

Public Abstract

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Title:MIDDLE AND LATE WOODLAND PERIOD CULTURAL TRANSMISSION, RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY, AND AGGREGATION IN THE DEEP SOUTH

The way humans situate themselves on the landscape and interact with one another and their neighbors has long been within the purview of archaeology. Rather than take a single site approach, however, this research uses archaeological data from 32 sites in the lower Chattahoochee-Apalachicola River valley and neighboring Gulf Coast to explore prehistoric human interaction and group mobility for the period spanning 200 B.C. to A.D. 1000. Interaction and group mobility are evaluated in terms of evolutionary models of population dynamics, modified so as to be applicable to the archaeological record. The results suggest that human groups did not have fixed residential and social strategies. Instead, their strategies changed through time in response to changes in their local cultural and natural environments. In particular, the period ca. A.D. 370-700 may be characterized by a marked increase in residential mobility and bracketed by periods of greater residential stability and increases in intergroup and, probably interregional, interaction. Temperature and rainfall reconstructions suggest that increases in residential mobility may have been a necessary response to prolonged drought. Independent data indicate that the periods of residential stability were also periods of widespread interregional exchange of materials and goods. The groups who were predictably located on the landscape may be those who benefited most from long-distance trade.