

The Ancient Ohio Art Series

"The Early Woodland Period"

ca., 2,800 - 2,000 BP

Panel 3 of 6



All human societies have ceremonies to mark important events in their lives and to express their beliefs. The Adena people occasionally constructed circular earthen enclosures to serve as the locations for ceremonies and social events. In this scene, several people are wearing wolf skins and appear to be mimicking wolf behavior, perhaps as they are enacting a clan legend or invoking the spirit of the wolf for comfort and protection. A hunter, judging from his spears and atlatl, is watching the proceedings, but the feathered skirt he is wearing suggests that he will likely be joining in the events within the circle. Beyond the opening of the enclosure is the temporary encampment where the people are living. After the ceremonies and other events are concluded, they will return to their settlements scattered through the river valley. This circular enclosure is patterned after a series of such earthworks near the town of The Plains along the Hocking River in Athens County, Ohio. Technical assistance was provided by Dr. Elliot Abrams, Ohio University, who has intensively studied the Adena occupation of the Hocking River Valley.

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