



THE CAHOKIA CONNECTION

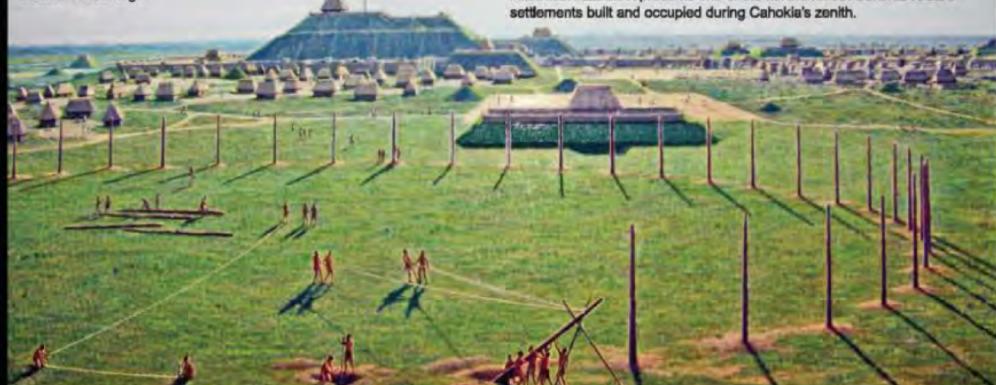
Mississippian people settled over much of eastern North America during the Late Prehistoric period. The people who built and occupied Aztalan (ca. A.D. 1100 – 1250) replicated major features found at the principal Mississippian site and ceremonial center of Cahokia, located near present day St. Louis. At Cahokia, these features included an extensive stockade, platform and other mounds, a large central plaza, distinct ritual and residential areas, agricultural fields, as well as a “woodhenge” used to predict the seasonal solstices and equinoxes.

Archaeological research at Aztalan, including analysis of stone tools and pottery, indicates a direct connection with Cahokia – at least some of Aztalan’s residents appear to have come from the Cahokia area. The Crawfish River provided ready access from Aztalan to Cahokia via the Rock and Mississippi Rivers.

FEATURES FOUND AT CAHOKIA WERE BUILT TO A MUCH LARGER SCALE THAN THOSE FOUND AT AZTALAN

As an example, the main platform mound at Cahokia - Monks Mound, the largest prehistoric earthen structure north of Mexico - measures approximately 1000 feet by 800 feet and is 100 feet high. In comparison, Aztalan's southwest platform mound is about 180 feet by 130 feet and stands 16 feet high.

The scale of Cahokia reflects the size of its population, an estimated 20,000 or more people versus the 300 or so who lived at Aztalan. In its time, Cahokia rivaled other major cities of the world in its size, technological achievement, trading networks, complexity of social organization, and influence. Aztalan represents one of the northernmost Cahokia-related settlements built and occupied during Cahokia's zenith.



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Aztalan itself has been recognized as one of only 2500 federally-designated National Historic Landmarks.



Recognizing Cahokia's status as a cultural heritage site of international significance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Cahokia a World Heritage Site in 1982, placing it on a par with England's Stonehenge, Peru's Machu Picchu, Egypt's Great Pyramids, and other remarkable places of the ancient world.