Recovery of a Connestee Vessel in the Middle Ohio River Valley

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Abstract

A complete simple stamped, tetrapodal vessel was found at the Panther Rock site (15CL58) near the confluence of the Kentucky River with the Ohio River. Petrographic analysis determined that the grit temper is extremely similar to that of two Connestee vessels in east-central Kentucky and Turner Simple Stamped vessels from Hopewellian sites in southern Ohio, southern Illinois, and central Illinois. The context of the vessel is unusual because it was found in a refuse pit on a site with minimal evidence of Middle Woodland occupation, whereas the other Connestee vessels in the region have been recovered from Hopewellian earthwork or mortuary sites. The location of the site provides additional insights about possible trade routes into the Ohio Valley.

Introduction

A small number of simple stamped or brushed, tetrapodal vessels found in mound or other mortuary contexts at Hopewell sites in the Midwest have been identified as Connestee or Turner Simple Stamped B vessels on the basis of distinctive grit temper that indicates manufacture in the Appalachian Summit area. While only single examples of these non-local vessels have been documented in the Havana, Crab Orchard, and Scioto Hopewell regions (Figure 1), and they do not appear to play a vital role in the Hopewell exchange system, their distribution may clarify trade and travel routes between Hopewell areas. In an effort to explore this possibility, the author examines the morphology, surface treatment, and temper source of three vessels excavated at sites in north-central and east-central Kentucky—areas between the Appalachian Summit region to the southeast and the Scioto region to the north-northeast.

Seeman (1979:376-379) noted that in addition to the dispersal of ideas and influences, people also traveled between regions during Hopewell Interaction. Observation of the origins and routes of travel of these individuals is an integral part of understanding the distribution of status and ritual items. Seeman ascertained that despite the prominent role of ceramics in Hopewell culture, only very rarely were nonlocal vessels found in mortuary contexts at Hopewell sites. He concluded that the most important question about these ceramics is whether they were a relatively passive phenomenon introduced because of the presence of people from outside the area or whether the pottery was an artifact type integral to the exchange system and prized and solicited by individuals and groups. After an intensive review of the literature, he concluded that the vessels were not a vital part of the exchange system. Consideration of more than one hundred complete or nearly complete vessels from Hopewell mortuary contexts yielded only three extraregional vessels that probably came from the southern Appalachian highlands into the Midwest. Sand tempered, tetrapodal vessels, which fit the description of Connestee or Turner Simple Stamped B pottery, were documented at Mound City in the Scioto region of Ohio; Rutherford Mound (11HN252) in the Crab Orchard area of southern Illinois; and Baalman Mound Number 1 of the Meppen Mounds in the lower Illinois Valley of the Havana area (Figure 1). Similar vessels have been found at the Camargo (15MM32) and Amburgey (15MM137) sites in the Bluegrass region of east-central Kentucky (Figure 2). More recently, a tetrapodal, Connestee vessel was uncovered at the Panther Rock site near the confluence of the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers, near the southern extent of the Scioto region. The morphology and contexts of the Connestee jar from the Panther Rock site and two

Connestee vessels from east-central Kentucky sites are examined herein to place them in perspective and ascertain if they might elucidate questions about the role, distribution routes, and chronology of these Hopewell trade items.

Keel (1976:19, 219) reported that the Connestee Phase of the Appalachian Summit area developed out of local manifestations as early as A.D. 100 and became a recognizable entity about A.D. 200. In addition to contact with groups in the Southeast, the Connestee phase of the southern Appalachians incorporated Hopewellian influence from the Midwest, perhaps precipitated by trade in mica from the mountains. Keel (1976:18-19, 219) in his study of the Appalachian Summit area provided a revised description of Connestee pottery, identified it as part of the South Appalachian and Northern Woodland ceramic tradition, and noted strong ties with northern Georgia and eastern Tennessee. The occurrence of single Connestee vessels in mortuary contexts on Scioto, Havana, and Crab Orchard region Hopewell sites, and on east-central Kentucky Hopewell sites is of special interest because they substantiate interaction, interregional exchange, and possibly mortuary-ceremonial affinities between societies from the Appalachian Summit area and Hopewell locales to the north. The presence of a Connestee vessel at the Panther Rock site adds another dimension to the distribution of this pottery because the site has only minimal evidence of Middle Woodland occupation and no discernible ceremonialism.

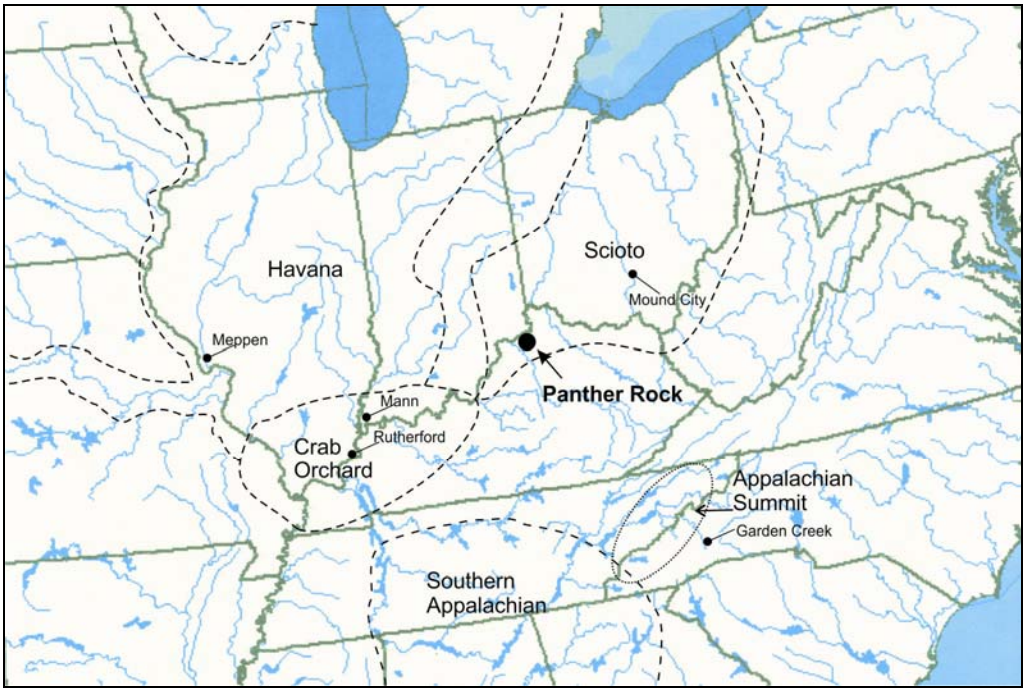

Figure 1. Southern Appalachian, Scioto, Havana, and Crab Orchard culture areas of the Hopewell, with selected sites and the probable general area of origin for the Panther Rock vessel indicated (adapted from Seeman 1979:Figure 1).

Context

The Panther Rock site (Stallings et al. 2008), located on the Ohio River near its confluence with the Kentucky River (Figure 2), is predominantly an early Late Archaic site. However, two anomalous, vertical walled, flat bottomed pits encountered at the periphery of the site each yielded major portions of limestone-tempered, plain surfaced pottery

vessels that appear to be of local origin, and one of these features also held a complete Connestee Simple Stamped vessel that petrographic analysis (Stoltman 2006) revealed probably originated in the Appalachian Summit area.

The fragments of the simple stamped vessel were positioned in a tight cluster against one wall at the base of Feature 11, a very large (140 x 150 cm; 70 cm deep) refuse pit. The stacked arrangement of the fragments suggests prompt disposal of the vessel into the pit after breakage rather than fracture at the time of deposition.

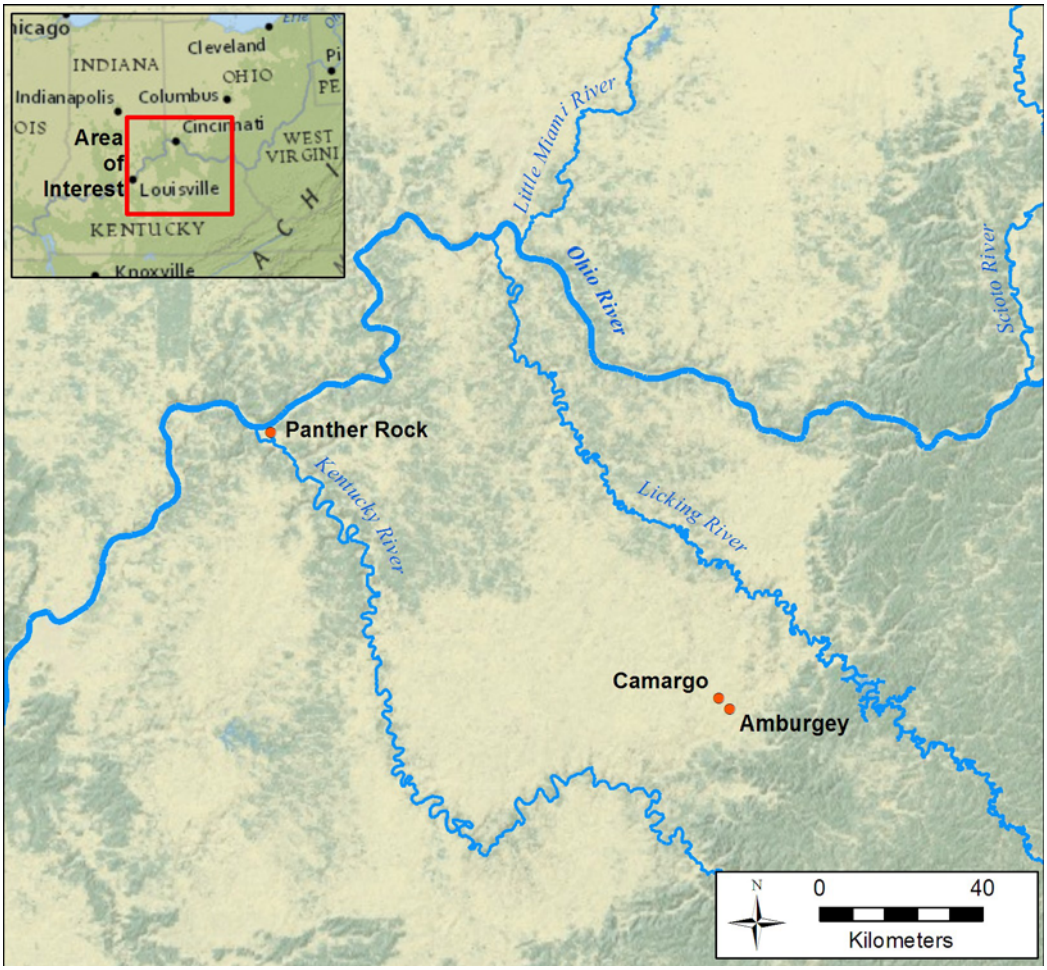

Figure 2. Locations of Kentucky sites with Connestee vessels.

Description

The tetrapodal, simple-stamped jar from Panther Rock (Figure 3) has a conical shape, a slightly constricted neck, and a moderately everted rim. The rim and neck are elongated and compose approximately one-third of the 25 cm height of the vessel. A 2 mm-wide incised line circumscribed around the upper shoulder separates the stamped body from the plain neck and rim. The simple stamped lands and grooves are of about equal widths—approximately 1.5-2.5 mm. The stamped impressions on the upper body are perpendicular to the lip. The lower body impressions form a herringbone pattern. They begin near the midpoint between pairs of podes and extend upward at a steep diagonal until they intersect with impressions from the

opposite direction at the ridges above the podal supports. The bottom of the vessel is plain surfaced, flat, and square in plan view, and the lower sides are flattened above the base and form ridges at the four corners above the podal supports. The sides expand upward and become more rounded as they rise until the vessel is circular in plan view at the shoulder.

Since other Connestee and Turner Simple Stamped B vessels were found in mortuary contexts, the vessel may have been intended for use by those performing a ceremony or preparing the dead. The elongated body, slightly constricted neck, and flared rim of the vessel would be particularly conducive to holding and pouring liquids or dry foods. The podal supports allow the pot to be free-standing; thus, it may have been suitable for display of offerings or symbolic serving of the deceased in a mortuary ritual. In light of the minimal evidence of Middle Woodland occupation at the site and the absence of mortuary or ritual facilities, it is quite conceivable that the pot was broken before it reached its projected destination or served its intended purpose.

Figure 3. Connestee vessels from Kentucky. Connestee Simple Stamped vessel from the Panther Rock site (left); Connestee vessel from Camargo (upper right); Connestee vessel from Amburgey (lower right).

A sherd from the vessel was sent to Dr. James Stoltman for petrographic source analysis. He reported (Stoltman 2006) that mineral inclusions are mostly fine to medium in maximum diameter, angular, and monomineralic and could be considered “grit”, i.e., finely crushed rock temper. The amount of temper versus natural inclusions is difficult to discern, but 36 percent of the paste is sand sized particles according to Stoltman, although he prefers to refer to the temper as grit. Amphiboles and microcline are the predominant minerals, with polycrystalline quartz and muscovite present in lesser amounts. A few polymineralic grains are present. Associations of amphibole, microcline, and quartz document that a metamorphic rock of generally granitic composition (a metagranite or gneiss) was the temper source. This same amphibole/microcline mineral suite, which he labels “Grit A”, has been observed by Stoltman

in Connestee/Turner B vessels imported to several midwestern Hopewell sites as well as the Connestee vessels from the Camargo site (15Mm32) (Fenton and Jefferies 1991) and the Amburgey site (15Mm137) (Richmond and Kerr 2005) in Kentucky (Figure 2). The comparative bulk compositions of the pastes of the vessels, measured by Stoltman, are extremely similar. The precise source of this metamorphic rock is presently unknown, but he states that, "there can be no reasonable doubt that this rock ultimately derives from the southern Appalachians, either from the Blue Ridge or Piedmont Provinces of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee".

Comparisons with Connestee Pottery in the Southern Appalachian Region

In his synthesis of Connestee pottery, Keel (1976:118-120, 247-255) described the most common surface treatments of the pottery as simple stamped, brushed, or cordmarked and the predominant temper as fine sand, occasionally with substantial amounts of mica in the paste. Keel (1976:107) noted that small, tetrapodal supports on some vessels are one of the outstanding characteristics of the series and observed that these footed vessels were usually smaller than non-footed forms.

The temper, surface treatment, vessel and rim forms, size, and tetrapodal supports of the Panther Rock pot are within the range of variation of Connestee Simple Stamped pottery (Table 1), and the vessel form resembles Connestee illustrations by Keel (1976:Figure 25; 107-109). The podal supports on the Panther Rock vessel are the size (12.0-15.5 mm long; 16-18 mm wide at juncture with base) and shape of supports described for Connestee jars, and they were formed in a similar manner. Keel (1976:109-110) noted that infrequently Connestee Brushed and Connestee Simple Stamped vessels have a plain band from the lip to the shoulder, and the use of an incised line to divide the rim and neck from the body is rare. The lands and grooves on Connestee vessels from the southern Appalachians vary in width but average wider than those of the Panther Rock vessel, and only eight percent of the vessels studied by Keel (1976:110) have stamped impressions oriented perpendicular to the rim. Diagonal and nearly horizontal impressions are more common for stamped and brushed Connestee vessels. These attributes of the Panther Rock vessel differ from most Connestee jars, but remain within the range of variation.

Table 1. Temper, Size, Form, and Surface Treatment of Selected Connestee Vessels.

Site/Region	Appalachian Summit Connestee Vessels	Panther Rock Connestee Vessel	Amburgey Connestee Vessel	Camargo Connestee Vessel	Rutherford Connestee Vessel	Mound City Connestee Vessel	Meppen Mounds Connestee Vessel
Temper Surface Treatment	Grit A* simple stamped, brushed, plain, cordmarked, check stamped; plain neck	Grit A simple stamped; plain neck	Grit A brushed, simple stamped; plain neck	Grit A Brushed; plain neck	Grit A simple stamped	Grit A simple stamped; plain neck	Grit A unknown
Vessel Form	conical	conical	conical	conical	conical	globular	globular
Vessel Size Height; Width	12-40 cm; 16-22 cm	25 cm; 18 cm	15.5 cm; 15.6 cm	13 cm; 11 cm	20 cm; 17.5 cm	11.8 cm; 12.2 cm	16 cm; 15 cm

*Grit A is an amphibole/microcline mineral suite identified by James Stoltman as the temper of these vessels

Locally made Connestee vessels at the Leake site (9BR663) in northwest Georgia (Keith 2010) and at Tuckaleechee Cove (40BT89-40 BT91) in Townsend, Tennessee, (Hammerstedt and Howell 2007) show sizes, shapes, and surface treatments comparable to those of the Panther Rock pot. There is considerable variation in the simple stamped impressions in these large collections. Cameron Howell (personal communication 2007) reports that only the early (circa A.D. 300) Connestee vessels at the Townsend sites have plain rim/neck areas, and that the tall rim/neck like that of the Panther Rock vessel is rare at these sites.

Comparison with Connestee Vessels from East-Central Kentucky

The temper, morphology, and surface treatment of the two complete tetrapodal vessels from the Bluegrass region of east-central Kentucky (Figure 2) are consistent with Connestee pottery. The Camargo and Amburgey sites from which the vessels were recovered show Hopewellian influences (Fenton and Jefferies 1991; Richmond and Kerr 2005), and the vessels are considered to have originated in the southern Appalachians and been transported northward (Richmond and Kerr 2005:83-84; Stoltman 2006).

The Panther Rock jar and these two pots from Montgomery County, Kentucky, have essentially the same temper and bulk composition. Like the Panther Rock vessel, these pots have smoothed rims and necks, but the Panther Rock jar is nearly twice the height of the Camargo (Fenton and Jefferies 1991) and Amburgey (Richmond and Kerr 2005) vessels, partially due to the elongation of the rim. The Camargo vessel is primarily brushed rather than simple stamped, and the Amburgey vessel is simple stamped and brushed, and the impressions on both vessels were oriented at shallow angles. These attributes coincide well with those of Connestee vessels and Turner Simple Stamped vessels.

It is not evident whether the Panther Rock jar had a function or an intended function different from the other two pots. The Panther Rock, Camargo, and Amburgey vessels do not show evidence of use for cooking. The Camargo vessel was found on the submound floor within the periphery of a burial mound, and, although it was not in direct association with the central interment, Fenton and Jefferies (1991) posit that it may have been used during the mortuary ritual. The Amburgey vessel was not directly linked with mounds, human remains, or mortuary behavior, but Richmond and Kerr (2005:81) note the presence of squash, goosefoot, purslane, and sticky catchfly suggest feasting, and that bedstraw is known for its fragrance. They posit that the vessel and associated ear spools compose an artifact cache that was “probably associated with ritual activity” but that the evidence of the ritual was destroyed subsequently by years of agriculture. The non-ceremonial context of the vessel from Panther Rock differs from the other vessels discussed herein. There is little evidence of more than brief encampment at Panther Rock, and there are no indications of the performance of rituals at the site, and no mica, copper, blades, or other exotic items were recovered.

Comparisons with Turner Simple Stamped Vessels

Willoughby (Willoughby and Hooten 1922:93) noted during the excavation of the Turner site that some of the sherds were tempered with sand instead of crushed stone and that a tetrapodal base and feet were recovered. He posited that the simple stamped vessels may have originated in the southern Appalachians or been made by captured women from the South. Prufer (1968) examined eight Hopewell sites in southern Ohio which yielded 134 Turner Simple Stamped B sherds, with 83 of them from the Turner site. Prufer (1968) recognized that Turner

Simple Stamped B pottery was not indigenous to Ohio and wrote a type description and placed it within his Southeastern series. He likened the simple stamped impressions to Early Woodland Deptford and Mossy Oak Simple Stamped of Georgia, but Keel (1976:120) indicated that the affinities were more probably Connestee or Cartersville. Griffin (1983:49) concluded that eastern Tennessee and southwestern North Carolina are the likely place of origin for simple stamped and check stamped vessels in the central Ohio Valley or for the manufacturing techniques which produced them.

Turner Simple Stamped ceramics of southern Ohio (Chapman and Keel 1979; Keel 1976; Prufer 1965, 1968) have characteristics that resemble those of Connestee series vessels from the Appalachian Summit. However, Turner Simple Stamped Types A and B may originate in different locales. The grit temper of Type A appears to be from local sources, while the fine grit temper of Type B vessels, referred to as "sand" temper by Prufer, is exotic. The latter temper is identified by Stoltman as what he calls "Grit A", which comes from the southern Appalachians but is found in pots from Illinois and Ohio Hopewell sites, the Camargo and Amburgey jars, and the Panther Rock vessel.

There is variation in the surface treatments of the two variants of Turner Simple Stamped. Type A vessels generally have non-overlapped impressions with lands and grooves of medium width. The widths of the lands and grooves of the Panther Rock vessel are closer to those of the Type A vessels. The Type B impressions generally are more closely spaced or at least appear so because of overlapped impressions, but plain rim/neck bands are more common than in Type A, and these often are set off by a band of punctates. Several illustrated Type B rims (Prufer 1968:Figures 7 and 9) are tall, concave, and moderately everted, like the Panther Rock rim, and vertical stamped impressions occasionally are found on Type B vessels.

The Connestee/Turner Simple Stamped B vessel (Prufer 1968:Plate 11B; 54) from Mound 13 at the Mound City site in the Scioto region of southern Ohio is comparable in size (11.8 cm high) to the Camargo and Amburgey vessels, but has a more globular form. Like all three Kentucky pots, the Mound City vessel has a plain rim and neck, and, like the Panther Rock jar, this plain band is demarcated by a ring at the bottom of the neck. On the Panther jar this is an incised line, and on the Mound City jar it is a series of hemiconical punctations. The simple stamped impressions on the upper body of the Mound City pot are nearly as vertical as those of the Panther Rock jar. This vessel, like the Kentucky pots and the Rutherford jar, has a square bottom with tetrapodal supports. The vessel was recovered from a ceremonial deposit on the floor of the mound. This mound is characterized by Brown (2004:160) as the most complex in grave forms, secondary features, and grave preparation of the Mound City earthworks, and most features are related to disposal of the dead. Although it is clearly early Hopewell, the age of Mound 13 and Mound City in general, have not been securely determined. There is a wide range of dates associated with Mound City and Mound 13 in particular. One date from Mound 13 (1770+/-80 rcybp) is within 50 radiocarbon years of the accepted date of the Panther Rock vessel, the two dates from Mound 10 have a weighted and corrected date of 1732+/-40 BP, and the four most plausible dates from Mound City have a weighted and corrected date of 1757+/-33 BP (Brown 2004:160).

The Connestee/Turner Simple Stamped B vessel (Fowler 1957:Plate XI; 27) from the Rutherford Mound is closest in size (20 cm high) and form to the Panther Rock jar. The simple stamped impressions are distinct and minimally overlapped and carefully aligned, like the Panther Rock pot, but are oriented parallel to the lip. Unlike the aforementioned vessels, there is no plain rim band. The jar was found at the shoulder of Burial 6. An uncorrected date of A.D. 432+/-100 was obtained from the site, but whether it dates the vessel cannot be stated. Griffin posits that that date is too recent, and suggests a more likely age would be circa A.D. 100. The location of the site near the intersection of the Tradewater River with the Ohio River could indicate a route of entry into the Crab Orchard Hopewell region.

Tetrapodal, simple stamped vessels also occur in the Ohio River valley in Posey County, Indiana, at the Mann site (12PO2). Thirteen percent of the simple stamped sherds from the 1964 excavations have sharply delineated, broad grooves with well defined lands that are similar to those on Turner Simple Stamped A sherds and the Panther Rock vessel, but these vessels were made with local clays (Ruby 1997:120). Simple stamped sherds with thin grooves and lands that resemble Turner Simple Stamped B and metamorphic rock temper originally were posited to be imported from the Appalachian Summit area (Ruby 1997:119-123), but petrographic analysis by Stoltman (2010) and recent excavations and on-going investigations by Scot Keith (2010) demonstrate that they probably originated in northwest Georgia at or near the Leake site.

Temporal Placement

Dates from the aforementioned sites with Connestee vessels are quite disparate, and the temporal placement of the vessels remains uncertain. Keel (1976:120) estimates that Connestee pottery and Hopewellian materials co-occur at the Garden Creek Mound #2 at approximately A.D. 200-400. The Amburgey site (Richmond and Kerr 2005) yielded a conventional date of 1890+/-40 rcybp (two sigma range of cal A.D. 30-230) for the feature associated with the Connestee vessel and a date of 1720+/-60 rcybp (two sigma range of cal A.D. 130-500) for a nearby feature with other Hopewell diagnostics. The Camargo site (Fenton and Jefferies 1991) yielded two dates from a feature in the vicinity of the Connestee vessel. Conventional dates of 1780+/-60 rcybp (two sigma range of cal A.D. 90-400) and 1600+/-60 rcybp (two sigma range of cal A.D. 260-600) were obtained.

Based upon the ceramic attributes and the radiocarbon dates from the two east-central Kentucky sites with Connestee vessels, the Panther Rock pot was expected to have a corrected age of circa A.D. 100-400. However, an AMS date on three chenopodium seeds from Feature 11 yielded an age of 2050+/-40 rcybp (two sigma range of cal 175 B.C.-A.D. 50) (Beta-247795). An additional date was obtained subsequently in order to more adequately assess the validity of the first date. A wood charcoal sample taken from the charcoal layer around the vessel was submitted for radiometric assessment and yielded a determination of 1730+/-70 rcybp (cal A.D. 130-530) (ISGS 6700). This age correlates well with one of the dates from each of the other two Kentucky sites (Figure 4).

Site Location

Like most of the aforementioned sites, Panther Rock is associated with a major river. The Meppen site is near the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers; Mound City is above the Scioto Valley; Rutherford is at mouth of the Saline River and near the confluence of the Tradewater River with the Ohio River. The Camargo and Amburgey sites, however, are in an area with only small streams between the Kentucky and Licking Rivers in the Inner Bluegrass region of Kentucky (Figure 2). The location of these two sites may be attributable to overland paths and trade routes rather than proximity to a major river, although the Licking River ultimately flows to the Ohio Valley and the Scioto region of Ohio. Another surprising aspect is the closeness of the two sites. The other known Connestee vessels were dispersed across hundreds of miles, in different Hopewell regions, but the Camargo and Amburgey sites were separated by only a few kilometers.

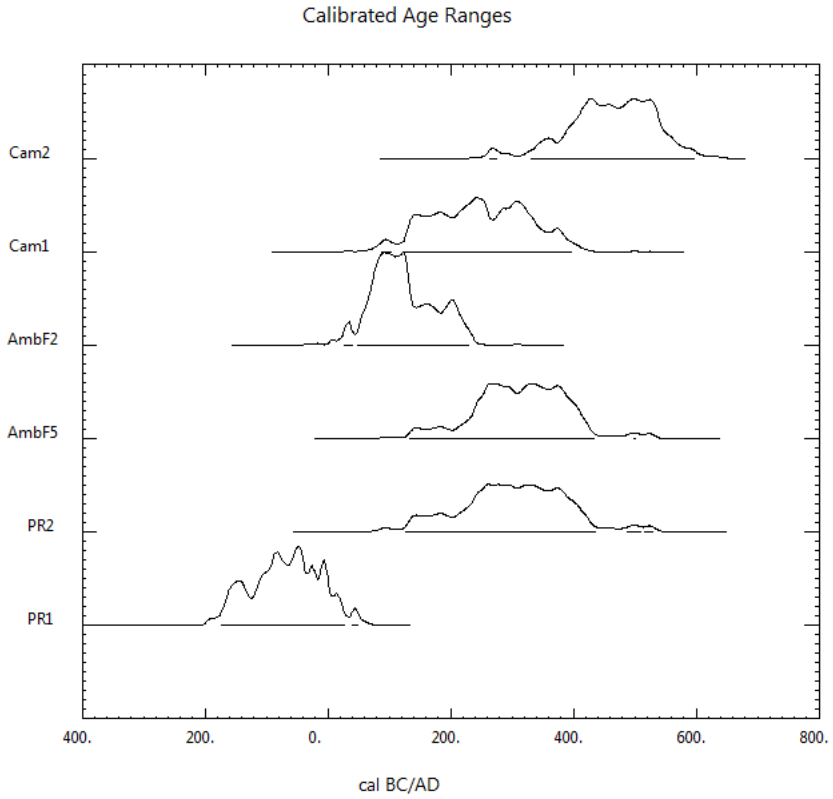

Figure 4. Probability distributions for the radiocarbon dates from the Panther Rock, Camargo, and Amburgey sites (intcal09.14c).

Griffin (1983:49), in his discussion of simple stamped pottery from Ohio Hopewell sites, states that it is not known whether the proposed inter-area traffic from Ohio to the Appalachians took place along streams or by trails, but suggests that possibly both were used. One potentially informative aspect of the discovery of the Connestee vessel at the Panther Rock site is the location of the site near the confluence of the Kentucky River with the Ohio River. The headwaters of the Kentucky River originate around Pine Mountain in southeastern Kentucky near the Cumberland Gap, and the river meanders 410 river miles (172 linear miles) across the entire breadth of the state and flows into the Ohio River at Carrollton—less than seven kilometers west of the Panther Rock site. The river is navigable for its entire length after the forks combine (Henderson et al. 1986:20), as demonstrated by historic log rafts that traversed the drainage from the mountains to the Ohio River. The Kentucky River may have functioned as one of the main north-south prehistoric travel routes from the southern Appalachians to the Ohio Valley.

Although early historic maps have limitations, some validation of the importance of the route may be gained by the preponderance of trails reported adjacent to or intersected by the Kentucky River. Myer's (1928) map of the Indian trails of the Southeast (Figure 5) shows a major overland trail that extended from the Asheville, North Carolina, area to the Cumberland Gap and northward from there until it intersected the Kentucky River south of Lexington. Jillson's (1934) study of early maps of Kentucky shows the Wilderness Road, which was partially composed of Native American trails, came through the Gap and extended to the Kentucky River. The routes of early explorers James Harrod and Daniel Boone followed the road to the vicinity of the Kentucky River, and some of the smaller subsidiary roads intersected the river several times in this area.

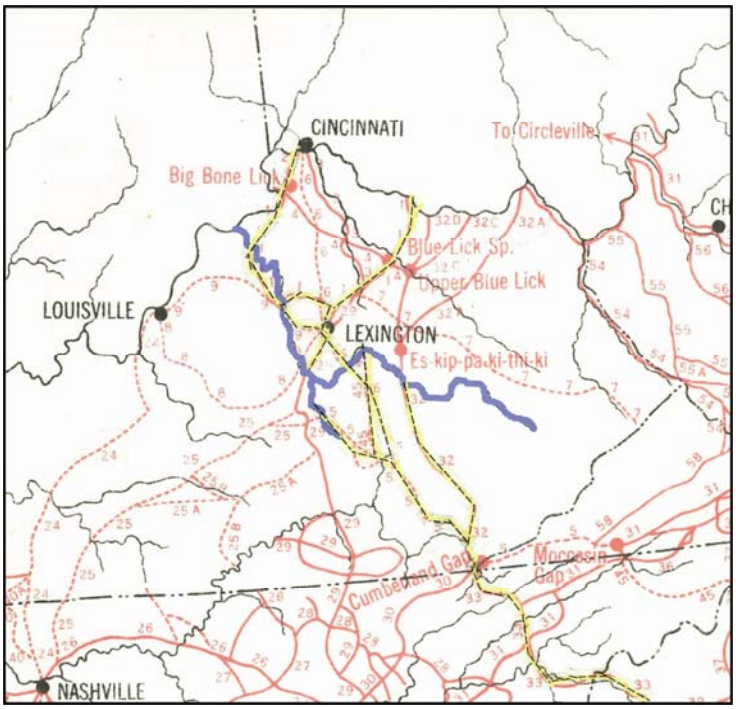

Figure 5. Potential trade and travel routes from the Appalachian Summit area to the Ohio River Valley along the Kentucky River (based on a map of early historic trails [Myer 1928]).

These trails were less direct routes to the Scioto area of Ohio than the Warriors Path, which was known as a trade route for mica and other exotic items (Chapman and Keel 1979:161), but they were still heavily used and involved less overland travel when the Kentucky River was incorporated. The Kentucky River provided relatively easy descent to the Ohio River and may have been the primary mode of travel with the trails as only subsidiary facilities. Filson's 1784 map (Filson 1962) shows a major trail--"Old Trail Thru the Great Wilderness"--passed along both sides of the Kentucky River from nearly its source. A "War Path" (Pownall 1776) and numerous heavily-traveled animal and Native American trails between salt licks extended eastward from the mouth of the Kentucky River to the Scioto area of Ohio. This may not have been the main route from the southern Appalachians to the Hopewell centers of southern Ohio, but a significant number of both overland and riverine routes intersected or incorporated the Kentucky River, and it was certainly a viable alternative route for travel and trade.

Conclusions

The vessel from the Panther Rock site has the morphological characteristics necessary for classification as a Connestee Simple Stamped vessel, and the temper indicates it was manufactured in the Appalachian Summit area. The form, surface treatment, and temper show strong affinities to the two Connestee jars from the Inner Bluegrass region of Kentucky and some Turner Simple Stamped vessels of Ohio and Illinois. Although the radiocarbon determinations associated with the three Kentucky pots show disparities, as do the dates from the other sites with Connestee vessels, each of the Kentucky sites has a date that suggests occupation in the third or fourth century A.D.

The Panther Rock site shows no evidence of ceremonial activity, thus the function of the

vessel could be different from comparable Connestee jars from Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois. It may not have had a ceremonial/mortuary function. An alternative possibility is that it may have been broken during transportation by a trader or during a pilgrimage to a Hopewellian site in the region.

It is plausible that the Panther Rock vessel was transported north by a different route than the Camargo and Amburgey vessels. The proximity of the headwaters of the Kentucky River to the Cumberland Gap, the navigability of the river, and the number of intersecting land trails are strong indications of its potential use as an alternate route from the Appalachian Summit to the Ohio Hopewell area.

Although they yield valuable comparative information, the Panther Rock site and the other two Kentucky sites with Connestee vessels do not provide major clarification of the role(s), chronology, or criteria for disposition of Hopewell trade vessels. The functions of the vessels are obscured by the variation in depositional contexts. The placement of the Camargo pot denotes ritual use; the jar from Amburgey co-occurred with ritual items that could only tentatively be associated with mortuary activity; and the Panther Rock vessel came from a site with no evidence of ritual behavior. Although the radiocarbon dates from each site differed significantly, at least one date from each of the sites supports the possibility that interregional trade took place during the third or fourth centuries A.D.. The locations of the three sites substantiate the likelihood that the Kentucky River and overland trails were used to transport exotic items from the Appalachian Summit area to the ceremonial sites of the Scioto region and beyond.

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