatures, extraordinary salamanders in the Below realms, or ordinary salamanders to world renewal. Nor does Job cite any. The Wahpeton Dakota did give ordinary tiger salamanders a role in their Mystery Dance (Medicine Rite), in which they serve as tent pins of the medicine lodge. However, salamanders are not given a part in the Wahpeton origin/world renewal narrative (see Carr and McCord 2013:67, Note 20), and historic Medicine Rites were conducted for purposes of healing, promoting longevity, facilitating reincarnation if desired, harming enemies, and performing initiation, wedding, and funeral ceremonies, rather than renewing the world (Weeks 2009:2).

A more likely interpretation of the probable salamander and possible salamander components of Creatures 3 and 1 is that they expressed transformation. Many animals migrate in large numbers in spring and the salamander is not special in this regard. One feature that does separate a salamander from other animals is its transformation from one form to another (larval to mature), and from water to land dweller and back again. The significance of salamanders to Ohio Hopewellian peoples in conveying the idea of transformation has already been discussed (Carr and McCord 2013) for the double salamander from Rutledge Mound, which was made of copper that changes from red-orange to green as it corrodes, analogous to the Eastern Newt's metamorphosis from its red terrestrial juvenile (eft) form to its olive-green aquatic adult form. Transformation of exterior form is also a key theme in Woodland Indian ontology (Hallowell 1960) and shamanism (Carr and Case 2005:199–208). Transformation also seems closely associated with death, as the separation of souls from the body and as a journey. In addition, other aspects of Feature 10 and the Central Altar suggest transformation: the process of cremating human bodies and ceremonial paraphernalia; the snake components of Creatures 1, 3, and 4, in that snakes shed their skin several times a year; the paraphernalia of one or more probable shaman-like practitioners; and the nuggets of copper, a raw material that transforms on its own from shiny to dull and from orange to green-blue as it corrodes, similar to so many transformative raw materials that Ohio Hopewell peoples selected (Carr and Case 2005:200, Table 5.3).

A second ambiguity is the meaning of the 284 deer and elk astragali (ankle bones) found in the Central Altar two layers above the composite creatures and human figurines. Astragali are not food cuts that might have had world-renewal associations but, rather, are power parts of deer and elk that bring them extraordinary speed. Power and swiftness in travel to an afterlife might have been a concern of Hopewellian peoples for their deceased on a journey to an afterlife. Were the astragali placed over the Central Altar to facilitate an easy or speedy journey? We do not know.

Significance to Woodland Indian religious studies

The biological, archaeological, and ethnographic information assembled and analyzed above all point very strongly to the conclusion that the Hopewellian peoples who performed the ritual dramas involving the Central Altar in Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb in Mound 3 knew the journey to an afterlife to be through the underwater-underground realm(s) of the cosmos. This was a rare path, however, in the religious beliefs and narratives of historic Woodland and Plains Indians. A recent, extensive survey of historic Woodland and Plains narratives and ethnographic information about journeys to afterlives (Carr et al. 2015) found the directions, west on the surface of the earth-disk and up, to have been the most common by count of tribes. South on the earth-disk was next most common, followed less frequently by east and north across the earth-disk.

Only four surveyed Woodland and Plains tribes had narratives of the journey to an afterlife that place it in the underwater-underground realm(s). The Chatas Indians of Bayou Lacombe, Louisiana, in the late 1800s, said that the land of the dead was below the bayou (Skinner 1896:97–98). A Hidatsa informant in the nineteenth century said that their village of the dead was down river and underground, to the southeast, where the Hidatsa had originally ascended from below to this world, although other informants placed the afterlife up or elsewhere on earth (Bowers 1965:173). Mandan knowledge about the direction of their village of the dead also located it below the earth from where the ancestors had ascended—in this case specifically the same as their village of origin, according to some; others thought the dead traveled to several villages to the south, to the sun, or to certain stars (Dorsey 1894:512). The narrative that resembles most closely the inferred Hopewell underwater-underground journey was told by the Fox:

There are two kinds of souls: one is like a shadow in the daytime and also at night. When this soul leaves you, you die. When the same soul inside leaves, we stop breathing and die. *Menō'gānāw*^{WA'} is the name of the little one inside. *Ke'tci'unō'gānāw*^{WA'} is the name of the soul that stays outside. The small soul is the same as life. The large soul simply watches over the other. That is why we are bad. When the outside soul gets too big, the owner will commit murder immediately. When it does not become very large, the owner leads a good life. After death for four days the small soul will stay near the dead. The large soul also stays. After four days the small soul goes underneath the ground; what is to happen at its destination has already been done. A hole has been bored in its head and charcoal is put in it. This is so the soul will forget the people on this earth, etc. The soul then leaves. There is a soul-river (*tčīpaiyi'sīpōwi*), and a soul-bridge (*tčīpaiyiku'ka'igani*). The souls must cross this. If the soul is bad, it falls off. If the soul falls off, it stays there till the end of the world. If the soul is good it gets across and arrives where the souls are kept. There is only one path. It is fixed so that flowers bloom on both sides of it, and there are trees. If the little soul turns out to be bad it will rest by those trees. There are two paths at the soul-bridge: one is red and one gray. The red path is followed by men, the gray by women. Young people, boys and girls take their choice [Mickelson 1925; see also Joffe 1940:273–274].

An underwater–underground journey to a land of the dead also appears to have been uncharacteristic of Hopewell peoples who lived in the Scioto valley and north-eastern Ohio (Carr 2012; Carr and Novotny 2010, 2014, 2015). The Hopewellian peoples who gathered for the ritual dramas at the Central Altar and Feature 10 were fairly unique among Woodland and Plains Indians in their having experienced the journey to their land of the dead through the Below realm(s).

Discussion: on motivation

Coming full circle to the issue of motivation with which we opened this and our previous article, what motivated Hopewellian people to construct the very large Turner earthwork? Why did they design it as a connected circle and oval of differing elevations? What led them to build the conjoined mound complex in the form of a composite creature of the Below realm(s)? Why did they take the risk of sculpting powerful raw materials, some retrieved from great distances, into powerful composite creatures who might bring harm or help, and then bury the sculptures with their dead and/or figurine representations of them? Why did they focus their attention on underwater–underground beings, build the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb and Central Altar of water-worn rocks probably retrieved from the Little Miami river below, and embed the cremated remains of their deceased in black ash?

The many lines of evidence presented above converge on specifically matters of eschatology as having been central to motivating Hopewellian peoples to perform the rites they did at the Central Altar and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb, and to build the Turner earthwork, the conjoined mound complex, and its features in the forms in which they did. Hopewellian people's notions about the nature of the journey to an afterlife, including its challenges and the creatures met, raised their concern for the safe passage of their deceased relatives' spirits to a land of the dead, and perhaps also their fear that the deceased might be unsuccessful in their passage and might return as irritated, harmful ghosts (Hall 1976; Lankford 2007:177; Speck 1909:97). In response, the living re-enacted the journey with effigies, manipulating its events to effect the desired outcome, probably instructing and reminding the deceased's spirit about what to expect and guiding it in how to proceed, and perhaps speeding the deceased's journey. As likely seeing themselves as less powerful than the composite creatures of the Below realms, the ritual participants probably sought through petition and/or reciprocity to forge relationships with the creatures to gain their help and make them more predictable, as historic Woodland and Plains Indians did so frequently in response to the Below-world creatures they experienced. These outcomes would have made it worthwhile for Hopewell peoples to take the risk of sculpting images of the composite creatures from potent materials and engaging the creatures.

Through seeking Hopewell people's motivations behind their rituals and material record, a glimpse of their world through their eyes is obtained. As Robert Hall reminded us more than thirty years ago, "...we cannot really interpret prehistory without making a conscious attempt to understand the nature of humans as symbol-using social animals affectively involved in a perceived world that they

have helped to create” (Hall 1977:515). At the same time, we do not go so far as to read into the mortuary record of the Central Altar and Feature 10 the details of the emotions of the Hopewell people who participated in the rites held there. In this regard, we part ways from Joyce’s (2002) emotionally embellished approach to interpreting archaeological mortuary data.

From the above study, it is evident that sociopolitical and political-economic answers to the above questions about why the composite creatures, the Central Altar, Feature 10, the conjoined-mound complex, and Turner at large take the forms they do can give at best only partial understandings of the motivations that led the Hopewellian people to produce this material record. The thrust of the content and symbolism of the Central Altar and tomb-chamber focused on the death journey; it was eschatological rather than socio-political or political-economic. The Central Altar and Feature 10 lacked potential indicators of socio-political contestation and prestige-goods economics—the symbols of leadership roles and importance, and the caches of fancy raw materials and worked objects, that characterize some lavish Hopewellian mortuary scenes. Beyond the artifacts used in the eschatological ritual dramas, the features contained some personal items: a copper bracelet and a few strands-worth of copper, pearl, and shell beads. The Central Altar also contained some paraphernalia of one or a few probable shaman-like practitioners—perhaps the equipment of those who helped lead the rite, or of the deceased, had he or she been a shaman-like practitioner. Alternatively, some of these items might have been gifts to the deceased to aid in the journey to an afterlife. Symbolic markers of the social roles and prestige of the deceased in the two features include a set of copper earspools in Feature 10 and the ear ornaments and elaborate hairdos of some of the figurines in the Central Altar. The earspools in Feature 10 were not complemented by other symbols of social importance and role that might suggest sociopolitical rivalry at the graveside. The postures of the figurines do not indicate domination-subordination, save perhaps one kneeling male. Instead, death and/or trance seem depicted.

In this empirical light, we disagree with those archaeologists who have viewed mortuary rites in general as predominantly political theater of the living (e.g., Binford 1964:414; Braun 1986:121; Brown 1981:26, 36; Buikstra and Charles 1999:205, 211, 215, 220; Cannon 1989; Charles 1995:84–85, 89–90; Childe 1945:17; Fagan 1995:416; Milner 2004:94–95; Pearson 1982, 2000:32, 84–87) and have ignored or de-emphasized the eschatological aspects of mortuary rites, which involve the soul(s)/essence(s) of the deceased in relation to the corpse and the living. A more encompassing, balanced approach is offered by Hertz (1960) and Metcalf and Huntington (1991:79–96), who demonstrated with ethnographic data and theorized that mortuary rites can address both political and eschatological concerns, and can vary across cultures and situationally in the relative emphases they place on the political and eschatological. This stance has been tested and is strongly supported by extensive cross-cultural survey (Carr 1995).

More broadly, we also disagree with Dobres and Robb (2000:13), who sum up that “Agency is a political concept,” and with Pauketat (2001:12–13) that “Politics and tradition are quite inseparable.... Tradition [is a] process shot through with contestation, defiance, and contrary practice.” Agency and intention are implicit in the

ritual dramas that were performed at the Central Altar and Feature 10 and that appear to have been aimed at affecting the outcomes of journeys to an afterlife taken by deceased persons and at influencing the actions of composite creatures encountered along the way. Tradition is evident in the similar horizontal and stratigraphic configurations in which the Central Altar and Feature 10 were constructed. However, the agency and tradition evident in the two features and the rites performed at them pertain to eschatology rather than socio-politics or political economy. Human needs and desires are many.

To seriously embrace eschatological matters as having been primary among motives for the Hopewellian peoples who performed their rites at the Central Altar and Feature 10, rather than to interpret those rites as the handmaiden of socio-political processes among the living, requires sensitivity to Native North American notions of personhood and sociality. Whereas popular agency and practice theory in anthropology limit social “fields” of relationships of power (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Mahar et al. 1990:8–10) or the “contextualities of interaction” (Giddens 1984:86) to living human beings, historic Native North Americans included in their social fields deceased ancestors, ghosts, and nonhuman beings, not to mention animals, plants, rock formations, rivers, and such (e.g., Brown 1971:37; Hallowell 1926, 1960; Harrod 2000; Henry 1809:143 quoted in Hallowell 1926:56; Hudson 1976:128, 157–160; Jenness 1935:20–21, 27; Overholt and Callicott 1982; Radin 1945). All of these were considered persons; that is, they were beings with whom mutual *social* relationship is possible, and all could be primary motivators. In the case of Turner, Creatures 1 through 4 were experienced as interacting with the deceased, as seen in the layout and stratigraphy of artifacts and deposits in the altar and in the chamber-tomb. This interaction appears to have been central to the plot of the ritual drama that was performed there.

At the same time, to answer the above questions—about why the composite creatures, Central Altar, Feature 10, conjoined mound complex, and Turner were made as they were—with the currently popular, religious interpretation—“to renew the world”—is insufficient, and even misleading. Matters of eschatology were core to the rites that produced the Central Altar and Feature 10 assemblages and their spatial layouts and stratigraphy. Key concerns of the Hopewellian participants in the rites were the nature of the journey to an afterlife, including its challenges; ensuring safe passage of deceased relatives to a land of the dead; probably evoking the aid of some powerful, composite creatures through pity and/or reciprocity; perhaps instructing or reminding the deceased of the nature of the journey, the obstacles to be faced, how to circumvent them, and/or the directions to take; and possibly speeding the deceased’s journey. Evidence for rites of world renewal is wanting. Woodland mounds and earthworks were constructed and used for many reasons beyond burial rites of separation and world renewal (Hall 1979:265; see also Seaman 1979:43–45), including eschatological concerns (Hall 1976).

Wider, epistemological issues

Prehistoric peoples’ motivations behind their ceremonies and ritual props are often-times difficult to ascertain because motivations are intangible and archaeological

evidence is underdetermined, and because ceremonies and ceremonial equipment are semi-symbolic, with forms often loosely coupled to meanings and meanings commonly plural. Equally challenging to learning prehistoric peoples' motivations in performing ceremonies, but less commonly addressed, is the ease with which an archaeologist can unknowingly project onto a past people his or her own values, ethics, beliefs, and symbolic framework, based in his or her own personality, culture, and limited range of experiences, and popular academic paradigms of the time. In these regards, concerning the interlinked issues brought up in our previous article (Carr and McCord 2013) and in this one: Why have composite creatures of the historic and prehistoric Woodland Indians been seen as grotesque contortions, "abominations," "monsters," or "chimeras" that were always harmful and anti-social to human beings, when historic ethnographic narratives speak openly of the creatures ranging from helpful to harmful? Could perceptions and meanings of the creatures, filtered through secularized, Euro-American, Christian cosmology and world view, be at play? Could the recent attention given to prehistoric Woodland world renewal rites, instead of the many other ceremonies that fulfilled other human needs and desires of Woodland peoples, relate to the troubled world ecology that looms large in our minds? Or to the ecological anthropological paradigms within which many currently active Woodland archaeologists were trained? How is it that Woodland archaeologists have, in the main, selectively heard and applied Hall's (1979:265) insight that prehistoric Woodland burial mounds served many cultural purposes beyond the staging of funerary and burial rites, only one of which was enacting world renewal, fertility, and creation drama, and that archaeologists should search out these additional purposes in historic Woodland Indian ritual? Could Woodland archaeologists' inattention, for the most part, to eschatological ceremonies relate to their enculturation in a post-1920 White American value-technology-demographic system that "denies death" in the Kubler-Ross (1969) sense and focuses on the material world and the living? Why have matters of meaning—"what peoples of the past found worthwhile to live for" (Hall 1977:499)—been given comparatively so little attention in Woodland archaeology until very recently, and seldom been attributed the role of primary cause in culture change? Here, the materialist and ecological paradigms that dominated mainstream American archaeology until recently have certainly constrained thought and research (see Carr 1995).

Some may feel uncomfortable asking questions such as these, which require introspection and exploring the limitations of one's assumptions, personality, culture, intellectual education, and life experiences. Epistemology, however, is a necessary driving component of the empirical sciences. Ease and satisfaction with an interpretation are not sound criteria for evaluation when trying to understand people of another culture because they need not hold to what we personally, culturally, and intellectually find "natural," "logical," and "worthwhile."

Conclusion

The motivations of prehistoric peoples are hard-won interpretations in archaeology, as Robert Hall has demonstrated through his career-long search for them (esp. Hall 1977, 1997). Combining rigorous biological identifications, extensive survey of historic ethnographic documents, and detailed archaeological-contextual studies strongly suggests certain motivations that led Hopewellian peoples to construct the Central Altar of Mound 4 and the Feature 10 cremation chamber-tomb of Mound 3 within the Turner earthwork and to sculpt four composite creatures and twelve to thirteen human figurines used in ceremonies there. The facilities and sculptures were foci of ritual dramas that enacted journeys of deceased persons through the Below realm(s) to a land of the dead and their dealings with powerful composite creatures, both helpful and harmful, along the way. The central purpose of the dramas was likely to ensure the deceased's safe passage. Because this interpretation was reached not only by way of analogy to historic, ethnographic information but also by considering patterning in the archaeological record, distinctions as well as similarities were revealed between Hopewell peoples and historic Woodland and Plains Indians in their cosmological concepts. Differences and similarities were found in the composite creatures experienced to inhabit the cosmos, and in the specific cosmic realm(s) through which the newly deceased were known to travel on their way to a land of the dead.

The archaeological-contextual analysis presented here has implications of general interest to Woodland archaeologists and ethnohistorians beyond the particulars of ceremonialism at the Turner site, as follows.

(1) Strong continuities were found between historic Woodland and Plains narratives about death journeys that involved a snake bridge, a great fish, or an alligator, on one hand, and Hopewellian depictions of a horned serpent, a fish-alligator/caiman, and a fish-rattlesnake in depositional contexts that suggest the participation of these creatures in such journeys, on the other. Multiple lines of formal, stratigraphic, spatial associational, raw material, and other kinds of contextual evidence support the continuities and lend the archaeological interpretations greater credibility and refinement. Our results are encouraging of other attempts that archaeologists might make to link Hopewellian ceremonialism to historic Woodland-Plains ideas and practices, despite the 1,500 years that separate them, and analogous to similar attempts being made by some Mississippian archaeologists (e.g., Lankford et al 2011; Reilly and Garber 2007).

(2) Unlike the eschatology of almost all historic Woodland and Plains Indians, that of the Hopewellian peoples who gathered for ceremony around the Central Altar of Mound 4 and Feature 10 of Mound 3 placed the location(s) of a journey to an after-life in the Below, underwater-underground realm(s). Almost all Historic tribes knew the journey to be, instead, to the west, south, or east on the earth-disk, or upward by ascension. Exceptions were the Chatas Indians of Bayou Lacombe, Louisiana, in the late 1800s, who told of an underwater land of the dead; the Mandan and one informant among the nineteenth-century Hidatsa, who placed the land of the dead underground, from where their ancestors had originally ascended; and the Fox, who said the path to the Land of the Dead is underneath the ground and crosses a river via a

bridge. Hopewell peoples who lived in the Scioto valley and northeastern Ohio, to the contrary, appear to have known the journey to be through the Above realm(s). Thus, the Hopewellian peoples who assembled at the Central Altar and Feature 10 were fairly unique among Woodland and Plains Indians in where they thought the journey to their land of the dead to be situated.

(3) Ceremonies of historic Woodland and Plains Indians were very diverse in their purposes, addressing many needs and desires of those peoples. World renewal was but one of these purposes, contrary to the inordinate attention given to it in contemporary Woodland archaeological studies. Another critical and common concern was facilitating the journeys of spirits of deceased persons to a land of the dead (e.g., Radin 1945). The rituals performed around the Central Altar of Mound 4 and Feature 10 of Mound 3 within the Turner earthwork exemplify these eschatological concerns. No convincing evidence of world renewal, fertility, or creation-myth symbolism was found in these two ceremonial contexts. Nor was balance—an essential characteristic of renewal—found in the constitution of any of the four depictions of composite creatures used in these contexts, or in the additional two composite creatures documented by Carr and McCord (2013). These paraphernalia do not combine animals and powers of the Above and Below realms, although they might have, as do Mississippian and historic Woodland and Plains renderings and tales of some composite creatures. At the same time, balance is probably reflected at the large, cosmic scale of organization of the Turner site in the complementary elevated circle and depressed ellipse layout of the earthwork and in the analogous combination of circular and elliptical mounds that comprised the conjoined mound complex, and at the much smaller, intramound scale of complementary rounded and quadrilateral basins in Mounds 5, 7, 9, and 12 (Greber 1996:162–164). Whether world renewal or other ceremonial themes are indicated by these structural relations has not been explored empirically.

(4) Not all domains of the social and ceremonial lives of Ohio Hopewellian peoples were political, and not all mortuary and other activities that occurred within Ohio Hopewell earthworks were infused with politics, as those theoreticians who see agency as a political concept would have it (e.g., Dobres and Robb 2000:13; Pauketat 2001:12–13), or those archaeologists who emphasize mortuary rites as political theater would propose (e.g., Binford 1964:414; Braun 1986:121; J. A. Brown 1981:26, 36; Buikstra and Charles 1999:205, 211, 215, 220; Cannon 1989; Charles 1995:84–85, 89–90; Childe 1945:17; Fagan 1995:416; Milner 2004:94–95; Pearson 1982; 2000:32, 84–87). The Hopewell peoples who performed ritual dramas at the Central Altar of Mound 4 and Feature 10 in Mound 3 appear to have been trying to affect the outcome of the journey to an after-life taken by deceased persons and to influence the actions of composite creatures encountered along the way. In these regards, the rites were agentive. However, the contents of the altar and tomb-chamber contain no clear evidence of material display for sociopolitical contestation or prestige goods economics as some lavish Hopewellian deposits might be interpreted. The symbolic thrusts of the ritual dramas at the Central Altar and Feature 10 were eschatological. The theoretical approach to mortuary practices constructed by Hertz (1960), which addresses

both eschatological and political actions and allows their importance to vary across cultures and situationally, is more realistic than the “politics in all” view.

Robert Hall opened a path to revealing and understanding the philosophical-religious knowledge and ceremonies of prehistoric Hopewellian and other Native American peoples. His approach to research includes the exhaustive study of historic ethnographic literature on Woodland and Plains peoples, identification of the animals rendered in Hopewellian iconography and earthworks, analysis of archaeological contexts, a sensitivity to native systems of meaning and cognitive association, attention to their spiritual aspects, and the goal of understanding prehistoric material culture from the vantage of its creators. To this we would add the importance of working closely with biologists, geomorphologists, and other natural scientists in the attempt to identify past native meanings, as in here and our previous article (Carr and McCord 2013) and in the studies of van Nest (2006), and would encourage the detailed contextual study of archaeological patterning in its own right as a rich source of information about philosophical-religious knowledge and ceremonies. Thank you, Bob, for your career-long concern for humanizing Woodland archaeology.

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Notes on Contributor

Christopher Carr is professor of anthropology in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) in 1979. His current research focuses on documenting the social and religious lives of Hopewell and other Native Americans of the Woodland Period in the Midwest-riverine area, drawing upon their art, mortuary remains, ceremonial architecture and landscapes, and exchange goods.

Correspondence to: School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287–2402 USA.

Robert McCord is chief curator of natural history and curator of paleontology at the Arizona Museum of Natural History in Mesa, Arizona. He obtained a M.S. in geosciences in 1986, and a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology in 1996, both from the University of Arizona. His research focus is on turtles and lizards from the Cretaceous Period to today, with numerous other interests.

Correspondence to: Arizona Museum of Natural History, 53 North Macdonald Street, Mesa, AZ 85201 USA.