INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARCHAEOLOGY

Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis

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Chapter 5

Landscapes and Mortuary Practices

A Case for Regional Perspectives

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeologists have understood the value and necessity of a regional approach for a number of years, with the application of regional studies focused primarily on settlements. However, a regional approach is equally valuable in the study of mortuary practices. I have previously argued (Goldstein 1980, 1981) that intra- and intersite spatial dimensions are critical components of mortuary analysis because of the multidimensional nature of mortuary ritual. In particular, for hierarchically organized societies such as the Middle Mississippian cultures of the eastern United States (ca. A.D. 1000–1300), it is impossible to determine the full range of statuses, burial types, or other partitions from the study of only one cemetery. However, even for cultures with less social differentiation, a regional perspective can provide important information on social organization. When the spatial dimension is extrapolated to an even broader scale—that of mortuary sites against the landscape—the interaction of settlement, mortuary practices, and land use in general can be examined.

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The focus of this chapter will be the area encompassed by the so-called Effigy Mound Tradition generally (Figure 1), and Southeastern Wisconsin specifically (Figure 2). Effigy Mound has been viewed as a distinct prehistoric culture that originated and was centered in Wisconsin, but extended into portions of northern Illinois, northeastern Iowa, and eastern Minnesota; Effigy Mound is generally dated between A.D. 650 and 1200 (cf. Benn 1979; Mallam 1976; Salkin 1987), although Hurley (1975) has argued for an earlier origin and a longer persistence. Dating is vague because there is not a large quantity of radiocarbon dates available, and those sites with dates vary considerably in their range.

Archaeologists generally agree that Effigy Mound people were semisedentary hunter-gatherers who moved in regular seasonal rounds and periodically constructed mounds. There has been some debate as to whether or not Effigy Mound people also practiced plant cultivation, but given the data available, it appears that if they practiced cultivation, it was to a very limited or minimal extent (cf. Benn 1979; Mallam 1984; Storck 1974). The most distinctive archaeological feature of this culture or tradition was the construction of mounds, and particularly mounds in the shape of animals. Mounds occur in groups, and generally include a variety of geometric and animal forms, including conical, oval, and linear mounds, and mounds in the shapes of birds, panthers, lizards, bears, turtles, and the like.

Although a number of archaeologists have examined Effigy Mound sites within the last 50 years, there is surprisingly little systematic or extensive research on the subject, and the available data have a number of problems or biases. Problems of data bias will be examined later in this chapter, but one of the reasons that the mounds have posed problems for researchers is that some do not include burials, and those that do include burials do not often include more than a few individuals; in addition, there are few artifacts found in mounds, either as grave goods or as mound fill. The relative lack of data from the mounds has caused some archaeologists to attempt to explain the reason for the "empty" or "vacant" mounds (e.g., Salkin 1976).

For approximately 15 years, I have directed an archaeological program in southeastern Wisconsin. One of the goals of that program has been to develop an understanding of the prehistoric cultures of the region based on representative and unbiased surveys. We have surveyed several areas within the region, including the completion of a more than 15% stratified random sample of an area of approximately 70 square miles. The survey area is centered around the Middle Mississippian site of Aztalan, but also includes a number of Effigy Mound sites within its boundaries. In addition, one of the richest Effigy Mound areas is immediately south of the survey area, around Lake Koshkonong (the second largest lake within Wisconsin), including 23 different Effigy Mound groups (the groups range in size from 3 mounds to nearly 80 mounds). For several years, we focused survey efforts on lands immediately adjacent to and surrounding these Effigy Mound sites.

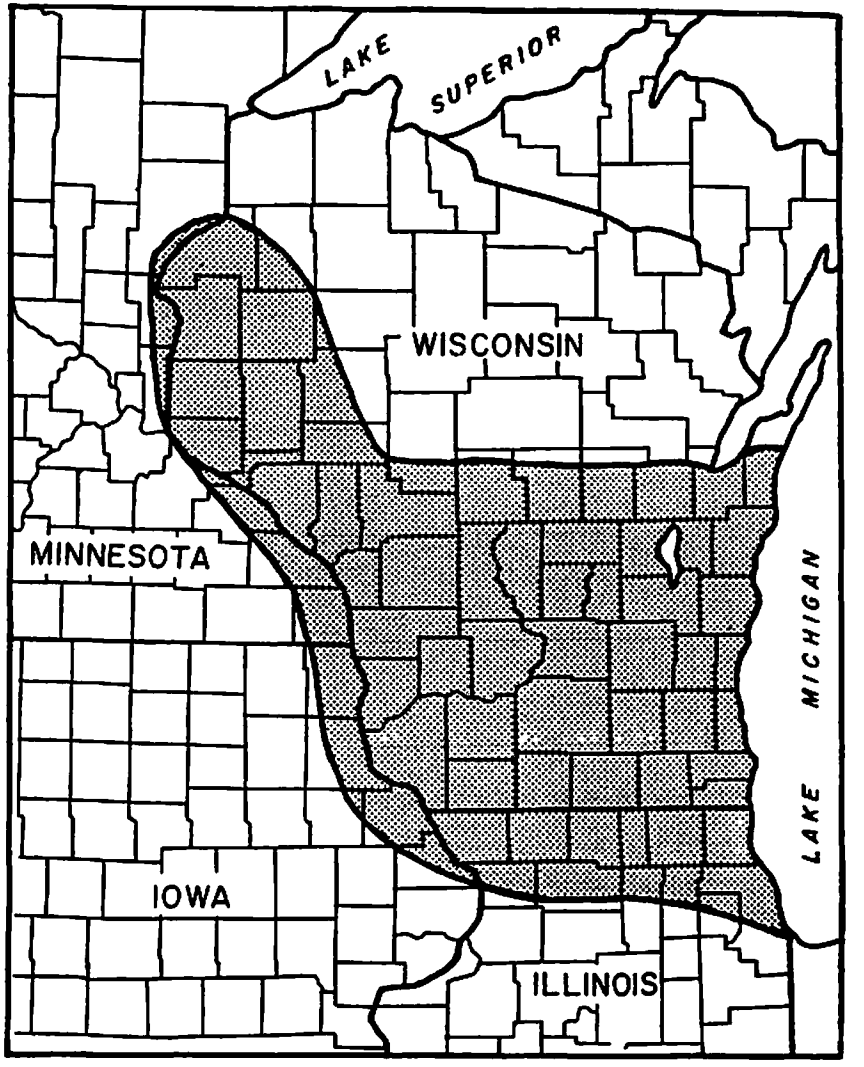

Figure 1. The geographic extent of the Effigy Mound Tradition.

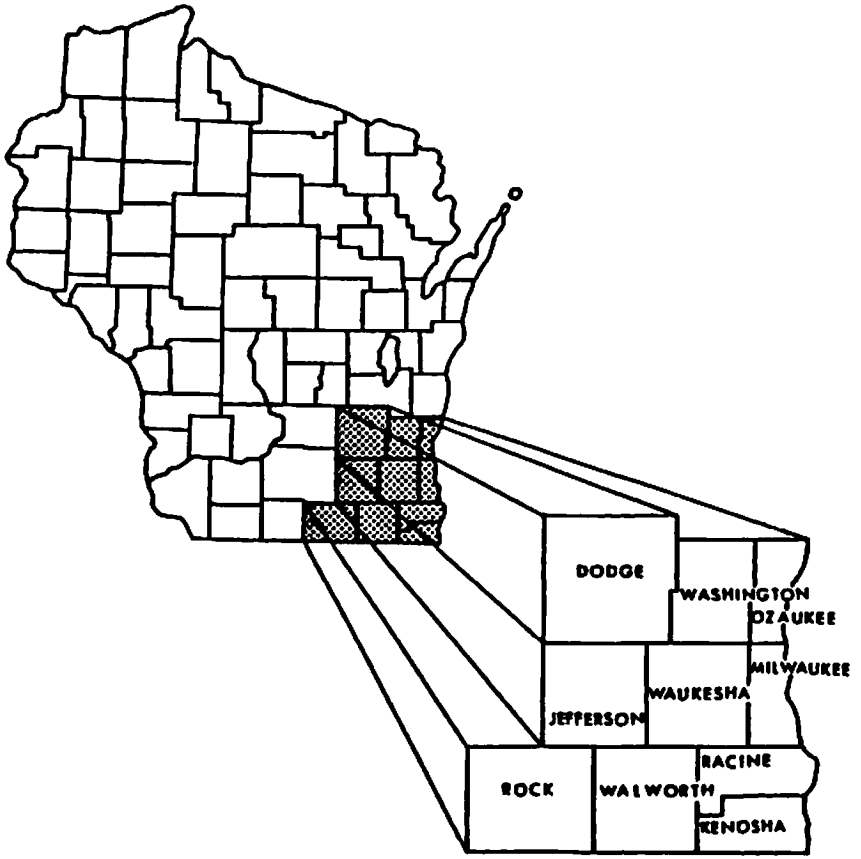

Figure 2. Southeastern Wisconsin regional boundaries.

Explanations for the presence of Effigy Mounds have ranged from a curious story at Beloit College that the college's first janitor built the mounds on campus by dumping ashes from the college's pot-bellied stoves in specific places (Bastian 1958), to more sophisticated notions that the mounds represent clan symbols, sacred spaces, or even revitalization movements (Mallam 1984:19).

This chapter uses data from three separate sets of sources: (1) an Effigy Mound literature review, somewhat abbreviated for the purposes of this chapter; (2) an analysis of a set of mound form or type data; and (3) data resulting from the stratified survey I directed in southeastern Wisconsin.

LITERATURE REVIEW

At this juncture, it is useful to review some of what we know about Effigy Mounds and their structure. Sites are "usually near zones of predictable and annually recurring natural resources" (Mallam 1984:19). There have been few unambiguously defined Effigy Mound habitation sites excavated, but it is clear that there are at least temporary habitation sites directly associated with mounds. The pottery is always Madison Ware (of several different varieties), and projectile points tend to be small, triangular, and notched or unnotched (use of the bow and arrow is thus inferred). A variety of scholars have enumerated the basic features of the mounds and associated mortuary practices, and the following is a summary of that data (based on Rowe 1956; Mallam 1976, and a variety of articles in the *Wisconsin Archeologist* reporting on specific sites):

1. Mounds are usually low (never more than 2 m high), but they are often of considerable length. Some linear mounds can have lengths of more than 100 m, although most mounds range from 20 to 50 m in length.
2. Borrow pits created in building a mound are rarely discussed in the literature; they have either not been found, or are broad in extent, leaving no discernible trace.
3. The mounds generally occur in groups—it is unusual to have only one mound. Groups may include as few as 3 mounds or as many as 100 or more, but most mound groups fall into one of three general categories: those with fewer than 10 mounds, those with around 25–40 mounds, and those with 60–80 mounds.
4. A pattern of orientation of the mounds within a group is not apparent, although the mounds will often be aligned parallel to the natural feature on which the mounds were built or other similar landscape markers.
5. There is no apparent pattern of which mound types will occur together. Conical mounds are the most commonly found, with oval and linear mounds also appearing frequently. Birds, panthers, bear or buffalo, turtles, and lizards are among the most prevalent effigy forms.
6. Construction of the mounds is not uniform from site to site, but several approaches to mound construction have been documented (cf. Rowe 1956:72). There does not seem to be a predictable pattern for which method is used in any particular case:
   a. In many instances, all or part of the soil's A-horizon is removed prior to mound construction, as if to define the aerial extent of the mound.
   b. In other instances, a so-called intaglio foundation was used; in this case, the A-horizon was removed, then excavated deeper to produce an intaglio or reverse cameo of the mound shape. The "hole" created is then filled and the mound completed.

c. Finally, in some mounds the A-horizon was not removed prior to construction; the mound was created on the original ground surface without special preparation. These mounds do not seem to be distinctive in any other way.

7. Mounds were apparently constructed using basketloads of soil from the immediate vicinity, and, in general, it does not appear that mounds were built in successive stages, but rather represent one event.
8. Mounds often contain one or more features:
   a. The most common feature is what archaeologists have called a fireplace or altar. This feature type shows clear evidence of fire, and usually includes constructions of stone. The features can appear singly or in multiples, and they often occur near burials or in prominent parts of the effigy form, such as the heart or head area.
   b. "Cists" are another Effigy Mound feature type. A cist is a "small bowl-shaped type of structure with more or less vertical walls of red, unbaked clay, reinforced to some extent with pebbles, and with a slightly concave bottom lined with stones" (McKern 1928:263).
   c. Burials or inhumations represent the third most common mound feature. Other types of features are rare.
9. Burials are either primary flexed interments, bundle reburials, or cremations. Treatment in any of these three forms may be single or multiple. There are also a number of instances of scattered bone in which burial disposition cannot be determined. Approximately 25% of the burials excavated have been primary (usually flexed) interments, about 61% have been single or multiple bundle reburials, 2% have been cremations, and the remaining 12% are scattered bone with indeterminate burial disposition. Burials may be placed in pits excavated below the mound floor, they may be placed directly on the mound floor with no pit, or they may be placed in the mound fill without a pit. Disposal types are not necessarily correlated with mound types.
10. Although nearly every mound group that has been tested or excavated has included at least one burial (cf. Riggs 1989), it is not the case that every mound includes a burial. A number of mounds have yielded no evidence of human bone, and it is unusual for mounds to have the remains of more than a few individuals. The few exceptions are the result of the presence of one or more sets of multiple (usually bundle) burials.
11. Although the number of burials in any mound is small, both adults and children are present. There seems to be roughly equal representation of males and females, and all (including children) have access to each of the disposal types indicated above. However, it should be noted that in a recent study, Ghere Paulus (1991) found that 33% of all identifiable remains found at nonmound sites of this period were children, and males seemed to be more commonly found in these nonmound sites than females.
12. Grave goods are rare, and include an occasional pot, a pipe, a projectile point, a bone artifact, or a copper artifact. Most of the artifacts are not necessarily directly included with burials, but tend to be associated with the fireplaces or altars, or are lying on the mound floor.
13. The spatial placement of features and burials within mounds is not random; burials and associated features are often placed at the "heart" or "head" of the animal, or at the center of the mound.

In the past 20 years, three studies have focused intensively on Effigy Mound cultures: Hurley (1975) examined two Effigy Mound habitation sites, Peterson (1979) examined the reliability of recorded mound location data and the relative rate of destruction of mounds, and Mallam (1976) developed an interpretive model for Effigy Mound dynamics. For the purposes of this study, Mallam's work is the most relevant.

Mallam (1976), Benn (1979), and Storck (1974) have all suggested the possible use of the mound sites as aggregation centers. Storck proposes that people lived in dispersed groups and congregated at mound sites for ceremonial and funerary activities. Mallam (1976) proposed a more complex model of coalescence and dispersal in response to seasonal availability of resources. In Mallam's model (1976:38), the Effigy Mound complex represents the territory of a number of loosely related families who seasonally merge into a larger corporate entity. Mallam notes: "The primary purpose of the mounds was not funerary. Rather, burial was only one of many cultural activities carried out at these selected locations, and its function must be considered within the context of the multipurpose function of these mounds" (Mallam 1976:38).

In the context of Mallam's model, Benn (1979) attempts to present an addition to the model to explain why the mounds were built. He notes that he "must consider at least three aspects of mound building behavior: the motivations for constructing effigy mounds at particular locations, the reasons for the variety of mound shapes, and the internal content of the mounds" (Benn 1979:70). Using Mallam, Benn explains that mounds were placed at the intersection of the territories of several family bands or lineages; they were territorial markers, but not in the sense of circumscribing absolute boundaries. The different mound forms are seen as the "political or social symbols of the corporate group who constructed them and are buried within" (Benn 1979:71). Benn (1979:72) also argues, following Hall (1977), that the totemic function of the mounds can be expanded to include the satisfaction of "the needs of a human soul released by the physical death of an individual." Burial in an effigy mound would insure reincarnation of the soul to the same totem group.

In a later paper, Mallam (1984:19) carries these ideas farther, and concludes: "[H]umans must assume responsibility for the quality of life by respecting the environment which enhances it. If this assessment is correct, the mounds, then, are not so much burial sites as they are metaphorical expressions about the idealized state that should exist between nature and culture—balance and harmony." Mallam thus sees mound building as an ongoing world renewal ritual.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the Effigy Mound data for southeastern Wisconsin, in an attempt to determine the validity of many of the propositions and interpretations presented in the literature, and also to focus specifically on the regional implications of a mortuary analysis of the Effigy Mound tradition.

THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM EFFIGY MOUND TABULATIONS

While working in the collections of the Milwaukee Public Museum, I discovered a notebook with carefully prepared forms. The forms are tabulations of Effigy Mound groups for every county with mounds in the state; the entry for each site includes the published reference, as well as information about illustrations. From the associated marginal notes, we assume that the data was prepared by W. C. McKern in the 1940s. The mound categories are standard, and the entire data set has been entered into a computer data base for future analysis. For the purposes of this chapter, I will limit discussion to the 10 counties of southeastern Wisconsin.

Use of this 1940s data set may raise questions in the minds of some, but the data should be reasonably reliable. Previous work has demonstrated that by the 1930s, especially in the southeastern part of the state, the efforts of Charles E. Brown and others resulted in the documentation of most mound groups (cf. Goldstein 1983). Few new mound groups have been recorded since that time, although such groups are occasionally discovered. While specific site maps may have errors in orientation or specific location, this particular data set does not include such details. Finally, to test the relative accuracy and consistency of the categorization, a sample of entries was examined in detail and was found to be accurate and acceptable.

Although there are 10 counties within the southeastern Wisconsin region, only seven of those counties are included in most of the analyses here; Kenosha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties have too small a sample size—there are many fewer mounds and mound groups in these counties. One further limitation of the sample must also be stated: only effigy mounds are included—that is, only mounds made in the shape of animals. This was done because of time constraints and because the system McKern used to record geometric and other mounds has

not yet been checked. The counties are presented in the following figures, and are generally ordered from west to east.

Figure 3 compares the number of effigy mounds to the total number of mound groups in each county. It is obvious that Dodge, Rock, Waukesha, and, to a lesser degree, Jefferson counties have mound groups with a considerable number of effigies per group. The other counties have fewer groups with fewer numbers of effigies per group. Dodge, Jefferson, Rock, and Waukesha counties are contiguous (see Figure 2) and are on the western edge of the region.

The differential distribution of effigy forms has been debated in the literature for many years. If the effigies represent totems or totemic symbols, one would not expect to find them equally spaced across the landscape. Figure 4 indicates the distribution of the most commonly occurring effigy mound forms by county. Note that the distribution of mound forms is different in each county, with variability represented in each, and the dominant types differing in each case.

Figure 5 adjusts these data for the relative number of mounds; the percentage of the most common forms in each county is represented. Birds seem to be present at the same relative levels (except in Racine County), while turtles are clearly prominent in Waukesha County, and to some extent in Walworth County. In a complementary fashion, panthers predominate only in Milwaukee and Racine

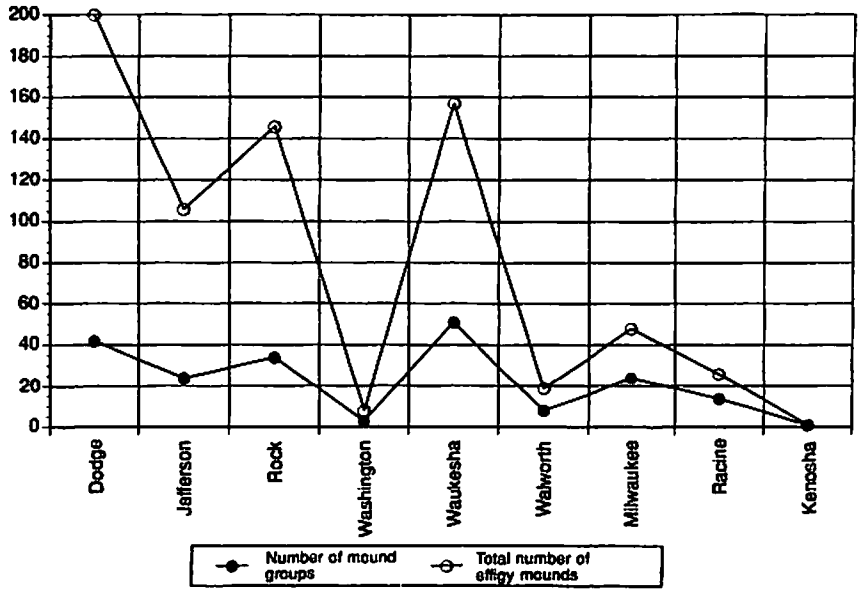

Figure 3. A comparison of the number of effigy mounds to the total number of mound groups in each county.

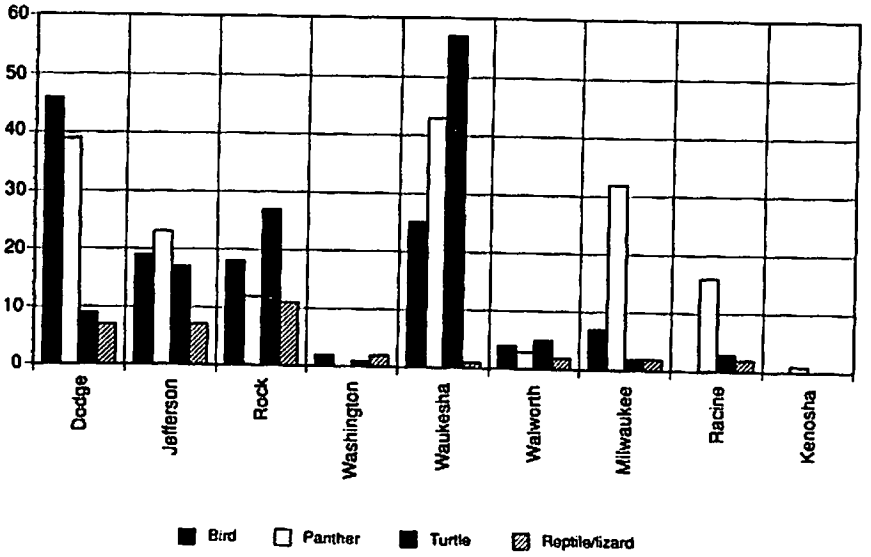

Figure 4. The most commonly occurring effigy mound types, arranged by county.

counties. These same data are presented in a somewhat different fashion in Figure 6—a county-by-county "profile" for the relative occurrence of each mound type. The charts are placed in relative geographic order for ease of comparison. Interestingly, the figure shows a decrease in heterogeneity as one moves from west to east. Each of the three counties in the westernmost column have a diverse set of mound forms. In the next column, turtles predominate, although other forms are present in some numbers. In the eastern set of counties, panther mounds are the clear favorite, with much less variability. This clinal or zonal pattern will be more closely examined in a subsequent section of this chapter.

THE SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAM DATA

The data in this section come from an extensive and intensive regional survey. The survey used a stratified random sample, and was intensive in coverage (project is summarized in Goldstein 1987). The distribution of sites in the region followed a series of clearly identifiable patterns.

Southeastern Wisconsin is rich in potential food resources and, in particular, in wetland resources. Wetlands are most productive for food in the fall and winter when food elsewhere is in shortest supply. In addition, wetlands provide storable

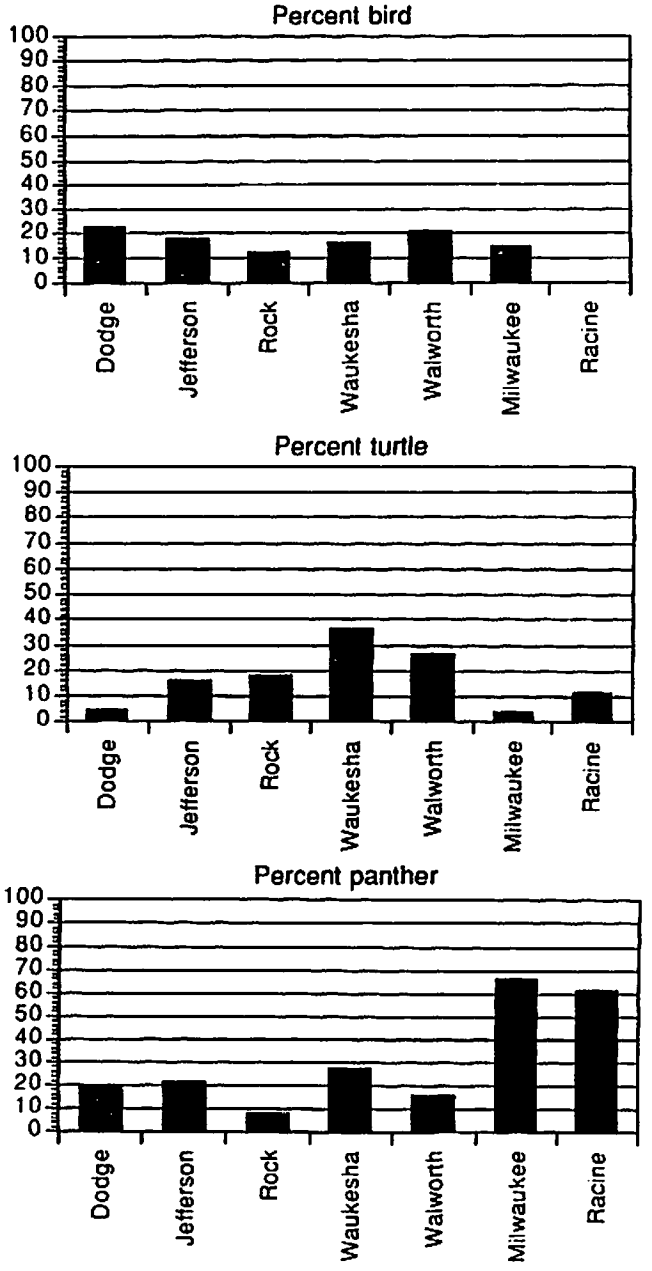

Figure 5. The percentage occurrence in each county of the three most commonly occurring effigy mound types.

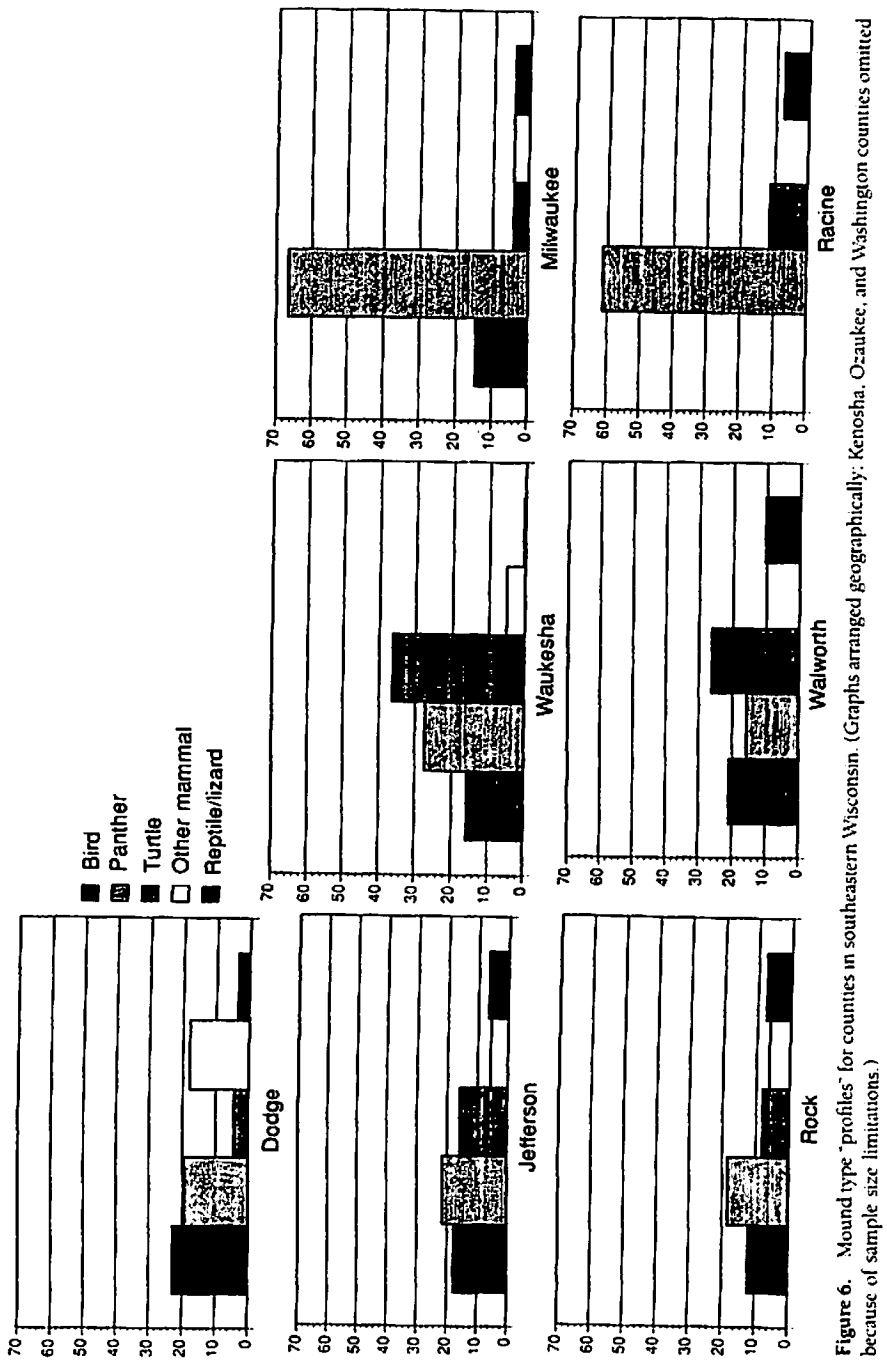

Figure 6. Mound type "profiles" for counties in southeastern Wisconsin. (Graphs arranged geographically: Kenosha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties omitted because of sample size limitations.)

food resources that are rich in nutrients. Permanent wetlands (swamps and marshes) will often yield rich food resources when resources in other zones may be temporarily depleted due to, for example, severe climatic conditions such as droughts or cold weather. The survey data indicate a clear preference for site location in areas adjacent to wetlands, but the presence of wetlands alone is not a sufficient predictor of site location.

The number and pattern of stream confluences, as opposed to simply the presence of streams, is also an important factor in understanding site distributions. Most sites have many confluences in their immediate vicinity, but the larger sites have many primary confluences surrounding them. The data strongly suggest that sites are located at the intersection of marsh, oak forests, and oak openings; these sites are often situated on end and ground moraines with wetlands within 0.5 km. This association is significant since this combination is not the most common vegetation set for the region overall.

Effigy Mound sites tend to occur along major rivers and streams, especially on high ground at the edge of major wetlands and lakes—that is, they are almost exclusively in marsh–oak settings. The number and location of Effigy Mound sites within the region may be an indicator of a seasonal aggregation–dispersal pattern. If people are dispersing for the winter to exploit the marshes, then gathering again in spring–summer to collect in larger villages, groups may meet at these mound groups just before winter dispersal and/or just before spring aggregation. The mounds may serve as a place to meet and/or keep track of who is where; their location would represent a rich resource base, and a logical place to wait for and meet others.

The distribution of mound sites within the region (Figure 7) illustrates the clarity of the pattern, and the distribution of mound sites with effigy forms (Figure 8) tends to focus on those areas with concentrations of large marshes and large numbers of mound groups. In the previous section, I noted that there was a decrease in heterogeneity of mound forms as one moved from west to east; this pattern follows the differential diversity of resources across the region—while the entire area is rich in resources, the greatest diversity is present in the western portion of the region. In addition, the largest numbers of effigies are present in the most diverse portions of the region.

CREATING A BIGGER PICTURE

The examination of a presumed mortuary site type across a region provides us with several sets of data from which to develop a model. The locational and physiographic data suggest a pattern of placement made to emphasize certain rich resources, and also suggest that mound sites may represent seasonal aggregation and/or dispersal centers for groups of families.

The differential distribution of effigy types lends some credence to the notion

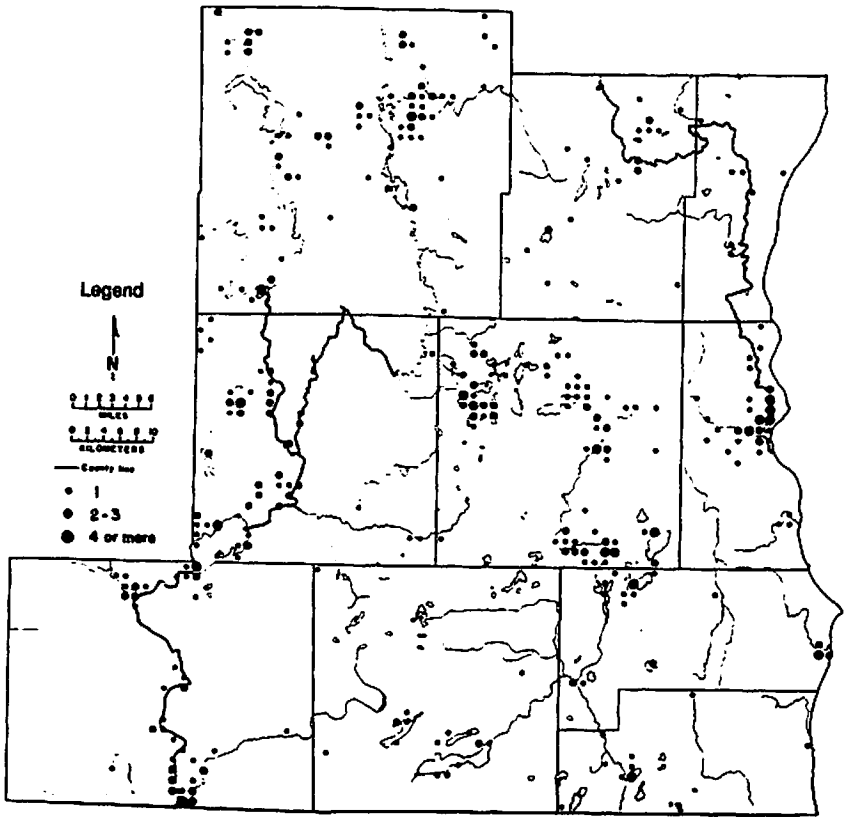

Figure 7. The distribution of mound groups in southeastern Wisconsin.

of mounds as clan symbols or corporate group symbols. The mounds must represent more than this, however, since the conical, linear, and oval forms are present in large numbers. While any particular mound may have been constructed as a single event, it is unlikely that all of the mounds in a group were constructed at one time. The groups with large numbers of mounds may simply represent longer use of the site over time.

The mortuary data indicate no particular differentiation of status, although one might argue that the sparse pattern of burial suggests that only a small portion of the population is being buried in the mounds. Nonetheless, there does not seem to be a differentiation based on age or sex, and grave goods tend to be associated with the mound, rather than with a particular individual or burial. The nature of the disposal types suggests that interments are not generally primary; in addition

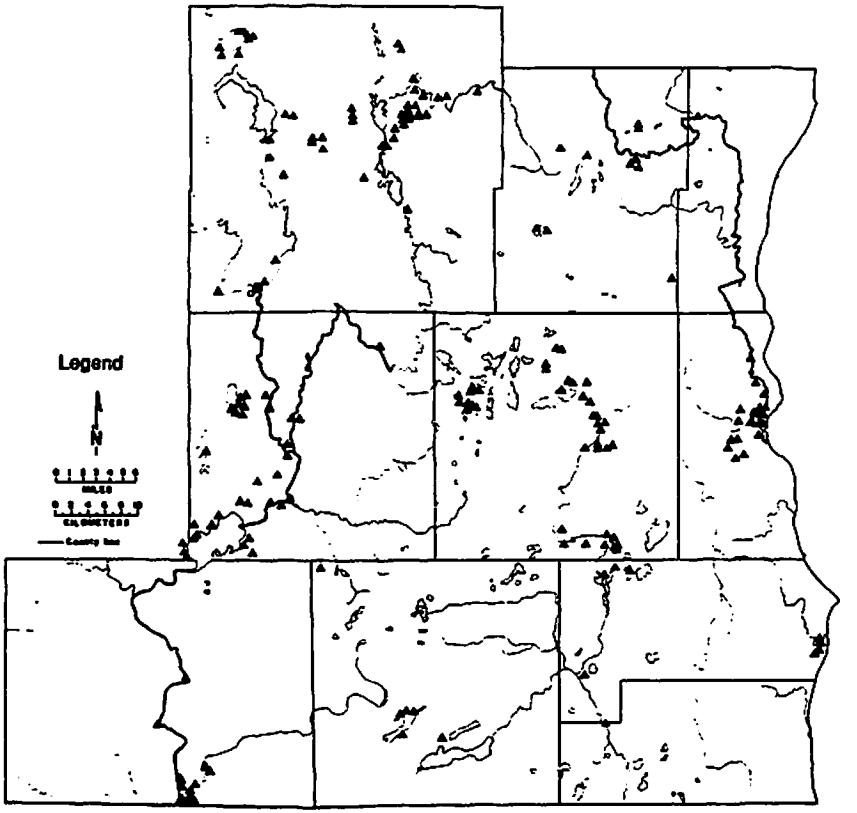

Figure 8. The distribution of mound groups with effigy forms in southeastern Wisconsin.

to the popularity of bundle burials, the excavating archaeologist often notes that the flexed interments seem so tightly flexed that they may have been bound and reburied from another location (e.g., Bastian 1958). The scattered bone may represent the remnants of another form of mortuary processing, and the number of multiple burials also suggests that placement in the mounds may be something other than primary interment. The overall patterning supports the notion of the mounds as aggregation points, with people bringing burials because of who the individual is (vis-à-vis the group) or because of when the individual died. Given the lack of differentiation present in the disposal types, time of death may be the factor in determining whether or not someone is buried in a mound. However, the secondary nature of the disposal indicates that keeping track of that individual or of that individual as a symbol for something else is of critical importance. The

nature of the disposal patterning suggests an organization where group identity is favored over individual differentiation.

In another paper (Goldstein 1989), I note that secondary disposal results either because of the group to which an individual belongs, or because of the circumstances of the individual's death. If group circumstances indicate secondary treatment, there should be a clear pattern of disposition. If secondary treatment is the result of individual circumstances of death, the form of the disposal may be similar to that of others, but the remains themselves will be bundled or disarticulated or otherwise differentiated.

The pattern of secondary disposal seen in effigy mounds is clearly that of group identity. There is clear pattern in placement, structure of the mounds, and treatment. In discussing secondary disposal, I (Goldstein 1989) have noted that if group identity is the focus, one should find: (1) some form of group facility; (2) that the treatment follows a primary form of disposal that results in disarticulation; and/or (3) there is ancestor worship represented by the handling and marking of remains. If only a particular group is afforded secondary treatment, these individuals most likely represent specific statuses or ancestors of a particular category.

These patterns fit Effigy Mound society well. The group facility is the mound, and the sparsity of burials may indicate secondary treatment for only a particular group within the society. The other finding that is relevant here is that there is a correlation between secondary treatment and settlement fixity; this may relate to the regular use and reuse of disposal facilities associated with secondary treatment based on group circumstances, or it may indicate the importance of particular locations or settings.

We may never know the actual purpose or purposes of the mounds, but it may be most instructive to think of them as artifacts in themselves, rather than as mortuary sites. As artifacts, the notion of "vacant" or full is moot, and the emphasis is placed on the physical mound, its particular characteristics, and its placement in terms of other mounds and in terms of the landscape. The placement of mounds in relation to each other has not been addressed in detail, although a number of individuals have recently focused their efforts on trying to relate mound orientation to significant astronomical phenomena; thus far, the results have on occasion been suggestive, but not unambiguous (e.g., Scherz 1990a,b; Steckel n.d.). Similarly, the notion that the mounds simply follow the natural contours of the landscape (cf. Rowe 1956) is also inadequate.

An example may help to clarify the issues. Lizard Mound Park in Washington County is an excellent example of an Effigy Mound site. There were originally nearly 50 mounds in the group, with a variety of effigy forms included (two birds, a number of panthers, and a lizard). Figure 9 is a map of the site as it appears today. While there seems to be some structure in the placement of the mounds, the pattern is not clear, and does not seem to follow any natural or astronomical phenomena. Pairs of mounds of similar types occur in several instances, but even

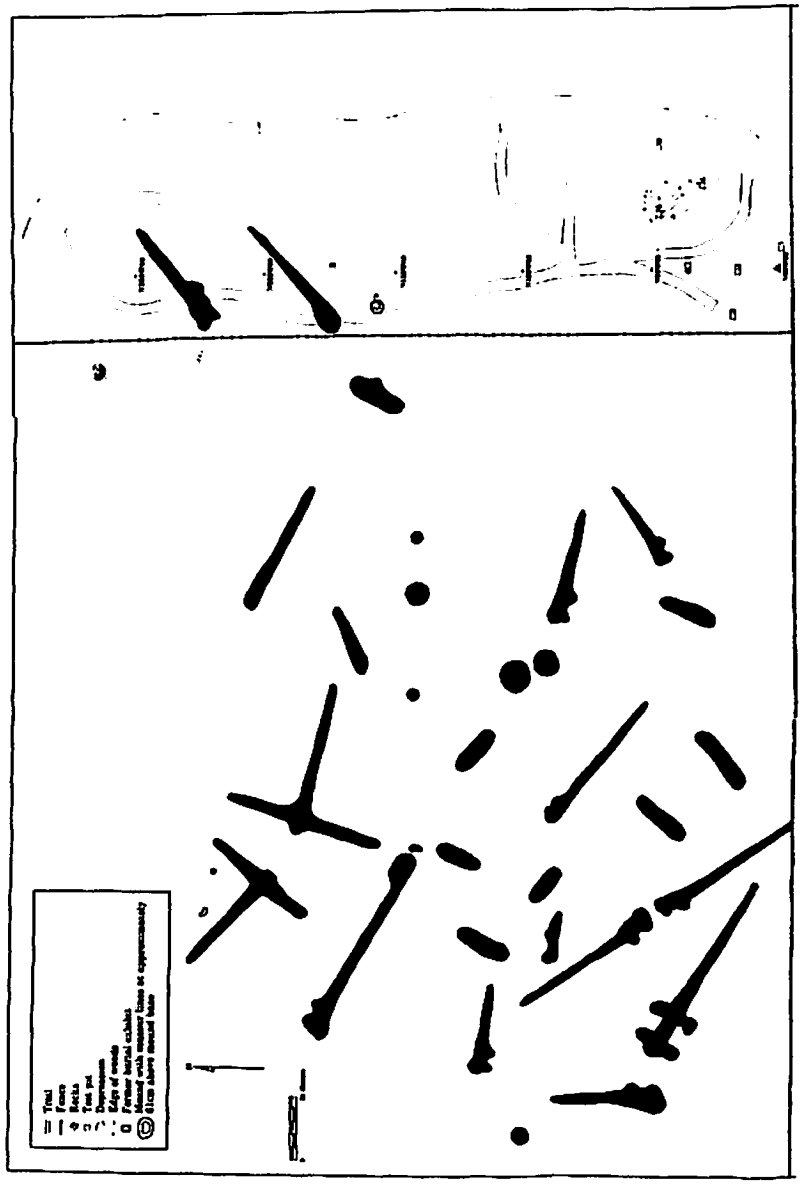

Figure 9. Lizard Mound Park (the Hagner mound group).

these pairs are placed differentially. Lizard Mound has also baffled students because its location does not appear analogous to other Effigy Mound sites. While it is on a relative high spot of land, it does not appear to be distinguished from any other spot.

If we look at the site in a larger context, the location begins to make sense, and at least one alternative explanation is suggested. Figure 10 is a map of the location of Lizard Mound Park in relation to its environment. In particular, Figure 10 focuses on features found to be important in site location determinations. From this perspective, it is quite clear that Lizard Mound is on an island in the middle of a large set of wetlands and a number of streams, lakes, and creeks. This location places the site in the middle of some of the richest resources in the general area. Why place a mound group here? Shouldn't the habitation site be here instead?

In a context focused more specifically on the nature of postmodernity and on cities and modern environments, Harvey (1989) examines the meaning of space in cultures and over time. In particular, using anthropological and other data, he challenges the idea of a "single and objective sense of time and space, against which we can measure the diversity of human conceptions and perceptions" (1989:203). The concept of space is varied, and is created for any individual society "through material practices and processes which serve to reproduce social life" (1989:204).

Harvey's ideas are not new to anthropology, and I would like to use these ideas to suggest that one of the reasons that we cannot determine the nature and function of Effigy Mound sites is because we have examined them from the wrong perspectives, partitioning them into particular categories and ignoring the whole—we have treated them as mortuary sites, we have treated them as astronomical markers, we have treated them as symbolic totems, and we have treated them as territory markers. While it is likely that they may represent all or some of these things in some context, we have to place them all against the social and physical landscape to provide an overall context.

As an initial attempt to provide that overall context, I suggest that in some sense Effigy Mound sites represent maps. Perhaps not maps in the conventional sense of the word, but symbolic representations of both form and space to the people who built and used the mounds. The different orientations of individual mounds, for example, may represent indicators or pointers to resources controlled by a particular group. The pairs of mounds might represent intra- or intergroup relationships, but might also indicate direction of resources or types of resources. We may not be able to completely read the map with our particular Western orientation, but we can see the regularities, and a map to resources or resource ownership provides a framework within which to place the remainder of the data, without stretching for new theories or directions. In the data presented for southeastern Wisconsin, for example, bird effigies appear everywhere, although they are more common in the western counties. This distribution coincides with

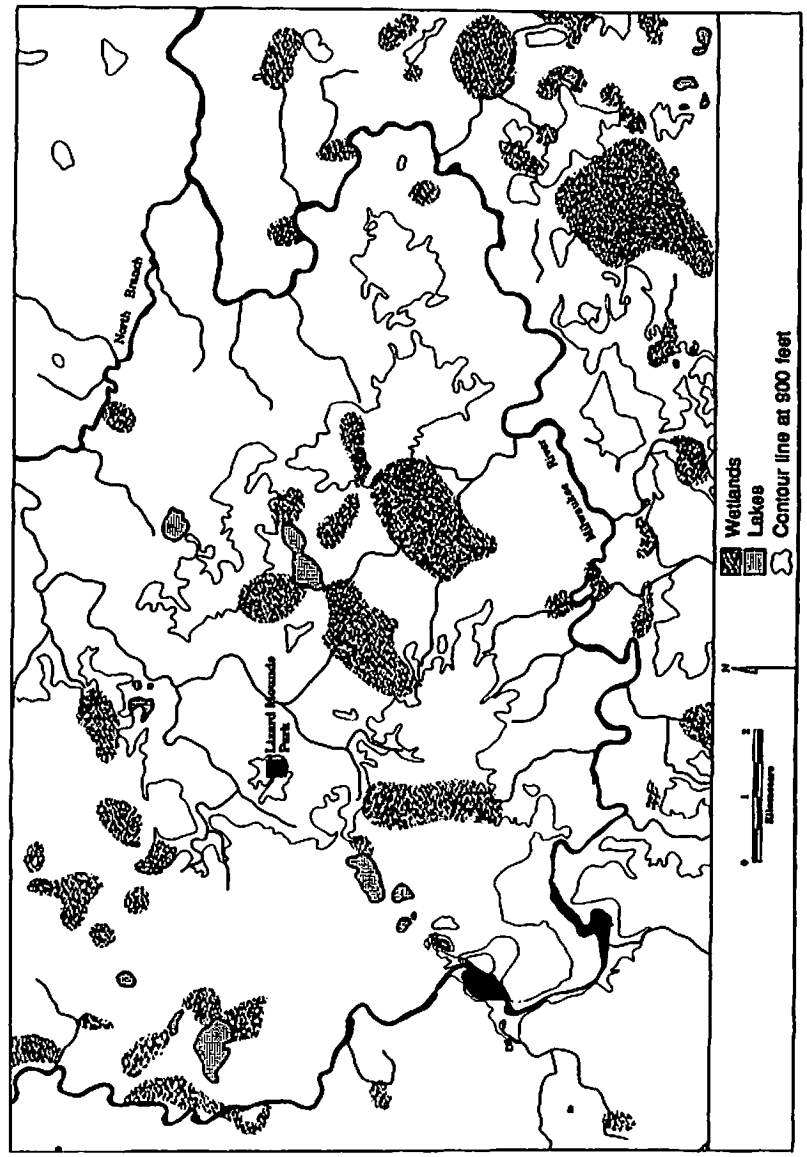

Figure 10. The location of Lizard Mound Park (47 = W+ = 001; the Hagner mound group) in relation to the surrounding environment.

the path of the Great Mississippi Flyway, a bird migration route. Similarly, the distribution of turtle mounds also coincides with more diverse wetland areas. Within a mound group, the number of different types of effigy forms may represent not only clan or corporate groups, but also diversity of resources. The largest and most diverse mound groups are consistently located adjacent to the largest and most diverse wetlands—Dodge County, home of the extensive Horicon Marsh, is perhaps the best and most obvious example. Dodge County has the largest number of effigy mounds, and most commonly has animal forms that are associated with wetland settings. The earlier discussion of secondary disposal and settlement fixity may well relate to the placement and importance of these mounds against the landscape.

The study of Effigy Mound groups as maps will take more detailed analysis than is possible here. However, just as maps today are used to represent a variety of different aspects of social life (everything from the distribution of religious beliefs to opinion polls, political parties, highways, recreation, and natural resources), viewing mounds as maps allows us to place seemingly disparate and even conflicting interpretations together into a framework that may eventually allow us to reconstruct the conception of space and, by extension, social organization for these people.

Even when social differentiation is not present, a regional approach to mortuary analysis can provide a new perspective for interpretation, and possibly an overall framework or context for understanding. Separating the mortuary site and its analysis is sometimes the best way to lose perspective. Further, as shown here, separating the mortuary site from the rest of the culture is a mistake that even a regional approach will not resolve.

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