

PREFACE

THE VAST MAJORITY of societies that have existed did so in the absence of writing, precluding self-description or documentation by anthropologists, historians, folklorists, or other social scientists. For these people who lived before the written record or the curious eye of outside observers, archaeology remains the only means through which they may be included in the broad spectrum of the human experience. To bring these cultures to light is the challenge of archaeology. From research design to fieldwork, from analysis to results, archaeology remains an ambitious undertaking, yet it is unmatched in furthering our understanding of the people who lived during these early eras in human social history.

The indigenous societies of the Ohio Valley were part of an ancestry that extended back at least ten thousand years. The description and understanding of these societies, largely known through archaeology, is relevant to living descendants and others interested in how these unique societies lived, grew, and changed in the millennia prior to the modern industrial world. This book is about the indigenous societies of one such valley in southeastern Ohio—the Hocking River Valley. We present archaeological data collected over the past two decades, in conjunction with earlier research. We begin this sequence of societal change at the Late Archaic period, about 3000 B.C., when people lived in nomadic hunting and gathering communities and end at the Late Prehistoric period, about A.D. 1450, as communities of settled maize agriculturalists developed. Each chapter details this process based on time-specific data, and accordingly, the book chapters are arranged chronologically, moving the reader through time to facilitate the analysis of culture change.

Scholarship from various arenas in archaeology is assembled to produce this nearly five-thousand-year narrative in the Hocking Valley. A diverse assemblage of archaeologists from academia, government, and the private sector brings to this volume expertise in anthropology, geography, material

science, and botany. Accordingly, chapters variously describe and analyze the spatial modeling of settlement patterns, the foods hunted, collected, or grown by varying groups through time, and the physical attributes of tools manufactured by distinct communities. However, the overarching theme of each chapter is drawn from anthropology, linking societies from each time period to a broad model considering the emergence and expansion of *tribal* institutions; that is, each chapter contributes more data and analysis to document the *process* through which the descendants of nomadic hunting and gathering societies eventually became sedentary agriculturalists. This process occurred in many regions of the world, particularly the Near East, Mesoamerica, Africa, and South America, and this volume ultimately aligns indigenous Hocking Valley societies with them, illuminating the importance of the valley's rich archaeological heritage.

To accomplish this goal we employ an array of modern methods. This volume contains the first Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of sites throughout the valley and offers the first demographic reconstruction of communities. Through the use of radiocarbon accelerator mass spectroscopy (AMS) dating, we present the earliest direct evidence for maize agriculture in the Hocking Valley, and suites of regular radiocarbon dates confirm the earliest use of pottery. Detailed archaeobotanical analyses serve as the basis for dietary and economic reconstruction, while x-ray diffraction and x-ray fluorescence are used to identify pottery clay sources. These and other contemporary scientific techniques collectively make possible the identification of behaviors and institutions as they were modified through the generations.

One of the primary goals of contemporary archaeology is to disseminate research findings to as broad an audience as possible, especially the interested and informed public, since the preservation of the archaeological heritage left to us by this country's first inhabitants lies in the public's appreciation of its irreplaceable worth. Therefore, although professional jargon is sometimes unavoidable, all authors have tried to produce chapters that are readable by the interested layperson yet retain the rigor of the professional archaeologist.