

Abstract

AN important problem in the prehistory of the alluvial valley of the Lower Mississippi River is the nature and development of two phases (periods) closely related to the Hopewellian culture of the Ohio River Valley. In the present monograph a major hypothesis holds that the concepts of these two phases, Marksville and Troyville, are essentially valid, but that greater conceptual precision may be achieved through reformulation of distinguishing criteria, particularly in ceramics. It is postulated that zoned, dentate rocker-stamping of pottery vessels is characteristic of two otherwise distinctive wares associated with Marksville and Troyville, respectively. On the basis of this criterion alone certain difficulties have arisen in assigning materials to the Marksville and the Troyville phases. Partial resolution of these difficulties is proposed by bringing additional ceramic criteria to bear, such as paste, form, and a variety of decorative motifs, together with stratigraphic and areal distribution evidence. A new phase, Issaquena, is postulated as evolving out of Marksville and into Troyville. The Marksville phase and, to a large extent, Troyville are treated through the published literature. While some indications of the Issaquena phase had been previously published, the major evidence is presented here, based upon excavations by Philip Phillips and the author. Four new components are described (Manny, Thornton, Leist, and Mabin), and one from the Jaketown site is added to formulate a preliminary definition of the phase. These components are identified largely through the relative proportions of ceramic types. At several of these sites components of the Troyville phase are stratified over those of Issaquena.

The most abundant pottery in all of the components discussed is that known as Baytown Plain. While this type has been mentioned in

previous reports, its possibilities as an indicator of cultural change have been overshadowed by emphasis on decorated types. A detailed study is made of this type that includes statistical analysis of some attribute combinations. The results include identification of trends toward larger vessels with thicker rims and a change from inner beveling of rims to horizontal flattening. Analysis of the decorated types is extended from that of Baytown Plain, with greater emphasis placed on surface treatment. A new type is postulated and named Manny Stamped. Its main criteria are zoned, dentate rocker-stamping, with a variety of forms and rim thickening, on a paste essentially like that of Baytown Plain. In Issaquena components these two types are associated with various proportions of Troyville Stamped, Yokena Incised, Churupa Punctated, and Larto Red Filmed. Troyville Stamped, characterized by zoned, *plain* rocker-stamping, tends to replace Manny Stamped in the Troyville phase. This replacement is accompanied by the appearance of a number of new pottery types which become characteristic of later phases.

Other ceramic materials of the Issaquena phase include platform pipes and human and animal effigy heads. Relatively large, stemmed projectile points of the Gary and Ellis types and a variety of ground-stone objects, including boatstones, are also associated with this phase. Curved, single-piece fishhooks, splinter awls, and bipointed objects of worked bone are identified with Issaquena. Of traits other than ceramic decoration, platform pipes, effigies, Gary points, and single-piece fishhooks may also be seen as representing continuity with the Marksville phase.

Placement of the Issaquena phase in time perspective is achieved through relative cultural dating, as well as geologic and radiocarbon dat-

ing. A reasonably consistent series of radiocarbon determinations gives a mean dating of Issaquena as about A.D. 500 to 700. This dating is consistent with that for phases in the Lower Mississippi Valley thought to be earlier and later on cultural grounds. Furthermore, two dates are in remarkable agreement with esti-

mates of river-channel migration in the alluvial valley.

A number of the diagnostic criteria of the Issaquena phase are seen to be historically derived from Hopewellian cultures, and these relationships throughout the southern states and the Ohio Valley are explored.