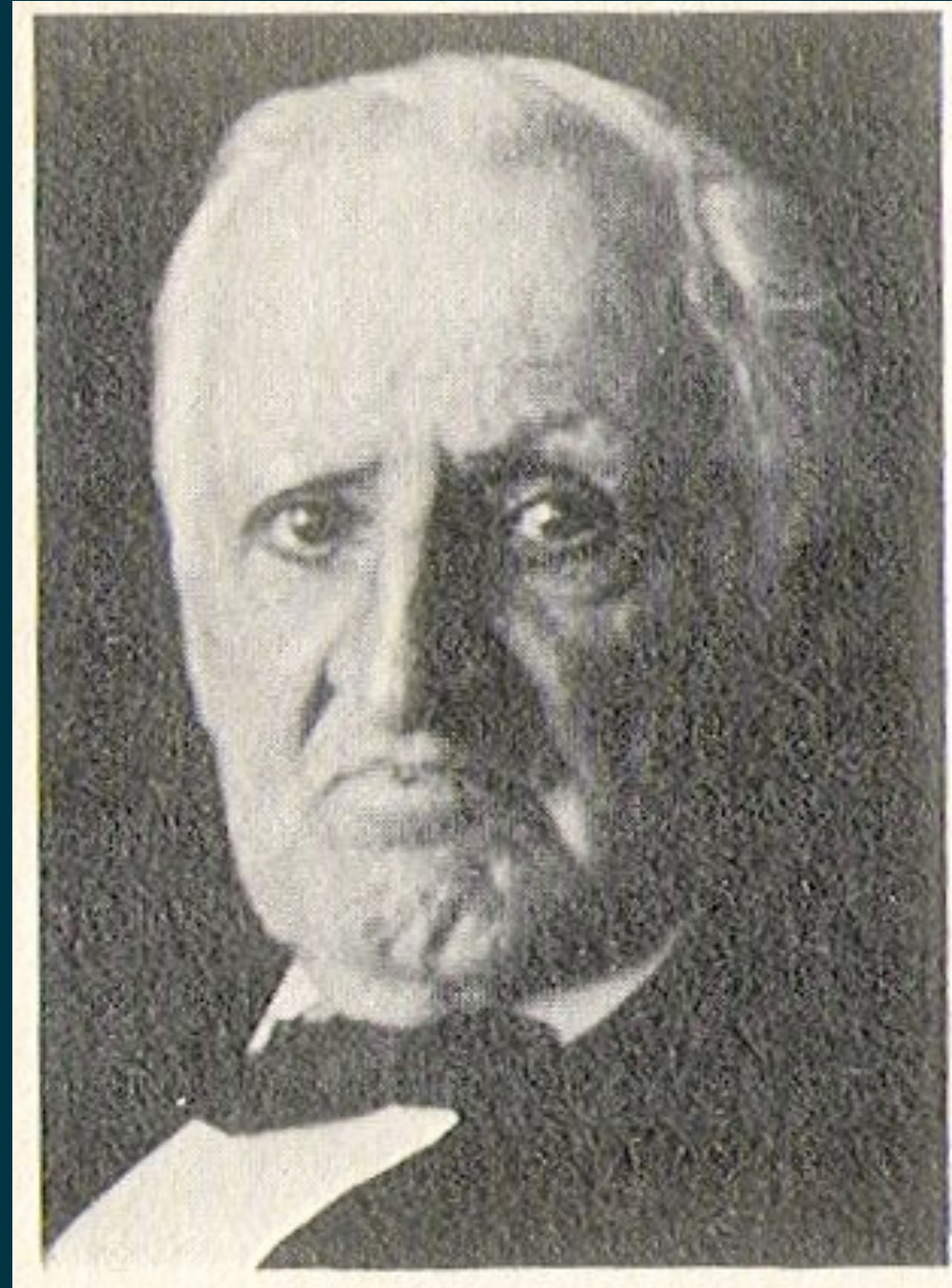




THE MYSTERY

“SOLVED”



CYRUS THOMAS

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
U.S.
BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY

TO THE
SECRETARY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

1890-'91

BY

J. W. POWELL
DIRECTOR



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1894





Brought to life
in CAHOXIA
Piste XIX
Coll.
Tetterington
Maggison Co. Ill.





A photograph of a large, grassy mound, likely an archaeological site, in a field. The mound is covered in green grass with some patches of brown. In the background, there is a dense line of trees under a clear blue sky. The word "THE" is written in white capital letters on a black rectangular background, positioned above the mound.

THE

MISSISSIPPIANS



7 CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

1 MOUNDS

Platform (flat topped), burial (conical), earthworks (geometric, etc), mound complexes







2 MAIZE

Intensive maize (corn) based agriculture. Closely linked to the emergence of Mississippian culture throughout the entire midwest & southeast.



③ SHELL TEMPERED POTTERY

Mississippians used riverine (or more rarely marine) shells as temper in their pottery.

TEMPER?





Painted Ceramic Bottle, found at Moundville, circa AD 1300-1450. This style originated in the Tennessee Valley.



Painted Ceramic Bottle, created in the Caddoan style. Found at Moundville, circa AD 1300-1450. The Caddoan style originated in Western Louisiana and Eastern Texas.

MOUNDVILLE'S CONTACT WITH OTHER MISSISSIPPIAN SITES

Interestingly, Moundville not only

4 WIDESPREAD TRADE

Extremely widespread trade networks that reached far to the west (rockies), the north (Great Lakes), east (Atlantic), and south (Gulf of Mexico). Possible evidence of trade colonies even further.



⑤ SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

Complex chiefdoms, evidence of social stratification and social inequality. Centralized control of combined political and religious power in the hands of only a few elite (or one).

CHIEFDOMS?

⑥ SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

One major mound center has clear influence (or direct control) over a number of smaller mound centers.

An aerial photograph of the Cahokia Mounds archaeological site. The image shows several large, grass-covered earthen mounds of varying heights and shapes. A paved road with yellow lane markings runs diagonally across the lower half of the image, with a few cars visible. To the left, a multi-lane highway runs parallel to the mounds. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green grass, scattered trees with some autumn-colored foliage, and a few small buildings or structures. The word "CAHOKIA" is overlaid in large, bold, light blue letters on a black rectangular background in the upper right corner.

CAHOKIA

MOUNDVILLE



7 SECC

Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (Southern Cult).
Belief system, cosmology, symbols, and associated
material culture shared by Mississippian peoples.
Some are redefining as "Mississippian Ideological
Interaction Sphere"

SOUTHEAST CEREMONIAL COMPLEX

COSMOLOGY

ABOVE WORLD

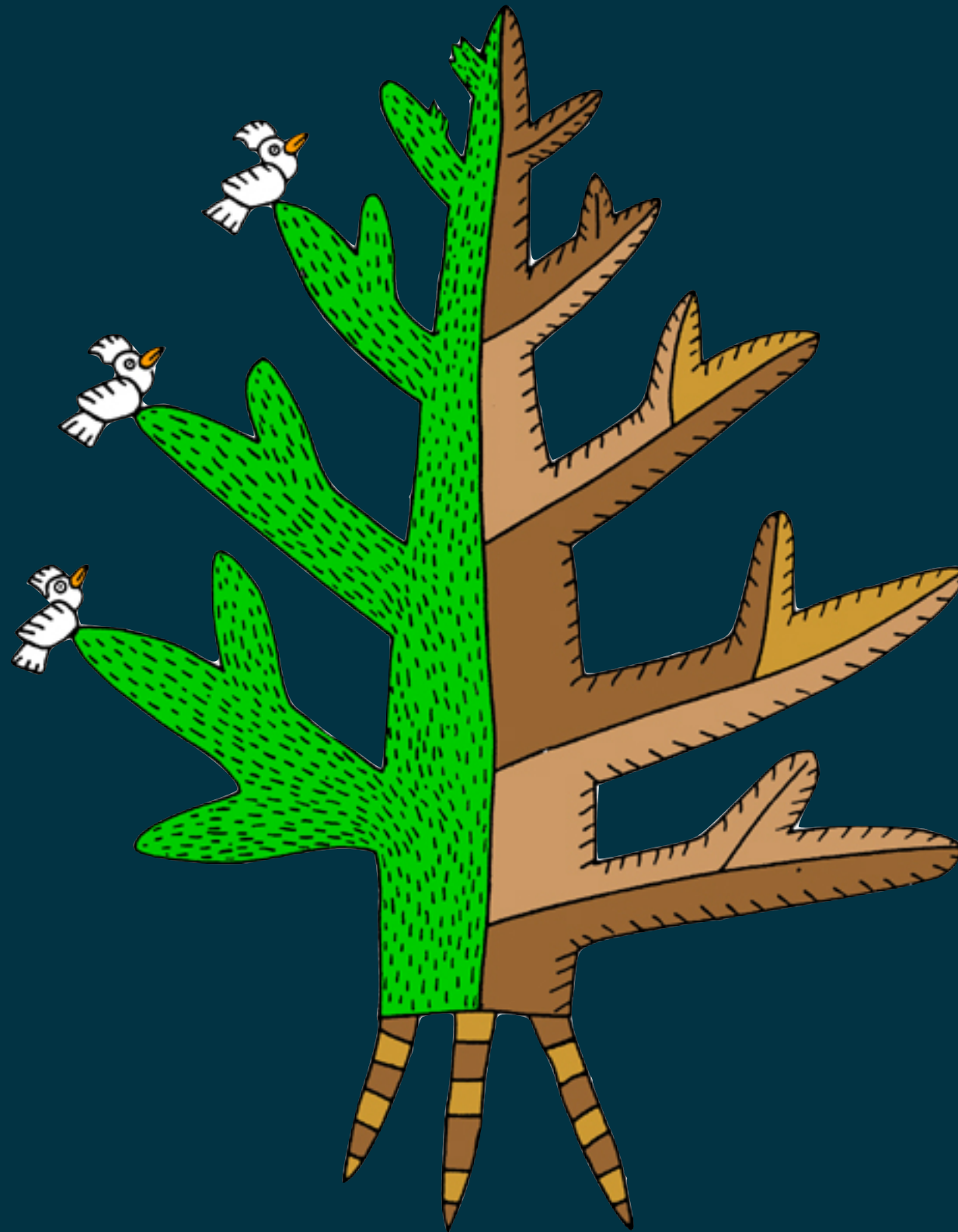
Home of the Thunderers, the Sun, Moon, and Morning Star or Red Horn. Representative of order and stability

MIDDLE WORLD

The world where humans being live and on which they have impact.

BENEATH WORLD

Cold, dark place of chaos. Home to the underwater panther and the corn mother ("Old Woman Who Never Dies")



AXIS MUNDI

SOUTHEAST CEREMONIAL COMPLEX

MOTIFS & SYMBOLS

BIRDMAN

Falcon. Avatar of a warrior. Object of supplication for long life, family health, and long line of descendants. Supernatural origin in the Upper World







REDHORN

Red Horn was one of the five sons of Earthmaker whom the Creator fashioned with his own hands and sent to earth to rescue mankind. He contested both giants and water spirits, and led warparties against the bad spirits who plagued mankind.



GREAT SERVANTS

Denizens of the Beneath World - in constant struggle with the Thunderers (birdman or falcon) of the Above World. Dangerous beings - but also source of great power





CHUNKEY

Extremely high stakes game (associated with gambling). Possible mythological overtones. continues on after European contact.





MISSISSIPPIAN

CHRONOLOGY

① EARLY MISSISSIPPIAN : 1000-1200 AD

② MIDDLE MISSISSIPPIAN : 1200-1400 AD

③ LATE MISSISSIPPIAN : 1400-CONTACT

1 EARLY MISSISSIPPIAN

Different groups abandoned tribal lifeways for increasing complexity, sedentism, centralization, and agriculture. Rapid population growth in major centers

② MIDDLE MISSISSIPPIAN

Height of the Mississippian period. Expansion of largest ceremonial center (Cahokia). Full extent of the Southeast Ceremonial Complex.

③ LATE MISSISSIPPIAN

Collapse of the Mississippian culture. Period characterized by increasing warfare, political turmoil, and population movement. Sharp decrease in moundbuilding - many centers abandoned.

MISSISSIPPIAN

REGIONAL VARIATION



UPPER MISSISSIPPIAN

MIDDLE MISSISSIPPIAN

SOUTH APPALACHIAN MISSISSIPPIAN

CADOAN MISSISSIPPIAN

PLAQUEMINE MISSISSIPPIAN

An aerial photograph of the Cahokia Mounds archaeological site. The image shows several large, grass-covered earthen mounds of varying heights and shapes. A paved road with a yellow center line runs diagonally across the lower half of the image, with a few cars visible. To the left, there is a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of yellow and orange. The overall landscape is a mix of green grass, brown earth from the mounds, and colorful trees.

CAHOKIA

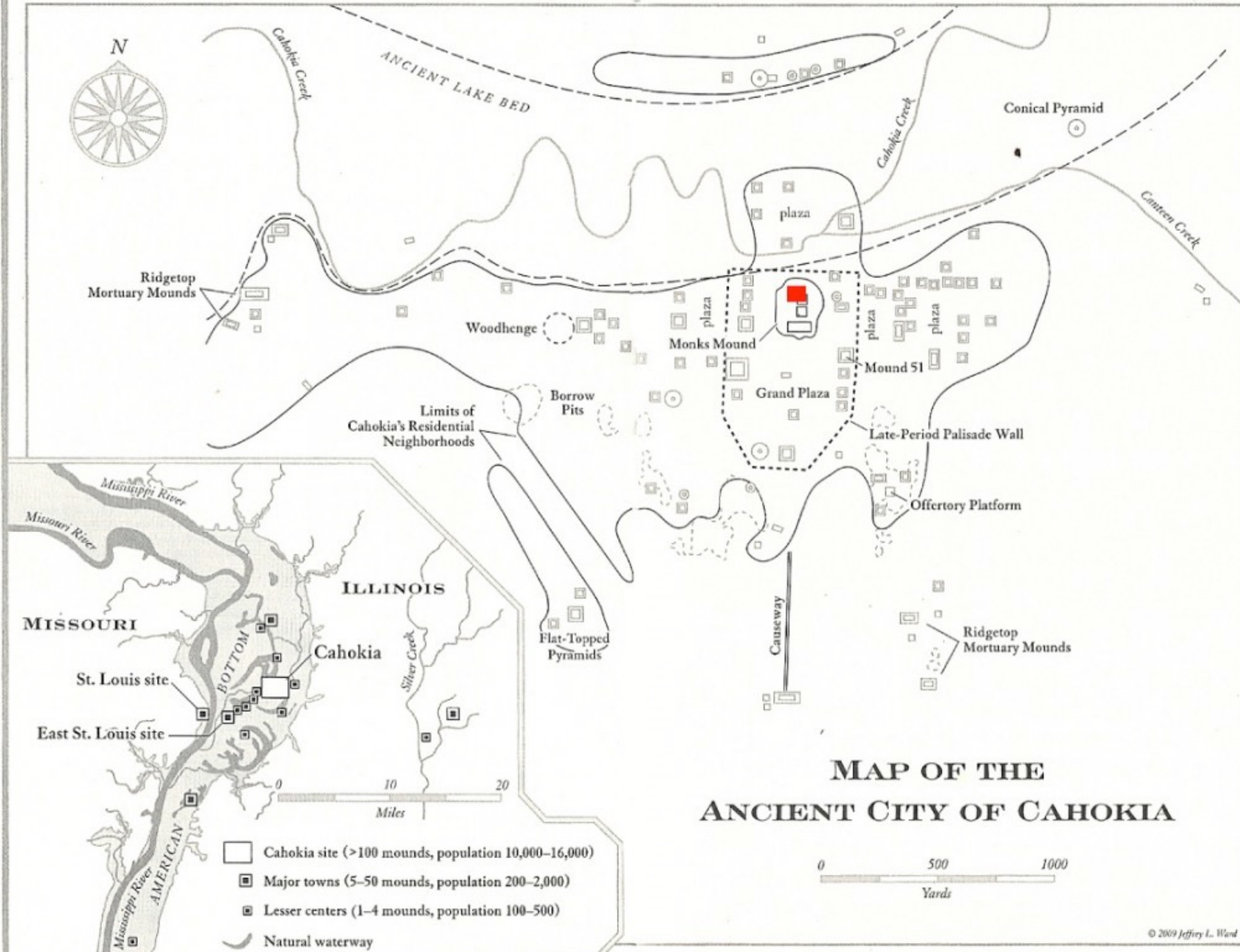


САНОКІА

CAHOKIA

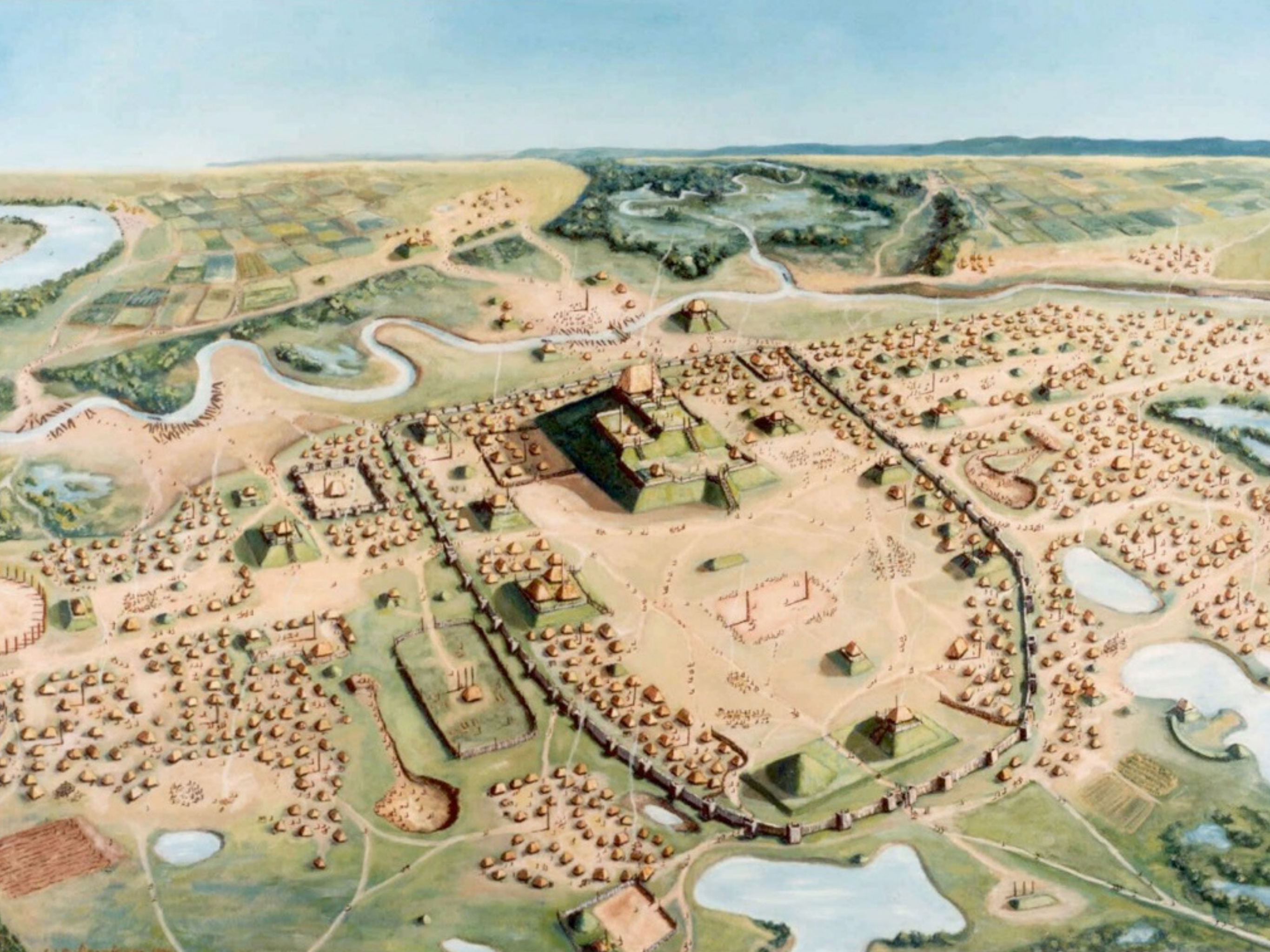
- ★ **LARGEST & MOST INFLUENTIAL MISSISSIPPIAN CENTER**
- ★ **AT ITS HEIGHT, CAHOKIA COVERED 6 SQUARE MILES AND HAD AT LEAST 120 MOUNDS**
- ★ **CONTINUALLY OCCUPIED FROM CA. 600-1300 AD**







MONKS MOUND





CAHOKIA

COLLAPSE

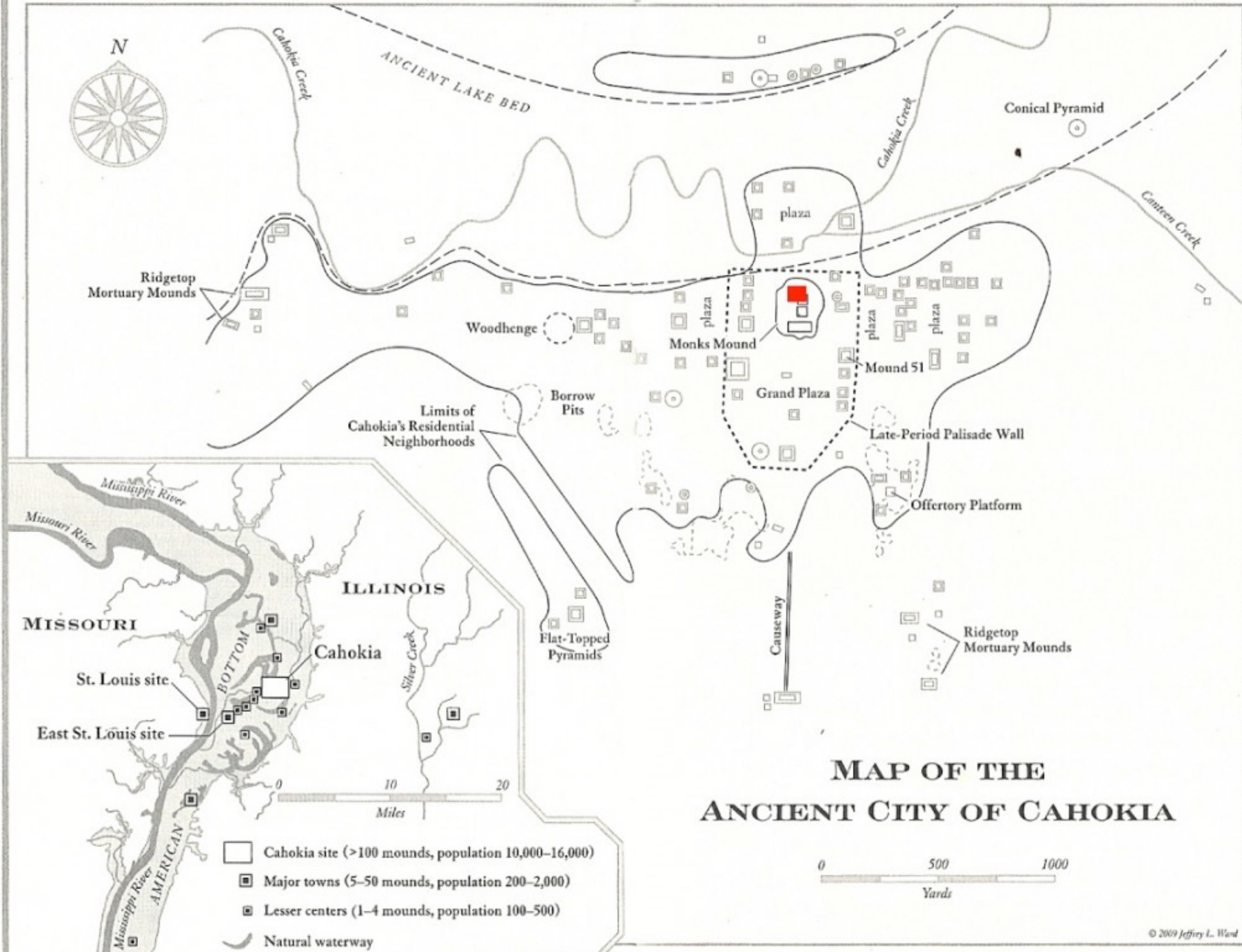
1 ENVIRONMENTAL

Possible overhunting and deforestation. In addition, climate change could have aggravated effects of erosion due to deforestation, and adversely affected the cultivation of maize, on which the community depended.

② WARFARE

Stress (political and resource) from new populations moving into the area caused warfare.





③ DISEASE

Incredible population density results in heightened instances of diseases and favorable environment for transition

VANISHED?

Alabama
Apalachee
Caddo
Cherokee
Chickasaw
Choctaw
Muscogee
Creek
Quapaw
Tunica-Biloxi
Yuchi

Guale
Hitchiti
Houma
Kansa
Missouria
Mobilian
Natchez
Osage
Seminole
Yamasee



THE END