Characterizing Community-Center (Village) Formation in the VEP Study Area, a.d. 600–1280
Donna M. Glowacki and Scott G. Ortman

This chapter describes the cycles of aggregation and dissolution of the largest villages in the VEP study area. Because these villages were often central nodes among a number of smaller settlements and contained civic-ceremonial architecture used for large gatherings, these villages have been termed “community centers.” We assess how the location, types of civic-ceremonial architecture, and association with agricultural land changed over time for these villages. A detailed history of the development and abandonment of community centers provides important context for understanding the differences between the two periods of out-migration that occurred during the occupation of the study area.

Ritual Practice and Textual Representations
André J. Krischer

Early modern diplomacy was never a princely and aristocratic province alone. Republics also sent and received diplomats or participated in peace conferences. Whereas this sort of republican diplomacy was basically accepted at the princely courts, Free Imperial Cities such as Bremen and Cologne faced significant difficulties when trying to gain recognition. Nonetheless, there were continuous efforts by the imperial...
cities to play their part in early modern diplomacy, not least because of the prestige that could be earned by participating in this sphere and its rituals. For them foreign relations were always a ritual process: ceremonial interaction was at its centre, since princely recognition of ceremonial receptions or urban emissaries conferred political and social acceptance of the imperial cities’ status. Ceremonial interaction between princes and cities often involved a reciprocal exchange of capital: of economic capital paid back as symbolic capital, as gestures of social recognition which were recorded in detail in the urban books of ceremony. Writing was therefore crucial for the symbolic dimensions of urban diplomacy. The imperial cities’ ceremony books were meant to be filled with reports about ceremony which were regarded as a gain of symbolic capital materialized in writing.

Early Mississippian in the North Carolina Piedmont
Edmond A. Boudreaux III
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The topic of Mississippian origins in the North Carolina Piedmont has received very little attention from archaeologists since the 1950s. This chapter pulls together information from multiple sites, especially the extensively excavated Town Creek site, to present an overview of Early Mississippian in the North Carolina Piedmont. The presence of Mississippian lifeways in the region is indicated by the appearance of complicated-stamped ceramics by around A.D. 1150-1200. Associated social changes include the appearance of archaeologically visible households and the development of a civic-ceremonial center at the Town Creek site. Public and domestic architecture as well as evidence for ritual activities suggests that social groups interacted and were integrated at multiple scales within the Early Mississippian community at Town Creek.

Ceremony and Civility
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London’s civic ceremonies marked the relationships between the mayors and the crown, but also between denizens and their government, gild wardens and members, masters and apprentices, and parishioners and their church. London, like all premodern cities, was made up of immigrants. The number of people who were citizens (who enjoyed the “freedom of the city”) was a small proportion of the inhabitants. The newly arrived had to be taught the civic culture of the city so that the city could function peacefully. Ritual and ceremony played a key role in the acculturation process. In a society in which hierarchical authority was most commonly determined by the inheritance of title and office or sanctified by ordination, elected civic officials relied on rituals to cement their authority, power, and dominance. Since the term of office was a year, the election and inauguration of city officials had to be very public, and the robes of office had to distinguish the officers so that everyone would know who they were. Apprentices entering the city to take up a trade were educated in civic culture by their masters. Gilds also provided experience in leadership through gild governance. Again, rituals, oath swearing, and distinctive livery marked their belonging. Those who rebelled against authority and who broke the civic ordinances were made spectacles of through ritual humiliations so that others could learn from their example. At the parish level, and even at the level of the street, civic behavior was taught through example, proclamations, and ballads.