

A Provisional Taxonomy of Prufer's Scioto Tradition

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Abstract

Indiana and Ohio archaeologists have been reluctant to classify and culturally affiliate archaeological remains. A symptom of this unwillingness to classify is the forced definition of large, vague and invalidly-defined units such as Hopewell, Adena and Fort Ancient. The purpose of this paper is to abolish these terms as culture taxons by proposing a classification of Scioto Tradition phases.

For various reasons of historic, scholastic, and idiosyncratic nature, Indiana and Ohio archaeologists have been loathe to define cultural affiliations from archaeological remains, that is, do archaeological taxonomy. It should be noted that McKern's (9) Midwestern Taxonomic System was developed on the basis of materials in the northern Mississippi Valley area, and was only nominally applied in Indiana and Ohio. Western Indiana is outside the range of problems discussed in this article, but terms used there are mostly borrowed from Illinois archaeology. Prufer's recent work in Ohio, however, has radically altered established views of conventional classification schemes there.

A symptom of this unwillingness to label is the forced definition of large, vague, and invalidly defined units. Such terms as *Hopewell*, *Adena*, and *Fort Ancient* hang on to plague contemporary comparative archaeological study. The purpose of this article is to rectify past sins, and, at least, to abolish two of these terms as taxa (*Hopewell* might be maintained in a ceremonial complex status, with its "Interaction Sphere," and/or a pottery type designator—but not as a cultural unit). For an up-to-date treatment of Fort Ancient see Prufer and Shane (15). Part of the reluctance to classify Midwestern Woodland materials is that so little data are available from living areas. Ceremonial remains do not seem to be sensitive spatial indicators, probably due to the rapid diffusion of associated religious concepts, as materials related to subsistence technologies.

Using the classification precepts of Willey (19) Prufer has proposed a "Scioto Tradition" (12). This concept is based on the belief that there is a continuity of development in the Ohio Valley of basic Woodland character which is largely unknown due to absence of detectable living sites. This assumption is not accepted by all workers in the field. The term *Scioto* is unfortunate in that it includes southeastern Indiana, southern and central Ohio, north central and eastern Kentucky, and western West Virginia besides the focal Scioto River drainage of south central Ohio (16, p. 212 and Fig. 3, p. 218; 17, p. 137). A specific site name or, perhaps, an appropriate descriptive geographical term should have been chosen. The term *Scioto Hopewell*, rather than *Ohio Hopewell*, does have some geographic plausibility though, in that the Scioto basin is the climax area, and manifestations of this development, though largely restricted to Ohio, do occur in some adjoining states.

It is very dangerous to place time limits on archaeological units, but the beginnings of the Scioto Tradition appear around 2000 B.C. The tradition is completely prehistoric, being displaced by Late Woodland and Mississippian populations, such as those of the Fort Ancient Tradition.

Along with Scioto, there are a number of Woodland traditions in the eastern United States which in some stage of development manifest a strong cast of Hopewell ceremonialism (5, Fig. 3, p. 181). It is believed that Hopewell ceremonialism evolved within the Havana Tradition of Illinois.

Although Prufer has described "Scioto Hopewell" in various publications, a set of traits defining the Scioto Tradition as a whole has yet to be put forth. In fact the literature suggests that Scioto Hopewell is confused with Scioto Tradition. Struever's map (16), for example, should read Scioto Hopewell for Scioto Tradition, and his definition of Scioto Tradition refers to Scioto Hopewell. It must be realized that Prufer's approach to this material has been from his initial interest in "Classic Hopewell" (11). The integrating feature of the tradition as perceived by Prufer appears to be cordmarked utilitarian pottery. Scioto can be contrasted to the Havana Tradition by the presence of extensive ceremonial cremation and a deciduous forest setting.

Table 1 represents a taxonomy of the Scioto Tradition, with units comparable to what Prufer calls phases, following procedures characteristically applied to the Southwest United States. These are essentially "generations of pottery makers" (6, p. 98), in river valleys. Local variants of what Prufer (13, p. 49), calls Early Middle, Late, and Latest [Scioto] "Hopewell" are, therefore, assumed to be components, though generic terms are not given. The table is not complete as regional phase sequences can probably also be established for the Miami and Muskingum drainages in Ohio. Selective explanation of phase terms proposed seems required. The most striking feature is the complete absence of the term *Adena*. Early Adena is replaced by *Fayette*, from Fayette Thick pottery (4). *Robbins*, from Dragoo's Robbins Complex (3, p. 269), has become the term for Middle and Late Adena. Fayette is too generalized to divide into phase units at this time. It differs from Munson's (7) Marion Culture of the Havana Tradition in that pottery is typically decorated by cordmarking, rather than by fabric impressing. Fayette and Marion pottery is quite thick. Michael J. Rodeffer (personal communication, 1972) is of the opinion that, on the basis of burial evidence, the dichotomy between Fayette and Robbins is not apparent in the Licking basin, and proposes a general Early Scioto Hartman Phase. The writer believes, though, that ceramic evidence will eventually indicate a division of this unit. *Westenhaver*, following Black's thinking (2, p. 301), is called Adena by Prufer (14, p. 130), and *Charleston* is called Adena by McMichael (10, p. 37-8). This writer is terming Prufer's Hopewell Phase McGraw (after Prufer's McGraw site) (14). New Castle, rather than Mounds or Anderson, is used for Indiana Middle Scioto because of the recorded presence of Hopewell pottery (18). Prufer's term *Peters* (14) seems preferable to Baby's *Cole* (1), since it is defined on the basis of pottery. An intrusive infant burial (8) was extracted from Earthwork Four, West Mound, at the New Castle site, indicating possible

TABLE 1. Selected regional phase sequences of the Scioto Tradition.

	INDIANA Whitewater drainage ¹	OHIO Scioto drainage	WEST VIRGINIA Kanawha drainage	KENTUCKY Licking drainage
Late Scioto	"Little Blue"	Peters	Buck Garden	?
Middle Scioto	New Castle	McGraw	Armstrong Murad	Wright
Early Scioto	Robbins Stage Nowlin	Westenhaver	Charleston	Fayette StageHartman

¹And environs.

evidence of Late Scioto occupation in east central Indiana. The term "Little Blue," from the nearby Little Blue River, is tentatively coined here to represent this manifestation and the phase it represents. Excluding the term *Charleston*, McMichael (10) is followed for Kanawha valley phases. McMichael's phrase Kanawha "Tradition" should be replaced with Kanawha Regional Sequence.

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