


THE Newark Earthworks

ENDURING MONUMENTS,
CONTESTED MEANINGS

Edited by Lindsay Jones and Richard D. Shiels

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LINDSAY JONES

Introduction

I Had No Idea!

Competing Claims to Distinction
at the Newark Earthworks

RENOWNED BY historians and archaeologists as one of the wonders of the ancient world,¹ the Earthworks of Newark, Ohio, nonetheless remain, for the broader public, lamentably little known. Among the largest, most geometrically precise and best-preserved earthen architecture ever constructed, these built forms have, as we'll learn in this volume, astronomical alignments no less sophisticated than those at Stonehenge and a scale no less enormous than the Peruvian geoglyphs at Nazca. And yet obscurity is also among their foremost attributes.

Indeed, incongruities abound. A two-thousand-year-old testament to another era, another civilization, and another set of socioreligious priorities, this pre-Columbian complex, irrespective of its size and precision, is, as thousands of local residents prove each day, much more easily ignored than explained. A major pilgrimage destination two millennia ago, still revered as an auspiciously sacred site by numerous Native American groups, the Newark Earthworks are, at present, host, or perhaps hostage, to a private golf club that restricts access to their principal features on all but four days per year. A contender for UNESCO World Heritage status—that is to say, a strong candidate to meet the UNESCO criterion of a site with “outstanding universal value”—the Newark Earthworks attract ever more frequent busloads of Shawnees from Oklahoma and Mormons from Utah, along with elder hostel tours, Edgar Casey aficionados, and a mix of antiquarian enthusiasts from everywhere. These earthworks are, nonetheless, never visited by the great majority of Ohioans who live just a stone's throw away.

Such are the intriguing ironies and contradictions that characterize the Newark Earthworks, alternately celebrated and snubbed. Distressingly be-

lated appreciation of this stupendous ancient complex is an admission re-echoed by nearly all of the contributors to this volume as well as by countless other Ohio natives with whom I have had essentially the same conversation over and over again. Among Ohio State University students, most of whom grew up in the state, not one in fifty can provide any informed acquaintance with the site. I too have to concede that, as a historian of religions with a special interest in sacred architecture and thus pilgrimage destinations across the globe, it was nearly twenty years before I finally made the thirty-mile jaunt from Columbus to the Earthworks of Newark. Though able to claim abundant company in my protracted indifference to Ohio's ancient architectural wonders, I should have known better. I too am among the most deeply implicated in what one contributor to this volume describes as the "I-had-no-idea" phenomenon.²

A Book-Making Symposium: Shared Urgency and Agreements to Disagree

Happily, however, as you will learn in Richard D. Shiels's opening essay, more dutiful and much better-informed scholars and community activists have been undertaking, in the past two decades, a whole series of spirited initiatives to bring to the Newark Earthworks a more suitably heightened respect and prominence. Notably, in 2006, The Ohio State University established the Newark Earthworks Center, which is supporting, among innumerable projects, the formulation of a proposal to have the Newark Earthworks, along with some other ancient Ohio sites, considered for UNESCO World Heritage status. It was a report on the progress of that collaborative effort that brought to light the startling realization that, irrespective of abundant site studies, there was, to this point, not even one scholarly book fully devoted to the Newark Earthworks. One has to ask, then, why, if this place is of such great consequence, has there never been a single book-length treatment of "the largest and most precise complex of geometric earthworks in the world"?³

Several colleagues found that lacuna to be astounding but, at the same time, a void that we could fill. And thus a small committee—composed of Richard Shiels, then the director of the Newark Earthworks Center; Marti Chaatsmith, a Comanche scholar who was then the associate director; Bradley Lepper, the curator of archaeology for the Ohio Historical Society and a longtime expert on the site; and me, then director of the Ohio State Center for the Study of Religion—was formed to organize a symposium that would

have as its express purpose the assembly of a group of scholars who could, together, produce the first academic volume on the Newark Earthworks.

That symposium, titled “The Newark Earthworks and World Heritage: One Site, Many Contexts,” was held at the regional campus of The Ohio State University at Newark, very near the actual site, on May 2–4, 2011. The tenor of that meeting—and, subsequently, the composition of this volume—eventually came to embrace two propositions, each of which proved somewhat contentious, even deal breaking, among various participants and onlookers.

First, while readers of this volume will easily discern that many, probably most, of the contributors are vigorously committed to winning World Heritage designation for the Newark Earthworks and related sites (Fort Ancient and the sites that make up Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, all parts of a serial nomination entitled *Hopewell Ceremonial Centers*), the volume is *not* configured as a direct advocacy for that or any other specific position on the future status and management of the site—even though some wish that it were. Alternatively, this book is an academic undertaking that admits and even encourages a wide range of opinions, including very different projections as to the most felicitous future for the Newark site. We prize rather than forestall disagreement.

Some of the contributors belong to academic traditions that allow, perhaps compel, them to move past description and interpretation to prescriptive recommendations about what *should* happen to the Newark Earthworks. These scholars do present general or specific policy recommendations. Others, by contrast, have strong personal opinions about how the site ought to be managed, but they feel compelled to withhold those opinions from their academic writing. And at least a few authors actually do abstain on policy matters insofar as they are content to engage the Newark Earthworks as a fascinating and instructive focus for a variety of larger issues. In sum, although indignation about the present circumstances wherein prime portions of the ancient earthworks are occupied by the Moundbuilders Country Club contributes considerable urgency to this project—and while this volume may well serve as a valuable resource for those committed to winning World Heritage inscription for the site—the contributors were not required to be spokespersons for that outcome.

Second, the same advocacy for multiplicity demanded the involvement of an aggressively interdisciplinary cast of characters. To be sure, archaeologists have been, and are almost certain to remain, the most prominent voices in the analysis of Ohio earthworks; and we have tried to give archaeology its

due priority. But we have not granted archaeology hegemony over other disciplinary frames of reference. In this book, archaeology, not exempt from its own internal disagreements, stands as neither less nor more than the most prominent among numerous academic perspectives.

Consequently, where a more obvious strategy might have been to assemble scholars who are already well informed about these ancient earthworks—an assemblage that would have been dominated by Hopewellian archaeologists—we ventured instead to widen and to complicate the conversation by juxtaposing, on the one hand, a core of the leading experts on the Newark Earthworks with, on the other hand, an array of accomplished researchers with relevant interests but for whom the specifics of this site are much less familiar. A large portion of our symposium was, then, devoted to education about the current state of Newark Earthworks studies via lecture presentations, the sharing of bibliographies, and of course on-site visits. Building on that background, every contributor to the volume owes a large debt to archaeology. But at the same time, participants were strongly encouraged to “do their own thing,” to see and to interrogate the Newark Earthworks through their own respective disciplinary lenses. As a result, the points of view range from historical and contemporary American Indian studies to art and architectural history; to archaeoastronomy, the history of religions, ritual studies, ethnohistory, and cartography; to legal studies; and to tourism and museum studies. As is apparent in the book’s subtitle and its six-part structure, our incentive was to situate and then repeatedly resituate this one site in a whole series of different disciplinary, thematic, and historical contexts. Yes, we prize disagreement!

Diversity, even outright disparities, of opinions and intellectual investments is, therefore, a central and deliberate feature of this volume. Assuredly, a careful reading of the individual essays will suggest that had the authors spent more time together, and had they come to know one another’s positions more fully, the intensity of disagreement would likely have been exacerbated rather than alleviated. While these widely heterogeneous scholars proved to be more or less congenial dinner companions, they are also in many cases quite robust critics of one another’s interpretations of the Ohio earthworks.

For example, those of a particular scientific bent find some of the contributions quirky, ungrounded, or at times politically tendentious. Scholars with commitments to academically informed social action find other essays disturbingly detached and oriented to the site’s past rather than its future. Specialists in the study of religion (including me) are uneasy with many of

the allusions to ritual, “spirituality,” and “sacred places” that we find in these pages. Additionally, those scholars with more finely tuned postcolonial sensibilities detect signs of lingering essentialism and ethnocentrism in their colleagues’ rosy characterizations of the ancient Mound Builders’ engineering talents and religious tastes. And there is also, perhaps most disputatiously, a very wide spectrum of opinions as to how we ought to evaluate the variously historical and purported connections between the pre-Columbian earthen mounds and contemporary Indian communities.

Expect, then, no shared resolution to the fundamental questions: What do the Newark Earthworks *really* mean? What sorts of activities originally went on there? And to whom, at this point, do the Newark Earthworks properly belong?

Fortunately, however, consensus was neither a goal nor an expectation. To the contrary, inquiries into the Newark Earthworks are made especially exhilarating both by the profusion of opinions that these ancient constructions engender and by the vigor with which the proponents hold these opinions. The overworked phrase “heated debate” is, in this case, fully apropos. The Earthworks of Newark are, to be sure, a “contested site” of the most intense sort, and we have aimed for a book that reflects that scrum of competing ideas.⁴

What Is So Special about the Newark Earthworks?

Fifteen Viable Replies

If this collection of authors is, then, so little prone to consensus, on what can the contributors agree? What unites these essays and essayists? Two things: First, all, without exception, are by now convinced that the Newark Earthworks are an exceptional, arguably unique, place. Second, there is at this point unanimity that the Earthworks of Newark are ironically and undeservedly obscure, overlooked, and undervalued in the scholarly literature, in the public imagination, and even by the central Ohio residents who live directly on or very near them. With just one plausible exception, every contributor to this volume admits to an initial indifference to these ancient earthworks that was, only later and often very slowly, superseded by a profound realization that contemporary Ohio is built atop literally hundreds of pre-Columbian mound sites.

Both the grounds and the consequences of that belated appreciation are, however, as we shall see, as diverse as the authors. If, on the one hand,

answering the UNESCO query as to the “outstanding universal value” of the Newark Earthworks demands unanimous agreement as to the most salient virtues and opportunities that the place presents, this interdisciplinary group would be hard pressed to deliver a reply. Yet, on the other hand, by directing attention to the host of different ways—or different contexts—in which Newark is special and distinctive, this set of essays also directs attention to the multitude of different ways in which the site has what might be more properly termed “audience-specific value,” or perhaps “discipline-specific value.” The wide array of enthusiastic endorsements demonstrates that the uniqueness and appeal of the Newark Earthworks are, in short, multidimensional. Evaluations of what is most special and most noteworthy about this place depend, in very large part, on the perspective of the evaluator.

Brief comments on each essay can, therefore, highlight both unanimous appreciation for the ancient mounds and the widely divergent opinions as to their greatest significance. In the first essay, “The Newark Earthworks Past and Present,” for instance, historian and founding director of Ohio State’s Newark Earthworks Center Richard Shiels places the earthworks within the context of American and Ohio history. He expresses his exuberant, still-mounting regard for this complex by noting that the configuration was, from its initial conception, “unique in at least three ways”—as the largest, the northernmost, and the most geometrically precise complex among all Hopewell earthworks. He contends that, even during the Middle Woodland era of 100–400 CE, and thus even amid considerable contemporaneous competition, this was the premier site in the region, an assessment of Newark’s pre-Columbian prestige that reappears in several of the subsequent essays.

Additionally, in the context of a richly detailed discussion of the site’s convoluted history of neglect and preservation during the past two hundred years, Shiels singles out the Earthworks at Newark—irrespective of ram-bunctious repurposings as a fairground, a military training camp, a venue for Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, an amusement park, and a racetrack—as the most prominent exception to the wholesale destruction that befell the great majority of Ohio’s earthen monuments. Fortuitously, a uniquely large share of the Newark Earthworks remains intact. Moreover, rehearsing the serpentine sequence of events that leaves the ancient complex’s main features presently overlaid with the fairways of the Moundbuilders Country Club, Shiels explains how a mix of community concern and outrage paved the way for the creation of the Newark Earthworks Center, an ongoing research initiative wherein the ancient monuments become the locus of not only public,

personal, and often “spiritual” interests but also more strictly academic undertakings, of which this volume is an example. In short, Shiels opens the book with a very personal and upbeat story of a once-preeminent site that is seemingly on the way to reclaiming its former prestige.

Part II, “The Newark Earthworks in the Context of Hopewell Archaeology and Archaeoastronomy,” gives voice to the leading interpreters of the pre-Columbian ideas and aspirations that account for this enormous complex. Suitably enough—because no one has contributed more to our understanding of the Newark Earthworks—archaeologist Bradley Lepper begins the discussion. Convinced that “ultimately, all claims relating to the purpose and meaning of the Newark Earthworks for its ancient builders must rest upon the material evidence as revealed by archaeology,”⁵ Lepper lauds the site as “unprecedented in the Hopewell world in terms of its scale and the precision of both its geometry and its embedded astronomical alignments.” Like Shiels, he celebrates the opportune endurance of “the best-preserved examples of geometric earthworks in North America” and laments the sprawling destruction that so distorts present-day perceptions of Newark. Lepper’s account reminds us of a theme that will reappear in many of the subsequent essays, namely, his now widely accepted assertion that Newark, at no time itself a site of dense population, nevertheless exercised remarkably wide allure as a great pilgrimage center, “like Mecca or Santiago de Compostela,”⁶ which attracted religiously motivated visitors from across eastern North America.

If very largely responsible for what has become the conventional wisdom about “Newark’s wonderfully preserved enclosures,” Lepper here opts for a self-correcting, even iconoclastic proposal that the burial mounds were the focus of the site and key to its ultimate purpose. That is to say, having long argued that human burials were a relatively minor feature of the Newark complex, Lepper now contends that “mortuary ceremonialism was the sine qua non of the Newark Earthworks complex as it was for many of the other monumental earthwork centers.” In this revised view of his own thinking about the “primary purpose” that unites the design of the entire assemblage, the Newark Earthworks were created first and foremost as a vast ritual context—a “ceremonial machine” or “monumental engine of world renewal”—in which to orchestrate a highly choreographed “Hopewellian mortuary ritual,” the goal of which “may have been nothing less than the regeneration of the Earth.”

The next essay, “The Newark Earthworks: A Grand Unification of Earth, Sky, and Mind,” coauthored by longtime collaborators astrophysicist Ray Hively and philosopher Robert Horn, both of whom stretch their disciplinary

backgrounds into the realm of archaeoastronomy, provides another instance in which the leading voices in the interpretation of the Newark Earthworks continue to extend and rethink their ideas as to what makes the site so special. Initially skeptical that careful surveys of the Newark mounds would reveal any intentional celestial alignments at all, Hively and Horn eventually became, to their great surprise, the leading proponents of the view that these massive earthen enclosures “were built to record, celebrate, and connect with the celestial actors or large-scale forces that appear to govern relations among earth, sky, and the human mind.”

This essay, however, goes further. Having already provided the most thoroughgoing analyses of Newark’s stunningly sophisticated referencings with respect to the movements of celestial bodies, most notably alignments to an 18.6-year lunar cycle, Hively and Horn reaffirm—but also extend and enhance—their contention that “no other site encodes with the same accuracy all of the solstice stations and all of the stations of the lunar extreme standstills.” Revisiting their decades of investigatory data, they now argue that Newark is moreover unique insofar as “no other site so tightly integrates the exacting geometry of its architecture with the local terrain.” In other words, while they continue to insist that the Hopewell-era builders were intensely preoccupied with the movements of the moon, this essay demonstrates also these researchers’ growing appreciation of the very special allure of the Newark area’s distinctive topography of local streams, valleys, and “hilltop observing stations,” all of which, they argue, played determinative roles in both the site selection and orchestration of a unified earthworks design. For them, the Newark complex is a unique human construction that became plausible and meaningful only by virtue of its emplacement within a unique natural landscape.

Part III, “The Newark Earthworks in Cross-Cultural Archaeological Contexts: Nazca, Chaco, and Stonehenge,” assembles the reflections of three archaeologists whose primary expertise and excavationary experience has been trained on prominent sites *other than* Newark, all UNESCO World Heritage sites that have enjoyed substantially higher public profiles than the Ohio mounds. In her essay, Andeanist archaeologist Helaine Silverman compares the Newark Earthworks and famed Nazca Lines of Peru, on the World Heritage registry since 1994. Irrespective of their stark disparities in form and appearance, Silverman is far more impressed with the similarities between the two far-spaced sets of ancient remains. In her view, both are conspicuous by the enormous scale with which they express the idea of “marking

the landscape and memory”; both demonstrate “geometric precision through simple constructional techniques”; and most significantly for her, both the Nazca geoglyphs and the Newark Earthworks were, in their pre-Columbian primes, highly venerated pilgrimage destinations.

Extending to the Ohio earthworks a host of insights about pilgrimage that she has been able to test in her extensive Peruvian excavations, Silverman argues that Newark, like Nazca, was constructed as a “sacred enterprise” and visited as a “sacred obligation.” That is to say, Newark, like Nazca, was conceived and then experienced as the very antithesis of the quotidian daily routine; it was a “heterotopic sacred site” with “properties of frame, scale, and perspective, which exceed or differ from that of ordinary life.” Instead of being prosaic and politically expedient, the layout of Newark, like Nazca, was characterized by a striking incongruity of appearance; instead of being on a manageable human scale, Newark, like Nazca, was stupendously oversized; instead of supporting stable and permanent habitation, Newark, like Nazca, was the locus of movement, a provocateur of transient, “awe-inspiring,” and therefore exceptionally memorable visitations. Accordingly, in her view, if contemporary audiences are thrilled and amazed by the “dramatic artificially created sacred landscapes” of Nazca and Newark, they are, in that respect, echoing the sentiments of pre-Columbian designers, builders, and users, all of whom similarly regarded these places as exceptional in the extreme, terrifically impressive contrasts to the broader landscapes within which they were located. From Silverman’s perspective, the specialness of Newark, like Nazca, is, if humanly contrived, nonetheless deliberate, unmistakable, and permanent.

By contrast, in his essay, southwestern archaeologist Stephen Lekson juxtaposes the Ohio earthworks with another World Heritage site, Chaco Canyon, the great eleventh-century Pueblo Indian regional center, in ways that give us pause to reconsider whether or not Newark was, after all, an awe-engendering pilgrimage center wherein “spiritual” priorities prevailed over political or economic concerns. Revisiting the long history of comparing these two sites, Lekson acknowledges that unquestionably there are notable parallels insofar as both sites have large earthen constructions, precise geometric forms, extensive systems of “roads,” and thus, it seems, similarly wide zones of influence. Given these apparent similarities, Lekson is not surprised that students of the Hopewell have often appealed to the New Mexico site as the preeminent model for a version of “rituality” wherein the configuration of Chaco and its network—and by extension that of Newark—are assessed as very rare

even in their own time inasmuch as they were designed to support exceptionally elaborate ritual apparatuses that “cannot be reduced to . . . being the handmaiden of economic and/or political institutions.”⁷

An increasingly skeptical Lekson now suspects, however, that both Chaco’s uniqueness and its characterization as a religiously motivated antithesis of modern materialism have been seriously overstated. To the contrary, he presents the iconoclastic view that Chaco was simply a “garden-variety Mesoamerican *altepetl*”—that is, the northernmost example of a political formation that was exceptionally common in Classic and Postclassic Mesoamerica. According to this revisionist view, Chaco was neither uniquely mysterious nor decidedly more preoccupied with ritual than other Mesoamerican communities—and thus, in Lekson’s duly cautionary view, to utilize Chaco as a kind of “poster child for rituality” that supposedly supports the presence of those sorts of ceremonial preoccupations at Newark is actually more distorting than informing. In short, here we face the disquieting possibility that neither site was the preponderantly “sacred place” that many purport it to be.

Where Lekson is most impressed by the profound differences between Chaco and Newark, British archaeologist Timothy Darvill’s essay, “Beyond Newark: Prehistoric Ceremonial Centers and Their Cosmologies,” the most broadly framed in the volume, directs attention to four “common themes” that he thinks are shared by virtually all ancient centers of note, whether in Eurasia, Africa, or the Americas—each of which is unmistakably exemplified at Newark. First, with respect to “sacred geography,” Darvill notes that Newark’s geometric ground plan is a particularly elaborate example of the use of circles, squares, and octagons as well as a strategic juxtaposition of monumental forms and natural water features, design strategies not unlike those deployed at Stonehenge, Avebury, and even the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. Second, with respect to “seasonality and communal gatherings,” Darvill observes that the layout of Newark would have provided large groups of periodic visitors precisely the sort of choreographed arrivals, ceremonial performances, and departures that one observes at innumerable great pilgrimage destinations.

Third, with respect to “cosmological structuring,” the intricate referencings to the movements of the moon documented by Hively and Horn provide an exceptionally sophisticated example of the “alignments to heavenly bodies” that are embedded in the design of most major ceremonial centers. And fourth, Brad Lepper’s recently amplified emphasis on the significance of burials at Newark lends weight to Darvill’s suggestion that this complex—again

like “countless other” major sites—was configured to mark “cosmic boundaries where the mortals meet the immortals, spirits meet the living, and the quick and the dead are united.” Owing to its exemplary demonstration of these four features, Darvill concludes that Newark, if still very seriously underappreciated, ought to be relocated within that class of top-tier ceremonial centers that includes the likes of Stonehenge, China’s Temple of Heaven, and Çatalhöyük in Turkey. In his view, despite their modest renown, no comparative company is too fast for these Hopewell earthworks.

Part IV, “The Newark Earthworks in Interdisciplinary Contexts: Architectural History, Cartography, and Religious Studies,” marks a departure from the preceding archaeologist-authored essays. While all four of the essays in this set acknowledge an explicit and essential reliance on the work of archaeologists, each is likewise explicit in its unwillingness to accept that archaeology provides the sole disciplinary frame through which we may see, interpret, and appreciate long-abandoned sites such as the Newark Earthworks, and thus each approaches the specialness of the site through a very different lens. Additionally, while not uninterested in the Hopewell-era conceptions and uses of the site, which are the primary preoccupation of the archaeological essays, all four of these essays comment both on the present status of the site and on what each of the authors imagine, albeit in quite different ways, as a lively and promising future for the Newark Earthworks. Each of these essays argues, in its own way, for the two-thousand-year-old site’s continued relevance and allure in the twenty-first century.

“The Newark Earthworks as ‘Works’ of Architecture,” is by John Hancock, architectural historian and cofounder of the Center for the Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites (CERHAS), the Cincinnati-based organization that, in collaboration with the Newark Earthworks Center, initiated the interactive web-based guide to the earthworks known as the “Ancient Ohio Trail.” While CERHAS’s digitally enhanced “tours” thorough Ohio’s abundant earthen mounds are committed to utilizing insights from the respective “disciplinary paradigms” of archaeology, architecture, and Native studies, Hancock contends that the second alternative—wherein ancient earthworks are analyzed as “monumental works of architecture”—has at least three decided advantages. First, it provides a means of mediating the persistent tension between the prevailing “objective/scientific” investments of archaeologists and the “traditionalist” outlook of Native scholars and communities. Second, it has the practical advantage of helping to advance the World Heritage nomination process insofar

as that conceptualization provides the closest match to the UNESCO requirement that, to be deserving, sites must qualify as “masterpieces of human creative genius.” And, third, Hancock is persuaded that construing these ancient constructions as continuously meaningful “*works of architecture*”—rather than as, say, “archaeological *sites* that hold knowledge about distant cultures”—provides the most expeditious means of lifting the ancient constructions to their much-overdue appreciation as “objects of public engagement.”

In other words, confessing his own very slow appreciation of just how marvelous these monuments are, Hancock finds in his background as an architectural historian—and more specifically, in what he terms “the primacy of experience”—both the foremost cause and the most salient antidote to the near invisibility of these fantastic built forms in the eyes of the wider public. And thus he builds a subtle and compelling case that it is, ironically enough, the contrivances of cutting-edge technologies and “augmented reality” utilized by the Ancient Ohio Trail project that provide the most promising means of helping a general audience to a fuller appreciation of these two-thousand-year-old constructions.

In his essay, another architect and architectural historian, Thomas Barrie, reopens the question of Hopewell burial mounds and rituals but then addresses it in a very different and more broadly comparative way. Informed by the interpretation of numerous better-known sites in Egypt, Europe, and elsewhere, Barrie proposes that the Newark Earthworks constitute a “liminal place” or “place of mediation” insofar as this was—and, for him, still is—an exceptional locale at which to enjoy “physical and metaphysical connections to what otherwise [would be] inaccessible.” Exploring the very close connections between Hopewell funerary and domestic architectures, he suggests that the abundant “charnel houses” in which human remains were interred and later burned appropriated the symbolism of regular domiciles and thus the “ontological significance of home.” Newark’s charnel houses were indeed “houses of the dead,” which provided Hopewell-era residents and visitors a kind of multivalent architectural expression and exploration of their comingled respect, fascination, and/or puzzlement at the conundrum of death and dying.

Be that as it may, Barrie urges students of Newark to push past the archaeological questions about Hopewellian funerary conceptions and practices in order to consider as well what this age-old architecture can teach us about our present human condition. Affirming something like John Hancock’s

emphasis on the continually meaningful quality of the pre-Columbian built forms, he stresses the “contemporary relevance of Newark” insofar as present-day visitors share with the ancients two fundamental human problems or “perennial conditions”: first, we, like they, are challenged by a realization of “the enormity of our environmental setting (over which we have little control)”; and, second, we, like they, are no less vexed by “the mystery of death (and what may lie beyond it).” In Barrie’s venturesome view, the Newark Earthworks do indeed have a kind of “outstanding universal value” required of World Heritage site designation inasmuch as they still have something relevant and profound to teach all of us about both our ongoing environmental precariousities and our inescapable mortality.

Geographer Margaret Wickens Pearce’s “The Cartographic Legacy of the Newark Earthworks” presents yet another disciplinary framing by locating the Newark Earthworks within the context of indigenous mapping practices. Again relying heavily on archaeology while nonetheless raising quite disparate questions, Pearce explains how the Hopewell site belongs to a tradition of “Indigenous cartography,” which operates with assumptions very different from those that are taken for granted in Western cartography and thus likewise assumed in most Euro-American (mis)conceptions of this place. For instance, where Western cartographers aspire to maps that are finished products—that is, “produced for a market, intended for interpretation by a map reader, not a mapmaker”—indigenous cartography is process-oriented, dispersed and embodied so that mapping is conceived as “an ongoing series of located or situated events among people and places, and that maps themselves are . . . not intended to carry all the meanings of the process as a whole.”

Given this sort of open-ended cartographic initiative, Pearce challenges us to appreciate the Earthworks at Newark not simply as an “object” of mapping but instead as an ambience that has, since the Middle Woodland era—just as it could in the future—played host to the continually regenerative mapping processes, which had been initiated by earlier generations of Hopewell surveyors. Furthermore, Pearce intimates, perhaps counterintuitively, that it is the sophisticated, forward-looking imaging of twenty-first-century technologies—such as those employed by Hancock’s CERHAS project and by LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)—that will, in all likelihood, provide the best means of recovering those process-oriented indigenous cartographic priorities and thus the most promising antidotes to the colonialist cartographies of our nineteenth- and twentieth-century predecessors. She predicts, in other words, that, intriguingly enough, these new, high-tech mapping technologies

may well enable the next “restoration” of the ancient earthworks. And thus, Pearce, like Tom Barrie, gives us reason to predict that the formerly famous site does, in that sense, have a very relevant and promising future.

“The Modern Religiosity of the Newark Earthworks,” by Thomas Bremer, a specialist in the dynamics of religious travel and tourism, anticipates reservations that will reappear in Winnifred Sullivan’s essay and thus demonstrates again that, at this point, it is scholars of religion who are most ill at ease with deceptively simple pronouncements that this is a “sacred place.” Reiterating Lekson’s concerns about a pervasive tendency—prevalent among scholars as well as wider audiences—to idealize, and thus distort, the priorities of the ancient Mound Builders as overwhelmingly “spiritual,” Bremer nonetheless trains his attention on the persistence with which, even now, “modern people deem the Newark Earthworks special, sacred, and religious.” But why, he asks, and in what sense, do these ancient constructions persist as religious contexts and resources?

To explore those questions, Bremer singles out two particularly instructive cases: a 2009 “pilgrimage” termed the “Walk with the Ancients,” wherein some thirty walkers spent a week retracing an ancient Hopewell road that seems to have stretched about sixty miles from the earthworks near Chillicothe, Ohio, to those in Newark, and a 2007 charter-bus excursion wherein members of the now Oklahoma-based Eastern Shawnee Tribe returned to the traditional Ohio homeland from which they had been forcibly removed in 1832. Assuredly, members of both these groups—as well as many others who currently frequent the Earthworks for very heartfelt reasons—may find the designation “tourist” discomfiting, perhaps even an offensive diminishment of their reverent attachments to this unique place. Tourism connotes levity. But the ironic fact that tourists invariably enrich their meaning-making journeys by imagining themselves as other than tourists actually lends support to Bremer’s surmise that these Newark enthusiasts are participating in the characteristically touristic practices of “aestheticizing,” “com-modifying,” and “ritualizing.” In short, his discussion provides us both an explanation for the continued allure of the Newark Earthworks as a particularly appealing travel destination—yes, a tourist attraction!—and a more rigorously self-conscious way of assessing the Earthworks as comprising “auspicious places of modern meaningfulness” and, to that extent, a “sacred site.”

While nearly every essay in this volume touches on the perhaps proprietary relationship between Ohio’s pre-Columbian sites and contemporary American Indian communities, Part V, “The Newark Earthworks in the

Context of Indigenous Rights and Identity: American and International Frames,” brings that issue to center stage. In “Native (Re)Investments in Ohio: Removals, Earthworks Preservation, and Tribal Stewardship,” sociologist, Indian scholar, and interim director of the Newark Earthworks Center Marti Chaatsmith advances the widely held proposition that because the earthworks were built by pre-Columbian indigenous peoples, present-day Indians have both a special affinity and a special entitlement with respect to the ongoing management of the mounds. While she reminds us of the six-thousand-year history of mound building to which the Newark Earthworks belong, for Chaatsmith, the most consequential context in which to locate these geometrical remains is the colonialist history of European incursion and settlement, which included a host of broken treaties and, by 1850, the forced relocation from Ohio of all formally recognized native groups and tribes.

Another who anticipates a very bright and important future for the Newark site, Chaatsmith nevertheless describes a version of “tribal outreach” that can have doubly salutary effects both for Ohio’s earthworks and for contemporary native communities. On the one hand, Indian “stakeholders,” including prominent native scholars and artists as well as tribal leaders, increasingly emerge as frontline resources for the preservation and thoughtful management of the Ohio mounds. And, on the other hand, as the Eastern Shawnees’ renewed interest in Newark described by Tom Bremer well demonstrates, increasing appreciation of the Ohio mounds can also serve as a vital resource for present-day Indian communities, especially those with some historical connection to this region, to revitalize a sense of their own history and cultural heritage. Chaatsmith argues, in short, that native stewardship of the mounds benefits both the ancient monuments and contemporary American Indians.

In her essay, historian of religions and specialist in the indigenous traditions of Oceania and Australia Mary MacDonald recasts the question of “Whose Earthworks?” in a more international context. Conceding that, for her, Newark is a new interest, MacDonald nevertheless immediately recognizes a number of issues pertinent from her years of reflecting on “the encounter of indigenous peoples and settler peoples,” which begins in “the Age of Discovery” and era of colonialism but persists into the present. At a national level, for instance, she sees parallels in the debates, activism, and legal challenges of numerous Native American communities, in particular the Haudenosaunee in central New York; and thus she both echoes Marti

Chaatsmith and anticipates the upcoming set of essays by commenting on the qualified relevance of the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act to the Newark site. She too believes that the Newark Earthworks “belong in a special way” to all American Indians, an affiliation that ought to be recognized and respected.

But MacDonald, moreover, urges that “we might go even further and say that [the Newark Earthworks] are indigenous constructions that the indigenous peoples of the world should celebrate in solidarity.” And thus, at that international level, management of the site ought to be informed also by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a document that was adopted by the UN in 2007 in order to present “an ethical stance” with respect to “the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, and education.” MacDonald, in other words, not only reaffirms that the Newark Earthworks have an “outstanding universal value” for everyone as well as a special significance for all Native Americans; she furthermore calls attention to an emergent “discourse of indigeneity” and a widening solidarity among aboriginal peoples the world over. And thus she brings to light an overlooked tier of distinctiveness that the Ohio site has for the global community of indigenous peoples.

Part VI, “The Newark Earthworks in the Context of Law and Jurisprudence: Ancient and Ongoing Possibilities,” is composed of three essays that, in very different ways, continue to locate the Ohio mounds in relation to questions of law and legal contestation. Two native scholars, Duane Champagne, a professor of sociology and American Indian studies, and Carole Goldberg, a professor and practitioner of law, coauthor “The Peoples Belong to the Land: Contemporary Stewards of the Newark Earthworks,” an article that reveals yet two more ways in which the Newark Earthworks stand out as particularly noteworthy. The first part, which “characterizes indigenous motivations, values, and practices about ancient holy places,” not unlike Margaret Pearce, urges us to appreciate the fundamentally different presuppositions that undergird indigenous versus Western conceptions of land. Champagne and Goldberg explain that, traditionally, indigenous peoples do not “own” the land *per se* but claim instead that “people belong to the land, like the plants, animals, places, and even sacred bundles.” They contend, moreover, that the Newark complex, as a major pilgrimage destination, was an exceptionally inclusive and “unguarded” place to which countless different groups

would have felt an obligation for responsible “stewardship” but none would have claimed exclusive “ownership.”

In the second, more prescriptive portion of their article, the Hopewell site emerges also as a consummate example of the difficult—but not insurmountable—legal challenges at issue in the reclamation and management of traditional “sacred sites.” Bolstering optimism by recounting the successes of several recent cases, Champagne and Goldberg make a persuasive case that the traditional native notion of “belonging” to the land, and thus being compelled to share access with others, is not simply a quaint anachronism. To the contrary, that nonhegemonic ideal remains, even now, an informing principle for the effective and responsible management—in their terms, the “contemporary stewardship”—of sites such as Newark. In their upbeat forecast, like MacDonald’s, were the Earthworks at Newark selected as a World Heritage site, not only American Indians of numerous tribal affiliations but also “many indigenous peoples from around the world would probably want to attend and perform ceremonies.” Suitably enough, as in the Hopewell past, Newark could again be, if a permanent abode for few, a rewarding destination for many.

In “Caring for Depressed Cultural Sites, Hawaiian Style,” Greg Johnson, a scholar of comparative religion and specialist in indigenous legal disputes in both North America and Hawai’i, trains his attention on the latter context in order to find clues for the management of Hopewell sites. In his considered assessment, the Newark Earthworks stand at present as “a depressed cultural site” insofar as the mounds occasion admiration, celebration, and even adulation, but most of all “concern”—that is, a sense of distress, which evokes a corrective sensibility that Native Hawaiians would call *mālama* (care). Exploring this dynamic relationship between depression and care, Johnson, another to deploy a strategic inventory of case studies, narrates the stories of three very recent Hawaiian controversies, each of which demonstrates both a different version of *mālama* “caring for sites” and a different reliance on the law, and each of which thereby sheds “comparative light on possible futures of the Newark sites.”

In the first case, Hawaiian community activists—not unlike the Ohio-based Friends of the Mounds—undertake the sort of extralegal *mālama*, or “care giving” practices that, while eventuating in few if any actual legislative or policy changes, nevertheless have extremely salutary effects on people’s appreciation of the “depressed” site. Johnson’s second example is a kind of

intermediate circumstance wherein a combination of “waves of love” for a revered site and legal action result in partial victories or “uneasy compromises” that forestall development at one of Hawai’i’s most prized stretches of beach. His third case study directs attention to more fully legalist caregiving strategies such as grant writing, petitioning state and federal agencies for action, or working with UNESCO for heritage site designation. Johnson then concludes that, encouragingly enough, counterparts to all three versions of Hawaiian *mālama*, or “caring for sites,” are presently at work in central Ohio. Thus, as in Champagne and Goldberg’s contribution, his own concerns about the neglect of this distressed site are superseded by a qualified optimism with respect to the mounting attention—and thus diverse versions of nurturance and care—that Newark is attracting.

In the final essay, “Imagining ‘Law-Stuff’ at the Newark Earthworks,” another seasoned expert on religion and law who comes fresh to the consideration of Hopewell sites, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, shifts the attention from contemporary legal wrangling over the site to consideration of the role that law and legal jurisdiction, broadly conceived, may have played in the pre-Columbian conception and use of the place. Another who is wary of seemingly laudatory designations of Newark as a “ceremonial center” or place of pilgrimage, her expansive and duly tentative comments thereby reopen the debate as to whether Newark was primarily a place of “rituality” or whether the geometric mounds might have been designed instead as a forum in which to undertake a distinctive sort of “law-stuff,” that is, “a space for regularizing human relations, resolving disputes, and performing justice.” Redoubling the theme of inclusiveness from Champagne and Goldberg’s article—but then transferring that notion of pluralism from the realm of multiple worship styles to that of “legal multiplicity”—Sullivan proposes that ancient Newark may have been “a context of overlapping jurisdiction,” that is to say, a site at which, instead of one state-sponsored authority enjoying absolute control, many sorts of indigenous “law-stuff” were “all jostling up against each other.”

In sum, then, Sullivan exemplifies the spirit of the “One Site, Many Contexts” subtitle of the symposium and the exploratory aims of this volume by pushing against the grain, widening the range of conceptual options, and encouraging us to consider that the ancient Hopewell site may have been a place at which to formulate, disseminate, debate, and adjudicate topics and policies that are not less suitably imagined as “legal matters” than as “religious matters.” In that sense, she provides a befitting ending to this interdisciplinary

collection—wherein shared consensus was never an aspiration—insofar as she brings to the table yet one more provocatively plausible reply to that driving question *What is so special about the Earthworks at Newark?* To be sure, only cursory readers will find agreement among the fifteen responses that follow.⁸

Notes

1. See, for example, Scarre, *Seventy Wonders of the Ancient World*.
2. See John E. Hancock's contribution to this volume.
3. See Richard D. Shiels's contribution to this volume.
4. I borrow the term "contested site" from the editors' introduction to *American Sacred Space*, edited by Chidester and Linenthal, 16ff.
5. This and all subsequent phrases that are quoted in this introduction are, unless otherwise noted, drawn from the essays in this book.
6. Lepper, "The Great Hopewell Road and the Role of Pilgrimage in the Hopewell Interaction Sphere," 128.
7. Yoffee, Fish, and Milner, "Communities, Ritualities, Chiefdoms," 265–66, quoted by Lekson in this volume.
8. For a concise enumeration of fifteen replies to the question "What is so special about the Newark Earthworks?" see the appendix to this volume.