

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

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to reconstruct the extent of prehistoric human interaction within the lower Chattahoochee-Apalachicola River valley and neighboring Gulf Coast for the period spanning 200 B.C. to A.D. 1000.

Using evolutionary models of population dynamics, intergroup cultural transmission (i.e., interaction) is inferred from changes in intra-assemblage ceramic decorative diversity and interassemblage ceramic distance across a 1000-year ceramic sequence. Two periods, ca. A.D. 200–370 and ca. A.D. 700–810, are noted for their high levels of decorative diversity and are interpreted to be periods during which intergroup cultural transmission increased. Interassemblage ceramic distance did not behave in the manner expected, and the deviations suggest that group residential strategies may be fluctuating in sync with pulses in interaction. In particular, the period ca. A.D. 370–700 may be characterized by a marked increase in residential mobility.

Reconstructed PDSI values, a proxy composite measure of temperature and rainfall, are examined to search for a possible cause for changes in residential strategies. Two of the three periods of greatest below average PDSI values correspond to inferred increases in residential mobility at ca. A.D. 370 and ca. A.D. 810.