

Pre-Columbian Burial Rites: Burial Practice Among Prehistoric Native Americans: Midwest Region, Volume III (Volume 3)

Barbara L. Ladwig

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Volume III of the PRE-COLUMBIAN BURIAL RITES series analyzes prehistoric mortuary practice in the Midwest Region of North America. The database consists of 32,998 individuals from 1,304 burial sites and covers the period from approximately 9000 B. P. until A. D. 1500. The region by now comprised of the following states: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. The provinces are analyzed individually by prehistoric period, then the analysis is followed by discussion and comparison, conclusions, references, Appendix I-Tables, Appendix II-maps, graphs. Characteristic traits that are examined include: type of inhumation, including cremation, primary inhumation, secondary inhumation (possible bundling); position of primary inhumations (extended, semi-flexed, flexed, tightly flexed), placement of inhumations (ventral, dorsal, left side, right side, sitting/reclining), age, gender, specificity of time period and cultural affiliation, intra- or extramural internment, intra- or interregional contact of influence, artificial cranial flattening, mortuary furniture including ceramics, stone, bone, shell, native copper, other exotics, red ocher; direction of the head, in-site location, structural facets of mortuary facility, elevation of terrain, water features in area, other general useful information. The Midwest Region was a complex and dynamic example of mortuary practice that was ritually oriented and traditionally grounded, consistent for long periods, yet subject to change due to both internal forces and external pressures. Multiple factors were interwoven in a clarifying display of how each cultural tradition dealt with the deposition of their deceased individuals according to the prevailing ideology of the time period.

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