Mississippian Chiefdoms and the Fission-Fusion Process
Author(s): John H. Blitz
Source: *American Antiquity*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), pp. 577-592
Published by: Society for American Archaeology
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2694206
Accessed: 12-12-2016 22:32 UTC

MISSISSIPPIAN CHIEFDOMS AND THE FISSION–FUSION PROCESS

John H. Blitz

In the American Southeast, the simple-complex chiefdom cycle is the predominant model of sociopolitical development applied to the Precolumbian ranked societies known as Mississippian. In this paper, mound–center settlement patterns in the South Appalachian area are reviewed. Most of these distributions fail to conform to the hierarchy of centers predicted by the simple–complex chiefdom model. Contrary to the model, an absence of primary–secondary center hierarchies implies that extension of regional administrative control was not the primary determinant of mound–center distributions. A review of ethnohistorical sources suggests that another sociopolitical mechanism, the fission–fusion process, created the majority of mound–center settlement patterns through the aggregation or dispersal of basic political units. The fission–fusion process was the product of efforts by factional leaders to resolve the conflicting values of autonomy and security. Unlike the simple–complex chiefdom dichotomy, the fission–fusion model encompasses a greater diversity of Mississippian political forms and provides an alternative explanation for changes in mound center size, complexity, and location.

El modelo predominante para el desarrollo sociopolítico aplicado en el sureste Norteamericano a las sociedades jerárquicas precolombinas misisipianas es el cacicazgo simple-complejo. En este trabajo he analizado los patrones de asentamiento de centros con montículos al sur de los Apalaches. La mayoría de estas distribuciones no se alinean con una jerarquía de centros, como lo predeciría el modelo de cacicazgo simple-complejo. La ausencia de centros jerarquizados primario-secundarios implicaría que la extensión del control administrativo regional no era el principal determinante de estos centros con montículos. Un análisis de fuentes etnohistóricas sugiere que otro mecanismo sociopolítico, el proceso de fusión-rompimiento, creó la mayoría de estos patrones de asentamiento de centros con montículos a través de la acumulación o dispersión de pequeñas unidades políticas. El proceso de fusión-rompimiento fue el producto del esfuerzo de líderes de facciones para resolver los conflictos resultantes de los intereses sociales conflictivos de autonomía y seguridad. A diferencia de la dicotomía de cacicazgos simple-complejo, el modelo de fusión-rompimiento incorpora una mayor diversidad de formas políticas misisipianas y presenta una alternativa para explicar los cambios en el tamaño, complejidad y ubicación de los centros con montículos.

A settlement hierarchy is one of the standard archaeological signatures of complex society (Johnson 1977). Typically, a regional pattern of central places that differ in size and complexity is interpreted as an indicator of decision-making levels within a sociopolitical hierarchy. In chiefdoms, the spatial arrangement of centers often is claimed to reflect the extension of regional political control or administration, much of it concerned with the movement of resources between centers (Steponaitis 1978). In the South Appalachian area (northern Georgia and adjacent portions of Alabama, South Carolina, and Tennessee), Mississippian political formations are identified as simple chiefdoms or complex chiefdoms based on a hierarchical pattern of primary–secondary mound centers. Mississippian political change in this area has been described as a long-term cycling between simple and complex chiefdom configurations (Anderson 1994).

In this paper, recent studies of South Appalachian mound–center settlement patterns are reviewed. Two distinctive kinds of mound–center settlement patterns are identified that appear to deviate from the settlement patterns expected of the simple–complex chiefdom dichotomy. Specifically, the absence of a hierarchical pattern of mound centers suggests that concerns other than administration of regional tribute flows determined the majority of mound-center spatial arrangements. Based on these observations, I propose that the simple–complex chiefdom cycle

John H. Blitz ■ Department of Anthropology, Queens College, The City University of New York, 65-30 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11367

model is too limited to encompass the full range of Mississippian polity forms and therefore is an incomplete account of Mississippian political development. An additional political dynamic, the chiefdom fission–fusion process, must be factored into the historical equation.

Ethnohistorical documentation of indigenous Southeastern polities reveals that basic political units oscillated between dispersed and clustered spatial distributions in an effort to accommodate the conflicting demands of autonomy and security. There is evidence that a similar chiefdom fission–fusion process shaped Mississippian mound–center settlement patterns in the South Appalachian area. The chiefdom fission–fusion process created changes in mound center size, complexity, and location without the establishment of a hierarchical pattern of primary–secondary administrative centers. Before evidence of this process is presented, a brief overview of the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model is in order.

The Simple–Complex Chiefdom Cycle

Southeastern archaeologists often use a well-known model of Mississippian political structure and development: the simple–complex chiefdom cycle (Anderson 1994; Steponaitis 1978; Wright 1984). Decades of archaeological and ethnohistorical research has established a solid empirical basis for identifying some Mississippian polities as chiefdoms: nonstate ranked societies that exhibit a range of sizes and inferred degrees of organizational complexity.[1] Minimally, these chiefdoms had (1) kin groups of unequal ascriptive rank, and (2) a decision-making body, located in a central community, headed by a genealogically sanctioned office of leadership or "chief." In the simple–complex chiefdom model, chiefdom size and power is measured by the number of subordinate communities under the direct political control of the chiefly center: "the number of levels in the administrative hierarchy, or steps in the chiefly command structure, thus provide an effective measure of the organizational complexity of a chiefdom" (Anderson 1996a:232). The emphasis on "administrative hierarchy" is the basis for a classification of chiefdoms (Figure 1a–b). Simple chiefdoms have one decision-making level above the household or local community level; complex chiefdoms have two decision-making levels (Steponaitis 1978; Wright 1984). An additional term, paramount
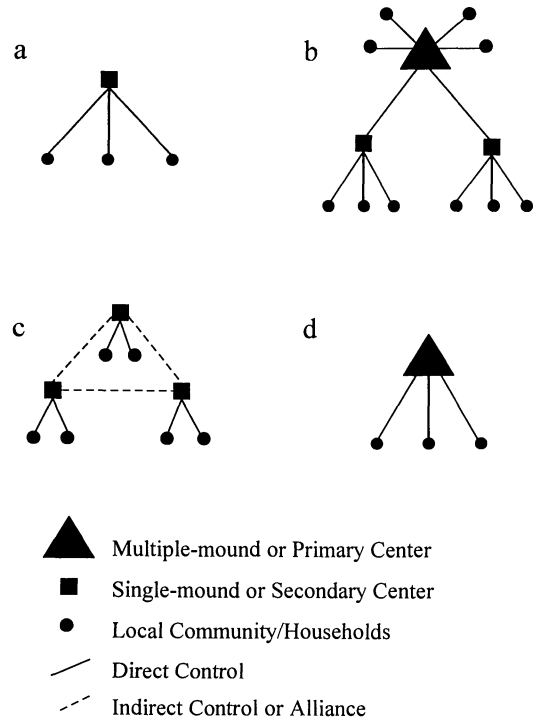
Figure 1. Mississippian mound-center settlement patterns found within 40 km-diameter polity boundaries in the South Appalachian area: (a) single-mound center pattern (simple chiefdom); (b) primary–secondary center pattern (complex chiefdom); (c) grouped or paired single-mound center pattern; (d) isolated multiple-mound center pattern.

chiefdom, has been used to "...describe the situation when a complex chiefdom exerts direct or indirect control over a series of other chiefdoms, including at least one other complex chiefdom" (Anderson 1996a:232).

The simple–complex chiefdom classification has archaeological correlates in regional settlement patterns (Steponaitis 1986). In southeastern applications of the concept, a local civic-ceremonial center marked by a platform mound is identified as the central place of a simple chiefdom. Complex chiefdoms are recognized by a number of local or "secondary" one-mound centers affiliated with a multiple-mound regional or "primary" center. The expectation of hierarchical centers is based on the central idea that populations were organized to ensure the efficient flow of tribute—food, goods, services—from household producers to chiefly elites. Thus the simple–complex chiefdom concept and a regional pattern of multiple-mound and single-mound centers is linked

explicitly to a general theory of chiefdom political economy (Welch 1991). The simple–complex chiefdom concept measures organizational complexity along a vertical axis only; different settlement units are stacked into a political hierarchy, but possible horizontal links between equivalent units are disregarded. Consequently, those researchers who focus on nonhierarchical mechanisms of regional integration in Mississippian polities deemphasize or reject the top-down political hegemony inherent in the simple–complex chiefdom concept (e.g., Milner 1990, 1998; Muller 1997).

Initial applications of the simple–complex chiefdom concept in Mississippian archaeology were insufficiently diachronic (e.g., Steponaitis 1978). That situation changed in the 1980s as fieldwork and chronological controls progressed to the point where it was clear that not all small and large centers in a region were contemporary (Anderson et al. 1986; Bozeman 1981; Williams and Shapiro 1996). Anderson (1994) proposed a developmental "cycle" for the emergence and collapse of Mississippian chiefdoms. He defined cycling as "the transformations that occur when the administrative or decision-making levels within the chiefdoms occupying a region fluctuate between one and two or (in the case of some paramount chiefdoms) three levels above the local community" (Anderson 1996a:234). The cycle model creates specific expectations about regional settlement pattern changes through time: large mound centers will arise from an antecedent series of small centers, a multiple-mound primary center will be linked in an administrative hierarchy to one-mound secondary centers, and then the complex chiefdom will collapse back into a series of autonomous, small centers. This political process, according to Anderson, was propelled by multiple factors. Factional competition for succession to chiefly office within chiefdoms and warfare between chiefdoms were especially strong forces of change. Both internal and external forms of competition were efforts to gain control over or access to the ideological and material resources that conferred status and power. Over time, this competition produced winners and losers, united some populations and fragmented others, and created long-term changes in regional sociopolitical complexity.

In the absence of credible alternatives, the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model has become the foundation for current studies of Mississippian

sociopolitical organization and change. However, the model and its archaeological application have not been without criticism. While there have been few objections by Mississippianists to the concept of chiefdom per se (Emerson 1997:17–18, 192; Muller 1997:38–42), debate has focused on the degree of political centralization, the structure of the political economy, and the spatial extent of polity boundaries present in those archaeological cases to which the model has been applied. Specific criticisms of the simple–complex chiefdom cycling model include: (1) an objection that reconstructions of sixteenth-century Coosa and other complex/paramount chiefdoms are based on misreadings of the historical record that define Mississippian polities "upward" to conform with a feudal political order applied erroneously to Southeastern societies by the Spanish chroniclers (Blitz 1993:7; Galloway 1995:110–111; Lankford 1981:53–54; Muller 1997:56–61; Swanton 1979:647, 650–652); (2) an objection that the "administrative hierarchy" of many Mississippian complex/paramount chiefdoms was not a centrally controlled, integrated polity of subordinate functionaries imposed to ensure the regular flow of a tax-like tribute but, instead, consisted of episodic prestations to seal temporary alliances between autonomous or semiautonomous political units (Blitz 1993:15–16; Milner 1990); (3) objections that the model has its source in synchronic ethnographic analogies drawn from complex tributary polities or archaic states found outside the Eastern Woodlands (i.e., Peebles and Kus 1977; Wright 1984) where a different set of historical, social, and environmental conditions were at work (Blitz 1993:21); and (4) objections that Mississippian chiefs did not exercise centralized or absolute economic control over affiliated populations to the degree implied by the forms of political economy (e.g., Welch 1991) intimately linked with the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model (Muller 1997).

Although I believe the degree of political centralization and economic control attributed to Mississippian chiefdoms often is exaggerated, I am not concerned with those specific issues here. Instead, my purpose is to show that the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model does not account for certain spatial arrangements of mound centers found in the South Appalachian area. These distinctive mound-center settlement patterns are more numerous than the primary–secondary center settlement pattern

thought to be diagnostic of complex chiefdoms. Furthermore, changes in these distinctive settlement patterns may indicate alternative forms of Mississippian chiefdom formation and organization not addressed by the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model. It must be emphasized that the South Appalachian dataset is used here as a case study of a chiefdom fission–fusion process that is not restricted to a particular geographical area, but may be inherent to all Mississippian sociopolitical formations.

Mississippian Polities in the South Appalachian Area

Two seminal works by Hally (1993, 1996) analyzed 47 Mississippian platform–mound sites occupied during the A.D. 1000–1550 interval in the South Appalachian area. Hally's studies provide evidence for the size, distribution, and growth of chiefdoms. In geographical scope and chronological precision, Hally's data are unequaled in Mississippian research. He accepts the basic propositions that sites with platform mounds functioned as political or administrative centers of chiefdoms, and that the duration of platform mound construction was equivalent to the duration of the chiefdom that used the mound. Hally discovered regularities in the spacing of sites where the construction of platform mounds was contemporary (same phase/period). Contemporary mound centers were distributed either less than 18 km or more than 32 km apart. Hally (1994a:167) proposed that "(1) contemporaneous mound sites separated by less than 18 km belonged to the same polity; (2) mound sites separated by distances greater than 32 km belonged to different polities; and (3) Mississippian polities seldom exceeded 40 km in spatial extent."

From stratigraphically documented stages of mound construction, Hally determined that polities were unstable. Only one Mississippian chiefdom lasted 200 years (9HK1) and most lasted a century or less. Mound centers were created, abandoned, and often reoccupied in a pattern that suggested frequent polity formation, movement, or collapse. Like Anderson, Hally considers factional competition and warfare to be the primary forces responsible for the pattern.

These spatial and temporal patterns are pervasive and unlikely to be the product of inadequate data. Very similar limitations on the spatial extent of political control characterizes chiefdoms cross-culturally (Johnson 1987; Renfrew 1975). The spatial similarities suggest that a common limit on the extent of

effective administration in a chiefdom was the maximum distance of one day's travel by foot. Therefore, the polity boundary should be no more than a 20-km radius extended out from the political center, which creates a 40 km-diameter polity size limitation (Hally 1993:162–163). Hally's polity size limit, derived from the observed spatial characteristics of the known universe of South Appalachian Mississippian centers, adds a realism not found in other methods of determining Mississippian polity boundaries, such as the XTENT algorithm (Scarry and Payne 1986). For example, the XTENT method assumes that the spatial extent of a center's political control is directly proportional to a center's size, but Hally's identification of the transportation and communication limits imposed by foot travel would apply to all centers regardless of size. As a result, Hally's proposed polity limits exist at a smaller spatial scale than the polity boundaries proposed by Scarry and Payne's XTENT study. Certainly large centers exerted greater regional influence than small centers, but political influences and effective administrative boundaries are not the same thing.

With notable exceptions (O'Brien 1989), the trend in recent interpretations of Mississippian chiefdoms has been away from conceptions of spatially extensive polities with tightly integrated political centralization. Sixteenth-century Coosa, for example, has been promoted as the prime example of a paramount chiefdom (Hudson et al. 1985). The various Spanish accounts indicate that Coosa exerted dominance beyond its administrative boundary (i.e., a complex chiefdom) but this extensive zone of influence was not a unified, centrally controlled polity or chiefdom as initially portrayed by some investigators (e.g., DePratter 1991). More recently, Coosa has been described as a set of relationships between relatively independent polities (Hudson 1997); as a political entity, however, it is "essentially invisible" archaeologically (Hally et al. 1990:133). The paramount chiefdom classification, defined by Anderson (1996a:232) as "direct or indirect control" between complex chiefdoms, is problematical because it has no obvious settlement pattern or material culture correlates (Hally 1994b:248–249; Muller 1997). The paramount chiefdom phenomenon is best interpreted as an ever-shifting alliance network of chiefdoms, perpetuated not by a fixed administrative order, but by threat, warfare, and temporary extortion inflicted on the weak by the powerful (Blitz 1993:15–16).

Mississippian polity boundaries and political zones of influence occurred at different spatial scales. At the smaller scale, the spatial regularities in mound center distributions discovered by Hally identify polity boundaries: intrapolity zones of direct political control. At a larger scale, the relationships glossed as paramount chiefdom extended across a geopolitical landscape: interpolity zones of indirect control or influence where powerful and weak polities sought or resisted tribute and alliance (Hally 1994a; King and Freer 1995). If political control declined as distance increased between mound centers (an assumption of both XTENT and Hally's analysis), then the paramount chiefdom phenomenon may be even more decentralized and poorly integrated than the simple and complex chiefdoms. If so, then the inability to reconcile Coosa's archaeological invisibility with Spanish descriptions of extensive territories under powerful lords is not such a paradox. In retrospect, the XTENT method may more useful in the analysis of interpolity zones of influence than it is for the identification of polity boundaries (i.e., Scarry and Payne 1986:Figure 4).

With Hally's 20-km radius as a polity boundary measure, it is possible to identify chiefdoms of different size or complexity: (1) simple chiefdoms can be identified by the presence of a one-mound center with no other contemporary mound centers within 20 km; (2) complex chiefdoms can be recognized by the presence of two or more contemporary mound centers within 20 km of each other that exhibit hierarchical size distinctions. During the A.D. 1000–1550 interval, Hally's dataset reveals at least 17 autonomous simple chiefdoms consisting of confirmed one-mound centers more than 20 km from a contemporary mound center. In contrast, there are only three confirmed cases of mound center arrangements that conform to the expected complex chiefdom settlement pattern of contemporary multiple-mound and single-mound centers situated within 20 km of each other. These cases are (1) Etowah (9BR1, at least three mounds) and the single-mound sites 9BR3, 9BR6, and probably 9CK5, in use during the early and late Willbanks phases, A.D. 1250–1375 (King 1996); (2) Little Egypt (9MU102, two or three mounds) and the single-mound site 9GO4, in use during the Barnett phase, A.D. 1450–1550 (Hally and Langford 1988); and (3) Scull Shoals (9GE4, two mounds) and the single-mound site Dyar (9GE5), in use during the Iron

Horse-Duvall phases, A.D. 1450–1550 (Williams and Shapiro 1996).[2] Of the three complex chiefdoms, only the Etowah system has impressive archaeological evidence of size and complexity; the other two systems have few mounds and only a single, secondary center each.

Hally (1996:125) found "very few examples" of Anderson's cycling chiefdoms. He observed that (1) most polities began and ended as simple chiefdoms (one-mound sites); (2) in only a few cases did it appear possible that complex chiefdoms developed locally out of an antecedent simple chiefdom; and (3) when a complex chiefdom ended, there was no clear evidence that it passed back to the simple chiefdom form (Hally 1996:125). He concluded that either chiefdoms did not cycle between simple and complex forms as proposed by Anderson or that this process occurred too rapidly to be detected archaeologically.

In addition to the sites that match spatial expectations for simple and complex chiefdoms, there are two other kinds of mound-center settlement patterns in the South Appalachian dataset that do not: grouped single-mound sites and isolated multiple-mound sites. These settlement patterns diverge from the expectations of the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model in two basic ways. Within Hally's 20 km-radius polity boundary, there are either two or more one-mound centers without a multiple-mound primary center, or a multiple-mound primary center without one-mound secondary centers. While these mound center arrangements have not gone unnoticed, previous commentary has not addressed the possibility that such sites may constitute different forms of organization and alternative "cycles" of chiefdom development.

Grouped single-mound sites are two or more single-mound sites with contemporaneous (same phase/period) mound construction located closer than 20 km to each other. There is no contemporary multiple-mound center within 20 km of the grouped centers. Hally (1993:160) observes that it is uncertain whether this settlement pattern represents a complex chiefdom, but he does not elaborate further. One could define grouped single-mound sites collectively as a single decision-making level above the local moundless communities or households, and therefore a single simple chiefdom with two or more centers. But how were the grouped mound centers integrated socially and differentiated politically? Was one center subordinate to another? Because grouped

Table 1. Paired Single-Mound Sites.

Site Name	Site Number	Interval of Mound Construction	Component	Distance Between Sites
Tugalo–Chauga	9ST1-38OC47	A.D. 1100–1200	Jarrett	8.2 km
Eastwood–Nacoochee	9WH2-9WH3	A.D. 1450–1550	Middle Lamar	2.7 km
Neisler–Hartley-Posey	9TR1-9TR12	A.D. 1450–1550	Lockett	4.7 km
Park–Avery	9TP41-9TP64	A.D. 1450–1550	Bull Creek	15.0 km

References: Hally 1993, 1994b, 1996.

single-mound sites are of equivalent size, an "admin-istrative hierarchy" of primary and secondary mound centers is absent, and the number of decision-mak-ing levels is not evident. However, a closely spaced arrangement does imply a political association or entity composed of allied, constituent single-mound centers (Figure 1c). This mound- center spatial pat-tern and its implied form of organization does not match the simple–complex chiefdom model.

Four of the grouped single-mound sites are paired centers (Table 1). In addition, there is at least one grouped arrangement of three contemporaneous sin-gle-mound centers: Tugalo (9ST1)-Chauga (38OC47)-Estatoe (9ST3). This grouped arrange-ment was established between A.D. 1450–1550. The three mounds are within 10 km or less of each other on the upper Savannah River. Other paired or grouped mound centers exist in the South Appalachian area (and elsewhere in the Southeast) but the chronology of mound construction at these sites remains unconfirmed.[3]

Isolated multiple-mound sites are sites with two or more mounds spaced more than 20 km from the nearest contemporary (same phase/period) mound center. There are no contemporary single-mound centers located within 20 km of isolated multiple-mound centers. Therefore the settlement pattern of primary and secondary mound centers—the diag-nostic archaeological measure of administrative hier-

archy in complex chiefdoms–does not exist. All mounds in the chiefdom exist at a single site (Fig-ure 1d). Isolated multiple-mound sites exhibit one decision-making level above the household or local community level and so, strictly speaking, conform to the simple chiefdom concept. As multiple-mound centers, however, they exhibit a wide range of sizes and therefore different degrees of inferred political complexity. There are a total of eight isolated mul-tiple-mound sites where the dates of mound con-struction are confirmed by excavation (Table 2). The Etowah and Shinholser sites conformed to this pat-tern twice during their long occupation spans, before and after abandonment episodes. Other isolated mul-tiple-mound sites may exist but the chronology of mound construction at these places remains unknown, and the excavations required to show that no contemporaneous, single-mound centers existed within 20 km have not taken place.

In the South Appalachian area, isolated multiple-mound sites were present in all time periods. Most of these sites had only two mounds in contemporane-ous use. The site with the greatest number of coeval mounds, Macon Plateau (9BI1, eight mounds), also was the first Mississippian multiple-mound center established in the area. Macon Plateau, and possibly other isolated multiple-mound sites (e.g., 9RI1), appeared in their respective locales without detectable antecedent single-mound centers.[4] Such develop-

Table 2. Isolated Multiple-Mound Sites.

Site name	Site Number	Number of Mounds in Use	Interval of Mound Construction	Component
Macon Plateau	9BI1	8	A.D. 1000–1100	Macon Plateau
Etowah	9BR1	2 ?	A.D. 1100–1200	Late Etowah
Shinholser	9BL1	2	A.D. 1250–1375	Scull Shoals
Hollywood	9RI1	2	A.D. 1250–1350	Hollywood
Rembert	9EB1	5	A.D. 1350–1450	Rembert
Shoulderbone	9HK1	2	A.D. 1350–1450	Duvall, Iron Horse
Little Egypt	9MU102	2	A.D. 1375–1450	Little Egypt
Etowah	1BR1	2 or more	A.D. 1475–1625	Brewster, Barnett
Shinholser	9BL1	2	A.D. 1450–1550	Dyar
Lamar	9BI2	2	A.D. 1450–1550	Cowarts

References: Anderson 1994, 1996a; Hally 1993, 1994b, 1996; King 1996; Williams and Shapiro 1996.

ments seem contrary to the expectations of the simple-complex chiefdom cycle model, unless the antecedent "stage" of one-mound sites occurred elsewhere, some distance from the multiple-mound center locales. Apparently, some multiple-mound sites formed rapidly, perhaps by the arrival of immigrants in a new territory (Williams 1994). Isolated multiple-mound centers also occur elsewhere in the Southeast, such as Singer-Moye (9SW2, eight mounds) and Rood's Landing (9SW1, eight mounds) in southwestern Georgia (Knight 1979; Scarry and Payne 1986), Obion (40HY14, seven mounds) in Tennessee (Garland 1992), Owl Creek (22CS502, five mounds) in Mississippi (Rafferty 1995), and Bessemer (1JE12, three mounds) in Alabama (Welch 1994).

The Chiefdom Fission–Fusion Process

Archaeologists identify the central places of Mississippian simple chiefdoms by the presence of a single platform mound: a civic-ceremonial facility for an affiliated population (Hally 1993; Steponaitis 1978). Platform mounds served as powerful symbols of group unity and chiefly authority (Lindauer and Blitz 1997). As an architectural feature of standard form but variable size, a platform mound may signify a minimal or basic political unit. In reality, this situation may be more complicated than a one-to-one relationship between a mound and a political unit because not all platform mounds served identical functions. Platform mounds often served multiple purposes, such as elite residential or council house facilities and temple/charnel mortuary facilities. These facilities may occur on separate mounds. So a two-mound site of this sort might still represent a single constituency or simple chiefdom. It is unclear whether the difference between a one-mound center and a two-mound center marks a significant sociopolitical distinction. However, sites with more than two contemporary platform mounds suggest the presence of multiple constituent groups, each with its emblematic monument of residential/mortuary function.

When encompassed by Hally's 40 km-diameter polity boundary, the number of mounds in contemporaneous use provides a general measure of the number of constituent political units that composed a Mississippian chiefdom. If the presence of contemporaneous, multiple platform mounds within a polity may be taken as evidence of the collective participation of multiple constituent political units, then the degree of regional political centralization can be measured by the relative distance between platform mounds: Centralized power was most developed when coeval mounds were grouped together at a site and weakest when mounds were dispersed widely. The fundamental settlement dynamic revealed in the South Appalachian dataset is a fission–fusion process in which small and large chiefdoms formed by the aggregation and dispersal of minimal or basic political units.

Before the Precolumbian fission–fusion process is explored further, it is necessary to review the nature of historic Southeastern political units and document the circumstances under which such units aggregated and dispersed. A fundamental mechanism of sociopolitical integration and differentiation in indigenous Southeastern societies, the fission–fusion process was of central importance in chiefdom formation. Once this is understood, certain expectations about Mississippian mound-center settlement patterns are created that can be recognized in the South Appalachian dataset.

Historic Southeastern Political Units

In the eighteenth-century Southeast, the basic political unit was the *okla* (Choctaw) or *talwa* (Muskogee) polity, defined as a "people" or "town" that shared a common civic-ceremonial center. Although by the eighteenth century the placement of civic-ceremonial facilities on platform mounds was in decline in favor of the nonmound rotunda and square ground, the new features were transformations of the key elements originally found atop Mississippian platform mounds (Howard 1968; Hudson 1976:221–222; Knight 1989; Swanton 1928a; Waring 1968). This difference in the form of civic-ceremonial facilities, while important, should not obscure awareness that the eighteenth-century *okla-talwa* was organized as a simple chiefdom (Hudson 1976:210–211). As indicated by shared criteria such as population size, ranked kin groups, and hereditary leadership roles, there is no reason to maintain that Mississippian simple chiefdoms were larger or more complex political units than historic period *okla- talwas* (Blitz 1993:9; Muller 1997:200–201). Historic period *okla-talwas* existed as single, isolated political units or clustered together to form larger political entities or confederacies. *Okla-talwas*, as basic political units, were combined like "building-blocks" to create polities of different sizes and degrees of centralized power (Blitz 1993:11–13;

Lankford 1981:53–54; Muller 1997:193–196). *Okla-talwas* were ranked relative to each other as well as ranked internally (Knight 1990). Through direct historical analogy, it is reasonable to suggest that the *okla-talwa* political unit, or something very similar to it, originated in Mississippian times, and that many Mississippian platform mounds were the civic-ceremonial facilities of Precolumbian *okla-talwas* (Blitz 1993:12).

Under conditions of stress, historic period *okla-talwas* fissioned into "mother and daughter chiefdoms" (Hudson 1976:233). The fission process was mentioned by various Euroamerican observers. One such commentator, Thomas Nairne, described the fission process in 1708 as a series of village movements in which a senior-junior relationship was maintained between the fissioning chiefdoms: "If ye removeall be but a small way, they continue one nation...but if...they remove a great way they by degrees alter their Language & become an other people" (Nairne 1988:62). Nairne (1988:62) stated that the fissioning began "Upon some disgust, or other reason..." If the stress was of an internal political nature, perhaps it was factional competition over chiefly succession, identified by Anderson (1994:84–93) as a major source of instability in Mississippian polities. Chiefdom fissioning was probably the social mechanism whereby breakaway Mississippian populations spread across the South Appalachian area to establish new single-mound centers.

The fusion of autonomous simple chiefdoms to create a larger political union is also documented in early historical accounts (Hudson 1976:233). While the confederacies of the Cherokees or Creeks are familiar, less well known was the fusion of two autonomous simple chiefdoms, a settlement arrangement that Willis (1980) referred to as "twin towns." Twin towns represented two *oklas* or *talwas* that joined into a political union, yet maintained separate civic-ceremonial facilities: "They were composed of two peoples, two societies, two governments and two religions" (Willis 1980:98). Twin towns existed among the Choctaws (Mereness 1916:274), Cherokees (Hudson 1976:233–234; McDowell 1958:82, 256; Mereness 1916:112; Reid 1970:30–31), Creeks (Swanton 1979:81, 87–88, 116, 144), and others. Two "peoples" joined in this manner were common in the Lower Mississippi valley in the early eighteenth century, and include Acolapissa- Tangipahoa, Koroa-Yazoo, Pascagoula-Capina, Tunica-Houma,

and Taensa-Bayougoula (Swanton 1911:281, 294, 311; Swanton 1979:147). Fusion was fraught with social tensions; eventually several of these pairs attacked one another and dissolved the union.

It is not always clear from the historical references if twin towns represented a polity with two basic political units in one or two towns; apparently both situations existed. One reason for this ambiguity is that indigenous Southeastern towns often did not conform to Euroamerican definitions of towns as compact settlements with demarcated boundaries. Frequently, historic period "towns" had a settlement pattern of households dispersed widely around a civic-ceremonial center, a common settlement form in Mississippian times as well. Thus the civic-ceremonial facilities of each constituent political unit that composed twin towns could be situated some distance apart or arranged closely together. For example, consider Colonel Chicken's 1725 comment on the Cherokee Great Tellico-Chatuga union: "Here are two town housses [sic] in this Town by reason they are the people of Two towns settled together" (Mereness 1916:112). Willis (1980:98, 100, 110) cited the Mugulasha-Bayougoula union of 1699 as another twin town. Father Du Ru described it as a settlement with separate temples for each group, placed on a common plaza. Willis went on to suggest that Mississippian sites with two mounds and multiple ceramic complexes may represent twin towns. Although Willis's choice of Precolumbian mound sites to illustrate this last point was flawed by poor data, his theory has interesting implications for Mississippian chiefdom formation.

Willis's study of historic twin towns provides an insight into the circumstances of their creation. A twin town was established when a formerly autonomous polity suffered a decisive military defeat or some other disaster, was compelled to abandon its settlements, and sought refuge at a neighboring polity with whom they enjoyed peaceful relations (Willis 1980:104–105). This refugee situation might be short-lived if the host polity negotiated a peaceful end to hostilities with the refugee group's enemy, but if the refugee arrangement were prolonged, a twin town formed. When this occurred, the refugee political unit was forced to accept a subordinate "stinkard" rank within the new union of conjoined chiefdoms (Swanton 1911:181–182, 185–186). An obvious benefit to the host polity was a gain in military strength that might tip the regional balance of

power in their favor. If a similar fusion process was at work in the Mississippian South Appalachian area, then a mechanism for the origin of contemporary paired centers has been identified. If the fusion process amplified to include the recruitment of multiple political units, then clusters of single-mound sites or even multiple-mound sites may have been created in this manner (Willis 1980:107).

As is well known, historic period Southeastern dual organization classified and ranked individuals, kin groups, and basic political units in an asymmetric value system coded red-white (Hudson 1976; Swanton 1928b). White political units were deemed senior, original, stable, and high-rank. Red political units were coded junior, newcomer, volatile, and low-rank. The system probably originated as multiple kin groups formed communities and later served as a logical device to link and integrate basic political units in a system of reciprocal and ranked relationships (Galloway 1994:407; Haas 1940; Hudson 1976:234–239; Swanton 1911:181–182, 185–186). For example, among the disparate peoples who formed the historic period Creek confederacy, red-white dualism specified moiety divisions and ordered sets of *talwas* into more inclusive political entities (Swanton 1928b). Chiefdom fission–fusion created a white–senior:red–junior relationship. A weaker political unit added to a stronger polity took a red–junior-subordinate or "stinkard" rank in the new political formation. Red–white dualism mediated the chiefdom fission–fusion process in the early historic period and perhaps these institutions existed in Mississippian society.

Mississippian Mound Centers

Willis's historic twin towns may be the same phenomenon that Williams and Shapiro (1990) called "paired towns" and what I refer to above as grouped single-mound sites, which occur mostly as paired sites less than 15 km apart (Table 1). Williams and Shapiro proposed that Mississippian "paired towns" were created by sequential alternations of mound occupation between two closely spaced sites; the sites were not occupied simultaneously. They suggested that sequential alternating moves between paired mound sites were prompted either by localized environmental concerns (e.g., depletion of firewood) or some cultural imperative that compelled a new chief to relocate the civic-ceremonial center close to his or her local support group at the time of

succession to office. Hally rejected these explanations. He observed that some paired mound sites were so closely spaced that local resource depletion was probably not the motivation for changing the location of mound-building activities (Hally 1996:115) Also, Hally (1996:114) offered this counterpoint:"...if platform mounds and the buildings they supported were important symbols of chiefly continuity and legitimacy, it seems unlikely that they would be periodically and voluntarily abandoned, especially at the time of peaceful succession." Hally found no clear examples of alternating, back-and-forth occupations between paired mound sites in the South Appalachian dataset. Instead, there appear to be cases of sequential movement between closely spaced paired sites (i.e., a mound center used in one phase was abandoned and in the subsequent phase a new mound center was established nearby): "abandonment of the old mound and construction of the new mound [at another center] may have been symbolic acts to emphasize the commencement of a new chiefly lineage" (Hally 1996:115; emphasis added). Put another way, such a move was likely only if power shifted from one lineage or faction to another at the time of a contested chiefly succession.

If succession to chiefly office at a mound center was contested, the polity might fission along factional lines. Of course, the weaker or losing faction might accept a subordinate position and remain in the chiefdom. Under such circumstances, it is uncertain if a losing faction would attempt to establish their own civic-ceremonial mound nearby, for this action might be a threat or affront to the reigning chief's authority. If environmental and social circumscription were not severe, one possible outcome of contested succession would be for the chiefdom to fission, and the losing faction emigrate to establish a new center at a considerable distance from the natal center (Krause 1988:101–102). As mentioned previously, some paired mound sites were contemporary (same phase/period) occupations (Table 1). I think the sociopolitical circumstances under which contemporary paired centers were created must have been different than the situation Williams and Shapiro or Hally proposed for the creation of sequentially-occupied paired centers. The attraction or recruitment of weak refugee or allied political units to a strong chiefdom under the crisis conditions that Willis identified as the basis for the formation of historic twin towns was probably the same situation that created

contemporary paired centers or even some multiple-mound centers.

Multiple-mound sites can be viewed as compositions of repetitive architectural units maintained by social segments of a total site population (Lindauer and Blitz 1997). At Mississippian multiple-mound sites, it is common for one or two mounds to be much larger than the others. These largest mounds, linked to the principal chief and a high-rank faction, may represent the collective labor of all social segments at the site, perhaps as a form of tribute or sumptuary rule to acknowledge the ranked social order. The different sizes of the smaller mounds may reflect the relative size of the labor pool available to each lower-rank social segment (Lindauer and Blitz 1997). To speculate further, differential allocations of labor may have served as a ritualized integrative device or compromise to counterbalance factionalism: Subordinate groups could construct lower, smaller mounds for their own constituency so long as labor was supplied for the symbol of collective unity and leadership, the main mound of the principal chief and superordinate group.

Dualities, symmetries, and alignments in mound arrangements at sites underscore the composite character of Mississippian polities. For example, Waring (1968:56) proposed that the paired structures on the split-level summit of the Hiwassee Island platform mound signified the presence of red-white dual leadership positions. This assertion is not inconsistent with other suggestions that it resulted from the merger of two peoples in a twin town (Willis 1980:113) or the fusion of two chiefdoms (Hudson 1976:522). Peebles (1971, 1983) considered the spatial configuration of the Moundville site to be indicative of a planned community that embodied the principles of a ranked social order: The largest mounds and the mounds with the richest burials demarcated the precinct of the highest-rank group; and elite residence mounds were paired with mortuary temple mounds in an alternating arrangement around the rectilinear plaza perimeter. More recently, Knight (1998) confirmed the functional pairing of the Moundville mounds and identified additional patterns: Mound volume diminishes north to south with distance from the northern superordinate precinct; and each pair of elite residential and temple mortuary mounds was probably the facility of a constituent kin group. Most revealing was Knight's discovery that the spatial patterns of Moundville's

mounds mirrored the ranked arrangement of subclan structures in a historic Chickasaw camp square.

The ranking principles of the historic campsquare and square-ground layouts, with clan-affiliated architectural units and possible ancestral roots in Mississippian mound arrangements, were symbolized and structured by red-white dualism (Swanton 1928a, 1931). The main point here is that multiple-mound sites were composite compositions of architectural units, some of which were the corporate constructions of constituent groups. I think it is reasonable to conclude, through the extension of a direct historical analogy, that each constituent, mound-affiliated group was the potential nucleus for a minimal or basic political unit. The chiefdom fission–fusion process brought together or pulled apart mound-affiliated political units to create large or small chiefdoms.

One might object that the chiefdom fission–fusion process of the historic period was a product of the forces unleashed by Euroamerican contact and therefore a poor analogy for Mississippian sociopolitical dynamics. But the basic causal factors of internal factionalism and external warfare were certainly present in the Mississippian world. Factionalism is an inherent, unstable force in any kin-based political entity, and a substantial obstacle to political centralization (Brumfiel and Fox 1994). Mississippian warfare was of sufficient intensity in the South Appalachian area to create fortifications, buffer zones, site abandonment, and even regional depopulation (Anderson 1994:309–311). Under such circumstances, previously independent simple chiefdoms might cluster together to create paired or grouped single-mound settlement patterns indicative of a political entity larger than the constituent units: a Mississippian confederacy. I am not making a claim that a specific political entity, such as the Creek confederacy, existed prior to the eighteenth century. I only wish to suggest that the general conditions known to create historic period confederacies by a chiefdom fission–fusion process were present in Mississippian times.

Conjoined chiefdoms or twin towns often formed the central or core settlement in historic period confederations (Willis 1980:114). If Mississippian paired or grouped single-mound settlement patterns were the product of a confederacy similar to those of the historic period Southeast, each participating single-mound center would have had considerable

autonomy. Nevertheless, a confederation of grouped single-mound sites implies a greater degree of political integration or a different form of polity organization than that found in an isolated, simple chiefdom with only one mound center. Even greater political integration and power was possible when basic political units massed together at a multiple-mound site.

Throughout this paper, I have followed common archaeological practice and assumed that sites with evidence of same-phase mound construction were in simultaneous use for at least some portion of the phase interval. That assumption may not be valid (Hally 1993:148). If the duration of mound use was sometimes less than the 100- to 150-year phase intervals in the South Appalachian area, then some same-phase mound sites may be sequential rather than simultaneous occupations. If so, then some grouped single-mound sites may represent sequential moves of the mound centers used by autonomous simple chiefdoms, and not paired-center chiefdoms or confederacies. Concentrations of three or more same-phase mounds increase the probability that at least some were in use simultaneously. Of course, if we reject the assumption that same-phase mounds were in simultaneous use, then this does great damage to the archaeological identification of complex chiefdoms. Indeed, it raises the possibility that some cases of so-called primary and secondary centers were not contemporary but sequential products of the fission–fusion process.

In such a scenario, what appear to be secondary centers arrayed around a primary center need not represent an extended complex chiefdom at the peak of regional control and centralized power. Instead, the supposed secondary centers might be a settlement pattern of isolated or grouped single-mound sites immediately before a multiple-mound center was established or just after such a center was abandoned or depopulated. In the former case, single-mound site populations would abandon their old centers and establish new mounds at a single site to create a powerful multiple-mound chiefdom. In the latter case, "secondary" centers would be the product of decentralization and fissioning at a multiple-mound center as the constituent political units relocated to establish separate, one-mound centers nearby. The relocated mound centers would share a common history and cultural tradition. Such a rearrangement of equivalent mound centers might, under the right circumstances, form the core of a confederacy. Rather

than the simple-complex chiefdom cycle, this alternative sociopolitical transformation would "cycle" between single-mound sites and isolated multiple-mound sites.

The Savannah River Chiefdoms Reconsidered

With the chiefdom fission–fusion process of the historic period in mind, a brief reassessment of Mississippian mound center settlement patterns in one region of the South Appalachian area is in order. In considerable detail, Anderson (1994, 1996b) has presented a diachronic analysis of Mississippian mound centers in the Savannah River valley of Georgia and South Carolina, and interpreted changes in the size and location of centers as examples of the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model. I propose that the chiefdom fission–fusion process provides a more informative perspective on these changes. Figure 2 reproduces a series of maps by Anderson (1994:Figures 40–45; also 1996b:Figures 8.3–8.5) that plot the location of platform-mound centers in the valley at different points in time between A.D. 1100–1600.[5] I have followed Anderson's dating of the sites. Mississippian chiefdoms can be identified on these maps as contemporary platform-mound centers contained within 40 km-diameter polity boundaries.

The first Mississippian platform-mound centers to appear in the valley (Figure 2a), Tugalo and Chauga, were paired single-mound sites. Mound construction at these sites is contemporary (same phase/period), so it is possible that Tugalo and Chauga formed a paired-mound polity. Next, at A.D. 1200 (Figure 2b), Tugalo and Chauga were abandoned, and a new paired arrangement, Tate and Beaverdam, was established. Another paired-center arrangement, Lawton and Red Lake, appeared further downstream. Lawton and Red Lake are sites with two mounds each, paired together. Irene, an isolated two-mound site, arose at the river's mouth. Around A.D. 1250, an additional isolated two-mound site, Hollywood, was constructed in the middle of the valley (Figure 2c). Note that new centers were established in the region from A.D. 1100–1250 without detectable antecedent examples of isolated, single-mound chiefdoms. Perhaps paired sites originated as single-mound sites that were joined later by immigrant groups who established a second center nearby. Alternatively, paired sites may have been formed by the sequential relocation of a mound center. Either process must have occurred rapidly.

▲ Single-mound Center

■ Multiple-mound Center

(N) Number of Mounds
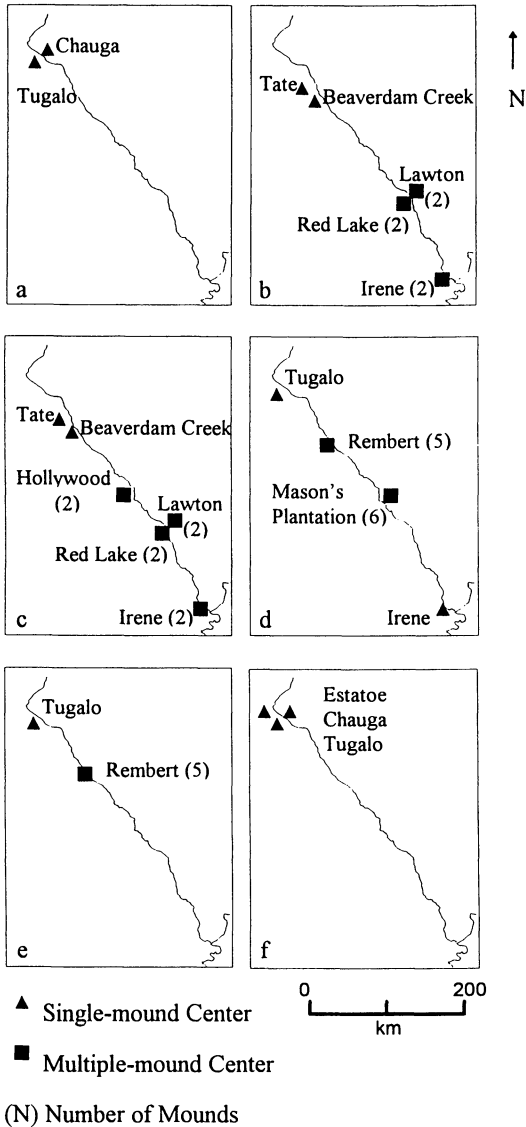
Figure 2. Mississippian Centers in the Savannah River Valley: (a) A.D. 1100–1150; (b) A.D. 1200; (c) A.D. 1250; (d) A.D. 1350; (e) A.D. 1400; (f) A.D. 1450–1600.

The assortment of mound centers at A.D. 1250 formed four polities: one paired single-mound cluster (Tate and Beaverdam), two isolated two-mound sites (Hollywood and Irene), and the unusual paired two-mound site cluster (Lawton and Red Lake). If these different mound center settlement patterns are forced to fit a simple chiefdom classification (Anderson 1996b:160), it is at the expense of ignoring possible sociopolitical variation. Not surprisingly, investigators are uncertain or express contradictory

statements as to whether such settlement patterns are to be considered simple or complex chiefdoms (Anderson 1994:237; Hally 1993:160). One reason for the ambiguity is that these mound center arrangements do not easily fit the settlement pattern expectations of the simple–complex chiefdom model. There are different kinds or sizes of chiefdoms in the valley, but centers within each polity boundary are equivalent, and cannot be arranged into a hierarchy of size and complexity.

Anderson identified four chiefdoms spaced out evenly along the length of the valley at A.D. 1350 (Figure 2d): Tugalo (one mound, reoccupied), Rembert (five mounds), Mason's Plantation (six mounds), and Irene (one mound in use). The available evidence indicates that Rembert and Mason's Plantation were isolated multiple-mound centers. Because the occupation interval of Mason's Plantation is unknown, it may have been contemporary with Hollywood sometime prior to Hollywood's abandonment ca. A.D. 1350. This hypothetical paired configuration would make for a powerful chiefdom, but it is an odd spatial arrangement for the primary-secondary centers expected of a complex chiefdom. The two sites are only a few kilometers apart, hardly an efficient settlement deployment for administrating regional tribute flow. More likely, the centers were not contemporary, or were part of a fusion process that had little to do with the imposition of hierarchical administrative centers.

The fission-fusion process provides a parsimonious explanation for the origin of the six-mound Mason's Plantation chiefdom: it may have formed by the relocation and fusion of the antecedent chiefdoms, Hollywood (two mounds), and Lawton-Red Lake (four mounds). Similarly, Tate and Beaverdam may have relocated a short distance to create Rembert. Although Anderson (1996b:160, 162) identifies Rembert and Mason's Plantation as complex chiefdoms, he does not identify the associated secondary centers. I see no clear evidence of an "administrative hierarchy" of secondary centers affiliated with these isolated multiple-mound sites. Instead of complex chiefdoms, Rembert and Mason's Plantation appear to represent a different form of Mississippian political organization, one where all of the mounds affiliated with the chiefdom existed at a single site.

Rembert and Mason's Plantation are about 100 km apart. The only other chiefdoms in the valley at this time, Tugalo and Irene, were presumably

excluded from the new political order. These weak, autonomous, simple chiefdoms were located about as far away as possible from the two powerful multiple-mound chiefdoms. So while some mound-affiliated political units fused, other units persevered through isolation or in other ways resisted domination. At A.D. 1400 (Figure 2e), Rembert and Tugalo continued as before, but platform mounds were no longer in use at Mason's Plantation or Irene (Anderson 1994:242).

By A.D. 1450–1600 (Figure 2f), Rembert was abandoned, and much of the Savannah River valley was depopulated. This regional depopulation is thought to be the result of unsuccessful competition with more powerful chiefdoms in adjacent regions (Anderson et al. 1986). Chauga, long abandoned, was reoccupied to create a single-mound site paired with Tugalo, 8.2 km away. Estatoe became the third center in this grouped single-mound cluster; it is located 6.3 km from Tugalo. The three contemporary centers probably formed as the result of population relocation upstream from the abandoned Rembert center (Anderson 1996b:163). Isolated, antecedent Tugalo was in a position to receive immigrants from Rembert and thus reinforce its defenses. This final fission–fusion process, at the dawn of European contact, did not result in a cycle back to autonomous simple chiefdoms. It would be more precise to identify the Tugalo-Chauga-Estatoe political entity as a confederacy. All three sites were important Lower Cherokee towns in an eighteenth-century confederacy, although mound construction had ceased ca. A.D. 1600 (Anderson 1994:242–245).

Conclusions

In the Mississippian South Appalachian area, within 40 km-diameter polity boundaries, the isolated single-mound center, interpreted as a simple chiefdom, was the most common mound-center settlement pattern (N=17 confirmed). The primary-secondary center pattern indicative of complex chiefdoms was rarest (N=3 confirmed). Two other mound-center settlement patterns, the grouped or paired single-mound site pattern (N=5 confirmed), and the isolated multiple-mound site pattern (N=10 confirmed), were common. Like the simple-complex chiefdom cycle model, recognition of the chiefdom fission–fusion process is an acknowledgment that large chiefdoms may develop from small chiefdoms, then change again into less centralized polities. But,

as Hally pointed out, these political transitions rarely followed a linear simple chiefdom–complex chiefdom–simple chiefdom sequence. I propose that the fundamental political dynamic consisted of oscillations between dispersed and concentrated regional power centers, situations in which mound-affiliated political units assembled and disassembled to create polities of different size and complexity. By this process, chiefdoms assumed one of the three common polity forms without ever establishing hierarchical administrative centers.

The fact that complex chiefdoms were rare in this part of the Southeast suggests that regional-scale, centrally controlled, tribute-based political economies were not the primary forces that propelled most Mississippian political cycles or influenced the distribution of most mound centers. If the intrapolity flow of resources or tribute was an important determinant of mound-center distribution patterns, as is often supposed, then in the majority of these polities the flow was localized—from households to individual centers. In other words, the spacing of most centers implies that resource flows were directed to a specific center, and did not pass through a hierarchical chain of subordinate centers centrally organized to support a superordinate regional center.

I agree with most proponents of the simple-complex chiefdom cycle model that internal factionalism and external warfare drove Mississippian political cycles. These factors are certainly implicated in historical accounts of the chiefdom fission–fusion process. Furthermore, interpolity competition for the prestige goods used to validate authority and alliance probably shaped mound center distributions to an unknown degree. As each of the common mound-center settlement patterns reveal, however, the efficient administration of regional tribute flow was not the primary organizing force in most Mississippian polities, even large chiefdoms. Instead, the chiefdom fission–fusion process suggests that polity formation and settlement patterns were shaped by a compromise between the desire for autonomy and the need for mutual security. In contrast to the conventional interpretation of Mississippian polities, it is possible that political power had the greatest efficacy when multiple, mound-affiliated political units were concentrated at a single site. Viewed this way, a dispersed distribution of mound centers in a polity may not represent the extension of regional political control, but quite the

opposite—its decentralization (Clay 1997; Muller 1997:199–200, 397–398).

One component of the fission-fusion process is population movement. Population movement continues to play an explanatory role in Mississippian research (Williams 1994). Although it often is acknowledged as an important mechanism of culture change, the theoretical status of population movement is underdeveloped in Southeastern archaeology. Perhaps this is one reason why such explanations are often rejected by processual archaeologists (Schroedl 1994; Smith 1984). Further examination of the chiefdom fission–fusion process may help change this situation, once it is realized that population movement is an integral aspect of Mississippian sociopolitical formations, and relevant to a host of related issues such as the Mississippian emergence, interregional interaction, resistance to hegemonic control, and ethnogenesis.

A much-repeated note is the acknowledgment that Mississippian societies were "diverse" or "variable" (e.g., Scarry 1996; Rogers and Smith 1995). As presently conceived and applied archaeologically, the simple–complex chiefdom cycle model is too limited to encompass the sociopolitical variability that once existed in the South Appalachian area and the American Southeast. We need to pay closer attention to those mound-center settlement patterns that "don't fit" the expected order. Once the simple-complex chiefdom cycle model is augmented to incorporate this perceived variability, our reconstructions of Mississippian polity histories may take off in new and unanticipated directions.

References Cited

Anderson, D. G.
  1994 *The Savannah River Chiefdoms.* University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
  1996a Fluctuations between Simple and Complex Chiefdoms: Cycling in the Late Prehistoric Southeast. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, edited by J. F. Scarry, pp. 231–252. The Ripley P. Bullen Series, Florida Museum of Natural History, The University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
  1996b Chiefly Cycling and Large-Scale Abandonments as Viewed from the Savannah River Basin. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, edited by J. F. Scarry, pp. 150–191. The Ripley P. Bullen Series, Florida Museum of Natural History, University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
Anderson, D. G., D. J. Hally, and J. L. Rudolph
  1986 The Mississippian Occupation of the Savannah River Valley. *Southeastern Archaeology* 5:32–51.
Blitz, J. H.
  1993 *Ancient Chiefdoms of the Tombigbee.* University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
Bozeman, T. K.
  1981 Moundville Phase Sites in the Black Warrior Valley: Preliminary Results of the UMMA Survey. *Southeastern Archaeological Conference Bulletin* 24:84–86.
Brumfiel, E. M., and J. W. Fox (editors)
  1994 *Factional Competition in the New World.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Clay, R. B.
  1997 The Mississippian Succession on the Lower Ohio. *Southeastern Archaeology* 16:16–32.
DePratter, C. B.
  1991 *Late Prehistoric and Early Historic Chiefdoms in the Southeastern United States.* Garland, New York.
Emerson, T. E.
  1997 *Cahokia and the Archaeology of Power.* University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
Galloway, P.
  1994 Confederacy as a Solution to Chiefdom Dissolution: Historical Evidence in the Choctaw Case. In *The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South 1521–1704*, edited by C. Hudson and C. C. Tesser, pp. 393–420. University of Georgia Press, Athens.
  1995 *Choctaw Genesis 1500–1700.* University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
Garland, E. B.
  1992 *The Obion Site, An Early Mississippian Center in Western Tennessee.* Report of Investigations 7. Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State.
Haas, M. R.
  1940 Creek Inter-Town Relations. *American Anthropologist* 42:479–489.
Hally, D. J.
  1993 The Territorial Size of Mississippian Chiefdoms. In *Archaeology of Eastern North America, Papers in Honor of Stephen Williams*, edited by J. B. Stoltman, pp. 143–168. Archaeological Report No. 25. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.
  1994a An Overview of Lamar Culture. In *Ocmulgee Archaeology 1936–1986*, edited by D. J. Hally, pp. 144–174. University of Georgia Press, Athens.
  1994b The Chiefdom of Coosa. In *The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South 1521–1704*, edited by C. Hudson and C. C. Tesser, pp. 227–253. University of Georgia Press, Athens.
  1996 Platform-Mound Construction and the Instability of Mississippian Chiefdoms. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, edited by J. F. Scarry, pp. 92–127. The Ripley P. Bullen Series, Florida Museum of Natural History, University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
Hally, D. J., and J. B. Langford Jr.
  1988 *Mississippi Period Archaeology of the Georgia Valley and Ridge Province.* Laboratory of Archaeology Series Report 25. Department of Anthropology, University of Georgia, Athens.

Hally, D. J., M. T. Smith, and J. B. Langford Jr.
  1990 The Archaeological Reality of DeSoto's Coosa.
    Columbian Consequences, Vol. 2, Archaeological and His-
    torical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East, edited
    by D. H. Thomas, pp. 121–138. Smithsonian Institution
    Press, Washington.
Howard, J. H.
  1968 *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and Its Inter-*
    pretation. Memoir No. 6. Missouri Archaeological Society,
    Columbia.
Hudson, C.
  1976 *The Southeastern Indians*. University of Tennessee Press,
    Knoxville.
  1997 *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*. University of
    Georgia Press, Athens.
Hudson, C. M., M. T. Smith, D. J. Hally, R. Polhemus, and C. B.
    DePratter
  1985 Coosa: A Chiefdom in the Sixteenth-Century United
    States. *American Antiquity* 52:840– 85.
Johnson, G. A.
  1977 Aspects of Regional Analysis in Archaeology. *Annual*
    Review of Anthropology 6:479–506.
  1987 The Changing Organization of Uruk Administration on
    the Susiana Plain. In *The Archaeology of Western Iran*, edited
    by F. Hole, pp. 107–155. Smithsonian Institution Press,
    Washington, D.C.
King, A.
  1996 *Tracing Organizational Change in Mississippian Chief-*
    doms of the Etowah River Valley, Georgia. Ph.D. disserta-
    tion, Pennsylvania State University. University Microfilms,
    Ann Arbor.
King, A., and J. A. Freer
  1995 The Mississippian Southeast: A World-Systems Per-
    spective. In *Native American Interactions: Multiscalar*
    Analyses and Interpretations in the Eastern Woodlands,
    edited by M. S. Nassaney and K. E. Sassaman, pp. 266– 288.
    University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
Knight, V. J. Jr.
  1979 Ceramic Stratigraphy at the Singer-Moye Site, 9SW2.
    Journal of Alabama Archaeology 25:138–151.
  1989 Symbolism of Mississippian Mounds. In *Powhattan's*
    Mantle, Indians of the Colonial Southeast, edited by P. H.
    Wood, G. A. Waselkov, and M. T. Hatley, pp. 279–291. Uni-
    versity of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
  1990 Social Organization and the Evolution of Hierarchy in
    Southeastern Chiefdoms. *Journal of Anthropological*
    Research 46:1–23.
  1998 Moundville as a Diagrammatic Center. In *Archaeology*
    of the Moundville Chiefdom, edited by V. J. Knight Jr. and
    V. P. Steponaitis, pp. 44–62. Smithsonian Institution Press,
    Washington, D.C.
Krause, R. A.
  1988 *The Snodgrass Small Mound and Middle Tennessee Val-*
    ley Prehistory. Publications in Anthropology 52. Tennessee
    Valley Authority, Chattanooga.
Lankford, G. E.
  1981 *A Documentary Study of Native American Life in the*
    Lower Tombigbee Valley. Report submitted to the U.S. Army
    Corps of Engineers, Mobile District.
Lindauer, O., and J. H. Blitz
  1997 Higher Ground: The Archaeology of North American
    Platform Mounds. *Journal of Archaeological Research*
    5:169–207.
Lorenz, K. G.
  1996 Small-Scale Mississippian Community Organization in
    the Big Black River Valley of Mississippi. *Southeastern*
    Archaeology 15:145–171.

McDowell, W. L. Jr. (editor)
  1958 *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21,*
    1750–August 7, 1754. Colonial Records of South Carolina.
    South Carolina Archives Department, Columbia.
Mereness, N. D. (editor)
  1916 *Travels in the American Colonies*. Macmillan, New York.
Milner, G. R.
  1990 The Late Prehistoric Cahokia Cultural System of the Mis-
    sissippi River Valley: Foundations, Florescence, and Frag-
    mentation. *Journal of World Prehistory* 4:1–43.
  1998 *The Cahokia Chiefdom: The Archaeology of a Missis-*
    sippian Society. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington,
    D.C.
Muller, J.
  1997 *Mississippian Political Economy*. Plenum Press, New
    York.
Nairne, T.
  1988 *Nairne's Muskhogeon Journals: The 1708 Expedition to*
    the Mississippi River, edited by A. Moore. University Press
    of Mississippi, Jackson.
O'Brien, P.
  1989 Cahokia: The Political Capital of the "Ramey" State?
    North American Archaeologist 10:275–292.
Peebles, C. S.
  1971 Moundville and Surrounding Sites: Some Structural
    Considerations of Mortuary Practices II. *American Antiq-*
    uity 36:68–91.
  1983 Moundville: Late Prehistoric Sociopolitical Organiza-
    tion in the Southeastern United States. In *The Development*
    of Political Organization in Native North America, edited
    by E. Tooker, pp. 183–198. The American Ethnological Soci-
    ety, Washington, D.C.
Peebles, C. S., and S. M. Kus
  1977 Some Archaeological Correlates of Ranked Societies.
    American Antiquity 42:421–428.
Rafferty, J.
  1995 *Owl Creek Mounds: Test Excavations at a Vacant Mis-*
    sissippian Mound Center. Report of Investigations 7. Cobb
    Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University, Mis-
    sissippi State.
Reid, J. P.
  1970 *A Law of Blood: Primitive Law of the Cherokee Nation*.
    New York University Press, New York.
Renfrew, C.
  1975 Trade as Action at a Distance: Questions of Integration
    and Communication. In *Ancient Civilization and Trade*,
    edited by J. A. Sabloff and C. L. Lomberg-Karlovsky, pp.
    3–59. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
Rogers, J. D., and B. D. Smith (editors)
  1995 *Mississippian Communities and Households*. Univer-
    sity of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
Scarry, J. F. (editor)
  1996 *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric South-*
    eastern United States. The Ripley P. Bullen Series, Florida
    Museum of Natural History, The University Press of Florida,
    Gainesville.
Scarry, J. F., and C. Payne
  1986 Mississippian Polities in the Fort Walton Area: A Model
    Generated from the Renfrew- Level XTENT Algorithm.
    Southeastern Archaeology 5:79–90.
Schroedl, G. F.
  1994 A Comparison of the Origins of Macon Plateau and
    Hiwassee Island Cultures. In *Ocmulgee Archaeology*
    1936–1986, edited by D. J. Hally, pp. 138–143. University
    of Georgia Press, Athens.
Smith, B. D.
  1984 Mississippian Expansion: Tracing the Historical Devel-

opment of an Explanatory Model. *Southeastern Archaeology* 3:13–22.

Steponaitis, V. P.
   1978   Locational Theory and Complex Chiefdoms: A Mississippian Example. In *Mississippian Settlement Patterns*, edited by B. D. Smith, pp. 417–453. Academic Press, New York.
   1986   Prehistoric Archaeology in the Southeastern United States, 1970–1985. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15:363–404.

Swanton, J. R.
   1911   *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*. Bulletin No. 43. Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
   1928a   The Interpretation of Aboriginal Mounds by Means of Creek Indian Customs. *Annual Report for 1927*, pp. 495–506. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
   1928b   Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy. *Forty-Second Annual Report 1924–1925*, pp. 25–472. Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
   1931   *Modern Square Grounds of the Creek Indians*. Miscellaneous Collections 85(8). Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
   1979   *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*. Reprinted. Classics of Smithsonian Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. Originally published 1946, Bulletin No. 137, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Waring, A. J. Jr.
   1968   The Southern Cult and Muskhogean Ceremonial. In *The Waring Papers*, edited by S. Williams, pp. 30–69. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 58, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Welch, P. D.
   1991   *Moundville's Economy*. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
   1994   The Occupational History of the Bessemer Site. *Southeastern Archaeology* 13:1–26.

Williams, M.
   1994   The Origins of the Macon Plateau Site. In *Ocmulgee Archaeology 1936–1986*, edited by D. J. Hally, pp. 130–137. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

Williams, M., and G. Shapiro
   1990   Paired Towns. In *Lamar Archaeology, Mississippian Chiefdoms in the Deep South*, edited by M. Williams and G. Shapiro, pp. 163–174. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
   1996   Mississippian Political Dynamics in the Oconee Valley, Georgia. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, edited by J. F. Scarry, pp. 128–149. The Ripley P. Bullen Series, Florida Museum of Natural History, University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Willis, W. S. Jr.
   1980   Fusion and Separation: Archaeology and Ethnohistory in Southeastern North America. In *Theory and Practice:*

Essays Presented to Gene Weltfish, edited by S. Diamond, pp. 97–123. Mouton Publications, The Hague.

Wright, H. T.
   1984   Prestate Political Formations. In *On the Evolution of Complex Societies, Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer, 1982*, edited by T. K. Earle, pp. 41–78. Undena Press, Malibu, California.

Notes

1. Some local populations within the Mississippian world exhibit few indications of social rank and may not have been organized as chiefdoms (e.g., Lorenz 1996).

2. The only other mound center cluster contained within a 40 km-diameter size limit that would permit a possible multiple-mound and single-mound center combination is Rembert (9EB1) and Beaverdam (9EB85). However, investigations at Rembert were too limited to confirm coeval mound use at the two sites (Anderson 1996a:237; Hally 1996:Table 6.2). Anderson (1996b:Figures 8.4 and 8.5; Anderson et al. 1986:41–42, 47) assigns the confirmed portion of Rembert's mound construction to the Rembert phase, A.D. 1350–1450, a time after Beaverdam was abandoned. In other words, while it is possible that Rembert and Beaverdam were contemporary prior to A.D. 1350, afterwards Rembert was an isolated multiple-mound site without any possible secondary centers within the 40 km-diameter limit.

3. In addition to paired single-mound sites, there are two pairs of multiple-mound sites that cluster within 40 km-diameter polity boundaries: Hollywood (9RI1)-Mason's Plantation (no site number) and Lawton (38AL11)-Red Lake (9SN4). The occupation interval of Mason's Plantation has not been established, so it is unknown if the Hollywood-Mason's Plantation pair were contemporary. The Lawton-Red Lake pair are contemporary (Anderson 1996b:187–194). These two pairs of multiple-mound sites were not associated with any contemporary single-mound centers.

4. Brown's Mount (9BI5) may be a secondary center in Macon Plateau's domain. It is 9.5 km from the larger site and has a Macon Plateau component but the history of the site is poorly documented (Williams 1994).

5. Mississippian mound construction at all of the Savannah River centers except Mason's Plantation and Tate can be assigned to general period or phase intervals. The assignment of Tate to the Beaverdam phase (A.D. 1200–1300) is based on surface collection data only (Anderson 1994:205); the platform mound may not be Mississippian (Hally 1993:149). See notes 2 and 3.