

VISIONS OF THE MORNING STAR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF NATIVE AMERICAN MYTHIC STORIES AND THE  
WEDGEMOUTH AND T-BAR THEME

THESIS

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem Explored in this Thesis

The rich archaeological corpus of engraved shell material from the Pre-Columbian Mississippian world is the basis for this thesis. Attempts to link these artifacts to mythic tradition have been difficult due to theoretical problems (Brown 2007:59) and iconographic limitations. This thesis represents an interpretation of the recovered iconography and the interpretation of numerous ethnographies. The ethnographic allusions are made possible through understanding the historic Hotcâk (Winnebago) mythic cycle, Wodjидjé. The iconographic patterning analyzed herein is the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme, present in the Spiro corpus of engraved shell artifacts. Previous analyses identifying associations between rank and tattooing (Bailey 2004:84-85; Diaz-Granados 2004; and Walker 2004) aided in my selection of this topic. Subsequently, it is my contention that the Wedgemouth and T-Bar designs are tattoos often worn by

elites to identify elite rank. More specifically differences in tattooing can be linked to overlapping iconographic sub themes, analogous to particular facets of Mississippian society.

This concept will be fully presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. However, for the purposes of introducing the subject matter, I must reconcile the differences between historic ethnographies and the archaeological corpus of Spiro.

My thesis formulation began when I noticed an inconsistency in the assignment of the Morning Star imagery among the Osage. This discrepancy occurs between previous iconographic and ethnographic data (Brown 2004; 2007) and Osage linguistic data (La Flesche 1932:91). My analysis of the Osage's use of both the Raccoon and Birdman imagery to depict the Morning Star is not an attempt to disprove established analysis of the coherent Birdman theme. Rather, I endeavor to expand upon existing theory. I will investigate the Osage's use of the Raccoon image in relationship to the Morning Star supernatural. It is understood that in selecting a separate myth and theme, I am accessing a separate part or chapter of the Deghian mythic cosmology. Undoubtedly, through my analysis, there will be some level of iconographic overlap implied between

both the Birdman and the Raccoon imagery. Furthermore, the hypotheses of this thesis are:

- 1) The thematic patterning of historic ethnographies and respective correspondences paralleled within the artifacts unites Morning Star imagery in the Wedgemouth form. This specifically occurs among Craig A style.
- 2) Raccoon and Birdman, are clanal or societal divisions that are tied together by Wedgemouth. Wedgemouth, being a figure of transformation (Brown et al. 2007) represents the highest elites in ritual trance.
- 3) Unlike Wedgemouth, T-Bar lacks the ability to transform (Brown et al. 2007:37). Stemming from this understanding, T-Bar possesses few or no allusions to the historic ethnographies. This is thematically paralleled in associated symbolism among Craig A artifacts (Chapters 2 and 6 of this thesis).

The selection of a modern mythic narrative serves as a guide for cohesion of the isolated iconographic occurrences within the Wedgemouth and T-bar theme. Each artifact is to be considered an isolated occurrence, vaguely analogous to the cycle of those peoples with ancestral ties to Cahokia. This thesis explores a complex problem through several independent analyses. All analyses herein are vital for a successful interpretation of the archaeological corpus.

To ensure a successful interpretation, I will first present an argument for utilizing historic mythic narrative appropriately analogous to the Mississippian era. Taken from the Winnebago culture, the Wodjидjé mythic cycle explicitly tells of an infant who amasses power by being

aligned with, and identified by a raccoon-tailed ball (Dieterle, 2005b, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html)). Retold by Richard Dieterle, this mythic cycle was originally documented in the notebooks of Paul Radin (Dieterle, 2005a, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Radin@APS.html#Anchor-Notebook-35882](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Radin@APS.html#Anchor-Notebook-35882)). However, Radin failed to officially publish this work initially collected among the Winnebago. Thus, it remains undated (Dieterle, 2005b, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html)). This mythic cycle was selected due to the Dhegiah Siouan speaking associations of Cahokia. The simplicity and accessibility of reading this narrative as an outsider is also beneficial to this analysis. Again, it is understood that in selecting a single myth, I am only accessing a single part or chapter of the overall cosmology. Nonetheless, strong parallels and correlations do exist between this mythic cycle and the already accepted Red Horn Hero Cycle save certain differences in imagery. The Red Horn Hero Cycle I am referencing was also documented by Radin (1948:115-152) among the Winnebago. Additionally, modern rituals in traditional Native American communities are considered to be analogous to those performed by the Mississippian cultures (Reilly 2004a:137). Given that

mythic narrative is intrinsically linked to ritual reenactment, modern narratives must likewise be analogously linked to the deeper past. To interpret ritualistic associations of rank, I will discuss mythological linkages among historic elites known as mikos. This will be fully demonstrated in this introductory chapter, and alluded to wherever pertinent within my analysis.

Second, I will discuss common theoretical sub themes linked to the imagery of the Morning Star or Red Horn. This is crucial to my analysis as elites link themselves to narratives through naming devices (Reilly 2004a:132-137). These naming devices are often epithets for the deity we know as Morning Star, or the cultural hero, Red Horn. Likewise, similar epithets also appear in Wodjiddjé, as the young boy is further identified by his regalia (the raccoon-tailed ball). In brief summation, the classifications to be identified in this analysis are: Wedgemouth as Birdman, Wedgemouth as Raccoonman, and T-Bar specific rituals. These are by no means all encompassing categories. However, they do provide a basis for future iconographic comparison across multiple styles and themes. These classifications will be further elaborated on in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Due to the limitations of this study, other intersecting sub themes of Wedge Mouth and T-

Bar will not be examined. These include patterns such as Cat Man and Snake Man (Brown et al. 2007). Moreover, basic correlations among these three thematic categories can be analogously compared to the historic Omaha. Previous analysis (Fortune 1932:1-2) discusses a rigid class distinction among four basic groupings of the Omaha. These four class groupings are priests, chiefs, multiple doctoral positions, and the unprivileged. These class specific associations were determined by paternal rank. Similarly, I argue the Mississippians linked rank to specific societal practices and privileges, visually identified through tattooing. Simply stated, it is my contention that among Craig A style, these "possible tattoos" are Wedgemouth and T-Bar facial designs.

Third, an iconographic analysis of the Wedge Mouth and T-Bar theme will be utilized to determine mythic cycle and ethnographic linkages. I propose that the modern mythic cycles are conflations and conglomerations of mnemonic devices that archaeologists identify as motifs. These narrative episodes can best be understood as parts or chapters in a single cosmological or mythic cycle (Reilly 2004a:126). This iconographic theme was selected prior to the selection of the ethnographies and mythic cycle presented in this thesis. It is of utmost importance that

my analysis is not seen as simply seeking to validate a plausible narrative. Rather, it utilizes specific epithets of the Morning Star (Wedgemouth as Birdman and Raccoonman) as an isolated snapshot in time. This serves as a basis for comparative analysis of historic elites (mikos). Similar to a previous study of ritual, (Reilly 2004a:125-137) these modern narratives, being a part of the ritualistic cycle, must also be analogous to the cycles of the Mississippian world. Again, I feel compelled to reassert that no direct narrative link can be made between historic ethnographies and the Mississippian artifacts.

Fourth, a comparative analysis will be established by drawing thematic parallels between patterned historic ethnographies and the patterned Wedgemouth and T-Bar imagery. This archaeological theme was selected due to its cohesive and readily recognizable motifs. Likewise, the simplicity and straightforward nature of the Wodjidjé cycle provides direct analogies to the archaeological corpus. Moreover, correlations of the raccoon tailed ball, (Dieterle, 2005b, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjidj%8e.html)) are easily associated to both the Red Horn cycle (Radin 1948) and the Wedgemouth theme. Again, both the included ethnographies and the artifacts themselves (Phillips and Brown 1984) will

be understood as a chartering device of elite rule.

This thesis also provides a unique opportunity for an etic analysis of both mythic narrative and iconography. It is to be considered unique due to a certain amount of assumed discontinuity between pre and post contact Native American cultures. As previously argued (Galloway 1991; Brown 1997, 2007), such a discontinuity would arise due to the depopulation of Pre-Columbian Native American cultures. This implies inappropriateness in examining historic myth and respectively paralleled artifacts in the hopes of arriving at an inherent emic meaning. The aforementioned is of particular significance to the ethnographers of the Mississippian cultures' archaeological corpus. This is attributable to chosen mythic narrative and the selected cultural theme both being determinant factors in an ethnographer's analysis.

#### Significance of the Problem: Discussion

The availability of mythic material must influence limitations on the number of connections that can be argued. When lacking alternatives, our options are limited. This forces the use of what is ethnographically available. These inconsistencies in the ethnographic record are compounded by inherent discontinuities over the passage of time. Brown (2007) notes that this theoretical



complexity makes it difficult to discern the full relevance of a mythic narrative.

Similarly, it has been argued by art historians (Panofsky 1939; Kubler 1970) that the meanings of images are subject to change over the course of time. Therefore, attempts to bridge Mississippian symbolism to historical narrative must be done critically. To make the argument additionally problematic, a baseline is lacking in the Southeast for image and textual correspondences. As previously argued (Townsend 1979) this is unlike the case with Mesoamerica. In stark contrast, I maintain that Mississippian cultures' "early texts" are contained within symbolic imagery on ritual objects.

Widespread commonalities of imagery and ritual forms throughout the Eastern Woodlands support the notion of thematic basis for mythic narrative. This is likely to have deep historical connections (Knight 1986; Brown 2007:61). Furthermore, these connections are believed (Knight 1986) to extend into prehistory. Thus, the introductory chapter of this thesis attempts to establish a patterned ethnographic framework that may be utilized to inform researchers of the potential range of meaning. Until this "ethnographic framework" is fully established no arguments can be effectively presented with respect to

discussing the iconography. As a result, iconographic discussion is fully presented in Chapter 2 (and subsequent chapters of this thesis).

### Origin of this Thesis

My initial interest in Mississippian iconography began in the spring semester of 2004. This was the first time I had attended a lecture by Dr. F. Kent Reilly III. His thorough instruction culminated in a professional class presentation at the end of the spring semester. During preparation for the class presentation, I became fascinated by the artifacts and antiquity previously unknown to me.

Since receiving my Bachelor's Degree in English (spring 2005), I have actively engaged in studying multiple cultural areas of iconography. These include the iconographic and archeological evidence of the Hopewell, Lower Pecos, Maya, Mixtec, and Olmec cultural and geographic regions.

Since the summer of 2005 I have attended and assisted at the annual Hopewell and Mississippian Conferences held at Texas State University-San Marcos. It was through these annual meetings, my discourse with Dr. F. Kent Reilly III and fellow students, as well as my background in English that resulted in this thesis.

My selection of the Wedge Mouth and T-Bar theme

originated as an attempt to identify individuals' ranks through analysis of the archaeological corpus. This resulted from an attempt to identify the specific ways Mississippian cultures associated ritualistic and social class distinctions to the Morning Star. My interpretation of the facial tattooing associated with Wedge Mouth and T-Bar is that it is indicative of elite ranking.

Conversely, I perceive associated imagery (Bird Man and Raccoon) to be illustrative of clanal alignment and ritualistic obligations. Upstreaming an etic analysis of the Miko is one way of understanding my assertion of clanal alignment and ranking.

Credit for understanding Wedgemouth and T-Bar should also be extended to the Caddoan group's dedication to their analysis of paired figure imagery within transformation (Brown et al. 2007). Without their numerous hours of intellectual discourse and insight, this study would never have come to fruition. I was first introduced to this group, headed by Dr. James Brown, in the summer of 2004. I have attentively followed and attended the iconographic workshops since that time, in order to gather my current understanding of this subject matter. Again, without their collective knowledge and appreciation for this area of study, this thesis would have been an impossible

undertaking.

Further motivation was brought about by my enthusiasm for the subject matter originating in the spring of 2004. Additional inspiration came from multiple group presentations held in Dr. Reilly's classes, involving the iconographic analysis of artifacts. These analyses and associations influenced my perception that iconographic images are illustrative of actual events taking place simultaneously in both the real and the spiritual worlds. My recognition of this duality with respect to the patterning of iconographic images allows for ease of scientific interpretation. This thesis is the product of years of combined enthusiasm, research, and original thought. Ultimately, my thoughts were influenced through daily interfacing with fellow graduate and undergraduate students as well as tutelage by the professors of Texas State University-San Marcos.

#### Defining the Terms

Terms are defined as they occur in this text. However, a generalized timeline must be established to understand the placement of archaeological artifacts in the Mississippian Period. The transition into the Mississippian period (circa A.D. 900) included the beginnings of both the Cahokia and Spiro sites (Table 1).

This is of utmost importance when attempting to understand the interaction, trade, and exchange among the Mississippian sites. Table 1 represents a basic timeline of artifacts found within the Mississippian cultural period. Although a complete chronology is not present, it is possible to group Mississippian works of art by stylistic themes respective to temporal period. The archaeological corpus (Table 1) also demonstrates the eminence of a Cahokian cultural influence through the use of elite symbols and motifs. Thus, elite mechanisms for trade, exchange, and heirlooming are crucial to this analysis. Consequently, it seems self evident that these previously established mechanisms were drawn from (among the later Craig A style) and used to validate elite rule. This trend can be witnessed in the following table (Table 1) and figure (Figure 1).

Table 1.  
Mississippian Cultural Eras and Events.

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Woodland Period          | 0-900 A.D                  |
| Mississippian Transition | 900-1100 A.D               |
| Mississippian Beginnings | 1100-1200 A D              |
| Mississippian Period     | 1200 A D -European Contact |

-Events within the Mississippian Period

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Spiro and Cahokia Sites Begin             | 900 A.D        |
| Hopewell/Mississippian Art Differentiate  | 900-1100 A D.  |
| Shell Material Produced In Braden A Style | 1100-1200 A.D. |

[Note: Limited Geographic Distribution Centered Around Cahokia]

Geographic Dispersal of Greater Braden Material Throughout Eastern Woodlands  
[Recognizable Elite Trade and Exchange Mechanisms] 1200-1300 A.D

Likewise, a generalized visual genealogy of Mississippian art styles can also be formulated. This genealogy is supported by available radiocarbon dates (Brown 2004:107-109). Figure 1 represents these stylistic groupings. It is naturally assumed that the stylistic groupings of Spiro are removed from the stylistic groupings of Cahokia. Due to this assumption, the classic Braden style of Cahokia branches off into the later Craig styles of Spiro and smaller provincial polities (Figure 1). This basic stylistic genealogy can easily be superimposed on the chronology previously demonstrated (Table 1). Again, this is a generic genealogy used only to introduce the subject matter.

Figure 1 (page 15) does not demonstrate the corpus specific to this study. Instead, it breaks down copied styles stemming from Braden style (Cahokia). Among these thematic replications, the Craig A style will be the most pertinent to this analysis. As will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, the Craig A style depicts ritual contexts of transformation. These relatively straightforward ritual snapshots are selected due to the ability to apply thematic imagery across wide geographic ranges of style and theme.

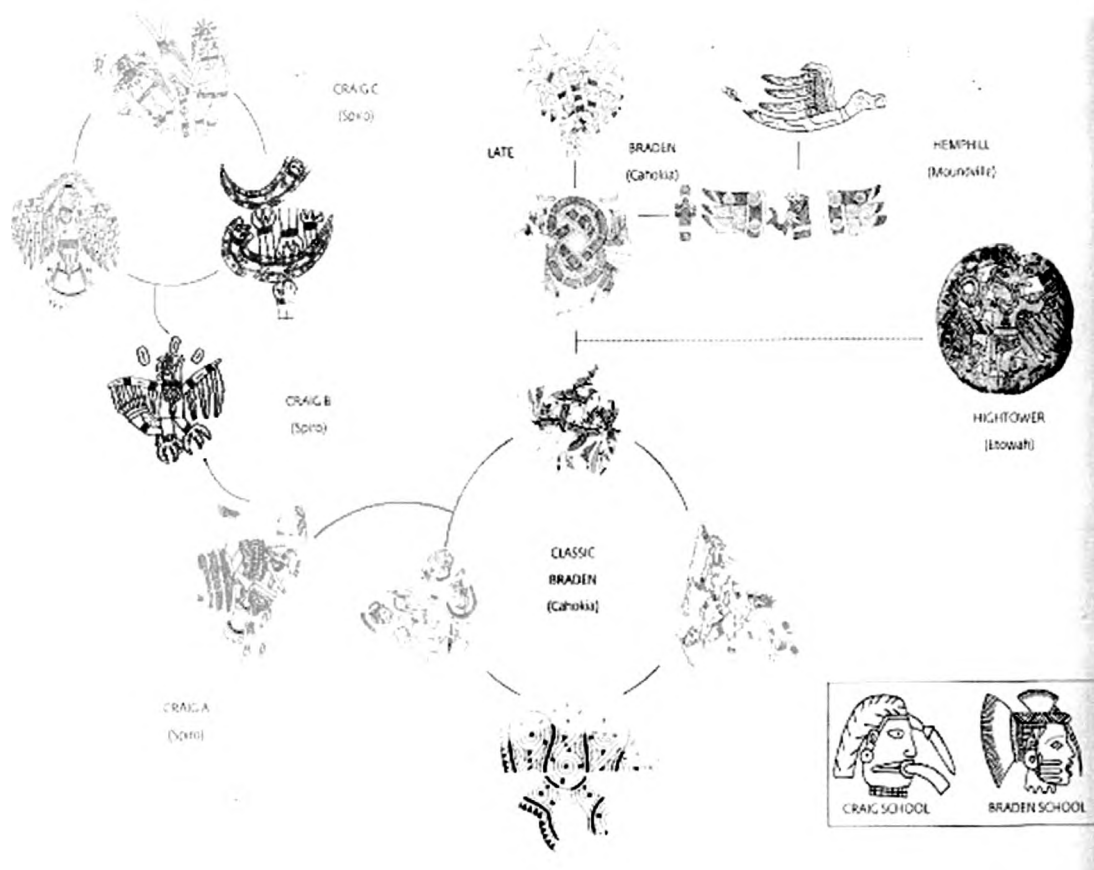


Figure 1.  
Generalized Stylistic Mississippian Genealogy.  
(Brown 2004:108).

The term, 'Mississippian' refers to the temple mound period of the eastern United States. This period is further distinguished by the emergence of sedentary societies based upon maize agriculture and a ranked social order with a paramount chief (Hall 2004:95-96). The Mississippian peoples are not to be interpreted as a single linguistic group or society. Rather, they represent a variety of cultures differing in complexity. It is

believed that they adopted particular cultural traits from one another while engaged in trade and exchange (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:76.)

The term 'Southeastern' is used to refer to the cultural region that once existed in the Southeastern continental United States of America. This cultural expression carried far westward into East Texas and Oklahoma. It also ranged from Florida to Ohio and Southern Wisconsin, and was undoubtedly linked by networks of trade and exchange. It is, however, important to note that not all sites existed simultaneously (Brain and Phillips 1996:1-2).

Non-Native terminology is used in this thesis where it is applicable and appropriately mentioned in previous scholarly works. This is done for continuity within the iconographic and mythic analysis.

The Winnebago peoples are a Siouan-speaking portion of a tribal grouping that "today spread from Wisconsin to Montana and from Oklahoma to Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Radin 1973:49-50). During the discovery of America, some Winnebago people extended far south into "southern Louisiana and as far east as Virginia and South Carolina" (Radin 1973:49-50). Apart from the Winnebago, Radin (1973) notes the best known members of this stock are the Dakota,



Omaha, Osage, Iowa, and Oto.

According to Radin (1973:49-50), though negligible exceptions do occur, the traits of civilization among these people were very much the same. These cultural traits included agriculture, socially organized religion, mythology, and ritualism. Radin (1973) elaborates that the Winnebago are part of a highly complex and widespread civilization removed from less complex tribes. This complexity is suggestive of an implicit antiquity, among the historic Winnebago. Further insight is established in Radin's analysis of the Medicine Rite (1973:51). He demonstrated that combined conservative antiquity and mythic reinterpretation is linked to social organization, mythology, religion, and ritualism (Radin 1973:49-77).

Drawing from Radin, ceremonial sub themes and specified associated motifs will be categorized among the shell engravings present in the archaeological corpus. These motifs will be analogously applied to ritual enactments present among the ethnographic framework established by the conclusion of this chapter.

Although the archaeological corpus from Spiro is not directly related to Radin's analysis (1973) it does provide a mental template for analyzing mythological cycles in a ritual context. The importance of this will be revealed in

the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

### Primary Sources of Data

The primary source of my data is the shell engravings themselves, as they appear in *Pre-Columbian Shell Engravings from the Craig Mound at Spiro, Oklahoma*. All Engraved Shell artifacts will be identified by their respective nomenclature as they occur in text. Additional data sources are derived from various authors and their publications. All sources appear in text as they occur and are listed in the bibliography.

Interpretation of shell engravings is inferential to some extent, since they are mnemonic "snap shots" utilized for ritual reenactment. I contend that cautious inference based on iconographic and archaeological evidence is a valid application. Moreover, I believe that this inferential element of the archaeological data is that very aspect essential in chartering elite rule.

### Method: Up-Streaming and Iconographic Analysis

A historic reference is required for up-streaming to take place. Previous analysis (Seeman 2004) linked conceptual aspects of Mississippian art to historical groups. Most notably these are the Chickasaw, Creek, Caddo, and Osage (Seeman 2004:57). Other interpretation (Levi-Strauss 1963:7) demonstrates that the Muskogee tribes

bridge conceptual gaps between the plains (totemic) societies and caste societies. One particularly important caste society is the Natchez. Drawing from these conceptual arguments, I have created a method for up-streaming a direct historical approach.

The direct historical approach makes the logical inference that textually established forms have retained an ancient meaning. It stands to reason that the more ancient the ethnographic chronology achieved, the highest probability for an accurate interpretation of intended meaning. However, it is possible that ascribed meanings may have arisen or disappeared over time (Brown 1997:471). This is particularly true where a special class has adopted a symbol to produce an ideology for its own promotion. Balancing this pessimism is a general faith that meanings embedded in religious ritual and practice are very conservative (Brown 1997:471). Furthermore, Lankford (2007:9) argues that the Mississippian visual and symbolic writing system lies beyond the limits of cultural boundaries and environmental adaptation. Drawing from these theoretical approaches, this analysis will up stream a historical ethnographic framework conceptually associated with Mikos. This is done in place of a single myth or ethnography. However, this technique is rooted in the

aforementioned symbolic differentiation of the Morning Star supernatural.

In the following abridged glossarial table (Table 2), a linguistic association among the Osage arguably connects the Morning Star to the consumption of hallucinogens, Raccoon imagery, and the epithet 'wrapped-in-blankets'. Francis La Flesche's analysis of the Osage (La Flesche 1932:90-93) is the source of this glossary. This table (Table 2) also provides a means of up-streaming otherwise extraneous historically removed mythic information into the deeper past. Additionally, Table 2 (like the Wedgemouth artifacts to be analyzed) allows for a parallel complementary relationship between the Morning and Evening Star supernaturals. More simply stated, it is my assertion that the Evening Star is literally the same as the Morning Star, with the addition of nightly locatives. This argument is drawn from Reilly's discussion of locatives (2004a), and will be fully demonstrated among Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

Previous investigation at the Mississippian iconographic workshop (Barker et al. 2004:11) hypothetically correlated the "crying raccoon" to the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme. This was provided by Robert Hall, and may be linguistically compared to Table 2.

Table 2.  
Abridged Osage Glossary.  
[Morning Star Associations].  
(La Flesche 1932:90-93).

- 
1. mi - Sun (Omaha = same)
  2. mi, - Moons (From a ritual)
  3. mi, - Blanket
  4. mi- k̥ a' - Raccoon
  5. mi- k̥ a'-k'e - Mushroom
  6. mi- k̥ a'- k̥ 'e - Star
  7. mi- k̥ a'- k̥ e'e çin-dse stse-dse - Long tailed star; comet
  8. mi- k̥ a'- k̋ 'e ho<sup>n</sup>-ba-do thi<sup>n</sup>- k̋ she - The morning star.
  9. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e ho<sup>n</sup>-do<sup>n</sup> thi<sup>n</sup>-kshe - Evening star
  10. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e mo<sup>n</sup>-thi<sup>n</sup> a-zhi - 1) lode star; magnetic ore.  
2) mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e = a star. 3) mo<sup>n</sup>-thi<sup>n</sup> = moving. 4) a-zhi = not.  
5) Star-moving-not. This star is known among astronomers as the  
guiding or Pole star.
  11. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e to<sup>n</sup>-a - The great star. The morning star.
  12. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e u- k̋ i-tha-ts'i<sup>n</sup> - Double star.  
Also pronounced mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e u- k̋ i-tha- ç'i<sup>n</sup>. This is identified  
as theta and iota in Orion (La Flesche 1932:395).
  13. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e u-xpa-the - Meteor; falling star. (The year 1833  
was known as the year of falling stars)
  14. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e u-zho<sup>n</sup>-ge - Orbit; path of a star.
  15. mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e-wa- çpe - The inactive star
  16. Mi- k̋ a'- k̋ 'e-zhi<sup>n</sup>-ga - Little-star = a personal name
  17. mi- k̋ a'-k'e zhu-dse - Red star; Pole star.
  18. Mi- k̋ a'- k̋ i-thi-xa - The raccoon's rutting season: November
  19. mi- k̋ a'u-thu-thi<sup>n</sup>-ge - A trap for catching raccoons.
  20. Mi- k̋ a'-wa-da-i<sup>n</sup>-ga - Playful-raccoon = a personal name
  21. Mi- k̋ a'-za-ge - Crying-raccoon = a personal name
  22. Mi- k̋ 'i<sup>n</sup> - The Sun Carrier. The name of a gens
  23. Mi- k̋ 'i<sup>n</sup> Wa-no<sup>n</sup> - Sun and Moon carriers. refers to life symbols  
and all heavenly bodies.
  24. mi-kshe - me [from a ritual context]
  25. mi<sup>n</sup> - A robe. [In the shrine: in the Rite of Vigil] scalp and  
bird degrees of the Tribal Rites, the ceremonial robe, called  
Xo'-ka mi<sup>n</sup>, was made of a puma skin; this symbolized fire. In  
the weaving of the Shrine, the burden strap sayings of the  
Ancient Men, degrees of the Tribal Rites, the ceremonial robe  
was a buffalo robe [of the Wa-tse-tsi gens; the robe was made of  
deerskin]. In the tattooing ceremony: the ceremonial robe was  
made of black bearskin. This ceremony is apart from the tribal  
rites. The, Mi-ki'i<sup>n</sup> and Tho'-xe gentes use seven raccoon skins.
  26. mi<sup>n</sup>-dse' - To creep. To crawl on the hands and knees.

Moreover, George Sabo hypothesized that the moon can be identified and personified by distinctive marks on an elite image's face (Barker et al. 2004:11). The aforementioned analyses pertaining to Wedgemouth and T-Bar iconography can be associated to this glossary (Table 2). Multiple mythological linkages can be drawn to elite rulership, the image of the raccoon, and numerous other cosmological acts that will not be examined in this thesis (Table 2). Moreover, what is revealed by the glossary in discussion is that respective mythologies and rituals are arguably connected through double entendre and 'plays on words'. This is an important component, often utilized in oral traditions, particularly those validating societal rank through the use of symbols (Reilly 2004a:125-137). Thus, in an archaeological context, mythic stories can be understood as modern interpreters, describing motifs and symbols present on the artifacts.

To iconographers, these appear on the artifacts and herein are understood as symbolic equivalents, analogous to historic words. In doing so I argue that elites would charter power, share a narrative, and establish rank through symbols. Thus, particular imagery denotes particular lineages or social groupings (i.e. Raccoonman and Birdman). Basic identifications among the Ponca and

Ka<sup>n</sup>ze (Kansa) associate a similar nomenclature to the image of the raccoon. The Ponca (Fletcher 1915:71) linked "mi'-ka" to the image of the raccoon, while the Ka<sup>n</sup>ze (Kansa) associated the term "Mika" to a raccoon (Dorsey 1891:334).

Further correlations include the Kwapa (Quapaw) who were documented as identifying the Mika'q'e ni'kaci'Na as the star gens (Dorsey 1891:332). This can be linguistically correlated to "mi-<sup>h</sup>a'-<sup>h</sup>'e" (star) in the Osage glossary (Table 2). Further investigation identifies a similar linguistic nomenclature (miko) as being associated with the raccoon. This occurs in a traditional Creek site plan for the Kealedji Square Ground, in eastern Oklahoma (Swanton 1928a:251, Lankford 2004:209). In this same square ground, the miko is incorporated into elite society (the chief's bed). Undoubtedly, it is assumed that cultural and geographic variations of these associations will occur<sup>1</sup>.

Other analyses (Hassig 1974; Pratt 1998) identify the miko (also spelled micco) as a word analogous to chief. In historic times, the miko's extensive powers were determined through the approval of the council and each individual

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<sup>1</sup>Example of variation in the Miko as Raccoon linkage among the Creek, from Eastern Oklahoma. This example is taken from the Ocevpofo ceremonial site (Swanton 1928a:211; Reilly 2004:40).

miko's qualities. Miko title attainment resulted from the combination of both descent and election (Debo 1941:12). The Miko was selected from a clan in a particular town; however, not all towns were governed by the same clanal alignments. This resulted in multiple mikos. Although the miko was selected from a specific clan, his duty was tied to the success of the town. Rule was reassigned to another clan if the town declined or if the lineage ran out. The miko is documented (Speck 1907:113) as having a lifelong tenure. However, the miko could freely resign, or be deposed, due to ineffectiveness. (Hassig 1974:253). An interview between Dr. F. Kent Reilly III and Timmy Thompson (Reilly 2004c) demonstrates that the concept of a micco exists even today. It is also noteworthy that at the conclusion of their discussion, Thompson (a religious leader of the Creek) mentions that three ranks are 'holders of oral history'. In particular, he mentions 'Medicine people, the Miccos (Mikos), and the great warriors' (Reilly 2004c:41). Here again, is another historical mimicry of the ranks that will be analogously applied to Wedgemouth and T-Bar.

Aside from the head miko, the Creek are documented (Hassig 1974:253) as having a town sub chief (miko apokta) who was from the same clan as the miko. There were also



the mikalgi, who performed minor functions, and various other personal advisors (Swanton 1928a:192-197, 275-305; Knight 1990:16). Although, not contextually a direct link to the paramount chiefdoms of the Mississippian cultures, comparisons have been extended (Knight 1990) to include the nonstratified Muskogee and Chickasaw of the historical era.

Drawing from Knight's analysis (1990) the focus of clanal alignment herein is centered on the concept of a clan totem. Conceptually, clans are not considered to be territorial, localized groups, nor do they dominate any local community (Knight 1990:5). Instead, clans were dispersed among communities, each containing members of multiple clans. Clans were 'weakly corporate', and among a multitude of functions, they were linked to ceremonial roles and social rank respective to the other clans (Knight 1990:5-6). Among the Chickasaw, clan association is a 'caste-like' determinant factor for "ideas about specific customs, lifeways, and mannerisms of the different clans" (Knight 1990:6). The Chickasaw of the early eighteenth century linked a chiefly clan to hereditary office. In this office, rule was never passed to the chief's son or a woman, but rather to his sister's son (Moore 1988:62-64; Knight 1990:17). This comparison among clan alignments is pertinent to an analysis of iconographic themes, as it

reveals the possibility that particular alignments (i.e. the Birdman) may be indicative of clan-like lineages.

The importance of clan alignments to an analysis of the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme is that they can also be understood as cultic manifestations. Such a manifestation could be the result of another clan attaining power or dominance over a ceremonial site. Validation of elite rule among a specific clan could be achieved through adding other narratives, cosmologies, or chapters to an overarching mythological tale. In this way, mikos (chiefs) would logically be associated with differing aspects and imagery of the same supernatural.

Thematically parallel to this historic interpretation, Wedgemouth as Birdman and Raccoonman are understood to be leaders within different groups, bearing different totems. As elites, they validate their authority through mythic charters (Dye 2004), which correspond to their ultimate transformational forms. Again, this understanding will be fully demonstrated elsewhere in this study.

Other ethnographies discussing mikos (McKenney and Hall 1934) suggests that historic Native American individuals routinely changed their names to coincide with circumstances impacting their lives. More specifically, Native Americans often had as many names as they had

remarkable events during their existence (McKenney and Hall 1934:39). Names allocated during infancy "are entirely accidental", or are selected "by the most trifling circumstances". Examples of names are Litker (the swift) for an active boy, Isca (the ground hog), or Woodcoochee (the raccoon) (McKenney and Hall 1934:39-40). These names are not to be likened to a child bearing a resemblance to any such animal. Instead, it may be the result of playing with, wearing the skin of, or imitating the motions of a particular animal (McKenney and Hall 1934:40). The importance of identifying the nomenclature Woodcoochee in relation to both the image of the raccoon and elite rank (miko) is that it ties into the mythic identification among the Winnebago (Wodjидjé). This revelation demonstrates the ways that conceptual interpretations of mikos can be used to upstream into the past outside of a topically limited and restricted definition. More specifically, this discussion of what I will generically refer to as 'Mikos' (chiefs) illuminates how multiple images might have been utilized to demonstrate social relationships. The generic term 'Mikos' is used for the sake of brevity in the analogous comparison of artifacts. Moreover, this should not be understood as a dominant term for the Native American peoples.

Thematically parallel to historic naming devices, it is believed that among Mississippian peoples, names were often linked with elite cosmological rituals. This was done by the use of emblematic naming devices (Townsend 2004:34; Reilly 2004a:132-137). These naming devices (epithets) often charter elite rule by identifying rulers with "ancestors and deities, and the celestial realm" (Dye 2004:203). Historic mythic documentation (Radin 1948:8) further describes deities as moralistic and purposive. In this context, I contend that ritual enactments of myth may be understood as theatrically allegorical. An allegory is a story containing characters and events alluding to another story. By allowing for figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another, abstract virtuous notions may be acted out by characters communicating those ideas (Levy 1999:975). Assuredly, a similar occurrence took place among Mississippian mythic enactments. In this way, ideas allude to previously established norms of validating elite rule, through the use of symbols. These would then be allegorically alluded to in historic tales. It is also noteworthy that among Craig A style, similar allusions of validating power (as mentioned earlier) were drawn from the Greater Braden style (Brown 2004:112-121).

Ethnographic attention for Spiro must now be focused

upon its geographic location, as a site among Caddoan territory. Among the Caddo, the head spiritual leader was the xenesi (also written as chenesi and xinesi). The most important duty of the xenesi was to care for the fire temple near his house, and to consult the Coninisi. Through the Coninisi (fictitious twin boys) he communicated with the Great Chief Above (Swanton 1928b:209-210). Logically, it is not expected that a linguistic connection can be made between Caddoan and Deghian speaking peoples. Nonetheless, the xenesi appears to be functionally analogous to the role of the Miko as a spiritual leader. Again, this is of importance because the site of Spiro is located in Caddoan territory. The grand xenesi has also been identified as Mr. Moon (Texas Beyond History, 2003, [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/Fundamentals/life.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/Fundamentals/life.html)) and hypothetically included in an analysis of the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme (Barker et al. 2004). Moreover, Caddoan clans were socially ranked and included animals like the bison, bear, and raccoon, or forces of nature such as the sun, thunder, etc. (Townsend and Walker 2004:234).

By establishing underlying ethnographic correlations, it can be speculated that raccoon imagery is associated with a specific aspect of the Morning Star supernatural. Moreover, the numerous examples previously demonstrated

make it unlikely that the use of a raccoon was an isolated or provincial occurrence. Additionally, the multiple associations of the Wedgemouth and T-Bar iconography span a variety of specific cultural parallels. In the following chapters, imagery allocated to specific categories of Wedgemouth and T-Bar will be substituted to interpret the iconography. Iconographic substitution herein is made possible due to the aforementioned historic and prehistoric thematic parallels. Again, it is my assertion that the associated imagery in this analysis identifies particular aspects of the Morning Star supernatural. I believe these iconographic variations are brought about by differing cultural and geographic ranks among ruling clans. Ultimately, in rituals of transformation, clans are aligned with the night (Raccoonman) and the day (Birdman). As will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, complete transformation of these clans results in "night" and "day" aspects of the Morning Star supernatural.

### Iconographic Analysis

Following Panofsky's (1939) formal criteria, I will establish my methods for iconographic analysis. The Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme was selected for two reasons: The first involves the narrative power of detailed imagery, often depicting specific ritualistic activities. The

second is a relationship shared between the image of the Wedgemouth and the imagery associated with Raccoonman and Birdman. Focusing on this patterning will avoid outside thematic distractions. Additionally, the restrictions included in my analysis aid in insuring the accuracy of my interpretations.

In accordance with Panofsky's (1939) analysis, formal compositions, ritualism, and activities will be analyzed before discussing issues of meaning. In the following chapters, I will seek patterns of consistency within the deployment and substitution in complete compositions. Motifs and Ceremonial sub themes of Wedgemouth and T-Bar symbolism will be discussed prior to iconographic analysis (Chapters 2 & 3). Again, it is not my attempt to demonstrate direct prehistoric equivalents to the Wodjijdjé mythic cycle. Rather I intend to correlate a pattern of prehistoric themed imagery to another pattern of historic mythic narrative. In this introductory chapter, linguistic ties and direct historical generalizations of elite validation have enabled my assertions.

## CHAPTER II

### DISCUSSION: MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURES AND ARTIFACTS OF SPIRO

#### The Mississippian Cultures

The Mississippian era of Moundbuilding cultures began its formation at approximately A.D. 800-900. However, later (during Hernando de Soto's expedition of 1539-43), chiefdoms were found of the Late Mississippian cultures (Townsend 2004:18). These cultures continued to flourish from Florida to the Carolinas, Tennessee, Arkansas, and still further, extending into east Texas (Townsend 2004:18-19). Cahokia, a prominent site of this period, is believed to have emanated standards of power and prestige. These standards continued their influence within the culture well after its decline during the 13th Century (Townsend 2004:18). The site of Cahokia was established near the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers. It is believed to have at one time been "a center of far reaching trade and a theocratic seat of political, religious, and military authority" (Townsend 2004:18).

In general terms, Mississippian sites were dispersed



throughout the Southeastern United States, believed to be interconnected through long distance alliances (Bell 1947:181-182; Garbarino and Sasso 1994:76). One site of particular interest to Cahokia's influence is the Craig Mound at Spiro. It was at Spiro, that art and ritual regalia were contextually linked to rank, social status, and legitimacy of political and religious rule (Phillips and Brown 1978:16-19; Townsend 2004:18).

The ruling elites of Mississippian ceremonial centers were revered by farmers who were lower in social status. It is generally accepted that this society was ranked, and non-elites lived in farmsteads or palisaded villages (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:79-80; Hall 2004:95-96). Aside from localized class structure, it is also believed that there was a hierarchy of settlements in particular geographic areas (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:80). Moreover, the largest ceremonial centers of Mississippian settlements were the focus of the economic, social, political, and religious activity. However, it remains plausible that unprivileged members of society inhabited lesser centers (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:80). Ultimately, this level of social complexity was brought about by a shift to maize centered agriculture. This enabled a surplus of both goods and leisure time.

Four of the major Mississippian ceremonial centers were Cahokia (Illinois), Spiro (Oklahoma), Moundville (Alabama), and Etowah (Georgia) (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:79). For the purposes of this study, I am only interested in analyzing Cahokia and Spiro.

#### Cahokia and Modern Day Illinois

The Cahokia Mounds are present today, east of St. Louis, in the Mississippi River valley, more specifically, St. Clair County, in southwestern Illinois. Figure 2 shows Cahokia's location relative to what is now Spiro, Oklahoma. Figure 2 also indicates that Spiro was on the fringe of the Middle Mississippian culture. Thus, archaeological findings from Spiro are expected to be a mix between Caddoan and Middle Mississippian cultures.



Figure 2.  
Cahokia and Spiro.

(Texas Beyond History, University of Texas, Austin, [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/fundamentals/miss.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/fundamentals/miss.html)).

The modern state of Illinois' western border is defined by the Mississippi River. It borders the states of Wisconsin to the north, Indiana to the east, Kentucky to the southeast, Missouri to the west, and Iowa to the northwest. Illinois has an area of 145,933 square kilometers. In the year 2000 this state had an estimated population of 12,419,293 (On-Line Encyclopedia, 2005, [www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10142-Illinois.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10142-Illinois.html)).

#### Spiro and Modern Day Oklahoma

The site of Spiro exists on the southern bank of the Arkansas River in what is present day Le Flore County, Oklahoma. More specifically, the Spiro site is approximately eight miles northeast of Spiro, Oklahoma and eighteen miles west of Fort Smith, Arkansas (Bell 1947:181).

The modern state of Oklahoma borders the states of Kansas to the north, Missouri to the northeast, Arkansas to the east, Texas to the south, New Mexico to the west of the 'panhandle', and Colorado to the northwest of the 'panhandle'. Oklahoma has an area of 181,048 square kilometers. In the year 2000, this state had an estimated population of 3,450,654 (On-Line Encyclopedia, 2008, [www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Okla.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Okla.html)).

As mentioned before, Spiro was on the western fringe

of the Middle Mississippian cultural expression (Figure 2). Though geographically separated from Cahokia, the centralized source of Mississippian power, Spiro shared several similarities. Both were established on rivers and experienced similar climates. There is also recent climatic evidence that both Spiro and Cahokia experience similar average annual rainfall, percentage of possible sunshine, and regions of moisture (Hudson & Espenshade, Jr. 1995:72-73).

The Spiro site itself is located on the Braden or Fort Coffee Bottoms, and is used for cultivation in modern times (Bell 1947:181). The archaeological corpus from the Spiro site was interpreted to indicate multiple trade items. These trade items are flints (quarried from Illinois, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Arkansas), Webbers Falls argillites, quartz, galena, mica, hematite and limonite, turquoise, marine shells (from the Gulf of Mexico), and copper (from Lake Superior) (Bell 1947:181-182). This abridged list of trade materials implies the depth and intensity with which these items were exchanged. These exchanges also included social interactions of cultural beliefs and ideologies. Furthermore, this establishes the context for an analysis of marine shell material.

Figure 3 shows the location of the Spiro site with

respect to the aforementioned trade items found in archaeological contexts. I contend that the predominantly straight lines on this map should be reexamined. Certainly, they should be segmented and intersected by respective major and provincial Mississippian sites, indicating implied trade and exchange.

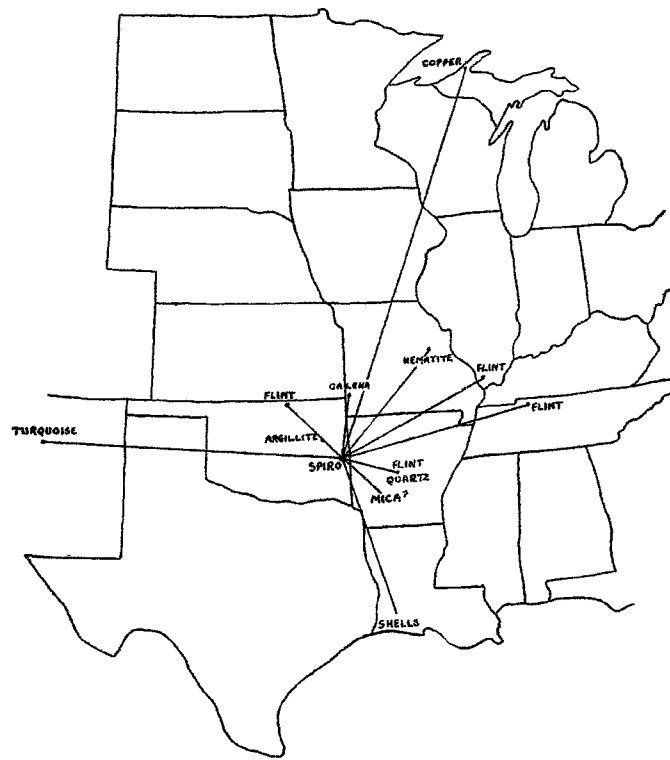


Figure 3.  
Spiro and the Sources of Trade Items.  
(Bell 1947:183).

Though trade linkages have been established, it should be understood that not all sites with Southeastern artifacts were contemporary (Brain and Phillips 1996:1-2).

Undoubtedly Mississippian sites, such as Cahokia, left ideological impressions on surrounding polities. Aside from the aforementioned archaeological artifacts, Cahokian peoples are believed to have ritualistically gathered at the site for religious purposes and games (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:80). The particular game being played was called chunky. Chunky is believed to have been a divinatory sport of high stakes, on a cosmic level, chartering at least one social position (Brown 2007:89). In historic times, this game is documented as being heavily associated with betting (Adair 1930:430-431; Swanton 1946:682-684).

In basic terms, the chunky players rolled a heavy disk-like stone and threw spears to predict the location where the stone would come to rest (Garbarino and Sasso 1994:81). During competition, ritual participants would take bets (Brown 2004:112). Unique qualities and treatment of chunky stones made them requisite items for elites (Brown 2004:112). Additionally, Robert Hall (1991) noted that the ritual architecture of major ceremonial centers was used to strengthen connections between groups. Such rituals were often adopted (Brown 1997:478-479) and prestige items were included in this inter societal cultural exchange (Brown 1997:478). This is included in my

analysis of Wedgemouth and T-Bar to demonstrate possible ways in which elite validation might have been diffused to the site of Spiro.

The Mississippian materials represent the southeastern artistic and technical skill, as well as expansive communication (Brain and Phillips 1996:2). It was this same skill and technical treatment that was adopted and mimicked in particular styles throughout the Mississippian world in ritual and myth. Consequently, it appears that complex Mississippian chiefdoms were linked together through relationships among ruling elites and the lasting efficiency of the principal ruler (Milner 2004:156). In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I argued a similar parallel among historic elites (mikos). Thus, conceptual and thematic patterning of elite validation is of more importance to this analysis.

#### The Spiro People

The people of Spiro (A.D. 1200-1350) belonged to a complex and ranked society. The basis for this assertion has been established (Brown 1971a, 1975a) by analyses involving burial associations (Phillips and Brown 1978:16). The centralized organization of Spiro was determined to be a chiefdom. Herein, the word chiefdom means that critical resources are controlled by the highest ranking elites.

The overall system is a 'descent system' and is the determining factor of individual rank. Essentially, the further removed in your descent from the chief, the lower your rank (Phillips and Brown 1978:16). It is also understood that status is linked to privilege and prestige in a descent system (Phillips and Brown 1978:16). Logically, major social distinctions were symbolized by the respective location to 'temple-towns', by the condition and treatment of the skeleton within a burial (Phillips and Brown 1978:17). Aside from kin relationship, geographic and an individual's proximity to 'temple towns' (major ceremonial centers) was indicative of their social rank (Phillips and Brown 1978:16-17).

With the exception of a few utilitarian knives among "the masses of exotic and unusual artifacts", Spiro's Great Mortuary's grave goods contain a specialized set of artifacts (Brown 1978:17-18). There exists major differences between elite and lower ranked burials at Spiro. Local cemetery burials are generally limited to a restricted list of artifacts (Phillips and Brown 1978:18). These include utilitarian tools used for "cutting, slicing, knapping, grinding, and abrading," claimed to represent the associated crafts and industries of the dead (Phillips and Brown 1978:18). Additional artifacts in local cemeteries



may include common pottery vessels, arrowpoints, and more exclusive items. More exclusive items consist of 'pipes, pigments, personal ornaments, and large chipped stone bifaces (knives)' (Phillips and Brown 1978:18). The limited number of burials examined in the regional ceremonial centers revealed an abundance of artifacts emphasizing social standing. The focus of these grave goods was on elite social status, rather than utilitarian use (Phillips and Brown 1978:18-19).

These local burials, containing various categories of grave goods, are contrasted by the prestigious burials at Spiro during the entire Spiro phase. These grave goods include "marine shell beads, pipes, pigments, flint bifaces, and arrowpoints" (Phillips and Brown 1978:18). Drawing from the Spiro shell corpus (Phillips and Brown 1978) all elite grave goods are more diversified in form or number than those found in the local cemeteries.

#### The Sample Analyzed in this Thesis

As previously stated, the subject of this thesis is the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme present among the Mississippian elite, shell corpus from Spiro. The Spiro shell material has been collected and documented through the use of shell 'rubblings' and shell fragments, interpreted to be primarily of *Busycon perversum perversum*

(Phillips and Brown 1978:26-27). Figure 4 depicts the shell prior to cutting and engraving.

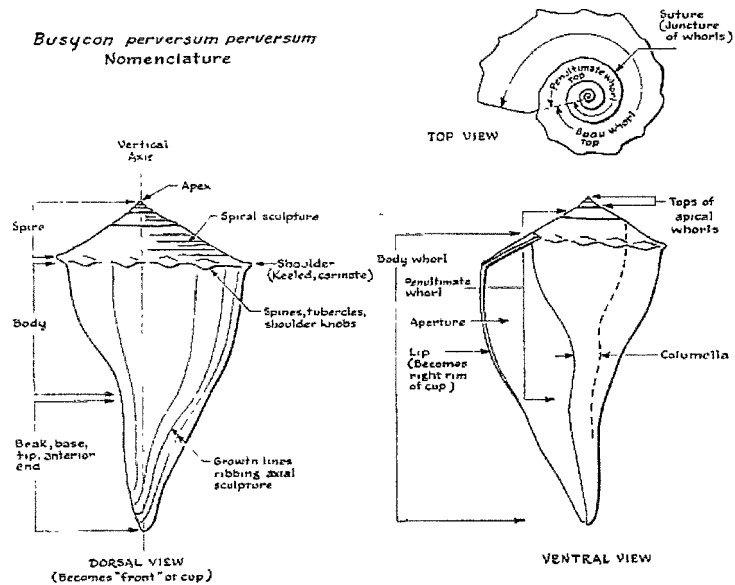


Figure 4.  
Terminology Related to *Busycon perversum*.  
(Phillips and Brown 1978:27).

Figure 5 shows the location of cuts made for the enlargement of the natural aperture and removal of the Columella in preparation for final engraving. Figure 6, shows the cup with spines and sculpture ground down to provide a smooth surface for engraving.

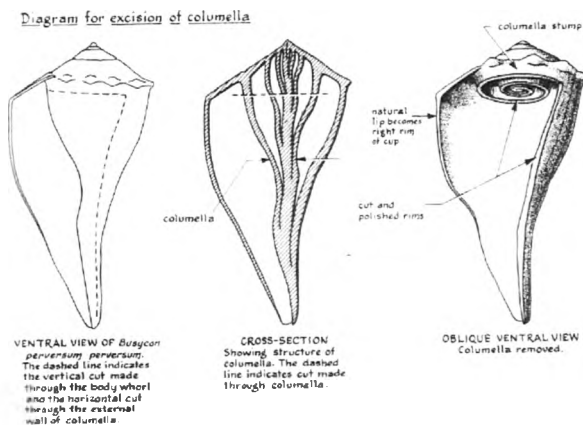


Figure 5.  
Removal of Columella/Formation of a Shell Cup.  
(Phillips and Brown 1978:28).

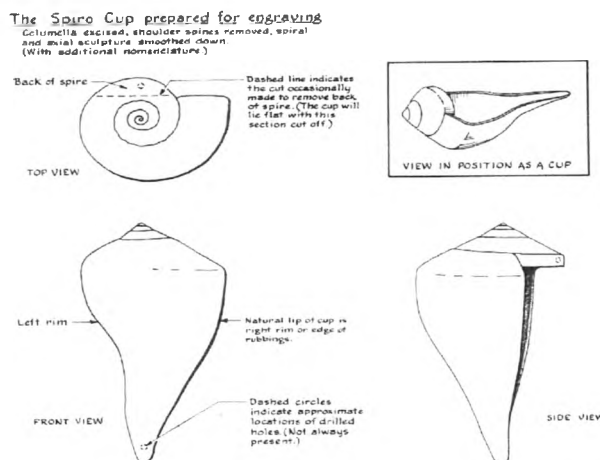


Figure 6.  
Spiro Shell Cup (prepared for engraving).  
(Phillips and Brown 1978:28)

For the sake of simplicity, I will specify descriptive terms necessary to readily comprehend the orientation of both shell engravings and utilizations. For my analysis, the exterior convex portion of the *Busycon's* surface (post preparation for engraving) is considered to be the front of

the shell (Figure 6). It is this area that was commonly utilized for engravings. The dorsal side and the bottom of the cup are synonymous with the front of the shell and are interchangeable terminologies (Figures 4 & 6). The spire will be considered the top, and the tip the bottom, in reference to rubbings. The back of the spire is actually on the front of the cup when being viewed in its functional position. Designations of the left and right shell cup rims are determined from the perspective of a front shell view.

In a previous study done by McFadden (Phillips and Brown 1978:28-29), measurements of 'whole' shell cups were taken. The findings of this study were that the average length of eighty-seven whole shell cups was 11.2 inches, with a range of five and a quarter (5.25) to fifteen (15) inches. The term whole here is specifically in reference to a shell cup that is intact or nearly intact. When this conservative data set was plotted, frequencies fell into a steep normal curve. Moreover, the majority of the specimens (63) measured in between ten (10) and thirteen (13) inches.

#### The Gorgets

For the purpose of this particular analysis, the term gorget is used in specific reference to an engraved ovular

disk, cut from the shell material of *Busycon perversum*. I make this qualification to emphasize the fact that gorgets were generally manufactured from various other materials as previously documented (Phillips and Brown 1978:29).

*Busycon* gorgets were typically cut from the upper portion of the shell (Figure 7). This allowed for maximum utilization of the available shell surface. Generally, engravings were limited to the inner concave area, but occasionally the outer convex surface also exhibited carvings. Due to the irregular shape of the *Busycon* gorgets, engraved shell rubbings are distorted with respect to their actual size.

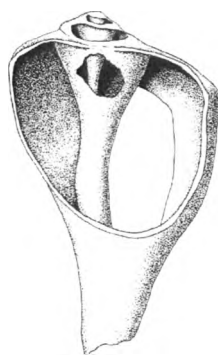


Figure 7.  
Cut Made for Gorget Preparation.  
(Phillips and Brown 1978:30)

#### Gathering Context for Wedgemouth and T-Bar

Drawing from the introductory chapter, elite efficiency is maintained by a metaphorical and symbolic

language among Mississippian artifacts. Previous analysis (Reilly 2004a:125) demonstrated the possibility that metaphorical subjects in historic mythic narratives were relevant to Mississippian cultures. Furthermore, elites engaged in activities with the intent of identifying themselves as participants in an allegorical mythic story, with the Morning Star supernatural at its core (Brown 2004:118). Thus, a majority of subsequent analyses have focused upon the imagery of the Birdman. The image of the Birdman is believed to be the dominant image of the Mississippian archaeological corpus (Brown 2004:106). Furthermore, Birdman imagery includes elite warrior ornamentation, falcon symbols, or may often be depicted as a participant of a chunky game (Brown 2004:106). Interestingly, the historic Osage also linked the image of a hawk (falcon) to the Morning Star supernatural (Brown 2004:118). This is of importance in that Raccoonman and Birdman imagery herein, are a sub set of the Wedgemouth theme (Table 3). Conversely, drawing from previous interpretation (Brown et al. 2007) T-Bar appears only in human form (Table 3). Wedgemouth is also represented with a stylized quadra partitioned facial design (Figure 8). T-Bar, hypothetically interpreted as the hoega, (Brown et al. 2007) may be understood as a symbol for all life (Table

3). Drawing from this, T-Bar may best be understood as an earthly individual. Again, it is my assumption that "earthly" is yet another allusion to a division in societal rank. Iconographic visualizations of this differentiation are visible in Figure 8 (page 48 of this thesis).

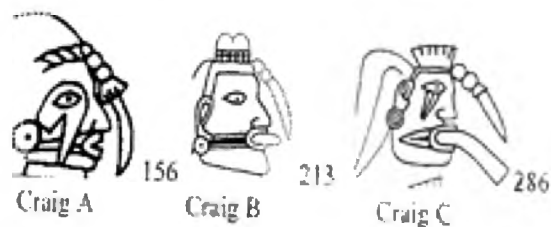
Table 3.  
Wedgemouth and T-Bar Associations.

|   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Wedgemouth  | was correlated to | Birdman<br>Raccoonman<br>Catman<br>Snakeman |
| T-Bar   | was correlated to | the human community<br>(or hoega)           |
| (Brown et al. 2007:37)  |                   |   |
| -----   |                   |   |
| Hoega is also documented as ho'-e-ga                                  |                   |   |
| Ho'-e-ga  |                   |   |
| (is defined as)   |                   |   |
| 1) ritual expression for an animal snare                              |                   |   |
| 2) bare spot [this contains a dual symbolism]                         |                   |   |
| 3) enclosure where life takes on bodily forms [only parting in death] |                   |   |
| 4) this term also means the earth                                     |                   |   |
| 5) ancient meaning:   |                   |   |
| life was brought about by the combined power of cosmic forces.        |                   |   |
| 6) among the Omaha the word ascribed to this meaning is Hu-thu-ga.    |                   |   |
| (La Flesche 1932:63)  |                   |   |

Drawing from my analysis of mikos (Chapter 1) I feel compelled to reiterate that historic Native Americans hold some part of this conceptual and ritualized ideology (Reilly 2004a:136-137, 2004b:187-189, 2004c:39-41). Thus, I compared an Omaha ritual related to the Ho'-e-ga (or the

Hu-thu-ga) to bolster my argument. Among the historic Omaha, the Hu-thu-ga is literally understood to be the circular encampment itself.

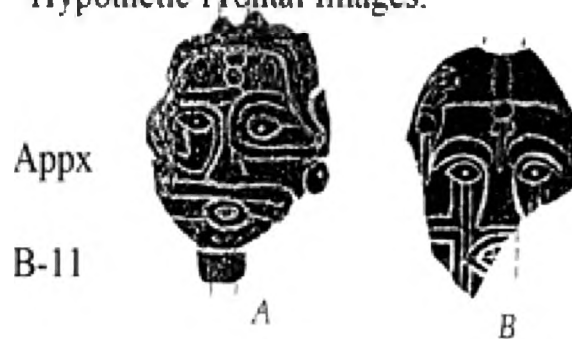
### Wedgemouth:



### T-Bar:



### Hypothetic Frontal Images:



A = Wedgemouth

B = T-Bar

Figure 8.  
Wedgemouth & T-Bar Examples.  
(Barker et al. 2004:4).



This encampment was divided into North (Sky People) and South (Earth People) (Ridington 1988:136). Fletcher and La Flesche also note Omaha myths "relate that human beings were born of a union between the Sky People and Earth People" (Ridington 1988:136). These renewal ceremonies, "channel the creative energy of this cosmic union into the life of the tribe", through a ritual theatre (Ridington 1988:136).

According to Robin Ridington, the ceremony, Waxthexe xigithe, is an Omaha ritual of renewal (Ridington 1988:138-139). In this context, the prefix 'Wa' is documented (Ridington 1988:145) as meaning that the sacred pole (Waxthexe) had the power of motion and life. Conversely, 'Xthexe' (the mark of honor) refers to the mark donned by individuals, and this honor was also 'vested on the Pole itself' (Ridington 1988:145). This ceremony includes visible metaphors that draw the community together in an ancestral ritual of unity, and collective forces. In this ritual, there is a specific association between a sacred tree aligned with the pole star or motionless star (Ridington 1988:140). This sacred tree is later made into the ceremonial center pole (Ridington 1988:137-138), of the Omaha.

Ultimately, the ceremony involves the introduction of a ruler into a "night dancing society" in which only chiefs were allowed to be part of (Ridington 1988:145). Ridington demonstrates a complementary relationship between the pole and the mark of honor, in her analysis. She likewise argues that the sun and star signs are complementary (Ridington 1988:145).

Correlating Ridington's analysis to Chapter 1 of this thesis demonstrates a relationship between ritual depictions of the motionless star and chiefly elite rule. The motionless star in La Flesche's Osage dictionary (1932:91) is linguistically related to the image of the raccoon (mi-<sup>h</sup>a'-<sup>h</sup>'e mo<sup>n</sup>-thi<sup>n</sup> a-zhi). This argument is also validated through associations between Wedgemouth and T-Bar in the following figure (Figure 9). Moreover, the complementary relationship of the sun (cross in petaloid circle) and star (raccoon) signs are visible, in relation to this specific iconographic theme (Figure 9).

**Wedgemouth as Birdman and Racconman**  
 (pole pointing toward inactive star, morning star, or evening star)

Plate 140 A



Raccoons on poles  
 (elites as Raccoonman)

Raccoons on poles  
 (elites as Birdman)

Plate 138 Ba &amp; Bb



Plate 128



Plate 138 Aa &amp; Ab



Plate 136



Plate 137



Plate 139



Figure 9.

Wedgemouth as Star/Celestial Body [Birdman and Raccoonman]  
 All Craig A plates (Phillips and Brown 1984:128-140).

For the purposes of interpreting the archaeological  
 record accurately, generalized conceptual correlations may

also be extended to the Wodjijdjé mythic narrative. Further linguistic documentation from Mary Carolyn Marino (1968) explains that Wodjijdjé also means "one who has become a sun". This correlation is visible in Figure 9. This also strengthens arguments for the representation of both the Birdman and Raccoonman as differing aspects of the Morning Star supernatural. There exists, however, a simultaneous, complimentary aspect of thematic parallel between Ridington's Omaha ethnography (1988) and Wedgemouth symbolism. More specifically, this is the right to transform involving center pole ceremonialism (Figure 9).

Conversely, T-Bar (a representation of the human community) does not seem to have a direct connection to the imagery of the Morning Star supernatural. Instead, drawing from previous analysis, (Brown et al. 2007:37) the T-Bar image may be understood as the earthly community (hoega) itself. Extending from this interpretation, historic Native American ethnographies of the earth (Earth Island) are conceptually believed to be resting upon the back of a turtle shell (Lankford 2007:22). The historic Iroquois, Delaware, and other Algonquian tribes held this belief (Speck 1931:44-47; Fenton 1962). The Shawnee were among these groups (Schutz 1975:75; Lankford 2007:22). Other historic tribes focused on stabilizing and balancing the

floating earth. For the Mandans, four floating tortoises stabilized and supported the earth (Catlin 1967:75; Lankford 2007:22). The image of the turtle (like the hoega) may also be extended to the tribal community itself. Although the Winnebago have no Turtle Clan, "they, or at least the Lower Moeity, style themselves as the 'People of the Turtle', and assert that Turtle was the first man" of their nation (Dieterle, undated electronic document, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Turtle.html](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Turtle.html)). It is along these same conceptual themes that I present T-Bar imagery as a sign of rank.

To clarify my assertion of T-Bar's earthly qualities I have added the following figure (Figure 10). In this figure, T-Bar (in the viewer's right hand column) is juxtaposed to Wedgemouth (in the viewer's left hand column). Plates B-11 M and Mv (a humanistic T-bar figurine) and B-9 A (T-Bar with a Columella necklace) supply a stylistic basis for comparison. Demonstrated in the following figure, the earthly imagery of the turtle (Plate B-11 L) can be stylistically correlated to the image of the T-Bar. I am not arguing that the T-Bar is a turtle. Instead, I agree with previous interpretation (Brown et al. 2007:37), that the T-Bar represents an earthly symbol that may be likened to the human community (or hoega). It also

seems logical that this earthly symbolism would be extended to the image of the turtle, and thus the lower moiety (Figure 10).

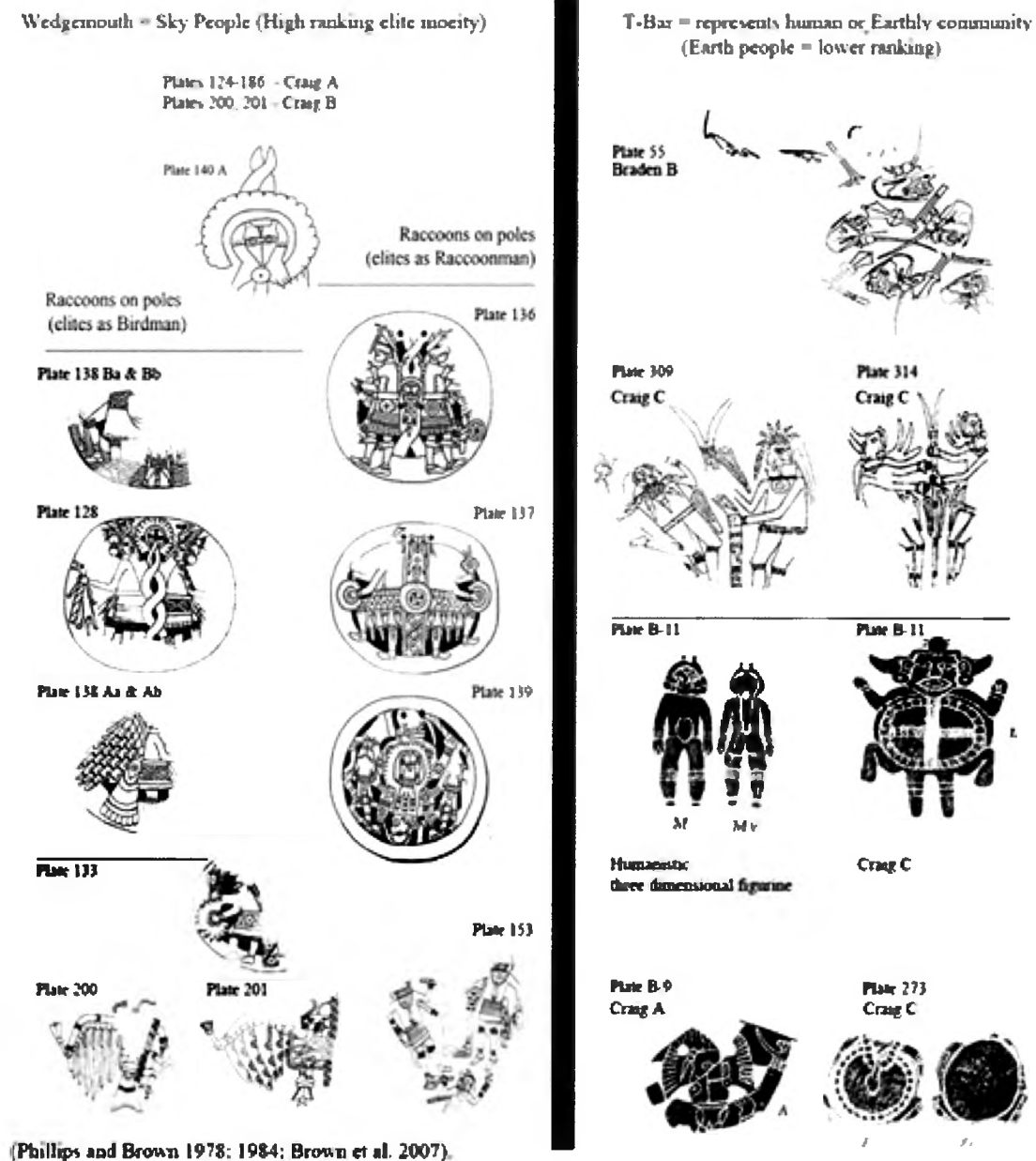


Figure 10.

Shell Engravings: Images of Wedgemouth And T-Bar.  
Images (Phillips and Brown 1978, 1984; Brown et al. 2007).

An additional point of note involves the Craig A (Plate B-9 A) and Craig C (Plate 273) plates (Figure 10). The Columella necklace in both images is somewhat problematic. According to David Dye (2004:195) this type of necklace is the quintessential item for warrior heroes. Ultimately, 'who' or 'what' T-Bar represents is irrelevant compared to the generalized assertion that it appears to be earthly or less elite.

Nonetheless, I argue that in certain contexts: Plates 55 (Braden B style) B-11 M and Mv (unclassified style), and B-11 (Craig A style), T-Bar appears more individual than an earthly representative (Figure 10). The Craig A overlap is particularly important in that there is a lack of T-Bar transformation among the imagery of pole ceremonialism (Figure 10). This general pattern can also be witnessed in the Pre-Columbian Spiro shell corpus text (Phillips and Brown 1984) itself. Drawing from Ridington's ethnography (1988), I deduce that transformation equates to paramount elite only rituals, thus excluding T-Bar.

Figure 10 also demonstrates that certain symbols are specific locatives attributable to specific imagery. Drawing from previous research (Reilly 2004a:129-130) a particular set of motifs may be understood as symbolic locatives. The three motifs of particular interest here

are the: cross in petaloid circle, cross in circle, and swastika cross in circle (Figure 11). These terms are drawn from the Spiro Shell Engravings Glossary of motifs (Phillips and Brown 1978:146-156), and may be witnessed in Figure 11. It is noteworthy that Reilly's analysis (2004a) did not seek an understanding of Wedgemouth among Craig A transformation. However later research, (Brown et al. 2007; Reilly 2007) allowed for the inclusion of A and C (Figure 11) within the Wedgemouth theme. Comparing Figures 10 and 11 demonstrates that in this study, T-Bar is associated with a cross in circle motif (labeled as B. in Figure 11).

Conversely, Wedgemouth's guises are associated to specific symbols. In this analysis, these are the cross in petaloid circle (Birdman) and the swastika cross in circle (Raccoonman) motifs respectively (Figures 10 & 11). These Wedgemouth images, are derived from the Craig A style, (Phillips and Brown 1984) and are interpreted as individual elite rulers engaged in respective clanal ceremonies. Figure 11 (part of a hypothetical argument for motifs as locatives) (Reilly 2004a:127-130) validates my assertions. All bolded text in the figure (Figure 11) is my adaptation of Jack Johnson's and Dr. Reilly's hypothetic model (Reilly 2004a:127).



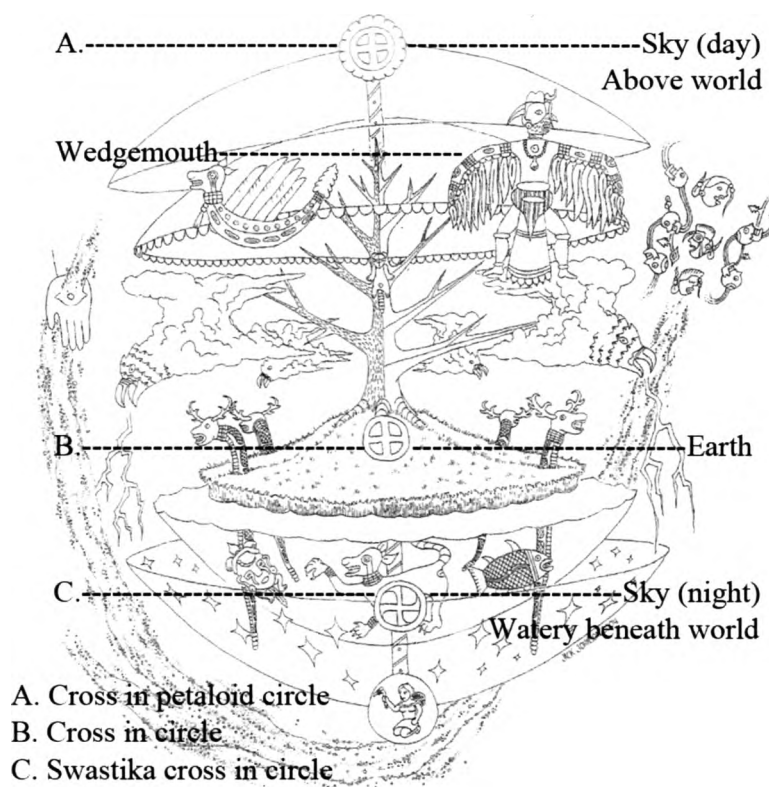


Figure 11.  
Adapted Native American Cosmos Model.  
(Reilly 2004a:127).

Given that this analysis is examining individual ritual contexts and depictions of Wedgemouth and T-Bar, one more correlation is worth mentioning. Previous analysis (Brown 2007:104-105), demonstrated that the hawk was aligned with the daytime. Among the historic Osage, the word for night is "ho<sup>n</sup>" while, the word for day is "ho<sup>n</sup>'-ba" (La Flesche 1932:63). It is noteworthy that the suffix "ba" is also used as a prefix specifically referencing using a knife for slicing and cutting (La Flesche 1932:17).

A similar word "Ho<sup>n</sup>'-ga" not only represents one of two major societal subdivisions, it also makes specific reference to the symbolic image of an eagle (La Flesche 1932:65). It is irresponsible to assume that that the image of the eagle will be found in the Mississippian corpus. Nonetheless, avian imagery identified Mississippian warrior elite's as the sacred warrior (the priestly leader of the war party engaged in ritual) (Dye 2004:191-205). Conversely, the Raccoonman lacks the imagery of decapitated heads. Within the archaeological corpus (Phillips and Brown 1984) the Raccoonman is never explicitly associated with warfare nor its accoutrements.

Wedge-mouth compositions (involving Craig A style pole ceremonialism) are to be understood as high ranking elites, involved in elite only rituals. The sacred hawk has been interpreted as the Birdman (Brown 2004) and thus, the Morning Star or Red Horn. This is noteworthy in that Birdman is a subset of the Wedgemouth theme, thus explaining the complementary relationship in imagery. Again, I believe this to be self-evident in the Craig A style iconography (Phillips and Brown 1984) found at Spiro.

Conversely, the T-Bar figure is only shown in human form (Brown et al. 2007:27). Subsequently, it stands to reason that the image of the T-Bar lacking transformation

among Craig A elite pole ceremonialism is lower in rank. According to the historic Omaha myth (Ridington 1988) it may also be conceptually argued that the lesser elite would still be a member of the ruling clan. This line of thought leads to my assertion that T-Bar could attain membership in the ruling clan, but could never be considered a paramount elite, lacking the ability of transformation. Reinforcing this concept is T-Bar's association with earthly symbolism (Brown et al. 2007).

It seems logical that the Raccoonman and Birdman (both being forms of Wedgemouth) represent differing aspects of the Morning Star supernatural. These aspects of the Morning Star are to be examined as clanal attributions and ritualistic responsibilities herein. Based upon associated locatives (Figure 11), I argue that the Raccoonman is linked to night rituals (given the inclusion of the swastika (Swirl Cross) motif and the exclusion of trophy heads). Conversely, the image of the Birdman (falcon) is not only associated with warfare (Dye 2004), but with day locatives as well (Reilly 2007:104). This is exemplified by petaloid motifs in direct association to the sky realm (Reilly 2007:54-55). Although these motifs could be construed to represent chronology (night or day), it is more likely that they are indicative of clanal division.

More specifically, as alluded to in Chapter 1 of this thesis, Wedgemouth as Raccoonman or as Birdman is the paramount elite (in effect, a paramount Miko). Cultural variations and overlap, of this societal duality however, is be expected. If these images are related to specific locatives, then the status linked with the image of the Raccoon may be lower in rank, than the paramount chiefs (Birdman). Irrespective of the specific rank chartered, I believe that the Raccoonman designation as a differing aspect of the Morning Star, bears comparative and complementary relevance to an analysis of the Birdman. Furthermore, two possibilities can now be argued for the meaning of the Wedgemouth motif. The first is paramount chiefly status. The second is the embodiment of the Morning Star supernatural itself. Thus it stands to reason that few images of T-Bar will occur in themes specifically related to highest elite only rituals among the Craig A style, (Raccoonman and Birdman rituals). Again these rituals would specifically be related to the validation of elites through the imagery of the Morning Star supernatural (Brown 2004:118-119). Although T-Bar may be demonstrated as being involved in warfare, it does not appear to be of the highest elite rank. This is based upon T-Bar's 'earthly' associations (Brown et al. 2007) and a lack of

transformation among center pole ceremonialism (Phillips and Brown 1984), associated with the Morning Star supernatural. Moreover, my assertions include an underlying pattern of historic and linguistic generalizations presented in these introductory chapters. In the next Chapter, I will further establish my methods for iconographic analysis of the engraved shell corpus.

In contrast to clan relationships, it remains equally plausible that when referencing Mississippian kinship, researchers may be witnessing varied crosscutting social complexity (King 2004:163-165). This complexity may indicate sodalities, such as dance or medicine societies (Brown, personal communication 2009; Reilly, personal communication 2009). Future arguments may serve in understanding the outside pressures that forced lesser polities to borrow foreign symbolism. However, this particular study presents a formal analysis based on transformational qualities among Wedgemouth and T-Bar. Irrespective of prehistoric interpersonal relationship, these formal groupings exist, even if respective symbols are adopted from earlier, foreign, styles. These approaches were arrived at, accepted, and reiterated by Dr. Jim Brown and the Caddoan Group (personal communication, 2009) at the Mississippian Iconographic Workshop.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODS FOR STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF WEDGEMOUTH AND T-BAR

Thirteen exclusively Wedgemouth shell artifacts will be examined in this analysis. Individual samples will be further divided into Wedgemouth as Raccoonman and Birdman. These examples, among the Craig A style, will be contrasted to T-Bar imagery at the site of Spiro. Archaeologically, the T-Bar shell artifacts lack transformation (Brown et al. 2007) and are fragmentary. For this reason, I will present generalized iconographic associations across broader styles from the Spiro site. Additionally, an underlying assumption of this analysis equates the rites of spiritual transformation to the rites of priestly rule. Thus, it is noteworthy that T-Bar lacks this transformational ability.

Each engraved shell artifact is to be considered an isolated 'snapshot'. The artifacts themselves are mnemonic devices revealing only parts of the overarching narrative sequence (Reilly 2004a:126). Drawing from previous studies (Brown 2007), it is improper to force isolated artifacts (as snapshots) into one confining narrative sequence as

opposed to a potential multitude of narrative sequences. Though highly complex and variable in reading order, I feel the variance of mythic cycles attests to this quality of mythic enactments. Furthermore, these same stories are specified by the function of supernatural characters, (Reilly 2004a, 2007) and their respective elite actors.

A mythic narrative does not exist in a proverbial, cultural vacuum. It is altered and changed to suit the needs of the members of society. Drawing from previous documentation (Milner 2004:129) and previous chapters of this analysis, Spiro is assumed to follow this same tradition. Though a strict narrative sequence cannot link isolated artifacts in the shell corpus, thematic patterning will be used to restrict unbridled interpretations of historic allusions.

Similar to mythic enactment, the production of an image (or shell engraving), can also be understood as a social act. Herein, the linkage of mythic enactment to the archeological corpus narrows the scope of speculative iconographic expression. Generalized expectations can be formulated by understanding a set of thematic imagery and associated subject matter (Brown 2007:65). These thematic expectations inform researchers as to what the range of meaning may have been. The potential range of meaning 'can

be drawn from the common stock of images, myths, and rites present on the subcontinent at contact times and later.' (Brown 2007:65).

To unravel the discontinuity between the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme and numerous aforementioned historic ethnographies, a basis for structural analysis must be presented. In this thesis, the artifacts will be compared to the glossary of motifs established in the *Pre-Columbian Shell Engravings from the Craig Mound at Spiro, Oklahoma* text (see Appendix). This glossary (Phillips and Brown 1978:146-156) identifies motifs that occur in the greater shell corpus. Thus, it is more than sufficient for analyzing the Wedgemouth and T-Bar theme.

Prior to identifying what specifically qualifies as Wedgemouth and T-Bar, I must briefly discuss the difference between style and theme. Drawing from previous analyses (Schapiro 1953:288; Brown 2007:216) style is to be defined as:

- 1) The formal elements, qualities, treatments or motifs that link similar artifacts.
- 2) A 'culturally shaped vehicle' that conveys and expresses subject matter.
- 3) Having a geographic location and changing temporally.
- 4) Being tied to the shared histories of specific groups.



Conversely, theme is to be defined as the meaning being conveyed through the use and presentation of the previously discussed, formal qualities. Figure 12 is used to demonstrate the difference between style and theme, as it pertains to this analysis. It is noteworthy that regardless of the particular style herein, thematic qualities (i.e. Birdman) not formal appearance is the basis of formal patterning (Figure 12). Subsequently, the pattern on the center pole remains the same while stylistic qualities change (Figure 12). This is but one example of stylistic substitution that will be used in my analysis.

Given the example in figure 12, I will break up specific elements and motifs within individual compositions. This is similar to previous analysis (Lankford 2004:208) of a Cox Mound gorget, whereby an artifacts' imagery was broken up and its' respective parts analyzed. Although Lankford's subject matter differs, the application of iconography remains the same. This method enables the comparison of patterned motifs among various artifacts. Figure 13 demonstrates Lankford's analysis and the way motifs will be interpreted within my research. Conversely, sequenced Wedgemouth imagery in this structural analysis is visible in figure 14.

**Craig A Gorget  
Plate 133**



- Birdman theme

- Style: symetrically centered (central axis/center pole)

---

**Craig B Shell Cup Fragments**

**Plate 201**



- Birdman theme

-Style: Shell Cup imagery is not symetrically centered on central axis

Figure 12.

Style vs. Theme [Craig A & B styles].  
Plates 133 & 201 (Phillips and Brown 1984).

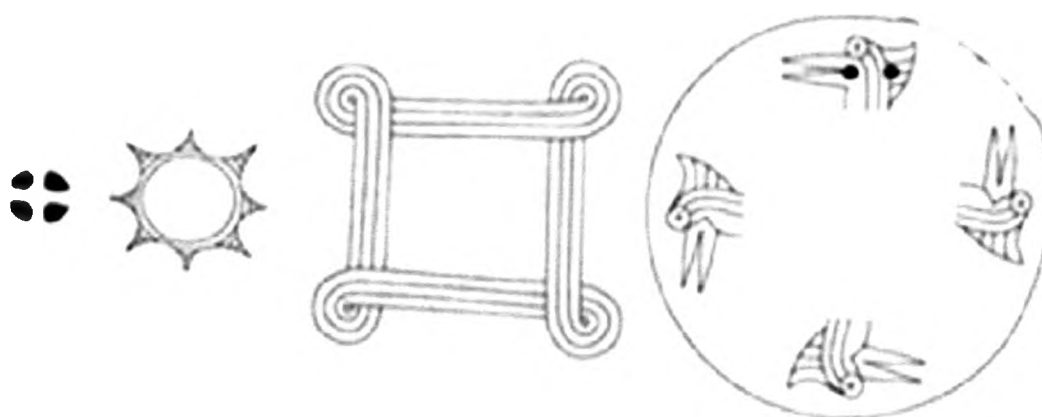
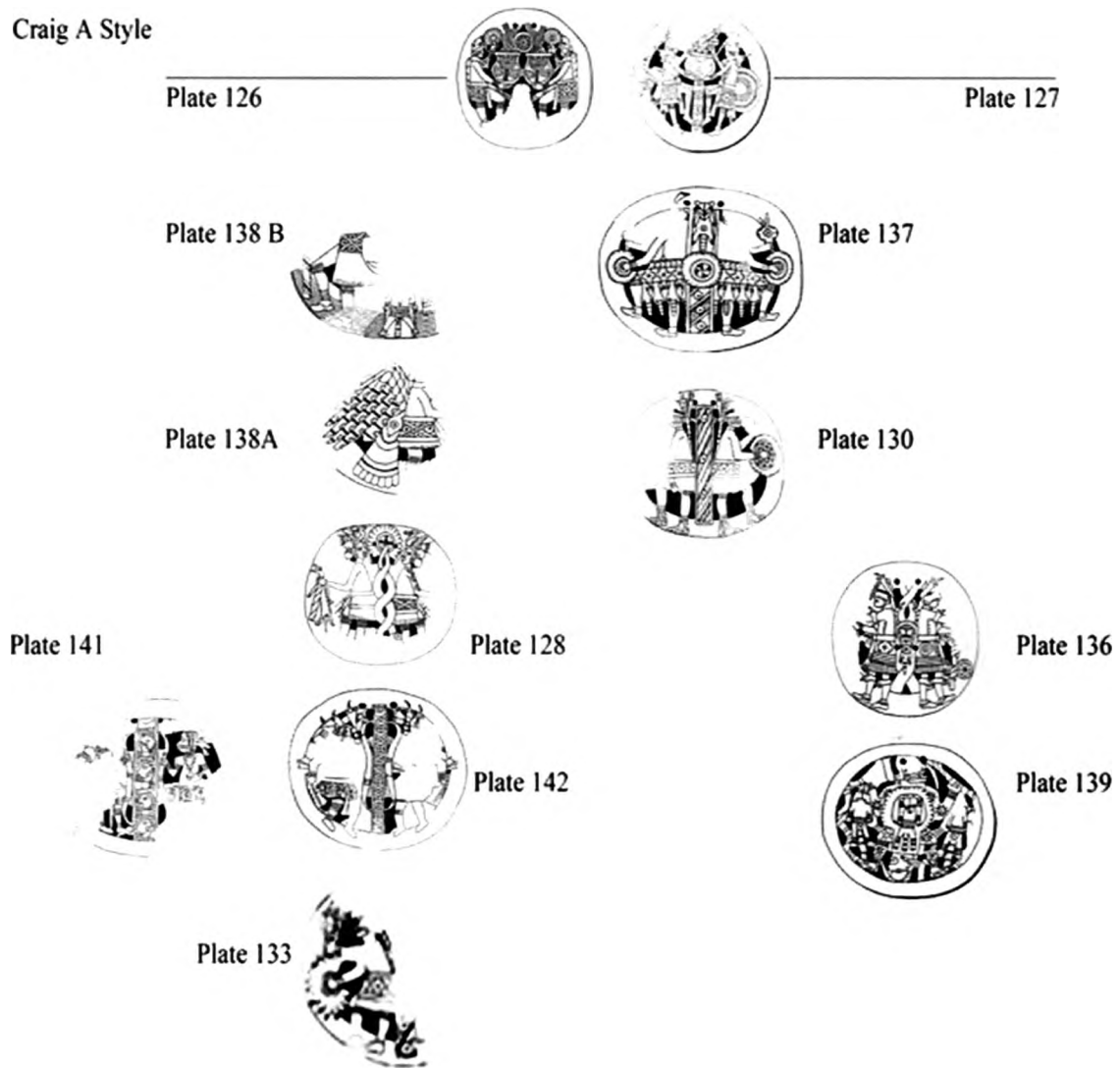


Figure 13.  
Cox Mound Gorget:  
Topical Example of Structural Analysis.  
(Lankford 2004:95).

## Craig A Style



## Craig B Style

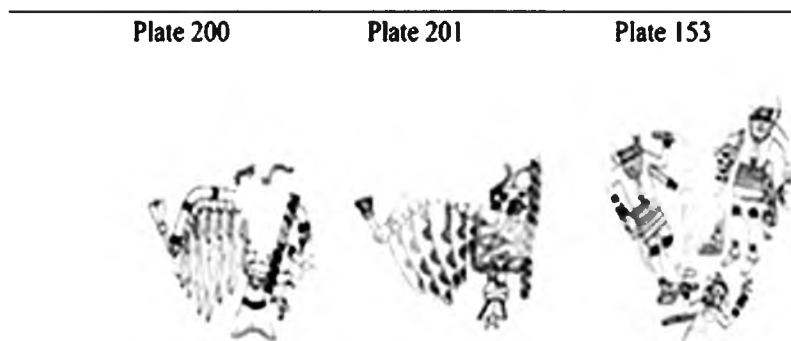


Figure 14.  
 Wedgemouth in Transformation: Raccoonman & Birdman.  
 All Plates (Phillips and Brown 1984).

I have identified all of the aforementioned images (Figure 14) as being conceptually and thematically linked to Wedgemouth imagery<sup>2</sup>. In the previous figure (Figure 14), a hypothetical model of transformation extends from a ceremony where steaming vessels are prominent (Plates 126 and 127). This culminates in a depiction of Birdman on the viewer's left (Plates 200 and 201; Figure 14). Plate 153 serves as a comparative tool to Plate 200, as both images bear motifs associated with severed heads (Figure 14). The three Craig B examples of Birdman (Figure 14) thematically allude to the transforming images of Wedgemouth.

On the viewer's right of figure 14 a transformational sequence leading toward Raccoonman can be seen. Given that all images are a subset of the Wedgemouth theme, the substitution of motifs will be examined in this analysis. In summation, the same treatment given to Birdman will be used to analyze Raccoonman.

I came to the conclusion of transformation due to a number of factors. These include the following:

- 1) The transition of motifs (Figure 14) in the archaeological corpus itself (Phillips and Brown 1984).

□

<sup>2</sup> It is my contention that Plate 142 among the Craig A style (Phillips and Brown 1984) is stylistically comparable to Wedgemouth (Figure 14). However, due to motifs on the center pole it will be presented as thematically aligned with T-Bar. This argument is presented in chapter 6 of this thesis.

- 2) The deduction that Wedgemouth is shown in multiple non-human guises (Brown et al. 2007:17-37).
- 3) The assertion that Okla-Lf-S43 (Plate 139 in Figure 13 above) is a transformational depiction of the paired figure sequence (Brain and Phillips 1996:68). However, prior to recent research (Brown et al. 2007) Plate 139 (Okla-Lf-S43) was not thematically included as part of the transformational sequence. Thus, it previously remained unassigned (Brain and Phillips 1996:68). In my analysis, this gorget completes the transformation of Wedgemouth into Raccoonman.

Unlike historic accounts (La Flesche 1932; Radin 1948, 1954), the Craig A style analyzed herein has a clear cut set of symbols associated to the recently defined Morning and Evening Star supernaturals (Figure 14). Three sets of motifs, although isolated examples presented herein, do not overlap among Wedgemouth and T-Bar themes. Originally presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis, these may also be seen in figure 15.

## Wedge-mouth

## T-Bar

A - Petaloid in Circle

B - Swirl Cross

C - Cross in Circle

A.

Plate 128



B.

Plate 137



C.

Plate 142



Plate 138 A



Plate 138 B



Plate 309

Figure 15.

Three Specific Locative Motifs: Wedgemouth & T-Bar.  
All Craig Style Plates (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Wedge-mouth as Birdman and Raccoonman (A and B in Figure 15), share the following motifs: Greek Cross and Cross Banded motifs on tunics, Entwined Bands (vapors) substituting as a center pole (Brown et al. 2007:37). Among Craig A examples (Phillips and Brown 1984), the basic style shared is paired figures (possibly dancers) carrying

rattles or staffs. The only difference in presentation of compositions is that the symbolism on the center pole (or central axis) appears to be subject to the resulting guise or transformation. This equates to an extension toward the Petaloid motif for Birdman, and a Swastika (herein a Swirl Cross) motif for Raccoonman. All aforementioned motifs are present in the Craig A style (Phillips and Brown 1978, 1984) and will be demonstrated within their respective chapters in my analysis.

Drawing from Reilly's discussion of the Petaloid motif as a locative in relation to a historic Morning Star priest (2007:48-49), I suggest that Raccoonman is set in opposition to Birdman. However, both guises share considerable overlap in motifs. Moreover, there are also numerous parallel linguistic and ethnographic examples presented within this thesis, discussing the political office of Mikos. Mikos (as leaders) validate their rule through metaphors (both linguistic and visual), aligning themselves with the Morning Star Supernatural. Following this historic reasoning, Raccoonman may be seen as representing nightly aspects of the Morning Star Priest. This complementary relationship is justified by the understanding that Mikos may possess the duality of the elite priest and the Morning Star supernatural (Chapter 1



of this thesis).

Although these are opposing supernatural beings, the Evening Star remains a nightly aspect of the Morning Star. It is also noteworthy that among the historic Osage, Polaris (the pole star) has a connection to the image of the raccoon and elite rank (La Flesche 1932:91). Other, ethnographic researchers (Fletcher 1903:13; Murie 1981:42; Dorsey 1904:57; and Lankford 2007) note the importance of a star north of the Milky Way. Furthermore, although it is somewhat confusing, Polaris is believed to be a referent, receiving the spirits of the dead, ultimately sending them to the South Star (Chamberlain 1982:113; Lankford 2007:199). This function of Polaris can be interpreted as being similar to Morning Star's receiving souls upon death to determine their ultimate fate (Lankford 2007:199). Essentially, this implies a multiplicity of aspects or guises regarding the Morning Star. This concept affirms both the iconographic analysis herein and the mythical associations already presented enabling historic elites (Mikos) to validate their rule. Similarly, Wedgemouth as Raccoonman and Birdman is associated with specific iconographic locatives allied with day and night (Reilly 2004a:129). Locatives are simply understood as the setting where action takes place within iconographic imagery (i.e.

day or night). As noted in the previous chapter, meaning may also extend to specific rituals, among the paramount elite.

Juxtaposed to an analysis of Wedgemouth is T-Bar, interpreted to be of human form (Brown et al. 2007:37). Among Craig A style, (Phillips and Brown 1984) there is no documented evidence that T-Bar and Wedgemouth are social equals. However, with respect to all facets of Craig styles (A,B, and C) T-Bar remains inseparable from the paired figure theme. Following this line of reasoning, a generalized understanding of T-Bar will be presented.

Among the T-Bar examples included in this analysis, the respective motifs are as follows: Detached Heads, Raccoon Hindquarters, Cross in Circles (on center pole and belt), center pole ceremony, weaponry, bows and arrows, and one example of a Bilobed Arrow. Although some individual motif overlap does occur between Wedgemouth and T-Bar, it is noteworthy that these motif examples cannot be patterned within a single style (Phillips and Brown 1984) at Spiro. However, by discussing what T-Bar represents, future researchers may achieve a greater understanding of what rank in society may be chartered by Wedgemouth.

Ultimately, individuals adorning the T-Bar facial design are representatives of the earthly community (Brown

et al. 2007:37). T-Bar associated with a spirit power transfer model, (Brown et al. 2007:37) demonstrates an individual receiving power from another individual. This could be interpreted as a lower ranking person rising to higher status. T-Bar's inclusion in this study, demonstrates the lack of mythic associations that can be effectively argued for particular "characters" in the archaeological record. Again, there are fewer associations in T-Bar's motif set due to a lack of a demonstrable transformation sequence (Brown et al. 2007:37). Additionally, T-Bar, as of yet, lacks a plausible validating narrative. In summation, T-Bar is absent from the rite of spiritual transformation, and thus lacks the validation to achieve priestly rule.

The following table (Table 4) shows the specific shell engravings to be analyzed within the next three chapters. The framing of this table also alludes to the possibility of three specific rituals, validating three specific ranks. The term overlap in the following table (Table 4) demonstrates where the iconographic subthemes between Birdman and Racoonman are so similar that the same plate is used in both categories. This quality not only depicts the duality of Wedgemouth in this analysis, but also topically alludes to their complementary relationship (Table 4).

Table 4.  
Analysis within Subsequent Chapters.

Wedgemouth

| <u>Birdman</u>            | <u>Raccoonman</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Plate 138B----overlap---- | Plate 138B        |
| Plate 138A                | Plate 137         |
| Plate 128                 | Plate 130         |
| Plate 133A----overlap---- | Plate 133A        |
| Plate 200                 | Plate 136         |
| Plate 201                 | Plate 137         |
| Plate 203                 | Plate 140         |
| Plate 153                 | Plate 139         |

[Completed Transformation]

T-Bar

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Plate 309-----    | Craig C style      |
| Plate 142-----    | Craig A style      |
| Plate B-9A-----   | Craig A style      |
| Plate 55-----     | Braden B style     |
| Plate B-11 M&Mv-- | Unclassified style |
| Plate 188-----    | Craig B style      |
| Plate 279-----    | Craig C style      |

In the previous table, it appears that the T-Bar analysis is problematic given a lack of patterning among a single style. However, Plates 142 and B-9A, both of the Craig A style, form the centerpiece of T-Bar interpretation. Generalized themes and motifs will be drawn together from the five other plates to enable comparison among the Craig A style. Although fragmentary,

this gives researchers the basis for three specific, comparative rituals among Craig A style.

The successive chapters of this thesis will proceed as follows:

- A. Iconographic analysis of Wedgemouth as Birdman
- B. Iconographic analysis of Wedgemouth as Raccoonman
- C. Generalized interpretation of T-Bar
- D. Conclusions

Each chapter will be self-sustaining, including discussion of artifacts after structural analysis. Discussion of ethnographic relationships with Mikos will be included where applicable. Due to the lack of sequenced transformation among T-Bar artifacts, it is believed that Wedgemouth will dominate these allusions.

## CHAPTER IV

### STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF WEDGEMOUTH AS BIRDMAN

#### Birdman Transformation Sequence

This chapter's subject matter is Wedgemouth as Birdman. Each artifact addressed within will be discussed and interpreted individually and include discussion of ethnographic references where pertinent.

Plate 138B (Figure 16) is a paired figure type gorget in the Craig A style comprised of two matching fragments. The visible image on this gorget is believed to be holding a striped staff and is wearing a Cross Banded tunic (skirt). The Cross Bands are formed by circular and triangular motifs along the upper portion of the figure's tunic (Phillips and Brown 1984:138). The central axis of the gorget contains a frontal (but damaged) raccoon motif (Brain and Phillips 1996:57; Phillips and Brown 1984:138).

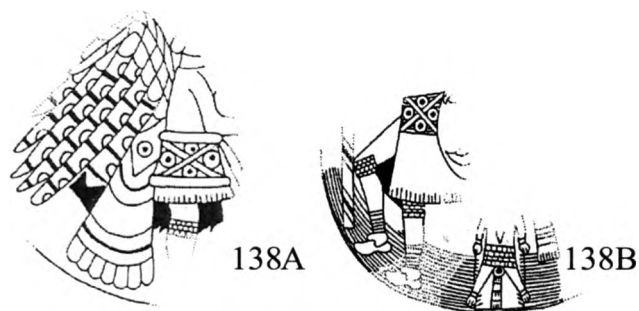


Figure 16.

Plates 138A & 138B: Cross Band Motif on Paired Figures.  
Both Craig A plates (Phillips and Brown 1984).

In spite of the fact that Plate 138B is badly damaged and does not exhibit a visible Wedgemouth figure, it does depict the image of a raccoon which is closely associated with the Wedgemouth theme. The subsequent shell engravings will further establish a more substantial connection between the two (Figure 16).

Plate 138A is associated specifically with the Birdman theme (Figure 16). Plate 138A, also of the Craig A style, includes the paired figure theme (although only the viewer's left portion is visible). It is included into both paired figure and Birdman themes due to "construction and decoration of the Cross Banded skirt, drawing of the arm, and the broad 'brickwork' kneebands" (Phillips and Brown 1984:138). I believe that the Cross Banded skirt is particularly important to a study of Wedgemouth imagery.

Most notable is that this motif has already occurred in concert with Raccoon and Birdman themes (Phillips and Brown 1984) among Craig A style. This comparison can be extended to the previously discussed Plate 138B (Figure 16).

Plate 128, of the Craig A style, is also part of the paired figure theme. This plate was included in a paired figure series associated with Wedgemouth at the iconographic workshop (Barker et al. 2004:5-6). However, this plate was not specifically included in a more recent paired figure iconographic workshop analysis (Brown et al. 2007). Nonetheless, figure 17 demonstrates the strong relationship between Plate 128 and the paired figure plates associated with Wedgemouth.

Particular emphasis needs to be placed on implied artifact relationships originating from depictions of a Cross Band motif on the skirts of ritual participants. This transition is exhibited between Plate 128 (Figure 17) and Plates 138 A & B (Figure 16) (Phillips and Brown 1984) of the Craig A style.

Another important substitution is the possibility of central axis transitions. This means that the axis can be a literal central pole or depicted by stylized Entwined Bands or vapors (Brown et al. 2007:4).





128

Figure 17.  
Wedgemouth as Birdman: Petaloid Locative  
Visible Above Central Axis of Gorget.  
(Phillips and Brown 1984).

This interpretation can be generally observed in figure 17. Moreover, although this does not represent a complete transformation of Birdman, it does introduce the Petaloid motif. This particular example is a Cross in Petaloid Circle (Reilly 2004a:129-130). Stemming from an understanding of Wedgemouth in paired figure transformation (Brown et al. 2007:37), I sought to identify a single sequence of Birdman specific transformation in the Craig A style. This progressing line of thought ultimately resulted in an examination of Plate 133A.

Plate 133A, a fragmented paired figure gorget, is stylistically different. Nonetheless, all paired figure

gorgets in this analysis are partly assumed to be ritual participants, this particular ritual being a "Birdman ceremony". This plate was never included in an analysis specifically allocated to Wedgemouth as Birdman. However, it does depict possible ritual dancers with rattles and fans facing away from a central axis (Phillips and Brown 1984:133).

No evidence appears to exist in either 133A or B implying stylistic continuance of a Cross Band skirt motif. However, plate 133 does afford a unique opportunity to compare similarities in thematic patterning between Craig A and B styled Wedgemouth figures. This comparison is controlled among Craig B examples by both Wedgemouth and Birdman associations. Other thematic restrictions include paired figure ceremonialism, continuance of the Petaloid motif, and similar center pole motifs (Phillips and Brown 1984). This can be witnessed in figure 18 below. Plates 200, 201, and 203 are samples among the Craig B style that will be compared to Plate 133 above. As a generalized example, they are associated with the Birdman (Phillips and Brown 1984) at the site of Spiro. All of these plates were more recently interpreted (Brown et al. 2007:23-24) as part of the Wedgemouth as Birdman subtheme.

Craig A  
Plate 133

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Plate 201



Plate 200



Plate 153



Figure 18.  
Comparison of Plates 133, 200, 201, and 153.  
All plates (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Stemming from Plate 133's center pole, Plates 200 and 201 (Figure 18) are directly associated with transformation into a Birdman. Plate 200 and 201 (Figure 18) include Birdmen with maces. However, Plate 201 is different due to

a Wedgemouth figure contained within the main Birdman imagery (Brown et al. 2007:24). This is important as it adds to the possibility of understanding that Wedgemouth is transforming into Birdman (Brown et al. 2007:37). It is my contention that the complete transformation of Wedgemouth into Birdman ends in Craig B style. However, I would like to add that it is assumed that future analyses will find evidence of complete Birdman transformation within Craig A or closely related styles. Moreover, this argument is further validated by the "carry over" of the same central pole (or central axis motif) among Craig B style. Although, thematically the same, it appears stylistically different than its presentation among Craig A style (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Among the artifacts analyzed in this chapter, one additional point is worth mentioning with regard to Birdman transformation. Plate 200's Birdman figure has a badly deteriorated engraving of a handle shaped accoutrement in what appears to be its left hand (Phillips and Brown 1984). This is otherwise understood as the hand opposite the mace. The problematic image escaped me for a large portion of my analysis. That was until I examined what appears to be a thematically unrelated shell engraving (Plate 153). This Plate is visible in the following figure (Figure 19).

Plate 201



Plate 200



Plate 153



Figure 19.  
Wedgemouth Transforming into Birdman.  
Plates 200, 201, 153 (Phillips and Brown 1984).

For the sake of brevity, Plate 153 was also interpreted as having Wedgemouth figures bearing Detached Heads and columella necklaces (Brown et al. 2007:19). In specific relation to Plate 200, Birdman was documented as being associated with warriors taking heads (Phillips and Brown 1984:200). Thus, Plate 153 affords a thematic linkage to Birdman ceremonialism. This assertion is

predicated upon Birdman also being a warrior elite (Brown 2004:106).

All Wedgemouth compositions detailed in Chapter 4 are assumed to have their origins in plates 126 and 127. These plates (Figure 20) depict what are perceived to be trancing, ritual participants in the act of hallucinogenic use while attempting to achieve transformation to Birdman or Raccoonman. This is mentioned in my analysis to reaffirm the transformation of elites, with the right to access that power. These artifacts were also included in previous interpretations of Wedgemouth and T-Bar (Barker et al. 2004; Brown et al. 2007). This Wedgemouth specific imagery (Figure 20) validates the possibility of elite specific rituals, and differing aspects of Morning Star elite transformation.

The attainment of complete and ultimate transformation is signified by the center pole specific ritual. Following this logic, the Cross in Petaloid Circle is associated with the transformation to the Birdman within ritual (Craig A style). Extending into Craig B style, only the Petaloid motif (Reilly 2007) is visible among the Wedgemouth as Birdman theme. The transformation into Raccoonman within ritual will be addressed in the next chapter.

# Craig A



126



127

Figure 20.

Paired Figure Wedgemouths with Ceremonial Bowls Directly Associated with Cental Axis: Axes Appear as Center Pole (Plate 127) and as Entwined Bands (Plate 126).

Both Craig A Plates (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Drawing from the argument presented in this chapter, Birdman may be understood as a high ranking elite warrior. This is predicated upon columella necklaces, Birdman associations with Detached Heads, and similar central axis motifs. Conversely, Wedgemouth imagery (also related to raccoon imagery) has been interpreted to demonstrate a

generalized transformation. All aforementioned associations have already been argued at the 2007 iconographic workshop (Brown et al. 2007). More specifically, at the iconographic workshop, these arguments were presented by the Caddoan sub group, led by Dr. James Brown. In the next chapter, Wedgemouth as Raccoonman will be analyzed. Utilizing previously established interpretations of paired Wedgemouth figures in transformation, (Brown et al. 2007) I will demonstrate Raccoonman as being derived from a similar ritual sequence.



## CHAPTER V

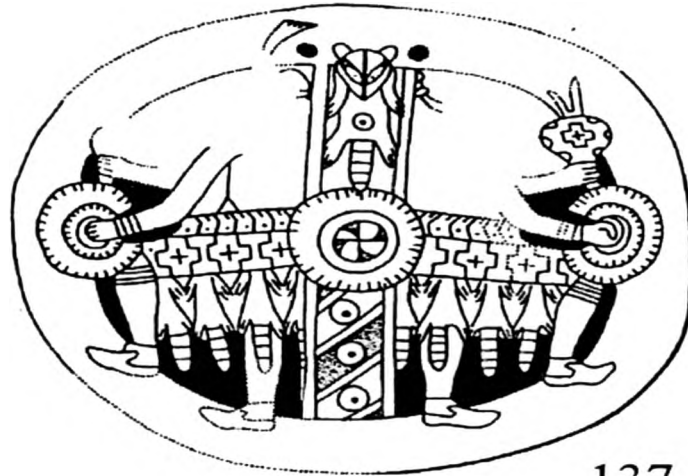
### STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF WEDGEMOUTH AS RACCOONMAN

#### Raccoonman Transformation Sequence

Derived from the previous comparative analysis of paired figures in transformation, Wedgemouth may also be understood as transforming into Raccoonman. Patterned motifs suggest that Wedgemouth could, with the use of raccoon accoutrements, transform into Raccoonman. This is almost identical to that of the Birdman transformation ceremony, addressed in Chapter 4. The only exception being that ultimate transformation is achieved through a center pole adorned with a Swastika Cross in Circle motif (Swirl Cross). Again, this interpretation of transformation stems from the 2007 iconographic workshop analysis of the Caddoan group headed by Dr. James Brown (Brown et al. 2007).

Unlike the Birdman, the Raccoonman (Plates 137 & 138B) appears in a sequence that is associated with more 'nightly' motifs. This is predicated upon historic linguistic associations involving the Osage (La Flesche 1932) and inclusion of the Swirl Cross motif as a locative

for the night sky (Reilly 2004a:130). Nonetheless, the Raccoon motif can also appear alongside paired imagery (Phillips and Brown 1984:138). I have previously stated (Chapter 4) that this same paired sequence is linked to Wedgemouth and Birdman.



137



138B

Figure 21.  
Raccoons on Center Poles with Ritual Dancers:  
Plates 137 & 138B. (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Plates 137 & 138B (Phillips and Brown 1984) begin the analysis of Raccoonman (Figure 21). Briefly stated, Plate 138B bears an interchangeable relationship with Wedgemouth

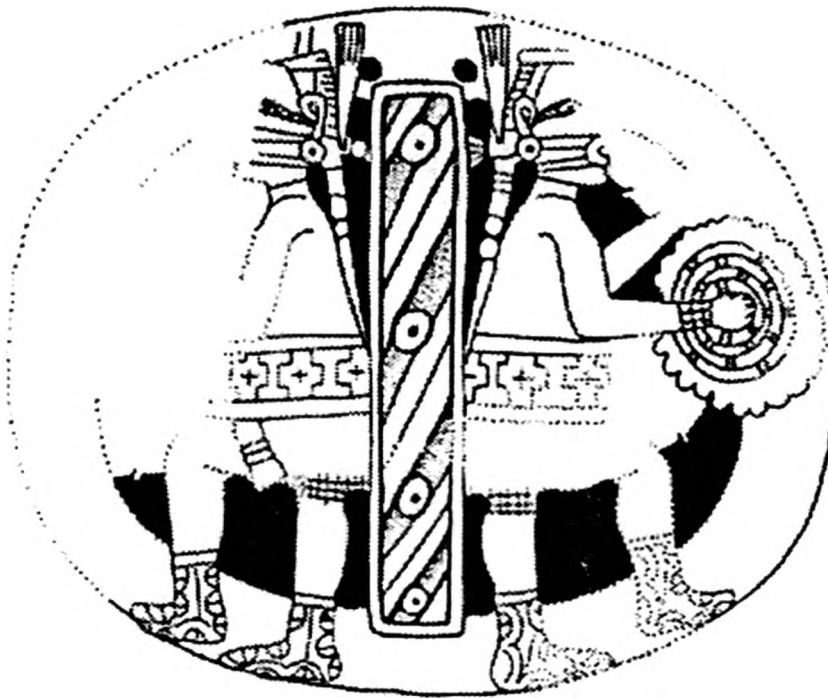
as Birdman. I am specifically referring to the Cross Banded skirt motif and paired figures flanking a central axis motif, previously presented in Chapter 4. This central axis (Plate 138B) is highlighted by a Raccoon motif centered on it. Thus, it is directly associated with Plate 137 (Figure 21).

Following a theme of paired Wedgemouth figures associated with both a central axis and Raccoonman, I now turn to Plate 137. Plate 137 depicts raccoon motifs on the skirts of figures flanking a center pole and on the center pole itself (Phillips and Brown 1984). Associated motifs on the center pole are a Swirl Cross, three Dot in Circle motifs, and striped band motifs on the central axis (Phillips and Brown 1984).

The figures themselves are rather perplexing, appearing to be normal human ritual participants (possibly dancers). However, aside from the typical ritual regalia (such as the rattle on the viewer's right) the skirts and belts are an anomaly. Namely, Phillips and Brown (1984) noted that there are two heads for each raccoon skin dangling near the dancing figures' knees. Primarily, I agree with their analysis in stating that this seems to be pure invention and that a factual interpretation of this skirt accoutrement may not exist (Phillips and Brown 1984).

However, in this analysis and unlike Phillips and Brown (1984), I contend this may illustrate the sacred power of the raccoons.

Plate 130 does not specifically demonstrate a Raccoonman in relation to Wedgemouth. This is due to its fragmentary appearance. Instead, it is included to show that Raccoonman may be interpreted as individuals engaged in ritualistic ceremony. Moreover, the Greek Cross motif (Phillips and Brown 1978:152) present on the figures' skirts are crucial to my analysis (Figure 22).



130

Figure 22.  
Raccoonman Dancers with Greek Cross Motifs on Tunics:  
Plate 130. (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Plate 130 demonstrates a continuation of a similar central pole (Circle in Dot motifs present), found on Plate 137 (Figure 21). These particular motifs allow for the comparison of Plates 128, 136, and 137 (Phillips and Brown 1984). In essence, this means that an understanding of Birdman in transformation supplements, completes, and complements my interpretation of transformative Raccoonman imagery (Figure 23).

Plate 128 is a Birdman, but ties in nicely to paired Wedgemouth figures (in ceremonial garb) flanking a central axis. This central axis (lacking a Raccoon) is assumed to be interchangeable with the axis (Brown et al. 2007), bearing the symbol of the Raccoon. This analysis is predicated upon aforementioned overlapping motifs.

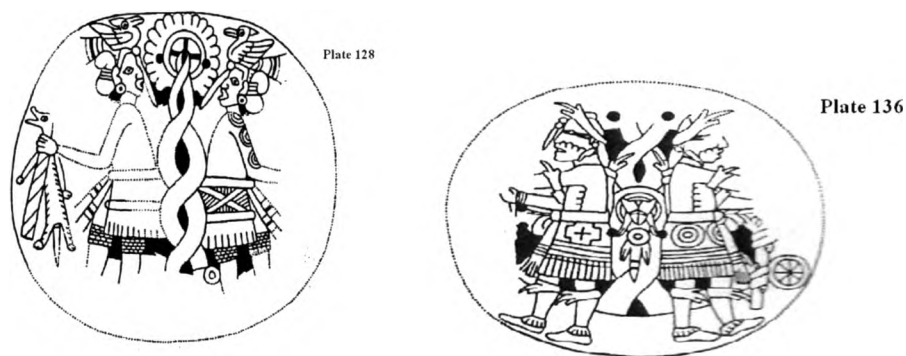


Figure 23.  
Symbolic Overlap [Wedgemouth as Raccoonman and Birdman]:  
Plates 128 & 136. (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Plate 136 (Figure 23) depicts paired Raccoonman figures and a central axis (comprised of Entwined Bands). This artifact is tied to the previous plates by the inclusion of the Greek Cross motif on the apron (skirt) of the viewer's left hand image. Plate 128 (Phillips and Brown 1984), also documented as Okla-Lf-S569 (Brain and Phillips 1996:56), depicts men with both Bird and Raccoon accoutrements. Although there is an indirect association with Raccoonman, as Wedgemouth, I argue that this further validates Raccoon and Birdman associations. This linkage is often depicted by paired figures with a central axis, and a generalized understanding of implied ceremonial transformation (Figure 24) (Brown et al. 2007).

It is noteworthy that there is an interchangeable relationship with the Petaloid Circle among Wedgemouth as Birdman and Raccoonman. Plates 128, 139, and 140A (Figure 24) represent a basis whereby the Raccoon is directly substituted for Birdman imagery. Drawing from previous interpretation of Petaloids as locatives for the celestial realm (Reilly 2007), Wedgemouth guises allude to a ritual duality. However, the inclusion of the Swirl Cross motif (as previously argued in this chapter) adds to the Raccoon's nightly attributes.

Plate 128-----



Plate 136-----

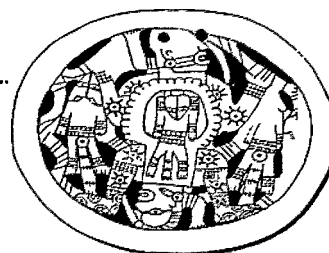


Plate 140 A-----



Plates 140 & 139 exchange  
Birdman's petaloid motif  
with the specific intent of  
indentifying Raccoonman.

Plate 139-----



(Phillips & Brown 1984).

Figure 24.

Symbolic Overlap [Wedgemouth as Raccoonman and Birdman]:  
Plates 128, 136, 139 & 140A. (Phillips and Brown 1984).

Plate 139 depicts an "apotheosis of Raccoonman"  
(Phillips and Brown 1984). Following an understanding of  
Wedgemouth figures in transformation (Brown et al. 2007),  
this plate completes a sequence of Wedgemouth transforming  
into Raccoonman (Figure 24). Basic comparison between

Wedgemouth as Birdman and Racoonman reveals that Wedgemouth may be understood as a transformation involving the Morning Star supernatural. Thus, it is my understanding that only the highest elites could validate their power with such supernatural symbolism. This is predicated upon the direct substitutions among the subthemes.

This is further substantiated by historic and ethnographic understanding of Mikos, argued multiple times within this analysis. The contention can be made that rulers (historic chiefs) were aligning themselves with cosmological events in order to validate their rule. Again, this ethnographic argument was fully demonstrated in chapter one of this thesis. Moreover, interpretations of all ethnographic correspondences to Wedgemouth have mimicked the representation and depiction of motifs.

In the next chapter, a generalized understanding of T-Bar will be demonstrated due to the fragmentary nature and lack of transformation. Here again, these qualities of T-Bar are present within the same archaeological sample (Phillips and Brown 1984). However, unlike the cohesive sequences of Wedgemouth, T-Bar will not be represented in the celestial realm. Again, it is for these reasons that I argue for three specific ritual depictions.

I am compelled to mention one final note before the



close of this chapter. As I have shown, not one example of Wedgemouth as Raccoonman bore weaponry. Future research may determine this to be an aspect of Raccoonman associated rituals of transformation. However, due to the limitations of this study, this concept will not be examined further.

## CHAPTER VI

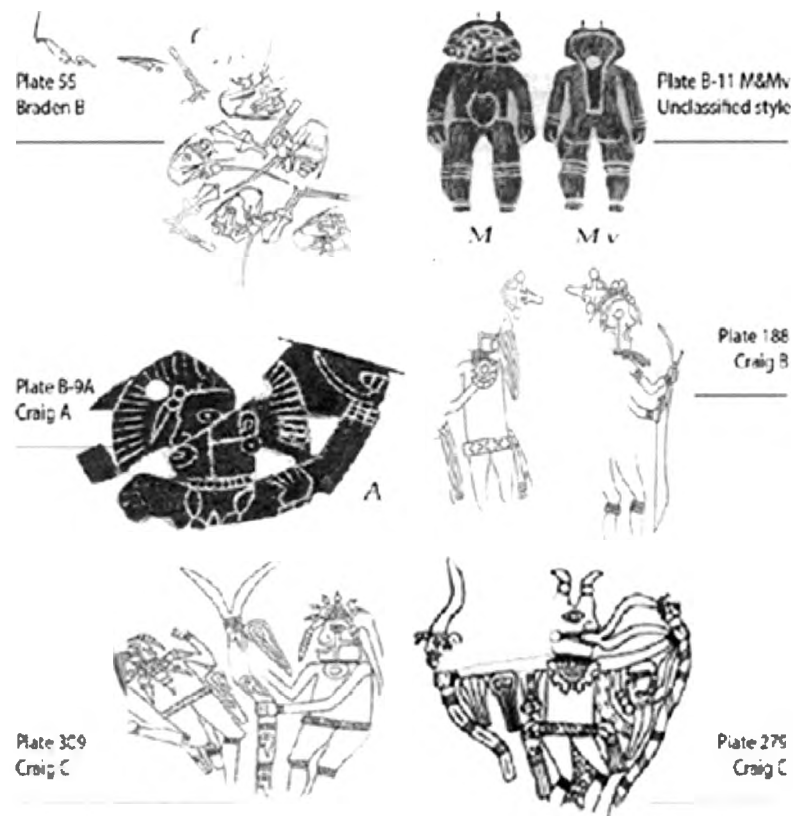
### GENERALIZED INTERPRETATION OF T-BAR

#### Interpreting T-Bar Within Craig A Style

As I have demonstrated, Wedgemouth is a transformative character among Craig A style shell engravings. Unlike Wedgemouth, T-Bar is not included in a sequence of ritual transformation (Brown et al. 2007). Although fragmentary, Wedgemouth and T-Bar both occur in the Craig A style (Phillips and Brown 1984). Only a generalized understanding of T-Bar will be presented due to the limitations of this study. This analysis is inherently problematic due to the fact that associated motifs (aside from the T-Bar itself) rarely appear stylistically the same within specific contexts. However, with respect to this study, it is my contention that T-Bar does retain certain associated motifs across differing styles. Unfortunately, evidence of patterning is limited to but a few examples.

Relevant, but often disjointed, subthemes of T-Bar include Detached Heads, pole ceremonialism, and arrow associations (Figure 25). Other isolated occurrences

include humanistic qualities (Plate B-11 M&Mv) (Figure 25).



Craig A - Plate 142



Figure 25.

A Generalized Examination of Fragmentary T-Bar Imagery.  
(Phillips and Brown 1984).

Moreover, drawing from all of the plates in the previous figure (Figure 25) T-Bar is depicted as a hunter/warrior.

This is starkly contrasted to the previous chapter, where not one example of Raccoonman (Wedgemouth) bears a weapon. This also begins the basis of why Plate 142 is not included into a Craig A study of Wedgemouth (Figure 25).

Plate 142 was previously omitted (Brown et al. 2007) from an analysis of T-Bar. This plate is, however, included here based upon the relationship between T-Bar and arrow imagery, Raccoon Hindquarters, and Detached Heads.

This claim is further substantiated by a close comparison of Plates 309 and 142. The design on the belt of Plate 309 (figure on viewer's right), bears a distinct similarity to the design on the central axis of Plate 142. The suggested thematic T-Bar relationship existing between Plates 309 and 142 are constant. This contrasts sharply both among and between each individual plate's respective styles. More specifically, the styles of these plates differ while the visible Cross in Circle motifs on both have remained the same.

This apparent stylistic inconsistency can be explained by the differing Crag A and C styles (Phillips and Brown 1984) at Spiro. Irrespective of Craig A and C stylistic differences, the dominant motif contained within plates 309's and 142's aforementioned accoutrements is the Cross in Circle motif (Figure 25). Robert Hall has argued that

this Cross in Circle motif (Barker et al. 2004) is suggestive of the image of T-Bar itself. However, in Hall's statement, the Cross in Circle motif is referred to as the sun motif (Barker et al. 2004).

Seeking to clarify what T-Bar might represent I have included table 5. This table (Table 5) demonstrates a generalized understanding of the complex T-Bar imagery across multiple styles.

Table 5  
The Fragmentary T-Bar Theme.  
[Understanding Contrasts to Wedgemouth Guises]

---

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Plate 55-Braden B  | Proto T-Bar: (Detached Head)  |
| Plate 142-Craig A  | Cross in Circle on Pole<br>[part of paired figure theme]                        |
| Plate B-9-Craig A  | Raccoon Hindquarter & columella necklace  |
| Plate 188-Craig B  | Bilobed Arrows and Weaponry<br>[This plate is also part of paired figure theme] |
| Plate 279-Craig C  | Wedgemouth Image Dominating T-Bars as<br>Detached Heads on Staffs.              |
| Plate 309-Craig C  | T-Bar Exclusive Individuals.  |
| Note: Image on viewer's right has belt accoutrement to be<br>compared to Plate 142 of Craig A style.<br>[This plate is also part of paired figure theme] |   |
| Plate B11 M&Mv-Unclassified Style  | T-Bar as 3 Dimensional<br>Humanoid Figurine.                                    |

---

Interpretation of table 5 and figure 25 (assumed to be

related to T-Bar, given substitution of motifs) includes raccoon imagery as well as generalized depictions of imagery bearing weaponry. This weaponry may represent anything used for hunting, warfare, or ritual. The crucial underlying interpretation is that progression into later styles increases the inclusion of T-Bar as validated elites. However, as demonstrated by table 5, T-bar lacks the ability of transformation. This is best represented by B11 M&Mv (an Unclassified style T-Bar) (Figure 25). This particular T-Bar is a three dimensional humanoid figurine, which although unique, solidifies the notion (Brown et al. 2007) that T-Bar lacks transformation. Consequently, while T-bar might be a high ranking individual (possibly a warrior), in the context of this study he does not have the rank, nor the right to identify himself, as the Morning Star supernatural.

Conversely, a single anomaly among Craig A (Phillips and Brown 1984) style does not fit neatly into my explanation (Figure 26). This anomaly does, however, further enhance the concept that T-Bar (like Wedgemouth) is also associated with what appears to be a Raccoon Hindquarter motif. Although poorly depicted on an engraved shell fragment, this motif occurs as an extension from the viewer's right of Plate B-9 A (Phillips and Brown 1984).



Figure 26.  
T-Bar with Columella and Raccoon Imagery.  
B-9A (Phillips and Brown 1984).

I will take this opportunity to reiterate that we have no evidence indicating that T-Bar has ever been depicted in the act of transformation (Brown et al. 2007:37). Thus, T-Bar's association with a Raccoon Hindquarter or raccoon symbolism does not immediately assume transformation. The fragmentary example also clearly displays a Craig A T-Bar bearing a columella necklace. This establishes that the image of T-Bar was among Craig A style artifacts. My addition of the single figure gorget (Plate B-9A) to the Craig A style shell corpus rectifies a critical error of omission in previous analysis (Brown et al. 2007). Their oversight brought about their failure to include this shell

fragment in the analysis of Wedgemouth and T-Bar.

The association of T-Bar to a columella necklace is of particular significance. Columella necklaces were previously considered (Dye 2004) to be requisite items for warrior elites. In other examples, T-Bar can be depicted as a Detached Head, as associated with ritual warfare, or as a bearer of a Bilobed Arrow (Figure 25). Given a Craig A interpretation of T-Bar as a warrior lacking transformation, allows for comparison among other Craig A motif sets.

However, focusing all of these individual subthemes into a single example of T-Bar remains a difficult undertaking. This leads my discussion back to specific Craig style motifs depicted within Plate 142 (among the Craig A style). Plate 142 is problematic in that the Detached Head imagery is similar to the facial treatment of those individuals bearing these heads (Figure 27). Neither of these images can easily be proclaimed as Wedgemouth. Instead, I conclude that Plate 142 combines all aforementioned subthemes of T-Bar into a T-Bar exclusive gorget. This provides a comparative basis by which other Craig A style examples within this thesis may be contrasted among the same style. Subthemes of this paired figure gorget include center pole ceremonialism bearing Cross in



Circle motifs, raccoon accoutrements near the top of the gorget, and associated with both Detached Heads and weaponry. This is self-evident in the following figure (Figure 27) and the archaeological text (Phillips and Brown 1984).

## Craig A - Plate 142



Figure 27.  
T-Bar Specific Center Pole Ritual.  
(Phillips and Brown 1984).

Drawing from Chapter 5 of this thesis, it is again noteworthy to mention that Wedgemouth as Raccoonman lacks

weaponry. Although this gorget is heavily associated with the raccoon (Phillips and Brown 1984), it does not appear to follow the same established criteria (Figure 27). The humanoid images bearing Detached Heads do not appear to be transformative in presentation. This is suggestive that Plate 142 does not depict Wedgemouth sequencing.

Generically speaking, among the examined Craig styles, T-Bar is a member of the warrior elite, deriving his powers through the more powerful Wedgemouth. Conversely, Wedgemouth appears to be the paramount Miko (religious leader). This is based upon his ability to transform into both Birdman and Raccoonman. My argument is further substantiated by the following, Craig C style, example. In Plate 279, a vertically centered Wedgemouth figure dominates two Detached Heads mounted on poles (Phillips and Brown 1984). Here again, the Wedgemouth remains the victor, or dominating ruler. Although this image may be stylistically compared to figure 27, Wedgemouth is often shown in the act of transformation (Figure 28) when associated with Detached Heads.

Plate 279  
Craig C style

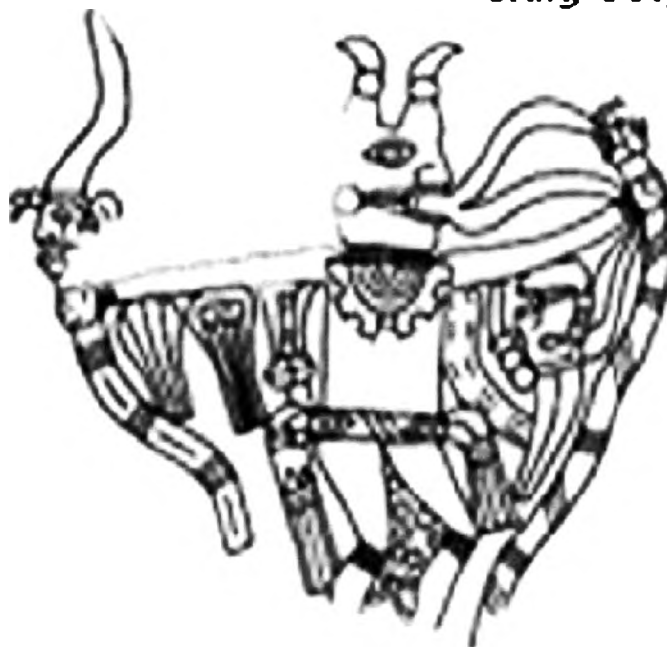


Figure 28.  
Plate 279 of the Craig C Style:  
Wedgemouth Dominates T-Bar Heads.  
(Phillips and Brown 1984).

Future research may discover that Wedgemouth can also be depicted as a war leader. However, it is my interpretation that among Craig A style, Wedgemouth is the religious leader, and T-Bar is presented as a subservient elite. This assertion is based upon the demonstrable ability of Wedgemouth to transform and the associated motifs I have analyzed. This should not be interpreted as a requisite universal for Wedgemouth and T-Bar beyond the Craig A style addressed here.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Three Specific Ritual Contexts Among Craig A Style Objects

In this analysis, interpretations of specific historic elites (Mikos) and a substantial basis of ethnographic sources were used to upstream and formulate a theoretical etic perspective of Craig A style iconography. These artifacts are not to be directly equated to the ethnographic data presented in the preceding chapters. Instead I have organized this data to inform researchers of the potential range of meaning for the iconography on the presented shell engravings.

One of these ethnographic sources was the Wodjijdjé mythic cycle (Dieterle 2005, [www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjijdj%8e.html](http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.Wodjijdj%8e.html)). Interpretation and application of this cycle was critical with respect to the iconography analyzed. This myth allowed for the understanding that elites identified themselves as the Morning Star supernatural through multiple medians of ritual regalia. Specific examples

would be that of the Birdman and my argument of a Raccoonman in regalia. This discovery (Brown et al. 2007) closely paralleled my initial ethnographic interpretations.

Up-streaming this concept into the archaeological record, both Raccoonman and Birdman were previously interpreted to be a part of the Wedgemouth theme (Brown et al. 2007:37). Wedgemouth is associated with T-Bar, who though inseparable from Wedgemouth, lacks his transformative ability.

Narrowing my analysis to the Craig A style at Spiro (Phillips and Brown 1984), excluding a generalized interpretation of T-Bar, I compared Wedgemouth and T-Bar to historic Miko rulers. My study resulted in finding little or no connection between historic Mikos and T-Bar imagery. More specifically, Wedgemouth (Birdman and Raccoonman) are rulers with both the ability to transform (Brown et al. 2007) and the right to identify themselves as the Morning Star. Conversely, T-Bar, although a highly decorated warrior (or possibly a hunter due to his accoutrements), lacks the right to achieve a transformative state. Again, these concepts have certainly been demonstrated numerous times throughout this study.

Overall individual thematic patterning among the analyzed artifacts resolve into three specific ritual

contexts. These three ritual contexts subsequently appear to involve particular participants (Table 6). Ultimately, this means that all three suggested hypotheses (Chapter 1 of this thesis) have been validated within this study.

Table 6.  
Three Specific Rituals (Craig A Style).

---

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Wedgemouth: [transformation]   |  |
| Birdman-----   | Cross in Petaloid Circle locative        |
| Raccoonman-----  | Swastika Cross locative<br>(Swirl Cross) |
| T-Bar: [no transformation]   |  |
| T-Bar-----   | Cross in Circle locative                 |
| Note: All locatives are drawn from previous analysis (Reilly 2004a). |  |

---

In summary, I will remind readers of my initial hypotheses. They are as follows:

- 1) The thematic patterning of historic ethnographies and respective correspondences paralleled within the artifacts unites Morning Star imagery in the Wedgemouth form. This specifically occurs among Craig A style.
- 2) Raccoon and Birdman, are clanal or societal divisions that are tied together by Wedgemouth. Wedgemouth, being a figure of transformation (Brown et al. 2007) represents the highest elites in ritual trance.
- 3) Unlike Wedgemouth, T-Bar lacks the ability to transform (Brown et al. 2007:37). Stemming from this understanding, T-Bar possesses few or no allusions to the historic ethnographies. This is thematically paralleled in associated symbolism among Craig A artifacts (Chapters 2 and 6 of this thesis).

Ultimately, having a Wedgemouth motif appears the same as having the right to transform into a particular aspect of the Morning Star supernatural. Although problematic in the associations that can be argued, future research may focus on additional guises of Wedgemouth among the shell corpus at Spiro. The following figure (Figure 29) portrays other depictions of Wedgemouth transformations. Drawn from previous analysis (Brown et al. 2007) figure 29, depicts the other forms of Wedgemouth not included in this thesis.

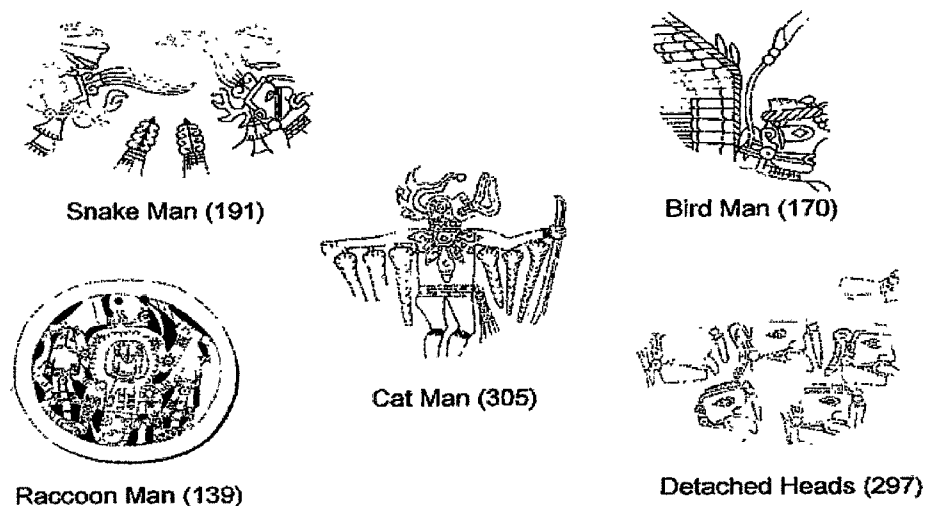


Figure 29.  
Wedgemouth in Multiple Guises.  
(Brown et al. 2007:17).

It is along these immediate parallels discovered at the iconographic workshop (Brown et al. 2007) that extensions of Wedgemouth identities should be researched. Additionally, I firmly believe that Mikos and ethnographies

should be analyzed, as I have demonstrated. Doing so will enable pertinent discussion of ruling elites transforming into other guises. Following definitions of what qualifies as Wedgemouth may prove to be relevant to other Pre-Columbian sites, within the southeastern United States.

Future researchers following my arguments for a paramount Miko may succeed in extending interpretations of what might qualify as Wedgemouth beyond the site of Spiro. If this overarching thematic interpretation stands the test of time, any and all guises of Wedgemouth are likely to be compared with my hypothetical concept of a paramount Miko. As a result, meaning may be extended to imagery where ritual participants associated with varying regalia transform (Figure 29). Further interpretations may lend themselves to ritual depictions where full transformation has already been achieved.

Ultimately, as I have demonstrated throughout this study, the patterned motif set in the archaeology mimics patterned themes of historic elite validation. Although a thematic mimicry exists, no single historic myth can be selected as the dominant charter of political authority. There remains an unbroken, constant, and devout adherence to thematic and symbolic validation of elite rule. This phenomenon serves as a thematic bridge aiding in clarifying



the inherent discontinuity existing between the Pre-Columbian and historic Native American cultures. My thesis also presents the notion that these parallel themes (historic and pre-historic) exist beyond the bounds of discontinuity in meaning. Thus, this thesis culminates in defining three specific locatives, with regard to three specific ranks and rituals. These ranks and rituals were compared to a significant historic conceptual framework supporting the validation of ruling Mikos through a Morning Star supernatural symbol set. I formulated my study to include all three specific rituals and locatives among the Craig A style as a standard for comparison. My analysis was controlled by limiting allusions of historic thematic patterning to specific archaeological styles and themes. However, these theoretical perspectives and methods may be applied amongst innumerable facets of iconography and mythic interpretation (see appendix).

Irrespective of what future research may validate, Native Americans (historic and prehistoric) manipulated symbolic messages in the same manner. The significance of these manipulations supersedes the random selection of an individual myth, which may or may not have any prehistoric relevance. This thematic link exists despite the geographic and temporal restrictions of style or median.

## APPENDIX A

### SPIRO SHELL ENGRAVINGS-GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

#### PRE-COLUMBIAN SHELL ENGRAVINGS OF SPIRO



ANK THING. The Ank thing motif is a stylized human figure with a rectangular body and a pointed head. It is one of the most common motifs found on Spiro shell engravings. The Ank thing motif is often found on the same shell as the Snakehead motif, and it is possible that they represent the same or related concepts. The Ank thing motif is also found on the same shell as the Snakehead motif, and it is possible that they represent the same or related concepts. The Ank thing motif is also found on the same shell as the Snakehead motif, and it is possible that they represent the same or related concepts.



Spiro Snakehead and Snakehead motifs 219  
Snakehead



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# SPIRO SHELL ENGRAVINGS-GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS

## (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

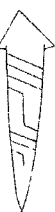
### GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS

**AC** of two bits in count and structure of cup 88 in Braden B. The 2 cannot be counted as a true 1 with one or more because they have characteristics of both in equal measure a condition that in Craig C and Craig B the point of recognition is a motif in its own right. This is the below as in the two most teeth markings.

**ARROW POINT** Occurs as independent motif only in Braden A and B cups (all the forms). Of seven occurrences in Braden A cups five are corner notched (4A 5 6 10 22K). The marginal drawing slightly idealized from cup 13 is sufficiently typical of the group. Functional points, corner notched in all phases are quite different broad and stubby. It may be inferred that, in engraving points as independent motifs the artist was not so concerned with reality. Side notched points are distinct, in the minority only two appear once. If identical points in cup 17 of Braden A one of which is shown here and two in cup 60 the only occurrence in Braden B. The latter are not quite independent since they are involved in a complex interface with human heads. Neither of these independent types can be matched with any of the related spirals. The corner notched is something like the Nisqually C or Stillman point (Brown 1926) the side notched has more than a vague resemblance to the Reed point (Bell 1958 pl. 3d) which in turn is similar to the Caliche Beale Notched point (Harrington 1936 fig. 11; Proulx 1968 pl. 6). It may be a matter of interest that this form occurs only in Braden and only as a conventional independent motif.



**ARROW SHAPE** Hitherto unnoticed motif so far occurring at Spiro only in Braden C. In its simplest form as illustrated here from cup 113 a long tapering figure with a triangular head suggesting an arrow decorated in the conventional manner of snakes in Braden B and C. Similar examples in cups 110, 118, 124B are reduced type with doughnutlike bands and conventionalized rattles. Doubt persists as to be included (cf. 114 120). Lucerne the straight arrow to that of a snake is an obvious metaphor and the triangular head suggestive of the rattlesnake gives an additional point. The more realistic example of 110 is in fact shown as a tracking a small animal of unorthodox character.



The idea that this is a conventional motif is supported by the presence of an example on the Roberts jar of Wata Engaved type in figure 163.

**ARROW TONGUE** Notwithstanding only one occurrence in the sample from Braden B cup 58 the form is worth highlighting as it is a motif in the Walls phase (Brown 1926 figs. 273-280). In the latter case the arrow also protrudes from the mouth of a skull and is associated with other symbols of mortality such as hands and forearm bones. The possibility that in our Spiro example there is an alluded reference to the broken arrow is worthy of consideration.



**BARRED OVAL** One of Waring and Holder's (1942) original oval motifs. Surveys of justified symbols exemplify of the concept of motif from the viewpoints of

independence and transference. It is not that the barred oval represents either the mass or signified motifs of animals is not borne out by our argument. Example. The motif figures as bird, markings on snakes (usually in the ventral segment) or composite involving snakes on serpent staffs on arms legs and torsos of human or partly human figures (in one case 210C on all three) on aprons belts and sashes on birds or bird wings. It is also composite and even one. Also freely used in great numbers to fill background in designs involving human, bird and spider subjects.

Has varying degrees of independence equally to all its phases. In that of Braden B it is only an occurrence once, in Braden B five, is only one in Craig A (165.1). Craig B has 26 occurrences, all multiple, some multitudinous. Craig C has 111.

The most likely meaning (Rowe 1926a, b) is to do with snakes. When it appears in association with other animals or human we tend to regard it as an indication that the snake is somehow involved.

One of the many Braden B snakes (BB) has a barred oval (possibly a pretentious version) a large number of these appear on the spirals of spider cup 243 of Craig B. Association of snakes and spider elements is common at Spiro. Further east the barred oval often appears on the cephalic thorax of spiders instead of the usual Great Lakes (H. Milton Hamilton and Chapman 1974, fig. 101; Burke 1950, fig. 16). A rich field for iconographic speculation.

The barred oval occurs in precisely the same form in the Postclassic Mesaquene under the name 'ovoid field' (R. E. Smith 1971, p. 55).



**BARRED RECTANGLE** A motif of doubtful significance. A snake marking it substitutes in at least one instance (194) for the commonly used barred oval. Others, its occurrence is in varied contexts: as part of, or decoration on other objects, on ovoid-shaped aprons in all three phases of Craig B. It is regarded as a fish by those who interpret the symbol as a pouch (cups 156, 170F, 187, 120, 201, 210C, 406 and 1067 310C), on bolts and sagels (194, 197) and the visit of a hand motif (256). It is Craig B. Nowhere does it appear as a completely independent form. Motif or not it comes close to being an adjunct to a Craig B feature.



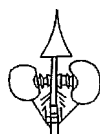
**BENT OVAL SHAPED MOTIF** Treated as a variant in Section V (pp. 96-101). Three types there described one shared by Braden A and Craig A, a second characteristic of Craig B and a third found only in Craig C. The latter occurs not only as an apron but in two cases (291, 296) as independent motif. The first (thus cited here) appended to a serpent staff the second is a completely unconnected motif, possibly no more than a filler of empty space at the bottom of a design featuring human heads in horizontal registers. As for attachment to another object, the first may be related to a rotated but similar form attached to human figures and other objects thereby acquiring status as motif in its own right. For want of a better name, 'erect shaped appendage' is proposed here. In the postulated line of transformation 296 (fig. 112) is beautifully interrelated. Practically, it is easier to construct a transformational series than to generate confidence in



# SPIRO SHELL ENGRAVINGS-GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

## PRE-COLUMBIAN SHELL ENGRAVINGS OF SPIRO

their validity. For another possible derivation of the carrot-shaped appendage see comment on the "bird head" under that heading.

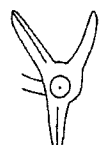
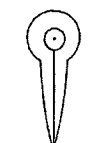


**BILOBED ARROW** The role of this well-known motif as hair ornament has already been covered in the preceding section (p. 86). It also occurs as an independent motif, once in Braden B (62) and four times in Craig B (271, 271.1, 272A, 272B). The mode of occurrence in the two cases is very different. The strange looking affair in cup 62, original but unmistakably a bilobed arrow, is a single minor component in the design, outnumbered by other forms. The Craig B examples are all from designs in which bilobed arrows, closely replicated, are the main if not the only subjects. Drawing above is one of the hairpins of Braden A cup 21 which, for reasons we cannot go into here, are assumed to be closer to the prototypical form.



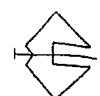
Also covered as a hair ornament in Section V (p. 87), the "bilobed plume" is not listed here as a motif because it does not occur independently or in different contexts in the sample. It does however have an independent existence in other media, e.g. the magnificent example in repousse copper from Citico, Tennessee (Keleman 1956, pl. 194a). Relationship to the bilobed arrow is obvious but puzzling. The latter is unquestionably a conventionalization of the whole bow and arrow. How the point of the arrow could be transformed into or replaced by, a feather is difficult to imagine. Still harder to envisage, however, is the transformation of the bilobed plume into a bilobed arrow. A convergence of two entirely different prototypical forms perhaps.

Distribution in the sample is restricted to Braden A cups 1, 2, 17 (illustrated here), and 20.

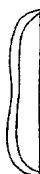


**BIRD HEAD MOTIF** A rare form so far confined to Craig B. If these are indeed bird heads, they are conventionalized out of all recognition. The possibility of their being forerunners of the carrot-shaped appendage will be discussed under that heading. An argument in favor of such a relationship is that the bird head hangs from the elbow of one of the figures in 187 and is attached to a serpent staff in 198A, both common modes of occurrence of the carrot-shaped appendage in Craig C. Two other Craig B occurrences, however, are completely independent, not attached to anything (210A, 219G). The second of these is illustrated above.

A possible elaboration of the simple bird head is the "bird-headed club" that is stuck into, or attached to, the belts of several Craig C single figures (280, 286, 290) and almost all the paired figures of the forked-pole theme (312, 314-319). Bird-headed clubs, having so far not occurred in other contexts in the sample, are not classed as iconographic motifs, hence not included in this glossary.



**BITRIANGULAR ARROW** Rare motif represented so far by only two occurrences in very different contexts: as body decoration on the peculiar skeletonized human figures of cup 21, Braden A, and as replicated independent motifs in 66.1 of Braden B, one of which is shown here. Like the bilobed arrow, this form is also, with a measure of uncertainty, seen as a conventionalized bow and arrow.



**BOW** Although there is only one unequivocal case in the sample, the fact that the bow could be used as an independent motif is worth recording. The design (cup 269) consists of a large number of identical bows in horizontal staggered rows with typical oval Craig B eyes interspersed between them. The association of bows and eyes gives particular interest to the design but what it means is completely enigmatic. Eyes, with or without surrounds, with pupils, or "blind" commonly occur as independent motifs in most phases, especially Craig B. There is one other possible combination of eye and bow on cup 189, in more intimate association, whether they form together an independent motif is problematical owing to the fragmentary nature of the cup. The form of the bow, in both cases, is not essentially different from the "functional" bows of Braden A and all three phases of Craig. They do not occur in Braden B and C.



**BOWKNOT** Term borrowed from Robert E. Smith (1971, p. 48). Sufficiently descriptive of the form indicated here, but the rarity (and variety) in Spiro shell makes it somewhat dubious as a conventional motif. In most cases it is attached to other objects, e.g., the snake body (and tongue) of the great Piasa of cup 224, at the neck of a bird (207A), attached to serpent staffs (197, 208C), attachments unidentifiable (199.1D). All these examples are from Craig B, the marginal drawing from 197. The only case of independent occurrence is in cup 86, Braden B. A superficially similar form in Braden C (116) is probably a conjunction of two bird tails end to end. This, of course, may be what the motif is all about.



**BROKEN ARROW** Impossible to improve on Lathel Duffield's terse description of this motif: an arrow "that has the shaft bent and sometimes broken. When the break is shown (the most frequent form) the shaft is held together on one side but the opposite side is splintered" (1964, p. 31). His example, plate 33, number 6, is our cup 66 in Braden B. Duffield might have added that other artifacts show the same "splintered break." Apart from one example from an altogether exceptional cup (168) and another associated with, but not sticking into, our only bison (176), both assigned to Craig A, all occurrences of the broken arrow are in Braden B and C: four in the former (62, 66, 67, 80), eight in the latter (101, 102, 106, 107, 108, 113, 114, 123A). There is considerable variety but the forms do not align themselves comfortably on either side of the invisible boundary between the two phases.

In all cases assigned to Braden B and C, the broken arrow is a perfect exemplar of the conventional motif as herein defined, presented in complete independence of other design components. Its association with another motif, the mace, is discussed in Volume Three, page xiv.



**BROKEN MACE** In Spiro shell this item has scarcely any distribution at all: only two occurrences in Braden B (cups 55 and 56), from the same workshop, if not by the same artist. Its occurrence elsewhere, however, in two widely separated contexts, a Walls Engraved jar from the Young site, Crittenden County, Arkansas (fig. 263), and the well-known repousse copper plate from Upper Bluff Lake, Union County,

# SPIRO SHELL ENGRAVINGS-GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

## GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS

Illinois (fig 228), give it the status of an independent motif

**BROKEN STAFF** Duffield's "chunky stick" (1964 p 23) which it surely is in most cases gorgets 149A, 149B, St Marys and Eddyville gorgets (fig 231), but not all chunkee players' staffs are broken, i.e., the double chunkee player of Braden A (gorget 7) and the MacDuffee gorget (fig 148). The broken staff occurs in other contexts (cups 20 and 170G) thereby qualifying as a motif according to the definition used here. Marginal drawing is from the St Marys gorget.



**CARROT-SHAPED APPENDAGE** In a previous section (pp 98-101) it was suggested that a certain characteristic Craig C form, attached to human figures and other objects, was the result of a series of transformations of the bellows-shaped apron. If the reasoning is correct, the change has so far out-reached the original concept that a new name is advisable. The form in question varies enormously in detail and mode of attachment, but the shape remains fairly constant, hence the name.

The motif fails the test for independence but makes up for it by excessive transferability. It hangs from the underside of outstretched arms, from one to three on each arm (282, 284, 286A, 289, 305, 335A); from hands (281, 314, 315, 316B, 318, 319, 320, 323F), attaches to serpent staffs (197 I, 290, 291, 293, 294), to forked poles (309, 310 I), and in one case (278) to a mace and arrow feathering "conflation." The nearest it comes to independence is in the guise of decorative motifs on a forked pole (312). All but one of the above cited examples are in Craig C. The exception, 167.1 in Craig B, is a cross between the carrot-shaped appendage and bird head motifs. The same could be said of quite a few of the Craig C examples cited above. A neat way to circumvent the problem is to invoke convergence of the bellows-shaped apron and bird head, resulting in a new Craig C motif that retains traces of both.



**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES** Plain unconcentric, undotted, circles are surprisingly rare in Spiro shell engraving, even as decorative motifs or parts of more complex forms. As independent motifs they cannot be said to occur at all. One possible exception in Craig B (211). Concentric circles, usually limited to two, are somewhat more in evidence as decorative elements and there are a few independent cases, one in Braden B (86), three in Braden C (110, 111, 118), and one in Craig B (268H). Enough to qualify as a motif but certainly not a pervasive one. According to David Phelps (1970, p 98) circles and concentric circles are interchangeable water symbols in Mesoamerican iconography and in the late Mississippian Southeast as well. The evidence at Spiro does not support the idea.



**CONCENTRIC SEMICIRCLES** Might be more accurate to use the term "arc", the majority fall short of full semicircular form. A fairly common motif, present but not consistently, in all phases fourteen examples in Braden A, two in B, four in C, seven in Craig A, two in B, one in C. Preponderance, it seems,

is with Braden A and Craig A. In these phases the mode of occurrence is almost entirely confined to human subjects, on shoulders, arms, legs, and knees, in that order of frequency. With eleven occurrences, concentric semicircles on shoulders is almost a Braden A exclusive (cups 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 4C, 6, 22A, 22C, 35F, gorgets 7, 23G), the number of semicircles varying from three to eleven. In many of these cases the motif is continuous with the striated or Akron modes of body decoration. Example in the margin is from cup 6, with body decoration removed. Only two of the seven Craig A occurrences are on shoulders (gorget 124, cup 156). Apart from the above, examples are mostly on nonhuman subjects on fins of a snake (73), on bird breasts (89), on angular bends of a snake (107), on margins of bird wings, (118), and on the back of an unidentified quadruped (211C). These comments do not add up to anything in the way of interpretation, but at least prove the transferability of the motif. There are no independent occurrences.



**CONCENTRIC AND SINGLE BISECTED SEMICIRCLES** Relationship to the simple concentric semicircular motif defined above would seem to be obvious, but owing to the totally different distributions among style phases, the forms considered here are listed under a separate heading. For convenience we break it down further into three versions: concentric bisected, concentric bisected by doubled lines, and single bisected. "Bisected" refers only to the single semicircle and to the inner semicircle of the concentric versions.

Judging from similar distributions of these three versions, differences in the forms themselves appear to be nonsignificant. None of the three occurs in any phase of Braden. Of thirteen examples of the concentric bisected version, Craig A has three, Craig B eight, and Craig C three, all five examples of concentric bisected with doubled lines are in Craig B; all eight examples of the single version are in Craig B. In sum, twenty-one of the twenty-eight occurrences of the motif are in Craig B.

These are, strictly speaking, edge motifs; there is no possibility of their being independent. They qualify abundantly however on the grounds of transferability: eleven on human elbows, one each on arm and shoulder, one on a belt, two on footwear, six on bird wings, two on bird bodies, one each on spider, snake, serpent staff, and unidentified shieldlike object. The last (cup 293), also decorated with identically drawn cross in concentric circles motif, strongly suggests that these "bisected" edge motifs are simply profiles of the cross in circle (or concentric circles) motif. Using "semi" as a prefix is like saying that a human profile is only half a face.



**CONCENTRIC RADIAL T-BAR MOTIF** Duffield's "bird emblem" would be preferable to this awkward name so far as Spiro is concerned, where its associations are entirely with birds, cups 34, 85, 120, of Braden A, B, and C respectively. Unfortunately at Moundville, which has many more examples engraved on pottery, the motif appears to have nothing to do with birds, as Duffield freely admits (1964 p 37). On the other hand, in the Etowah Mound C-Dallas gorget style, the motif in partial and simplified form appears on the breechcloths of bird-men (figs



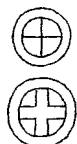
# SPIRO SHELL ENGRAVINGS-GLOSSARY OF MOTIFS (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

## PRE-COLUMBIAN SHELL ENGRAVINGS OF SPIRO

177, 178, this volume) which would support Duffield's terminology. At the same time it would, in our view, be consistent, considering the fondness of Spiro artists for combining different animal forms, to infer a meaning for this emblem other than avian. That, of course, cannot be safely done either. The motif is exemplified above by one of three replicated examples on cup 34 Braden A.



**CROSSED BANDS** It is possible that two separate motifs are covered by this term: simple crossed bands as in gorgets 128 and 142 (the first illustrated here), and the same with dotted circles in the four triangular interspaces, as in gorgets 138A and 138B. With so small a sample we cannot afford the separation. Of greater interest at this point is that crossed bands, a motif with possible Mesoamerican implications, occur only in Craig A gorgets at Spiro and, as far as we are aware, nowhere else in the Southeast.



**CROSS IN CIRCLE** It is possible to differentiate a number of basic forms of the cross in circle, and we have done so, but it does not seem to pay off in terms of distribution among the various phases. All that can be said is that Braden tends to favor the simpler forms and has fewer examples. The variations counted were: simple (single line) cross and broad (double line or excised) cross, either within single or concentric circles. All four of the variations created may be found in the same style phase. Respective frequencies in Craig A and B, the two phases that have the largest number of occurrences, are given by way of example: Craig A six single line cross-single circle mode, one single line cross-concentric circle mode, two broad (one double line, the other excised)-concentric circle mode; Craig B three single line-single circle mode, one broad cross single circle mode, five broad (three of which are excised)-concentric circle mode. Marginal drawings of single line and broad double line crosses in concentric circles are from cups 293 and 229 respectively.

The swastika cross in circle is listed further on as a separate motif.



**CROSS IN PETALOID CIRCLE** Like the "shield" motif, the cross in petaloid circle occurs as decoration on rattles in the hands of Craig A paired figure gorgets (126), but also as a completely independent design element (gorget 128, shown here) and in a replicated design in Craig B (cup 263). The difference in assignment was justified (perhaps mistakenly) by the fact of replication, a characteristic Craig B design structure, and by the presence in 263 of prominent spines on the "petals." The petaloid border, not listed as a motif, is far more common in Craig A than in B, but the addition of spines is exceptional, whereas in Craig B it is almost the rule.

**DAVIS RECTANGLE** Highly specialized motif aptly named by Duffield (1964, p. 39) confined to Braden A. Main occurrence is in combination with another motif clumsily referred to herein as "rayed concentric barred oval" (q.v.) but independence is indicated by separate use as body decoration in cups 18 and 19 and, more important by occurrence as a ceramic



motif in the type Hickory Fine Engraved at the Davis site (Newell and Krieger 1949, fig. 33, see drawing in caption to plate 46 in Volume Two). Drawing here is from plate 36. Relationships of this style of engraving in the Lower Mississippi are with pottery types that are believed to be on a temporal level equivalent to the early Winterville phase of Plaquemine culture dating around 1200 A.D. (Brain 1969, Hall 1972). Fragments in plates 36-45 bearing the motif in the form shown here may be from the earliest engraved cups in the sample.

A much simplified version, commonly used as ventral markings on snakes in Braden B, is referred to in these volumes as the "long step." It is not listed here as an independent motif.



**DIAMONDS, SINGLE AND NESTED** Rare motif, not worth differentiating, both single and nested occurring in Craig B (216, 264B, 262C, 272A), one single in Craig C. In all but last, occurrences are completely independent, the last as decoration on belt of figurine (285). There is a central dot or dotted circle in all examples, but connection with diamond-shaped eye is not indicated. This eye form is not present in Craig B or C. Normally human eyes are not rendered by dotted circles anyhow in either Braden or Craig schools.



**DOTTED SINGLE AND CONCENTRIC CIRCLES** Not counting eyes (feral), earspools, pectorals, and countless other circular objects and parts of objects for which conventional meanings are not likely to be prevent, there still remains a large number of dotted single circles in varied contexts for which conventional meanings are at least a possibility. Distribution includes all phases, significantly more perhaps in Craig B and C. The great majority of dotted circles are deployed in large numbers on snakes, felines, and bird tails, in that order. When on felines we are prone to refer to them as jaguar spots. If so, what are they doing on snakes and birds? In only one case, cup 166 in Craig A, do they occur in a manner that might be considered independent.

The case of dotted concentric circles is different. The same limited distribution as for concentric circles without dots: three occurrences in Braden A, three in B, none in C, five in Craig A, none in B or C. They are either decorative (52C, 57, 127, 145A) or function as body marking on snakes (68, 96ff, 229) or felines (225, 226E). No independent occurrences recorded.



**ELLIPSOIDAL EYE SURROUND** Unlike the "forked eye," this type of surround does not occur independently of human faces on Spiro shell. The only excuse for listing it here is its presence, and presumed conventional meaning, on one of the Wehrle repousse copper plates (fig. 252). It has the general shape of an ellipse with the back end usually cut off or overlaid by hair lines, scales, or other features. Distribution: seven occurrences in Braden A (1, 2, 4A, 4C, 11, 17, 23A), four in B (53, 54, 58, 60), none in C, ten in Craig A (124, 125, 131F, 143D, 148A, 152F, 157, 168, 169, 170A), one slightly dubious example in B (197.1), none in C. The locus classicus for the motif is the Wehrle plate mentioned above. Marginal drawing is from gorget 125.

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## (Phillips And Brown 1978:146-156)

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**ENTWINED BANDS** Principal source of this rare motif is the paired figure gorgets of Craig A, in two different iconographic contexts as rising vapor (?) from pots supported by the hands of the "dancing" figures (126, 127), or as a pair of vertical intertwining undecorated bands forming the central feature between the confronted figures (128). In two cases a raccoon with head surrounded by a nimbus is superimposed on the intertwining bands (136, 140A). The motif also plays a part in Craig A and B headdresses (131E, 198C). Stretching a point, it also occurs appropriately enough in Craig B on a snake (210A). Illustration above is from gorget 127.



Moundville (Moore 1907, figs 45, 46) and Walls (Brown 1926, fig 279). Another of Moore's vessels has unskeletonized hands attached to the forearm bones (1905, fig 147). A similar incongruity is seen in Classic Vera Cruz sculpture (Proskouriakoff 1954, fig 2, yoke 14). Nothing comparable to this in the Spiro material.

**EXCISED TRIANGLES** Rare motif, but has a perfect score so far as independence is concerned: one occurrence in Braden A, three in Craig A. The practical identity of the Braden A example (18) and two of those on Craig A cups (170E, 170G) is a little embarrassing—the one on the third Craig A cup (170D) differs in having the triangle framed by double lines. The form is simple enough to have been replicated by two or more individual artists but it is rather upsetting to find that we have assigned them to different schools.



**EYE** Simple unadorned eyes without surrounds have been referred to as an independent motif in association with the bow. There are other occurrences in totally different contexts: in ventral patterns on snakes (711, 96D) in Braden B, on the wing arm of bird-man (gorget 148B), "panels" of a cruciform structure (gorget 151A), in petaloid borders (164, 165), all in Craig A, as volar markings on fingers of hand cups (251, 255, 256B) and in a geometric composition (264) in Craig B.



The last-named and two of the volar eyes (252A, 255) are "blind," i.e., lacking pupils, which occurs fairly often. It might be considered to have special significance, but in looking into the nineteen cases in the sample, we are unable to see any noteworthy accord in subject matter. They are almost equally divided between human and nonhuman subjects, the latter including snake, bird, cat, and raccoon. Distribution among style phases is of possible interest: one case in Braden A, seven in B, four in C, on the Craig side, one in A, six in B, none in C. A distinct piling up in Braden B and C and Craig B. In the majority of cases, heads with blind eyes are associated with identical heads having normal eyes. Not encouraging to the idea of special significance.



**FOREARM BONES.** Term slightly modified from C. B. Moore's "skeleton forearms." Only two certain occurrences in our sample (68, 78), both shown here. The second shows the typical "splintered break," which may be a specialty of Spiro. Other bones, similarly broken, on cup 57 appear to be single, not identifiable but perhaps meant to be femurs, judging from their massive character. All three examples are in Braden B, the only phase in which bones of any kind, whole or broken, are depicted. There is, however, an unclassified fragment showing a number of long bones of a generalized nature (A-3F).

In the two cases illustrated here, the forearm bones are completely independent motifs as in



**FORKED EYE SURROUND** Easily the most firmly established motif in Southeastern iconography—and the least precise in point of nomenclature. The eye is not forked but rather the "surround." And, without going beyond Spiro, it is forked in seven different ways: two prongs of approximately equal length, two prongs, one truncated, two prongs, both truncated, three prongs; four prongs. In the first two cases the prongs may be undulant. Frequencies and associations vary in nonrandom fashion.

The two-pronged surround is almost confined to Braden: eight occurrences in phase A, four as eye surrounds (6, 11, 17, 20), three as body decoration (2, 6, 22f), and one with both prongs undulant (14). B has four, two on snakes (711, 73), one on birds (88), and one on an unidentified animal (961G). C has two, on human heads (101) and birds (121). No decorative examples in these two phases.

Turning to Craig, we have only two cases of the two-pronged surround, both on chunkee player gorgets (149A, 149B) in Craig A. Their presence argued against the assignment at the time it was made, and still does.

The two-pronged surround with one prong truncated is the most common, most thoroughly distributed, and most varied in its associations, of all seven types in the sample. The reader is advised to skip the oncoming lists, but the data are, we think, worth putting on record.

Braden A has six occurrences of the type, three in proper place as eye surrounds (cups 6, 22G, and gorget 23E), B has four, three on human heads (59E, 62, 63) and one on a snake (75), the last having an extremely attenuated undulating prong, the non-truncated one as always. C has two, one human (104), the other on a bird (112). In both cases, as in 63 above (mistakenly cited as 62 in the caption to plate 104) the truncated prong is on the side facing the front of the head instead of the back, as in the vast majority of other examples of the type. Only one of the many examples in Craig (208C) is similarly reversed.

Craig A has one occurrence of this type as a decorative point mark at the elbow (gorget 124) and four as eye surrounds, associated with humans (156, 159) and woodpeckers (182, 183), the latter excessively long in harmony with the long necks and tongues. None of these Craig A one-prong truncated surrounds is of the undulant mode.

The big change comes with Craig B which has 22 examples of the two-pronged, one prong truncated type, 18 of which are of the undulant mode. Apart from the one aberrant exception in Braden B (75) noted above, the combination of this type of surround with undulation of the nontruncated prong is a Craig B exclusive. The drawing shown here from a human head (212), is a fair example except that the eye is "blind," likewise a cat (226B) and a hydra-headed antlered snake (231). We have already concluded (see under EYE) that no special significance attaches to the circumstance. Other exam-



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ples, with no touch of blindness may be seen in human heads (189, 215A, 215B, 216 273C), a human-headed Piasa (223), birds (202, 207A, 207B) bird-man (204A), cat (228), hydra-headed antlered snakes (230), horizontal rows of examples of the undulant mode (265) a perfect demonstration of the independence of the motif, and one unidentified subject (274B) The four Craig B examples of the type without the undulant effect are equally diverse as to subject matter human (273B), bird-man (204B, 208C), and bird (274A)

Craig C has only four occurrences of the type in question, all nonundulant, as independent motifs (296, 297B), bird (303), and cat-man (305) All four are essentially the same, impossible to confuse with any of the Craig B depictions Drawing in the margin is one of the independent examples on cup 296



The two-pronged forked eye surround with both prongs truncated is a rare type, strictly confined to Braden A (11, 12, 17). One of the heads of cup 60 in Braden B might be so described, but only by giving undue latitude to the definition Because of the rarity of the type, it is worth noting that the eye surround on the square repousse copper head plate from Etowah (Moorehead 1932, fig. 16), though incomplete, was probably of similar form

For all practical purposes the three-pronged forked eye surround is, at Spiro, a Braden B exclusive Only possible exception is the snake on cup 20, assigned with good reason to Braden A but with reservations that have to be voiced whenever the cup is mentioned The snake has an impercible three-pronged eye surround and other features that would place the creature in Braden B if he could be prised loose from the rest of the cup The other seven occurrences are safely Braden B on two of eight human heads (61), on snakes (68, 72, 76, 82), bird with very snakey head (85), and a fragment that might be either bird or snake (96f)

In view of the strong association of three-pronged surrounds with snakes at Spiro, occurrence of the motif on a snake (but not as an eye surround) in one of the Olmecoid Chalcatzingo reliefs is worth mentioning (Nicholson 1971, fig. 1C, citing Grove 1968) Nearer in space, and more so in time, might be a connection with the "trefoil reptile eye glyph" of the Cozumalhualpa style (Parsons 1969, pls 38a, 41a)

Rarest of all is the four-pronged surround, possibly unique for the Southeast Only two occurrences in the sample, both in Craig B (225, 227) on feline heads that are almost identical in style and drawing but totally different in respect to other parts of the bodies (cf fig 45 in Section IV with 205 in Section VI).



A "one-pronged forked eye surround" is an obvious misnomer Also there is a question whether it exists as a consistent motif, but there are a few examples one in Braden B (72), one in Craig A (174), and two in Craig B (229, 249)

**GREEK CROSS** Strictly speaking the term applies to any equal-armed cross Apart from one or two notable exceptions, however, the single linear version seldom occurs by itself It is usually enclosed by a circle This is also true of the broad double line or excised cross Both of these combinations have already been covered under CROSS IN CIRCLE, q v For present purposes the Greek



cross is arbitrarily limited to the nonencircled broad form shown in the margin A favored motif for decoration of skirts, belts, and sashes, but not strictly confined to these locations, and occurs on at least two cups in complete independence (109 284) Three recurrent versions of the motif are worth differentiating from the standpoint of phase distribution simple broad-armed cross with no enclosed central feature, same with small unilinear cross inside, and same with central dot The first two may be multilinear, e.g., gorget 127 and cup 264 (the latter shown above) The dotted cross has a single outline



The first and simplest form is shared by Braden C (cup 109), Craig A (gorget fragment 150M) and Craig B (188, 189, 192, 193, 206 1E). Despite its nonoccurrence in Craig C, this cannot be thought of as the "primal" form Braden C cup 109 is from the only certain post-Great Mortuary cup in the sample Absence from Braden A and near absence from Craig A (150M is a dubious example) is also significant in this regard Absence of the motif from Braden B means little or nothing, since there are no skirts, belts, or sashes in that phase



Of the second version, Greek cross with linear cross inside Braden A has two (cup 2 and gorget 23D), Craig A eight on gorgets (125, 126, 127, 130, 131B, 131C, 136, 137), Craig B, one on a cup (190) but atypical, with a long-armed cross inside, Craig C has none



Version three, Greek cross with central dot none in any phase of Braden, none in Craig A, seven in B (197, 198A, 199B, 205 206, 210C, 222D), and three in C (304E, 306, 310), all on cups The clearest difference in distributions of the interior cross and dotted versions supports our Hypothesis D



**HAND** There is not much excuse for treating the human head as a theme (pp 116-121) and the hand as a motif Both occur as principal, if not only, design components and also as separate components in association with other subject matter The "hand and eye," however, was set up as one of Waring and Holder's (1945) original Cult motifs, we are following a well-traveled road Their definition "an extended hand containing a naturalistic eye in the center of the palm" which may be "replaced by a cross in a circle" is insufficiently broad to cover the diversity of forms used by the artists of Spiro Out of six occurrences as individual components in Braden B and C, fourteen fragmentary hand cups, four gorgets in Craig B, and one in C, twenty-five in all, there are only two occurrences of "naturalistic" eyes (251, 256A), three more with dotted semicircles (252A, 256C, 258A), possibly meant to be eyes but the type occurs on no human face in the sample, and three more blank semicircles (277A, 277B, 277C) Four palms bear the cross in circle motif (82, 255, 256D, 338B), one (276) has nothing, and seven more are all different (57, 76, 115, 122, 250, 254, 257), for which we lack space to characterize individually The remaining eight occurrences are on fragments on which the treatment of the palm is indeterminate



Eyes are involved with hands in another way, however, as volar markings at the finger joints "blind" (252, 255) or with pupils (254, 256B) This, and the vertical bisection of nails (252, 254, 255, 256B), are new features occurring only, so far as we know, on hand cups of Craig B



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**KEY-SIDED MACE** A rare form occurring twice as independent motifs in Braden B cups 57 and 84 (the latter shown here). In the caption to plate 64, already in print, two blunders are economically compressed into one sentence. The Braden C mace of cup 110 is not "the only other key-sided mace in the sample," but is in fact not a key-sided mace at all. It is simply a regular mace rendered in the angular style favored by some Braden C artists. At the same time, the perfectly good example in cup 57 was overlooked entirely. It remains true, however, that only Spiro has yielded maces that are "keyed" on one side.



The locus classicus for the two-sided symmetrical type is the fine repousse copper hairpin from Moundville (Moore 1905, fig. 105), which may have been the prototype for the small macelike "symbol badges" from another Moundville phase site, Koger's Island, and from Etowah. Our theory that the asymmetrical Spiro type is a significant transformation is still a reasonable hypothesis.

**LOOPED SQUARE** Included in the list because it is the basic structural element in the tentative Cox Mound gorget style (Muller 1966, pp. 174-175) and is constantly cited as an evidence of Mesoamerican connections since the time of William H. Holmes (1883, p. 285). The near absence of this motif in Spiro shell—one example only assigned without strong conviction to Craig A (186F), shown here—may be significant. A major portion of the design of cup 183.1, evidently based on the idea of the looped square, can hardly be proclaimed a successful transformation. Also assigned to Craig A. Our present notion is that this may be a little "early."



**MACE** Depicted as a functional weapon, occurs only in Craig A gorgets, grasped in the hand (142, 143C), stuck into the belt (141), or both in the hand and belt (142). No two of these maces are sufficiently alike to establish a type, and only one of them (143C) is complete enough for illustration.



A warrior figure in Craig B cup 187 is holding (in characteristic Craig B nongrasping fashion) a club with slotted pommel, suggestive of the mace, but the upper part necessary for identification is missing. If a mace, it would have to be an example of the long-handled type which at Spiro occurs only in Braden B, already listed in this glossary as a separate motif under the heading **BROKEN MACE**.

The sole proprietors of what we shall have to call the "regular" mace as independent motif are Braden B with five occurrences (62, 65, 66, 80, 81) and Braden C with eleven (103, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 113, 114, 121, 122, 123C). (The ridiculous example on cup 109 has been dropped as unworthy of the name.) There are no consistent formal differences between representatives of the two phases. Most of them could be switched from one phase to the other without being noticed. Braden C maces, as is to be expected, have a wider range of variation. The only deviation of possible significance is the doubled center line of two Braden C maces (121, 122), which may be construed as a tentative step toward the "mace and feathering" motif, q.v.



The **KEY-SIDED MACE** has already been covered as a separate motif. The **BROKEN MACE** likewise. Whether the "Y-shaped mace," as designated

in the captions to Braden C cups 110 and 112, ever existed outside the head of the artist engraver of these cups is highly problematical. It would have been a throwing club of lethal capabilities. It is not inconceivable. The fact that such an artifact has not been recorded archaeologically might be accounted for by the assumption that it was made of wood. Of copper, flint or other stone material its "cost effectiveness" would have made a very poor showing. In any case, it has added nothing to our understanding to have called it a mace.



**MACE AND ARROW FEATHERING** Figure 115 in Section V shows a variety of ear-spout accessories, two of which (220, 282) are of special interest. The hypothesis has already been advanced that these Craig B and C forms represent a conflation of two distinct Braden concepts, the arrow feathering motif and the mace. The most eligible prototypical form is presented as a decorative feature on the bodies of a pair of birds in court-card symmetry on cup 88 assigned to Braden B. In Craig B and C the form appears in several guises: rattlesnake tail (201), ear-spout bangles (220, 282, 308), clublike objects (cleavers?) held in the hand (200, 286D) or stuck in the belt (210C, 276, 279). One of the latter (276) is shown above. It may be significant that in this and 279 the figures are also holding severed heads, an association strongly suggestive of ritual sacrifice.



**MOUNDVILLE CIRCLE** A scalloped circle within a larger circle or band which may in turn enclose smaller circles, cross in circle, ogee, or simple oval. Only one certain occurrence in Spiro shell, as a headdress feature on Braden B cup 53, shown here. The justification for listing it as an independent motif has to be borrowed from Moundville where it occurs in several media: copper, engraved pottery, and shell, and in various iconographic contexts. Of particular interest is its association, as part of the so-called "heart" motif, with death symbols: hand, forearm bones and skull, the headline of which encloses a series of scallops handled in precisely the same fashion as the motif itself (Moore 1905, fig. 147). With similar mortuary associations it appears on the Wilbanks ax, figure 253, this volume.



A typical version of the motif in black on orange pottery from Cholula is illustrated by Noguera (1937, fig. 36). The form is not so complex that diffusion is the only alternative.

**NESTED RECTANGLES** Common in Southeastern ceramic decoration but of rare occurrence as an independent motif. Only two examples in Spiro shell as decoration on a leg in Braden A gorget fragment 23E, and on bodies of dove-like birds of Braden B cup 86, a most unlikely context. The motif was possibly in the mind of the artist of cup 116 who, in characteristic Braden C fashion, left off one side of each set of rectangles.



**OGEE** The definition of this form and the historical background of its appellation is covered in the caption to plate 16 in Volume Two. It is a perfect example of the concept of motif as here defined on

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both grounds of independence and transferability. The ogee has an immense distribution in the Southeast generally, in almost every possible medium capable of figural expression whether in stone, copper, pottery, or shell. Not common in Spiro shell engraving, however, where it is limited to the Braden school phase A has two occurrences, as independent motif (16) and as body decoration (19). B also has two, independent (58) and as dorsal marking on snakes (76). Example from 16 is illustrated above.



An interesting transformation, so far limited to Spiro, is called here for want of a better name "ogee with streamer". There are two occurrences in Braden B (62, 86) both as completely independent motifs, the first illustrated here. Cup 101, in Braden C, has an ogee with a break on one side presumably intended for a streamer that was not achieved.

Though treated here simply as a variant, it is possible that the ogee with streamer had a conventional meaning of its own. Support for such a possibility may be found in an analogous design in repoussé copper from the Mt. Royal site on the St. Johns River in Florida (Moore 1894, fig. 14).



**OVAL AND CONCENTRIC OVALS** Ovoid forms in general are remarkably rare in Spiro shell. Of the former a series of excised ovals on a bird or bird-man wing arm in Braden A (35B), another set of slightly squarish ovals on the arm of a bowman in Craig B (187), and three instances of two ovals, one above the other, on bird breasts, in Braden C (112) and Craig A (152E, 152F), as so often seen in repoussé copper hawk plates. Concentric ovals are equally scarce as body decoration in Braden A (2, 21) and Craig B (265), and as snake marking in Braden B (96C shown above). Even combined, these scattered examples can hardly be credited with any special significance.



**PEAR-SHAPED** Or "teardrop". Neither describes the form very well. "Teardrop" is not used here because most examples would be upside down. A ceramic motif of long standing, going back at least to Hopewellian times (Griffin 1941, pl. 14, Phillips 1970, fig. 440). Occurs as independent motif on one nearly complete cup (266) a large fragment (267), two matching fragments (268F), and three unmatched fragments (268E, 268G, 268H), all assigned to Craig B. Pear-shaped motifs also show through a Craig C design (289) indicating reuse of previously decorated cup. The forms, in all cases are composed of doubled concentric lines, the inter-spaces often occupied by lines of dots or dashes. Marginal drawing is from fragment 268F.



**RACCOON** A clear distinction between theme and motif is impossible when it comes to the raccoon. In at least one case, in which slightly anthropomorphized raccoons are the principal and only components of the design (235 fig. 59 this volume), it would be appropriate to speak of a raccoon theme. Possibly also in the case of raccoons on a tree (237) but that the tree is no more than a perch for the raccoons is unlikely. It is equally possible that the raccoons are merely decking out the tree. These occurrences are both in Craig B.

In a number of Craig A paired figure gorgets,



whole raccoons play a central but definitely subsidiary role in more complex iconographic themes (136 147, 138B, 139, 140A, the second of which is illustrated here and in fig. 114 this volume). There are also Craig B cups, other than those mentioned above, in which raccoons (or raccoon skins) are merely attachments in one case hanging from the elbow of a warrior figure (187, fig. 146 this volume), in the other, superimposed on the serpentine body of a Piasa monster (224 and fig. 206 this volume).

The only occurrences of the raccoon motif in Braden are in phase C (104, 105). In both cases the animals are headless, in the first probably intentionally, blocked out by one of the human heads in the design. In the second, the head is off the edge either due to breakage or cutting in the enlargement of the aperture. The drawing of these raccoon bodies is slightly infantile, but clearly identifiable.



**RACCOON BINDING** Called in captions to plates in Volume Three in the two cases applicable, "tied animal" (62) and "tied raccoon" (106). In order not to separate it from the previous entry the name is here being changed as above. In most cases it clearly is, or is capable of, serving as a binding around some object. One would think that by its very nature it could not be rendered as an independent motif, but in one case it is, as we shall see. It is, however, upon the freedom with which it is attached to so many different kinds of objects, both animal and material, that its warrant as a motif is so firmly established.



The raccoon binding is almost exclusively a Craig A and B feature. The Braden B and C examples cited above are imperfectly realized. Craig A has seven occurrences: on staffs (gorget 131D, cup 164), as connectors of human heads in a circular border (gorgets 143D, 152A), on an ankle (cup 158), on a serpentine band (cup 167), on a broken staff (cup 170C), the last illustrated above. Craig B has twelve occurrences as a headdress feature (205, 208A), on an ankle (210A), on snakes (222E, 222F), on wrists (252, 254, 255, 256B, 256C, 256F) independent, i.e., exactly as on wrists that are, however, non-existent, "opossums" according to some writers (253). All Craig B examples are on cups. Craig C has none. Accompanying drawing is from cup 252 with portions restored.

A consistent difference between the two phases is that the banding in Craig A is double in Craig B triple. So far there are no exceptions to this rule.



**RACCOON HINDQUARTERS** The theory that this is a transformation of the raccoon binding runs into the difficulty that in many cases it is impossible to see what, if anything, it is binding, also because it has almost exactly the same distribution among Spiro style phases as the raccoon binding. But there is one important difference: the raccoon hindquarters motif is abundantly present in Etowah Mound C Dallas gorgets, both as hair or headdress elements or as bindings on staffs and other objects (cf. pp. 127-128, figs. 177, 178, also fig. 232 and accompanying comments in Section VII).

Nothing vaguely suggestive of the motif is present in Braden A. Braden B has four occurrences, all located at the back of the head, as tops of hairpins.

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(55, 56, possibly 63) or elements of hairdress (53) These forms are certainly not derived from the raccoon banding, possibly only related to the raccoon hindquarters through convergence. There are no occurrences in Braden C.

Craig A has eight occurrences five as headdress elements, on top of the head, raccoon legs and tail thrusting forward (gorgets 127, 132, 136, 142, 143D the last illustrated here, one of these, 127, also has them on queues and hanging from bolts, another 136, also wears them as knee bands), one has the raccoon hindquarters attached to, but not bound around, a staff (150J), one is at the back of the head in the manner of Braden B (165 I), finally there is one whose context is not clear (134H).

In Craig B the raccoon hindquarters motif settles down to a consistent form. There are nine occurrences, all as bindings on the ankle (187), on wrists (194), on staffs (195, 197), on knees (206, 247A), on spider legs (245, 246, the first shown here), and in an unidentifiable context on a bird gorget (275A).

Craig C has one example of the motif, coming from behind a massive head in frontal view (202) but executed in a totally different style from the foregoing.



**RAYED CONCENTRIC BARRED OVALS** Defined in the caption to plate 36 as "an elaborated version of the well-known barred oval motif" and should perhaps have been included under that heading. It might be added that it is actually only somewhat more than half the figure described. Its status as an independent motif is not very firm, apart from the Braden A design in which it is combined with the Davis rectangle (plates 36-45), it occurs only once (without that association) in Braden B (98 I). In the latter, it is associated with rayed concentric semicircles, the next entry on the list.



**RAYED CONCENTRIC SEMICIRCLES** A better example of this motif than 98 I, mentioned above, is the one illustrated here (98). Relationship to the rayed concentric barred oval is discussed in the caption to plate 98. Both are ceramic motifs with wide relationships in the Southeast, particularly in negative painted types of the Tennessee-Cumberland area, e.g., Nashville and Dallas. Negative painted sherds, classified as Nashville (Brown 1971b, pp 157-160), were found in the Craig Mound, but none, so far as we know, showing this particular motif. Geographically closer relationships are with the type Avery Engraved of the McCurtain phase (Suhm and Jelks 1962, pl 1). Vessels of this rather late type have been found in legitimate contexts in the Craig Mound (Brown 1971b, p 132).



Broken-down examples of the motif may be seen in cup 104, Braden C.

**SAWTOOTH TASSEL** This not altogether satisfactory appellation refers to a feature that plays a role in Spiro-Moundville connections disproportionate to its apparent insignificance. It is sufficiently described in Section VII (fig 255 and accompanying commentary). The sawtooth tassel certainly cannot be called an independent motif and its transferability is limited to two contexts, on human figures in Braden A (21, 23D) and on a quadruped,



probably feline, in Craig B (226C). Marginal drawing is from cup 21.

**SHIELD** A replicated independent motif on two matching fragment sets and one nonmatching fragment (184, 185, 186C) making three cups in all. Information provided by the first two is sufficiently complete to warrant the assumption that no other subject matter was present. A Craig A assignment is mainly dependent on the fact that essentially the same form, somewhat simplified, is seen in what we take to be rattles in the hands of paired "dancing" figures in Craig A gorgets (133A, 134B, 134E). That "shield" is an appropriate name for this motif is exemplified in a combat scene from the Selden codex (Beyer 1933, fig 64). Marginal illustration is from cup 184.



**SKULL** If there is a theme of "heads" why not one of "skulls"? A good question. One answer is that, whereas skulls are invariably associated with detached heads, even to the point of being strung upon the same band (57), there are many cup designs in which heads are the only components and more in which they are associated with subjects other than skulls. But the effective answer, as usual, is that the distinction is vividly reflected in the distribution. Skulls are present on only five cups, four in Braden B (57, 58, drawing in caption to 58, 82), the last illustrated above, and one in Braden C (103). Complete absence in Braden A and all phases of Craig. In sharp contrast, detached human heads occur in all phases of both schools. For details of distribution see pages 117-119.



**SPIDER WEB** Only three examples, all assigned to Craig A (gorgets 126, 151N, and cup fragment 186A). The last and most naturalistic, is represented here. It and another just like it form part of a circle of such figures aligned within concentric petaloid borders, no other subject matter showing up on the fragment. 151N is part of the outer rim of a gorget. The web occupies the space between the rim and a set of four concentric circles. What is within the latter is problematical, it seems likely that it may have been a spider. The web in gorget 126 is complete and occupies an important central position between two steaming pots held by confronted "dancers" (cf fig 40). It is not a naturalistic web, but that such was the intent of the artist is proven by a very similar form on a spider gorget from Mt Sterling, Illinois (Burke 1950, fig 16).



**STRIPED PANEL** Long rectangular panel with or without narrow frame embellished with broad diagonal excised stripes, excised median line systems, or simple sets of two or three lines, alternating with blank diagonal bands. Dotted circles, concentric circles, or "eyes" are located on, or between, stripes, or both. No two arrangements are exactly alike but the general effect is the same. There are three modes of occurrence: as the central feature in paired figure gorgets of Craig A (130, 132, 133, 137, 151M), as plinth beneath the *caili* bodies of bird-men (200, 201) and as cross panels of 'turkey' gorgets (275B) in Craig B. There are no occurrences in any



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phase of Braden, and none in Craig C. Marginal drawing is from gorget 130, Craig A.



**SWASTIKA CROSS IN CIRCLE** Despite rarity, may be considered as more than just another variant of the cross in circle, already listed, by reason of its nonrandom distribution. Completely absent in Braden, all phases. Occurs only in Craig A and B on one gorget and one cup in A (137, 167), on one cup (266) and three gorgets (273B, 276, 277A) in B. In all cases the cross is within concentric circles. Marginal illustration is from cup 167, Craig A.



**TERRACE** In Spiro shell, simple terrace and tau motifs are indistinguishable. One is the reverse of the other depending on which way you look at them. In any case, they are invariably paired either alternating (cups 4B, 85, 110, 111, the first shown here) or one inverted over the other (gorget 126). There is no such thing as an isolated two- or three-step terrace in the sample. From the numbers above it may be seen that the motif is not common but occurs in all phases of Braden and in Craig A. It is on belts in Braden A and Craig A, as body marking on snakes in Braden B and C. Craig B has one multiple terrace (203) which is clearly not the same motif. There are also certain body markings on snakes that might be interpreted as terraces or taus turned up on end (20, 197, 242); behind these, we feel lies a different concept.



A variation that might be worth treating as a separate motif is the "terrace and lunette" of which we have two examples (cups 9, 79) Braden A and B respectively. The first is the only three-step terrace in the sample, the second, illustrated here, is the only example in which the terraces are neither alternated nor inverted one over the other.



**THREE FINGERS** A recurring motif on Moundville pottery, more elegantly called "three digits" by Moore (1905, p. 223). Somewhat similar in form, but used quite differently in Spiro shell. At Moundville the "fingers" are usually in four sets making a cruci-

form arrangement around a central feature, at Spiro they combine with other features in body marking or snakes (57, 68) or stand alone as independent motif as in fragment 96A, shown here. Addition of concentric circles centered on the three fingers in 61 and 96A is another departure from Moundville practice. Notwithstanding the differences, the fact that the motif occurs only in Braden B, the phase that shows the closest connections with Moundville, the likelihood of a common origin in this case is fairly strong. That such an origin may lie far back in time is indicated by the occurrence of a similar form on a tortoise shell ornament from Seip Mound 1 (Scherone and Greenman 1931, fig. 59).



**TRIOBATE** A widely distributed motif in the Southeast, rendered in various media. Only at Spiro is it found on engraved shell. Here it seems to have undergone a transformation which might prove to have taken place in other arts as well.



In Braden A the triobate motif takes the form of a triangle with rounded apices, slightly incurved sides, and excised center (gorget 7 and cup 8, the latter illustrated here). In both examples associations are with snakes. There is one occurrence in Braden B, where it is used as marking on a snake and as independent motifs occupying background spaces of the cup (73, shown here). The form is similar to the one above with the sides more incurved and no excision of the center. When it appears again in Craig B cups 219A, 220, shown here, and 249, the transformation has gone a good deal further, the incurvate sides have become sharp reentrant angles and the (formerly) excised center has been reduced to three single lines.



That a similar transformation may have taken place in locations other than Spiro might be suggested by comparing triobate motifs on a stone pipe from Sycamore Landing, Morehouse Parish, Louisiana (Moore 1909, fig. 106) with examples on one of the Perrault pipes from the Emerald Mound (Brown 1926, fig. 224, and fig. 267 this volume). The first is an exact replica of the Braden A version, the second is similar to the Craig B versions, especially the ones on cup 249, not illustrated here.

## APPENDIX B

## THEMATIC EXTENSIONS BEYOND SPIRO

Abstracted Wedgemouth Rituals in Dispersed Burial Contexts:  
Application of Subthemes to Brain and Phillips (1996)

Okla-Lf-S338                      Avian transformation with fragmentary center pole  
(No Burial Context)

Cruciform Style Gorgets and Relevant Avian Motifs  
Center Pole Symbolism: Wedgemouth as Birdman

|              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Okla-Lf-S338 | Spiro (No Burial Context)           |
| Ala-Ct-MC2   | Mulberry Creek (Burial 119)         |
| Ala-Ct-MC4   | Mulberry Creek (Unspecified Burial) |
| Ala-Lu-P2    | Mulberry Creek (Burial 607)         |
| Ala-Tu-M82   | Moundville (Burial 15)              |
| Miss-Cy-K1   | Kellogg (Burial 36)                 |
| Miss-Ok-RH1  | Rolling Hills (No Burial Context)   |
| Tenn-Hm-X13  | Hamilton County (No Burial Context) |

Drawing from Brain and Phillips (1996) the following gorgets (in burial context) may be associated with ritualized weaponry:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Ala-Ct-MC2              |  |
| Ala-Ct-MC4              |  |
| Miss-Cy-K1 <sup>3</sup> | [associated with five deer antler tines]             |
| Ala-Tu-M82              | [associated with pottery and sheet copper fragments] |

Piasa Burial Context

[The Piasa as a possible Subset of the Wedgemouth Theme]

Ala-Tu-M18 Moundville (Burial 21)  
Tied to Braden/Craig B styles at Spiro (Brain and Phillips 1996:298).

This conservative list of thematic extensions drawn from Brain and Phillips (1996) supports my interpretations of Wedgemouth as a paramount Miko. Although fragmentary, my argument that Wedgemouth is a specific rank associated with specific rituals retains thematic meaning beyond Spiro.

<sup>3</sup> Miss-Cy-K1 was part of a male burial (Kellogg site, Burial 36). This burial was accompanied by Burial 34. Burial 34 included an adult female, and a gorget associated with swastika (swirl cross motif). This gorget is documented as Miss-Cy-K2 (Phillips and Brain 1996:281). This is mentioned with regard to an analysis of Wedgemouth, given that there is a thematic replication of day (war) and night (peace) imagery.

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