

*The George C. Davis Site, Cherokee County, Texas.* By H. PERRY NEWELL and ALEX D. KRIEGER. [Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology, Number 5.] (Menasha, Wisconsin: 1949. Pp. xiv, 255. Illustrations. Paper.)

One important achievement of recent archaeological work in the United States has been the definition of the Caddoan area in eastern Texas and the adjoining portions of the states of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Many of the sites of this area of distinctive and high cultural development have been classified into two temporal horizons, the Fulton and Gibson aspects. The Davis site forms the basis of the definition of the Alto focus, one of the units of the Gibson aspect, the earlier of the two horizons. The study of the Davis site has not only added considerable historic depth to the Caddoan area, but has also served as a springboard for a discussion by Alex D. Krieger of relations with the cultures of the Southeastern United States and the higher civilizations of Mexico.

The Davis site is located on the Neches River, about six miles southwest of Alto, in Cherokee County, Texas. It consists of three mounds and a village area, though only a portion of one roughly L-shaped mound of the pyramidal or temple mound type and a sample of the village were excavated. The impressive size of the mounds, as well as the extensive village area, indicates that the site was both an important population center in prehistoric times and a major center of social and political activity. The belief that the mound group marked the site of a historic Neches village and the second location of the mission San Francisco de los Tejas is thoroughly exploded by the late H. Perry Newell in the first part of the report. The Davis site represents a far earlier cultural horizon and no evidence of historic Neches material or mission activity was recovered in the excavations.

Three subsequent phases within the Davis focus are established for the site by Krieger through an analysis of the cultural remains and by plotting the distribution of this material in the construction zones of the mound and in its association with house structures. Some ninety-six thousand sherds were recovered at the site and form the primary basis of the cultural analysis since lithic and other artifactual materials were not abundant. Phase changes are to be seen primarily in variations in the popularity of pottery types, though a few new pottery types are added in later horizons. Since the sherds are largely accidental inclusions in the mound fill, their frequency can be markedly affected by such factors as the chance selection of the area from which the mound fill was carried. While Krieger has attempted to take these factors into consideration in his analysis, it would be desirable to have the

ceramic sequence checked at other sites. The check is particularly needed since the number of trade sherds, by which cross-dating is achieved, is quite small.

In attempting a correlation of the Alto focus with other complexes of the southeastern portion of the United States, Krieger presents two alternatives. Either it falls within the Temple Mound I (Early Middle Mississippi) period, or it is to be equated with the earlier Burial Mound II period. Stress is placed on the latter interpretation. In regard to Middle-American relations, Krieger feels that the evidence indicates that polished monochrome ceramics with engraved decorations were introduced into the southeastern United States at some time during the formative period of Middle America. The Davis site is thought to be representative of a migration, perhaps only of small scale, during the formative period and dating around 500 A.D., if not earlier. The place of origin for this migration is not specified though the Huastecan area, the closest region considered, is rejected since greater resemblances are found to more southerly highland and lowland cultures. In considering this migration and origin of Phase I of the Alto focus to have taken place at such an early date on the basis of Middle-American resemblances, we do encounter a discrepancy in time. The cultures of the southeastern United States with which comparisons have been made are commonly dated some four hundred to nine hundred years later, depending upon the final assignment to the two alternative periods suggested by Krieger. This is felt to be indicative of their temporal placement far later than the data warrant.

Obviously the Davis site report offers no final solution to the problem of cultural relations between Middle America and the United States and it further indicates that the alignment of cultural horizons within the United States is still in a state of flux. It is, however, a provocative and stimulating report that focuses attention on these problems and should lead to a further clarification of the situation.

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## COLONIAL PERIOD

*Coronado on the Turquoise Trail: Knight of Pueblos and Plains.* By HERBERT E. BOLTON. [Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940, Vol. I.] (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1949. Pp. xiv, 490. Maps, index. \$8.00.)

With this delightful and scholarly work, which has been supplemented by a popular edition, *Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains*, (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949. Pp. xii, 491. \$6.00.) which won