

A DAN JOSSELYN MEMORIAL PUBLICATION

FORGING

SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY, ETHNOHISTORY,

SOUTHEASTERN

AND FOLKLORE OF THE MISSISSIPPIAN

IDENTITIES

TO EARLY HISTORIC SOUTH

EDITED BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA PRESS

TUSCALOOSA

The University of Alabama Press
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0380
uapress.ua.edu

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Typeface: Scala, Scala Sans, Gill Sans and Herculanum

Manufactured in the United States of America
Cover image: Fabric fragment, Spiro, Oklahoma, Catalog
No. 423,373, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian
Institution
Cover design: David Nees

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The paper on which this book is printed meets the minimum
requirements of American National Standard for Information
Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials,
ANSI Z39.48–1984.

Cataloging-in-Publication data is available from the Library of
Congress.

ISBN: 978-0-8173-1941-0
E-ISBN: 978-0-8173-9078-5

For Judith Knight,
in appreciation for all she does for southeastern archaeology

tural Resources, the Western Piedmont Community College Foundation, the Woodbury Family Foundation, Warren Wilson College, Tulane University, the University of Michigan, the University of Oklahoma, and the Exploring Joara Foundation. Thanks to our field crew supervisors and all of the field school students and volunteers who have participated in our project and to the many people from Morganton and Burke County, North Carolina, who have contributed to this project.

Thanks to Greg Waselkov and Marvin Smith for inviting us to contribute to this volume in honor of Judith Knight. We appreciate their editorial comments as well as those of the anonymous reviewers. Any errors remain our responsibility. Finally, it is an honor to participate in this volume and we thank Judith Knight for her friendship and for her significant service to Southeastern archaeology.

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WHAT'S IN A PHASE?

DISENTANGLING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE FROM COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA

John E. Worth

The study of human social organization in the past is always a daunting challenge, but especially so in the absence of textual or other documentary sources of evidence. Lacking written records for most of human history, archaeologists rely on material culture and other preserved traces of human activity as a basis for understanding the complex webs of social interaction that shaped the daily lives of people in the past. Whereas the social landscape of the historic era appears populated by comparatively straightforward sociopolitical units identified as tribes, chiefdoms, kingdoms, empires, and nation-states, the archaeological landscape of the prehistoric era is populated only by a dizzying array of artifacts and other material traces that display a range of spatial and temporal variation that generally ranges from continuous to somewhat less continuous. It has always been the task of the archaeologist to impose order on that variation, using the geographic distribution of preserved material culture to infer units of social integration at various scales, from households to regional culture areas. Sometimes there is relatively strong empirical correspondence between archaeological material distribution and historically documented social groups; many times, however, the situation is far more complex.

In North America, the earliest widespread systematic attempt to organize archaeological data in a consistent and uniform fashion was that of the early twentieth-century culture historians (Lyman et al. 1997). Their dependence on using the spatial and temporal distribution of material culture (particularly ceramics) as the basis for a strongly normative model of culture was later decried and nominally rejected by processualist archaeologists, who focused instead on the systemic dynamics of culture process itself (e.g., Binford 1962, 1965, 1968; Flannery 1967). However, although many facets of the taxonomic framework originally developed and employed by culture-

historical archaeologists have subsequently fallen out of use, several important conceptual units have survived the test of time to remain part of current usage among contemporary archaeologists. The hierarchy of spatial and temporal units has included W. C. McKern's *component, focus, aspect, phase*, and *pattern*, and Gordon Willey and Phillip Phillips's more simplified *component* and *phase* coupled with the broader *horizon* and *tradition* (McKern 1939, 1943; Phillips and Willey 1953; Willey and Phillips 1958:11–43). Two unit concepts still in widespread usage today are the relatively uncomplicated *component*, as well as the somewhat more ambiguously conceived *phase*, which remains a foundational concept framing many archaeological interpretations, irrespective of theoretical orientation.

Following critiques of their original scheme and subsequent revisions (e.g., Rouse 1955; Willey and Phillips 1958), Willey and Phillips defined the *phase* as “an archaeological unit possessing traits sufficiently characteristic to distinguish it from all other units similarly conceived, whether of the same or other cultures or civilizations, spatially limited to the order of magnitude of a locality or region and chronologically limited to a relatively brief period of time” (Willey and Phillips 1958:22). They furthermore asserted that the phase is “the basic space-time-culture concept in all that follows” and “the practicable and intelligible unit of archeological study” (Phillips and Willey 1953:620). Both of these propositions seem to have been accepted widely in the archaeological community, probably in part explaining the persistence of the phase concept even today.

As a cluster of archaeological sites characterized by a similar assemblage of ceramic types and other material culture within a bounded geographic space for a limited span of time, just what exactly does an archaeological phase represent in terms of the living human society to which it bears mute witness? Directly addressing this question in their initial proposal, Phillips and Willey go to great lengths to caution practitioners against presumptions of one-to-one correspondence between archaeological and “sociological” units: “For the purpose of this discussion, however, let us think of society in the terms most often implied in the older ethnographic studies, i.e., a relatively small aggregate comprising a number of closely integrated communities. How does this correspond to the concept of phase? Logically, the correspondence is perfect. The society consists of a number of communities; the phase consists of a number of components; component equals community; therefore phase equals society—QED. Unfortunately in practice it doesn't work” (Phillips and Willey 1953:622). They go on to state flatly that “ethnography offers abundant examples of different societies sharing a material culture that would be impossible to differentiate archeologically” and that “probably it would be only slightly more difficult to find examples in

which the culture of individual communities within a society diverged sufficiently to cause them to be classified archeologically in separate phases” (Phillips and Willey 1953:622). In addition, they point out that “within the time span of a phase, determined by material traits which can, under certain circumstances, be remarkably stable, it is conceivable that sociological changes might be sufficient to enable our hypothetical ethnographer to speak of several societies. Conversely, under special conditions, even a primitive population may exhibit revolutionary changes in material culture without losing its identity as a society. We have abundant examples of this in recent history” (Phillips and Willey 1953:622).

In the light of these clarifications, Phillips and Willey (1953:623) provide extraordinarily sage advice: “We do not maintain that any specific archeological phase corresponds to a former society. We simply call attention to the fact that there is a certain conceptual agreement between phase and society . . . this congruence, which can as yet be demonstrated only on the theoretical level, offers the best hope of incorporating archeology into general anthropological science.” I contend in this chapter that although the existence of this theoretical “congruence” has provided implicit justification for the “phase equals society” assumption for many decades, its implications have yet to be fully explored and explained directly using empirical data. To a large extent, this task still remains to us today. Here I offer an avenue for reconciling these concepts.

For most of the Southeastern United States, and likewise for other regions of North America, what might be described as an enhanced culture-historical framework is still commonly used by archaeologists to generate the geographical-chronological units called *phases* that are employed in the primary analysis of Native American social structure, even in their most sophisticated and modern analyses of prehistoric sites. Moreover, this foundational framework, and the principal assumptions that underlie it, is so pervasive as to influence most recent archaeological work on historic-era Native American groups, even when contemporaneous documentary evidence can readily dispute many important aspects of this perspective.

In the Southeast, household production by female potters seems to have been the dominant mode of utilitarian ceramic production among indigenous groups across the late prehistoric and early historic periods (e.g., Bartram 1792:511; Holmes 1886:371–372; Hudson 1976:264; Le Page du Pratz 1758:178–179; Romans 1776:96; Sassaman and Rudolphi 2001:408, 420; Swanton 1946:549–555, 710; Thomas 2001:33), making ceramic assemblages particularly well suited for archaeological analyses of the spatial distribution of material culture at all scales of social integration, from households to communities to polities to regions. When Southeastern archaeologists speak of

archaeological phases with relatively discrete spatial distributions during later prehistory, they commonly conceive of them as roughly equivalent to familiar social groups such as chiefdoms or tribes, either singly or as components of broader regional polities. This is perhaps most notably the case where there is clear evidence for multiphase longevity in these discrete areas, especially when such phases are geographically bounded by relatively unambiguous unoccupied zones, and even more so when they include one or more platform mounds with construction episodes contemporaneous with the phase (e.g., Hally 1993, 1996:116–118). Indeed, the “patchy” nature of the social geography of this broad region during the late prehistoric and early historic eras has perhaps served to reify the “congruence” between phases and societies that Phillips and Willey (1953:623) warned about more than half a century ago.

It is unlikely that any modern archaeologist would dispute the fact that there are always “formidable difficulties” in “finding social equivalents for archaeological units” (Willey and Phillips 1958:48), but I would argue that, at least in the Southeast, and certainly elsewhere as well, this has nonetheless become somewhat entrenched in implicit practice, as evidenced by many examples in the literature of direct correspondences between specifically named archaeological phases and historically documented polities at various scales. Examples of such proposals include a number of phases thought to correspond to polities documented during sixteenth-century Spanish exploration of the interior Southeast, and particularly during the Hernando de Soto expedition. These identifications include the Parkin phase as Casqui (Hudson 1985; Hudson et al. 1987:853; Jeter 2009:369, 371; Mainfort 1999:146; Morse and Morse 1983), the Nodena phase as Pacaha (Hudson et al. 1987:853; Jeter 2009:369, 371; Mainfort 1999:146; Morse and Morse 1983), the Mulberry phase as Cofitachequi (Ethridge 2010:104), the Caraway phase as Guatari (Ethridge 2010:104), the Walls phase as Quizquiz (Mainfort 1999:146), the Dyar phase as Ocute (Kowalewski and Hatch 1991:10), the Cowart’s phase as Ichisi (Hudson 1994), the Lockett phase as Toa (Worth 1988), the Lake Jackson and Velda phases as Apalachee (Ewen 1996; Scarry 1990, 1996; Scarry and McEwen 1995:484–485), the Alachua “tradition” as the Potanos (Milanich 1972a:35, 1978:76; Rolland 2012:126), the Suwannee Valley culture as the Timucuas (Worth 2012:171), the Safety Harbor phase as the Tocobagas (Bullen 1978:50), the Irene and Altamaha phases as Guale (Pearson 1977:128; Saunders 1992:140–142, 2000:1, 15), the Kymulga or Shine II phases as Talisi (Ethridge 2010:70; Hudson et al. 1985:731, 735; Jenkins 2009:220; Smith 2000:100), the Big Eddy phase as Tascalusa (Jenkins 2009:215, 221, 223), the Furman phase as Mabila (Jenkins 2009:216), the Blackmon phase as Apalachicola (Worth 2000), the Estatoe phase as

the Lower Cherokees (Hally 1986:95–111), the Qualla phase as the Middle Cherokees (Dickens 1976:213; 1986:84), the Brewster phase as Itaba (King 1999:116), the Barnett phase as the “heartland” of Coosa (Hudson et al. 1985:732; Hudson et al. 1987:850; Langford and Smith 1990), and portions of the Burke phase as Joara (Beck and Moore 2002:201; Ethridge 2010:104), among others. This expected correlation between archaeological phases and named polities is in fact so strong that when Charles Hudson and colleagues reconstructed the sixteenth-century Coosa paramountcy to encompass all or part of no fewer than five distinct phases, they were prompted to remark that “one would expect that the chiefdom of Coosa should coincide rather more neatly with the distribution of protohistoric archaeological phases” (Hudson et al. 1985:724).

From the relatively easy-to-digest expectation of a correlation between late prehistoric phases and named Native American polities on the comparatively stable social landscape of the early historic era, archaeologists have naturally been prone to make the leap between the material culture (generally ceramics) characteristic of those same phases and the ethnic identity of the groups and individuals who relocated so frequently across the sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Southeastern landscape in the widespread diaspora of indigenous polities that occurred in the context of European colonialism. Many examples can be found in the archaeological literature attributing specific ceramic assemblages or types to the members of named ethnic groups, or *ethnies* (sec. Smith 1986), whose members or ancestors once belonged to polities generally believed to be coterminous with phases characterized by the same or similar ceramics. To cite some examples, specifically named ceramic assemblages and types found in mixed or extralocal colonial contexts have been claimed to be diagnostic for a diversity of Native American ethnies, including the Guale (Deagan 1973:61; 1978a:31, 33; 1978b:115; 1990:304, 1993:95–101; Hoffman 1997:33; King 1984:79; Saunders 1992:143, 2000:1; Waters 2005:79, 103–121), the Mocama and Eastern Timucua (Deagan 1990:304, 1993:95–101; Hoffman 1993:76; 1997:33; King 1984:77–78; Milanich 1972b:290–291; Waters 2005:80, 135–147), the Yama-see (Deagan 1993:95–101; Milanich 1972b:290; Waselkov and Gums 2000:126; Waters 2005:147–149), the Creek (Honerkamp and Harris 2005:108; Johnson et al. 2008:11; Sears 1955; Silvia 2000:46, 217; Waselkov and Gums 2000:124, 127) and their constituent ethno-linguistic groups such as the Hitchiti (Foster 2004), the Apalachee (Cordell 2002; Deagan 1990:304; Goggin 1951:171; Silvia 2000:26, 45, 122, 126, 217, 252, 305, 342–343; 2002:29–31; Waselkov and Gums 2000:126, 127; Waters 2005:77–78, 95–103; Worth 1992:171–182), the Potano and Western Timucua (Slade 2006:97–101; Waters 2005:78–79, 121–135), the Chato/Chacato (Silvia 2002:27; Waselkov

and Gums 2000: 124, 126–130), the Tomé (Silvia 2000:46–47, 217; 2002:29–31; Waselkov and Gums 2000:125), the Mobilians (Cordell 2002:51–52; Silvia 2000:46–47, 217; 2002:29–31; Waselkov and Gums 2000:125, 127), the Choctaw (Quimby 1942:265; 1957:127, 162; Silvia 2000: 217, 305; Waselkov and Gums 2000: 124, 128), the Natchez (Johnson et al. 2008:11; Quimby 1942:268; Silvia 2000:48, 148), the Taensa (Silvia 2000:48), the Cherokee (Caldwell 1955; Sears 1955), and the Caddo (Silvia 2000:46, 148). Clearly, there is a long and ongoing tradition of lending ethnicity to pottery, even if only on an informal basis.

Thus, Southeastern archaeologists have long been prone to connect assemblages of ceramic types both with the political identity of geographically stable polities, and also with the ethnic identity of geographically mobile groups and individuals. As one of my anthropology professors (who shall remain nameless) once commented ironically regarding archaeologists' typical view of the relationship between pots and people, for most archaeologists, "the pots *are* the people." Despite protestations to the contrary, and routine clarifications and caveats, there seems to be a generally accepted underlying consensus that pottery, as measured through assemblages of archaeological ceramic types, represents a reasonably good indicator of political affiliation and ethnic identity. Pottery, in other words, can almost be viewed to *possess* ethnicity, insofar as it is generally viewed as a relatively conservative dimension of everyday culture that persists alongside political and ethnic identification.

In recent decades, with the florescence of various strains of postprocessual theoretical approaches to the archaeological analysis of material culture, there have been several attempts in the Southeast to conceptualize this longstanding assumption within the framework of more contemporary theories of agency, practice, and materiality, positing an active role for ceramics in constituting and communicating what is characterized as social identity. For the region under consideration here, for example, Rebecca Saunders (1992:139, 2000:49–51, 169–170, 180–181) conducted extensive and detailed ceramic analysis to propose that the presence of the "world symbol" in stamped pottery decorations among the Guale Indians represented a conscious communication of a distinctive Guale identity, and that the persistence of this style on documented Guale sites from both their homeland in the northern Georgia coast and at relocated settlements in northeastern Florida reflected the maintenance of this Guale identity throughout much of the mission period in Spanish Florida. In the same general region, Gifford Waters (2005, 2009) has more recently drawn on the tenets of practice theory (discussed further below) to examine the consolidation of mission populations around eighteenth-century St. Augustine by using

archaeological ceramics in "an examination of how . . . consolidated multi-ethnic contact situations affected patterned material expressions thought to reflect cultural or ethnic identity among the Indians of the southeastern United States" (Waters 2005:xiv). Explicitly connecting specific ceramic assemblages to the Bourdieuvian *habitus* of documented Native American ethnic groups originally located across Spanish Florida (Waters 2005:72–73, 76–80, 95–149), Waters used observed changes in ceramic decoration and technology based on the relative proportions of archaeological ceramic types in St. Augustine-area sites to infer varying degrees of identity maintenance or change among specific groups (Waters 2005:150–175). The increased percentage of check stamped St. Johns pottery, for example, is suggested possibly to represent a "revitalization movement among Eastern Timucua identity" (Waters 2005:168), whereas the increase in plain pottery at the expense of increasingly degraded stamped motifs is hypothesized to reflect "stresses in Guale society" associated with the collapse of the mission system, even if only indirectly reflecting shifts in identity that are "embedded in the more technological stylistic production aspects of pottery" (Waters 2005:167).

The lynchpin of these and many other recent studies in the Southeast and beyond is the connection of archaeological ceramics to what I would argue is the very hazy but now almost ubiquitously employed concept of identity, which could be characterized in this context as the postprocessualist explanation for and justification of what is essentially still the old culture-historical tendency to equate pots with people, or more specifically to define political and ethnic groups by their ceramic assemblage. Though the current focus on materialized social identity clearly provides archaeologists with a far more sophisticated and analytically robust mechanism to explain the social context of technological and stylistic aspects of ceramic production, my impression is that more often than not it simply reifies the same old equation of pottery with social identity. The effect is to lend postprocessual legitimacy to what I argue is essentially a culture-historical assumption, one that has not been thoroughly examined for empirical validity, and thus still a "theoretical" congruence, as originally asserted by Phillips and Willey (1953:623). Archaeological phases have long been entangled with political and ethnic identity in the minds of most researchers, but with little more than a token acknowledgment of the potential difficulties of this widespread assumption.

Comparing the Archaeological and Documentary Record

My research over the past few decades has led me to examine the question of equating ceramics with political and ethnic identity from a variety of per-

spectives and in a variety of circumstances. As both an archaeologist and ethnohistorian, I have focused efforts in particular on making concurrent and direct use of dual sources of evidence—documentary and archaeological—to evaluate the extent to which archaeological ceramic assemblages corresponded either to well-documented polities or to specific named ethnies (e.g., Worth 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). A detailed review of the totality of this research is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is instructive to point out several very clear examples as illustrations of my fundamental conclusion that ceramic variability as measured by archaeologists does not appear to be coterminous at any level or scale of social integration as traditionally conceived, and that archaeologically derived units of material culture distribution (such as phases) are therefore not equivalent to historically derived units based on political or ethnic identity. Furthermore, archaeological assemblages of ceramic types do not appear to be derivative or directly reflective of ethnicity, inasmuch as specific ethnic groups can be documented to have changed their ceramic styles in the context of new social interaction patterns both *in situ* and as a result of migration. I elaborate on these conclusions below.

The European colonial era in Southeastern North America provides a uniquely suitable laboratory for comparing documentary and archaeological evidence regarding indigenous social groups and material culture variability across a broad region over the course of several centuries. Ethnohistorical evidence pertaining to the social geography of the Southeastern landscape begins to appear during the first half of the sixteenth century, exploding spectacularly for the interior regions with the Spanish expeditions of Hernando de Soto (1539–1543), Tristán de Luna (1559–1561), and Juan Pardo (1566–1568), all of which have been meticulously traced by modern scholars in recent decades (e.g., Hudson 1997, 1990; Hudson et al. 1989). The Atlantic coastal regions around and between Pedro Menéndez's twin colonies established at St. Augustine (1565) and Santa Elena (1566) witnessed far more intensive and lengthy colonial interactions between Spaniards and Native Americans during the last third of the sixteenth century. Rapid expansion of the Franciscan mission system after 1587 ultimately assimilated not only these coastal groups but also Florida's transpeninsular interior peoples by the 1630s, ultimately encompassing dozens of indigenous chiefdoms within several broad language groups, all of which are documented by a voluminous ethnohistorical and archaeological record for greater Spanish Florida (e.g., Bushnell 1994; Hann 1988, 1996; McEwan 1993; Milanich 1999; Thomas 1990; Worth 1998a, 1998b, 2007, 2013a, 2013b). Moreover, the expansion and eventual collapse of this immense multiethnic colonial system across

the Southeastern landscape were also accompanied and ultimately overwhelmed by the extension of both English and French colonial interests from the north and west during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, considerably augmenting the available documentary record for a diverse range of Native American groups across the region beyond Spanish Florida (e.g., Ethridge and Hudson 2002; Ethridge and Shuck-Hall 2009; Pluckhahn and Ethridge 2006). Between Contact and Removal in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Southeastern North America represents an almost unparalleled laboratory for the comparative study of both documentary and archaeological evidence for Native American polities and ethnies undergoing dynamic and turbulent processes of colonial assimilation and transformation. Here we have many different circumstances and situations available for detailed examination. My research summarized below represents a mere fraction of the potential embodied by this region and time period, when prehistory and history effectively overlapped for indigenous groups in the eye of the colonial maelstrom.

With respect to the specific topic under consideration here, the mission system of Spanish Florida presents perhaps the best opportunity for a particularly robust case study, as it ultimately encompassed a broad region characterized by considerable cultural diversity before the colonial era and possesses a comparatively detailed documentary record spanning well over a century in duration, as well as a still-growing body of modern archaeological data. Tens of thousands of Native Americans organized into dozens of small-scale chiefdoms within several regional polities, and broader linguistic zones were assimilated into the expanding colonial system of Spanish Florida between the 1580s and 1650. Despite epidemic depopulation and English-sponsored slave raiding during the late seventeenth century that ultimately resulted in the contraction and withdrawal of only a few hundred surviving Mission Indians to St. Augustine by 1706, Native American ceramic production remained robust even until their 1763 evacuation to Cuba and Mexico. As a result, archaeologists can potentially track change and continuity in ceramics produced by individual households and communities with documented political, ethnic, and linguistic identity, even as such groups consolidated and relocated across the landscape during specific documented periods of this turbulent era.

Native-style ceramics represent the vast majority of all ceramics present at predominantly Native American missions and contemporaneous satellite communities in Spanish Florida, and indeed form a substantial portion of ceramics found at the handful of predominantly Spanish colonial communities (St. Augustine and Pensacola) as well. Easily a third to half or more of

the ceramics at Spanish presidios in Florida are fully Native in both form and manufacture (e.g., Bense 1999:215; 2004:59; Deagan 1983:233–234; Harris and Eschbach 2006:109–110), despite solid documentary evidence for only minimal resident Indian presence on these sites. That the Florida Mission Indians sometimes made pottery for Spanish consumption is indeed documented in the historic record, as is the fact that Indian pots were used and sometimes exchanged among Spaniards in Florida (e.g., León 1745:223v; Leturiondo 1685:102v; Menéndez Márquez 1714:306r; Wenhold 1957:252; Worth 2007:114, 125). Moreover, the archaeological record quite clearly demonstrates that in addition to ceramics of indigenous style and form, native potters made an extremely limited (less than 3 percent) but nonetheless recognizable amount of Spanish-style tableware and other ceramic items generally called Colono Wares by Florida archaeologists (e.g., Cordell 2001; Roland and Ashley 2000; Vernon 1988; Vernon and Cordell 1993), and their distribution generally seems to conform to their principal use as substitutes purchased by or provided to Spaniards (particularly military) for their own use (Melcher 2010:116–125). A weekly dole of ollas, caçuelas, and jarros, for example, was to be provided by Mission Indians among other items for the small resident garrison at Mission Santa María on Amelia Island in 1685 (Leturiondo 1685:102v), and pottery was evidently exchanged to Spanish soldiers by an entrepreneurial family of Lower Creeks living adjacent to fort San Marcos de Apalache in 1745, as described by its Captain Juan Isidoro de León: “Here I found a family of mother, daughter, and son, with another Indian woman named Agustina, whose husband was killed by the Indians. These maintain themselves here without wanting to separate themselves from the Spaniards. . . . It has seemed in the service of the King to give these women two arrobas of flour monthly, since the month of February. These Indians serve as great relief here, because they are continually crafting pots, bowls, jars, and other necessary things of clay, easy things with which they maintain themselves with the help of potatoes and oysters that they go out to search for” (León 1745:223v). The fact that the captain went out of his way to allocate them rations, and make specific note of this in his letter to the Florida governor, suggests that such craft specialists were somewhat out of the ordinary by that time, but the fact that they existed suggests one mechanism by which Native Americans were able to fulfill the ceramic needs of their colonial Spanish neighbors. Furthermore, the fact that these female potters were said to “maintain themselves” by potting, supplementing their subsistence needs with tubers and shellfish (and the Spanish flour added upon León’s arrival), simultaneously indicates not just that their ceramics were likely bartered on an individual level to gar-

ison soldiers in exchange for foodstuffs and other goods, but also that this craft production was insufficient to allow full-time specialization.

In this connection, there is no evidence for anything other than household-level ceramic production and consumption among Florida’s Mission Indians themselves. The entire new Spanish colonial market for both Native-style and Colono Ware ceramics actually consumed only the tiniest fraction of overall indigenous ceramic production in the region. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the demographic balance in greater Spanish Florida was overwhelmingly weighted in favor of indigenous populations, with perhaps 500 to 1,000 Spaniards living amid 20,000 to 30,000 Mission Indians (Dunkle 1958:3–10; Worth 1998b:8–10), translating to a total population that was between 95 and 98 percent Native American. If the 2 to 5 percent of the population that was immigrant (Spanish, African, and other nationalities) consumed Native-made ceramics for about half their ceramic needs (as demonstrated archaeologically), that amounts to only 1 to 2.5 percent of the total consumption of all ceramics produced by Mission Indians as a group. Minor surplus household production by any or all Native potters with access to colonial markets can easily account for the archaeological signature observed on Spanish presidio sites as well as missions and frontier garrisons located amid predominantly indigenous populations.

In the context of this model of predominantly household ceramic production and consumption, the spatial distribution of archaeological ceramics at mission-era Native American sites of documented political and ethnic affiliation provides an excellent measure of the degree of congruence between utilitarian ceramics on the one hand, and political and ethnic identity on the other. The best starting point for such comparative analyses in Spanish Florida is probably the year 1650, which I would argue was near the zenith of the colonial system’s combined geographic extent, resident population, and systemic functionality as regards the region-wide interplay of land and labor to produce staple foods (Worth 1998a:126–214). Moreover, an extensive body of available documentary and archaeological evidence from this period provides an extremely robust regional dataset from which to push our analyses forward and backward in time from this point. To this end, detailed analyses of these data provide what I believe is firm and unequivocal evidence that the regional ceramic style zones that crystallized across Spanish Florida by 1650 were equivalent neither to well-documented Native American political or linguistic groupings at the same time, nor to overarching Spanish-imposed provincial groupings, nor even to the region of Spanish Florida as a whole (Figure 7.1).

Before the sixteenth century, this same region had been characterized

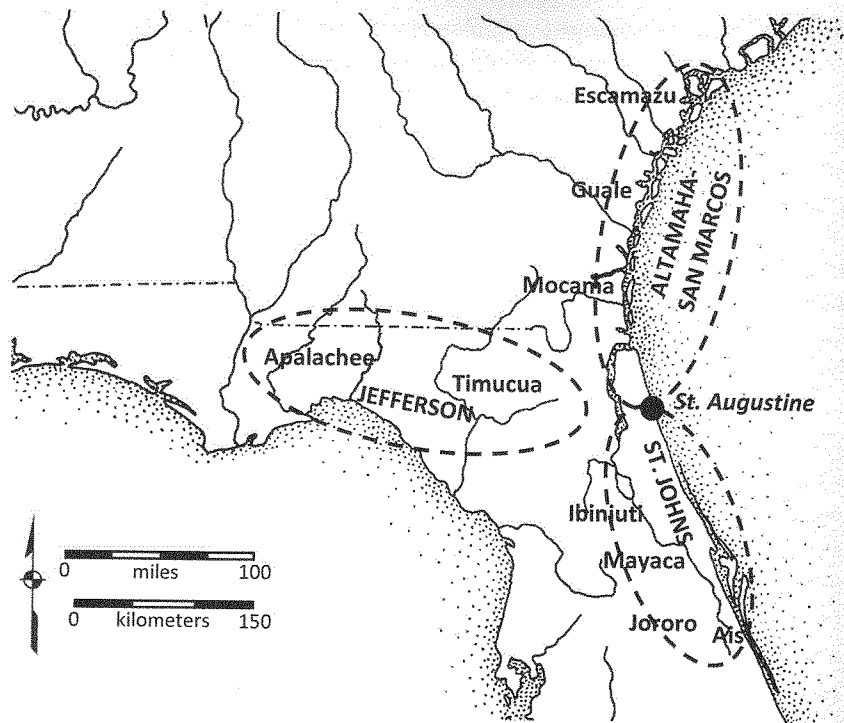


Figure 7.1. Ceramic style zones and political groupings of Spanish Florida, c. 1650.

by at least six distinct ceramic style zones that might easily be conceived of as phases (although they generally are not), but by the mid-seventeenth century only three style zones remained across the same region (Table 7.1). Documentary records do confirm localized intraprovincial settlement aggregation and consolidation in response to ongoing demographic collapse (Worth 1998b:27–29), and very occasional longer-distance interprovincial resettlement of Native towns overseen by Spanish authorities during the early seventeenth century (Worth 1998b:30–32). The vast bulk of this evidence nonetheless demonstrates substantial locational stability for the politico-linguistic units inhabiting this region during the precise era of this ceramic transformation. In other words, despite my early attempts to explain the apparent “homogenization” of six style zones or phases into only three as a product of interprovincial migration before 1650 (Worth 1992:171–182; Worth 1998b:36–37), over decades of research I have been forced to conclude that the weight of evidence is clearly against such an explanation. The unconnected but well-documented later population movements in many of these same regions during the latter half of the seventeenth century un-

questionably postdate the ceramic transformation that happened before 1650 (Worth 2009a, 2009b). Whatever happened within and beyond the expanding mission system to homogenize previously disparate archaeological phases into three broad style zones by the mid-seventeenth century, it happened *in situ* to locationally stable (if declining) populations interacting with one another.

Setting aside for now an explanation of the origins of the three ceramic style zones that are known to have characterized mid-seventeenth-century Spanish Florida, what is nonetheless extremely clear (in the context of a comparatively rich and detailed documentary record) is the fact that they correspond to no social group as traditionally conceived at any scale of analysis. More specifically, as noted in table 7.2, the three regional ceramic style zones that characterized the Florida mission system by 1650—Altamaha-San Marcos, Jefferson, and St. Johns—are characterized by markedly different assemblages of archaeological ceramic types, as distinguished from one another primarily on the basis of paste and surface treatment recorded from sherds. By about 1650, the Altamaha-San Marcos regional style zone, extending along the northern axis of Spanish Florida bordering the Atlantic coastline, encompassed at least three distinct Native American political units (Mocama, Guale, and Escamazu) and crossed not only a major indigenous linguistic boundary, but also the very borders of Spanish missionization and direct political control (Worth 1997a, 2009a). The Jefferson-style zone along the western axis of Spanish Florida, extending across the peninsula to the Gulf of Mexico, encompassed two major political units (Timucua and Apalachee), again crossing a major linguistic boundary (Worth 1998a, 2009a, 2009b). To the south, a third ceramic style zone—St. Johns—extended along the Atlantic coast and inland waterways and lake districts to encompass a number of distinct political units (including the “Freshwater” Timucua and the provinces of Acuera, Mayaca, Surruque, and Ais), crossing yet another major linguistic boundary and extending well beyond the realm of direct Spanish control. The nexus of these new ceramic style zones seems to have been the colonial capital of Spanish Florida, St. Augustine itself, which on a local level appears to have maintained a blend of both the northern (Altamaha-San Marcos) and southern (St. Johns) coastal style zones that intersected there (Waters 2008, 2009:167–169). In colonial Spanish Florida, therefore, Mission Indians were participants in three broad ceramic style zones, each of which comprised potters from multiple political and linguistic affiliations. A Christian Mocama potter living in a mission in northeastern Florida made the same general suite of ceramic types as a non-Christian Escamazu potter living outside the mission system in southeastern South Carolina, and neither spoke the other’s language. Similarly, Apalachee and

Table 7.1. Regional Ceramic-Style Evolution in and around Spanish Florida, c. 1500–1650

Groups c. 1650	Escamazu	Guale	Mocama	Apalachee	Timucua	Potano	Acuera	Ais
Language c. 1650	(Cusabo)	(Guale)	Timucuan	Muskogean	Timucuan	Timucuan	Timucuan	(Ais)
Affiliation/ Religion c. 1650	autonomous/ indigenous	Spanish/ Catholic	Spanish/ Catholic	Spanish/ Catholic	Spanish/ Catholic	Spanish/ Catholic	Spanish/ Catholic	autonomous/ indigenous
Style Zone c. 1650	Altamaha- San Marcos	Altamaha- San Marcos	Altamaha- San Marcos	Jefferson	Jefferson	Jefferson	St. Johns	St. Johns (Malabar)
Style Zone c. 1500	Irene	Irene	San Pedro	Fort Walton	Suwannee Valley	Alachua	St. Johns	St. Johns (Malabar)

Table 7.2. Characteristics of Ceramic Assemblages Comprising Style Zones Discussed

Ceramic Assemblage	Primary Paste	Primary Decoration	Secondary Decorations
Altamaha-San Marcos	sand/grit	rectilinear complicated stamped/ cross-simple stamped	incised, red filmed, check stamped
Jefferson	grog	curvilinear complicated stamped	incised, red filmed, check stamped
St. Johns	sponge spicules	check stamped	incised, red filmed
Lawson Field	sand/grit	roughened (brushed, cob marked)	incised, red filmed, check stamped

Timucuan potters living on opposite ends of the interior western mission chain also shared a single ceramic assemblage (although not a language) that was nonetheless substantially different from those of the Mocama and Escamazu. And all of these potters made ceramics that were substantially different from Christian Acuera and Mayaca and unmissionized Surruque and Ais potters to the south, all of whom spoke languages unintelligible to the previous hypothetical potters. There is simply no level of sociopolitical integration as traditionally defined that is coterminous with the ceramic style zones that developed by 1650 across and beyond the margins of greater Spanish Florida.

Importantly, even beyond mid-seventeenth-century Spanish Florida, this same clear lack of correspondence between archaeologically defined phases and historically described polities and ethnies is also evidenced among Native American groups in other regions and times during the historic era (Figure 7.2). One case in point is the Yuchi Indians, who incorporated themselves into the Creek confederacy during the eighteenth century (e.g., Jackson 2012). They were reported by many contemporary authors to have been fiercely independent from their new neighbors in terms of their language and ethnic identity, but by the end of the eighteenth century the assemblage of ceramic types on well-documented Yuchi sites along the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers was identical to that of their Creek contemporaries, making it impossible to distinguish the assemblages of pottery types made by Yuchi and Creek potters, who would never have considered themselves to be the same people (Braley 1998; Worth 1988, 1997b, 2009b). Even though Creek Agent Benjamin Hawkins (1848:62) claimed of the Yuchi that “they retain all their original customs and laws, and have adopted none of the Creeks,” the archaeological sites of documented Yuchi villages are characterized by the same sand-tempered assemblage of brushed, red filmed, and plain pottery that all their contemporary Creek neighbors also used (the Lawson Field Phase; Knight and Mistovich 1984:226–228), providing clear evidence that the conscious cultural independence of the Yuchi, which was so patently obvious to Hawkins, did not extend to the realm of utilitarian household pottery. Yuchi ethnic identity has been preserved from the moment of their incorporation into the Creek confederacy to the present day, but their pottery reflected the exact opposite: effectively complete assimilation into the local traditions of their Creek neighbors, the very people from whom they otherwise distinguished themselves.

This same phenomenon applies to the hundreds of Yamasee immigrants into the Florida missions during the late seventeenth century, whose ceramic assemblages quickly adapted to match those of their new neighbors in both Mocama and Apalachee (Worth 1997, 2004, 2009). The Atlantic

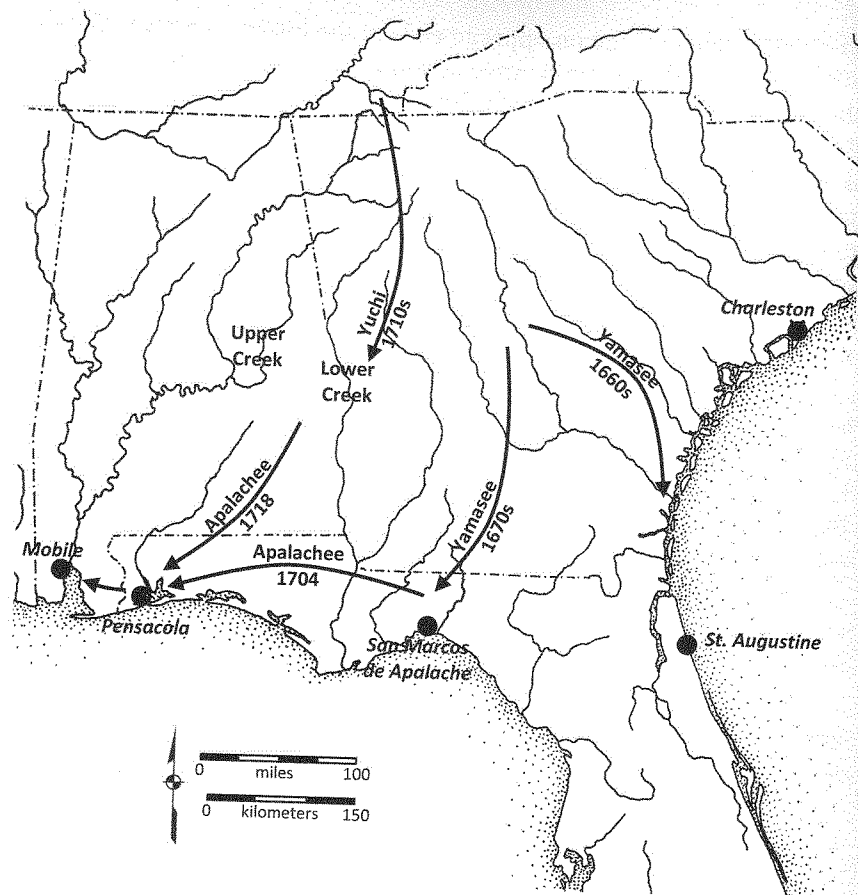


Figure 7.2. Selected colonial migrations in and around Spanish Florida.

coastal Yamasee were explicitly exempted from the requirement to convert to Christianity in exchange for their contribution to the annual Florida labor draft known as the *repartimiento* (Worth 1995:35; 2004:249), and maintained a distinct political and ethnic identity throughout their stay in the missions from the 1660s through the early 1680s. Yet, their archaeological sites display the same Altamaha-San Marcos ceramics then in use by their predominantly Mocama neighbors, who of course had adopted this ceramic tradition from the Guale just a few decades earlier, as noted above. Moreover, after these Yamasee fled the missions en masse following a 1683 pirate raid along the coast, and eventually coalesced by the end of 1684 on the margin of English territory just outside the mission system in the old Escamazu province bordering the then-abandoned Guale mission province, they subsequently continued to produce this same Altamaha-San Marcos ce-

ramic assemblage during the next three decades operating as slave raiders for Carolina traders (e.g., Green and DePratter 2000; Sweeney 2005, 2009; Worth 2009b:199–200). They even continued to produce these same types upon their return to the vicinity of St. Augustine after the 1715 Yamasee War, when they lived near other refugee missions whose inhabitants were also characterized by Altamaha-San Marcos ceramics (e.g., Boyer 2005:81–82; Waters 2008:150–154; White 2002:71–82). Just as was the case for the Yuchi, the Yamasee preserved a distinctive ethnic identity for decades after they settled among the Mission Indians of Florida, but nonetheless seem quickly to have adopted the ceramic practices of their new neighbors.

Details of a similar pattern are now also emerging among the eighteenth-century Apalachee immigrants to the Franco-Spanish borderlands in the far western Florida Panhandle and coastal Alabama. By the end of the seventeenth century, this region seems to have been severely depopulated, except for the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta region, where several communities of Mobila (French Mobilian) and Tomé Indians continued to reside through 1763 (Waselkov and Gums 2000:6–21). The few remnant settlements of Panzacola and Chacato (French Chato) Indians on Pensacola Bay seem to have disappeared not long after the 1698 arrival of the Spanish (Harris 1999:45–49, 2003:265–269; Waselkov and Gums 2000:21–23), but both areas were soon bolstered by an influx of Apalachee Indians from the east. Two major episodes of immigration are documented, including an initial influx of Apalachee refugees into both Spanish Pensacola and French Mobile after the 1704 destruction of the Apalachee mission province by allied English and Creek Indian forces, and the 1718 immigration of Apalachees returning to Spanish territory from exile in Creek territory after the 1715 Yamasee War against English Carolina (Clune et al. 2003: 28–29; Covington 1964; Hann 1988: 305–308; Harris 1999:49–53, 58–62, 2003:269–272; Worth 2008; Worth et al. 2011, 2012). The earliest years of the first Apalachee immigration are captured in archaeological collections from Old Mobile (1702–1711) and Presidio Santa María de Galve (1698–1719) and imply substantial persistence of Jefferson ceramics similar to the San Luís phase in the Apalachee homeland in Tallahassee (Cordell 2001; Harris 1999, 2003:277–292; Silvia 2000:98–148). In contrast, the archaeological signature of local Apalachee ceramics following the second wave of immigration by the northern band of Apalachee refugees is best represented in archaeological collections from Presidio Isla de Santa Rosa (1722–1756) and Mission San Joseph de Escambe (1741–1761) and shows strong affinities to Creek ceramic traditions (particularly the Lower Creek Blackmon phase), although clearly bearing unmistakable traces of their Apalachee heritage as well (Harris 2007; Harris and Eschbach 2006:109–113; Johnson 2012:89–90; Worth et al. 2011,

2012). Beyond this, the contemporary mid-eighteenth-century French-allied Apalachee village site at Blakeley Park on the Tensaw River displays the results of several decades of ceramic change after the initial 1704 migration into the Mobile Bay region (which also sustained indigenous Mobila and Tomé populations throughout the period) and shows both divergence and similarity to the contemporaneous Spanish-allied Apalachee at Mission Escambe not 37 miles away (Melcher 2012; Pigott 2013, 2015). Although the historical scenario is complex, and the archaeological analysis is still ongoing, this case study of the results of the Apalachee diaspora unquestionably provides even further evidence that assemblages of archaeological ceramic types do not correspond neatly to the documented ethnic identity of their makers, but instead seem to vary more directly with geographic proximity within the current social landscape at any given time.

Immigration, however, was not the only catalyst for wholesale stylistic change of utilitarian household ceramics among Southeastern Indians. Returning to my original example above, the *in situ* transformation of the Mocama ceramic style (San Pedro) into that of their Guale neighbors to the north (Altamaha-San Marcos) by 1650, and the contemporaneous transformation of both the Potano and Timucua ceramic styles (Alachua and Suwannee Valleys, respectively) into that of their Apalachee neighbors to the west (the Velda phase, or Jefferson), also provide clear evidence that new patterns of social interaction between polities could also result in ceramic transformation among locationally stable populations (Figure 7.3). In this case, the integration of two or more ceramic style zones, or phases, into a single corridor of transport and interaction under the overarching politico-economic system administered by the Spanish appears to have resulted in homogenization of household ceramics within each of these branches. However, it did not result in a unified ceramic style throughout the entire Florida colonial system, indicating that such transformations were probably more influenced by geographic proximity than political affiliation. The pre-Spanish landscape of warring chiefdoms and long-term social and linguistic boundaries between regional provinces gave way to a sort of pan-Florida *pax hispanum* during the early seventeenth century. Even though both Spanish and Native leaders are documented to have taken great care to recognize and maintain traditional provincial and ethnic distinctions within the northern and western mission chains, by 1650 the previously disparate ceramic style zones along these corridors coalesced into just two styles (Altamaha-San Marcos and Jefferson), not counting the continued persistence of a third style zone (St. Johns) along the short-lived southern mission chain along the St. Johns River drainage (Worth 2009a, 2009b:199, 201–207).

A fuller explanation of this broader phenomenon awaits additional tar-

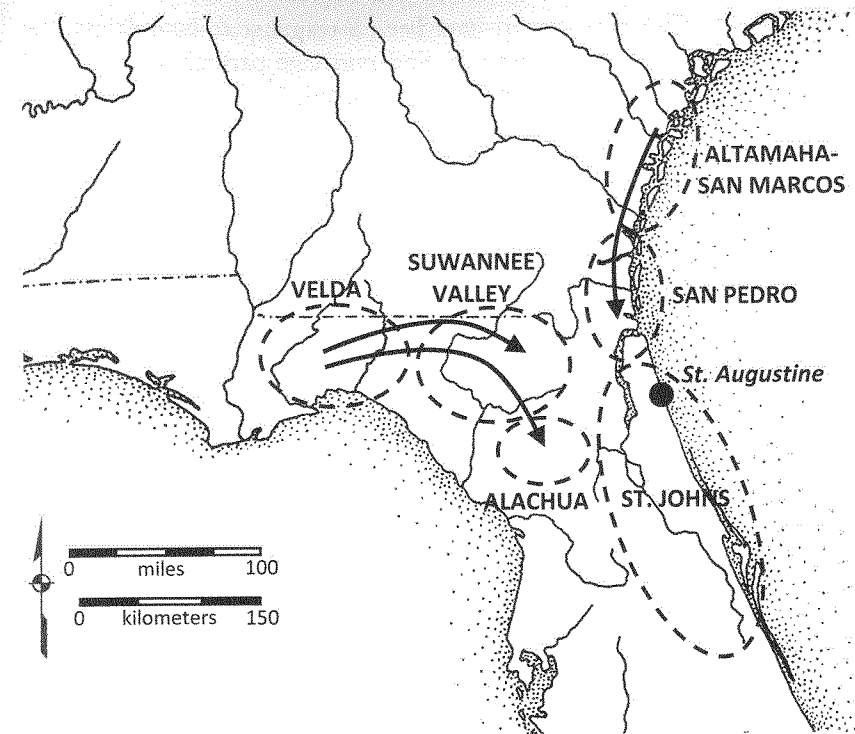


Figure 7.3. In situ ceramic transformations in early seventeenth-century Spanish Florida.

geted research, but it is perhaps telling that the homogenization of ceramics along the northern and western mission chains seems to have followed a pattern where the provinces nearest to St. Augustine, and thus the earliest assimilated and most severely depopulated due to the effect of epidemics and the Spanish labor system, adopted the ceramic style of the most distant provinces, which were not coincidentally more populous and, at least in the case of Apalachee, most recently assimilated. Moreover, this apparent “backflow” of ceramic homogenization literally followed the path of the annual *repartimiento* labor draft, which brought scores of unmarried male workers from the far ends of the mission chain through the most depopulated provinces to St. Augustine for seasonal farm work (Bushnell 1994: 121–123; Worth 1998a:187–197). There is also no documentary evidence for the kind of widespread interprovincial population movements that might otherwise account for this ceramic transformation, and indeed good evidence for its explicit prohibition, at least for men, as recorded in several visitations and other official documents (Hann 1993:119, 214–215; Worth

1998b:22–26). This may in part have been a response to complaints that single women were often unable to find marriage partners and married women were often living without their husbands because of the absence of men working as Spanish laborers, contributing to reduced population growth in already-devastated villages (Menéndez et al. 1657; Worth 1998b: 21–22). As discussed, there is no evidence for a widespread shift to marketplace ceramic production and consumption among Mission Indians, despite recent suggestions by Saunders (2001, 2009, 2012) and Waters (2005:170–175; 2009:176) that the prevalence of Altamaha-San Marcos wares can be explained as a sort of “negotiated tradition” incorporating Spanish consumer preferences into a new marketplace model. Whatever the exact mechanism for the *in situ* ceramic transformations during the early seventeenth century, what seems quite clear is that the assimilation of previously antagonistic groups with different languages into a new overarching colonial system resulted in the homogenization of ceramic styles along each corridor of regional interaction extending away from the colonial hub at St. Augustine.

In all the cases described, increased social interaction between previously separate indigenous groups brought together either by immigration or by *in situ* assimilation into a single society resulted in the adaptation of the ceramic style of the immigrant or least populous group to match that of their proximal neighbors within the same society, even while nonetheless continuing to maintain independent ethnic and political identities as a matter of public knowledge. How quickly such transformations occurred is an empirical question that has yet to be explored in depth, although the temporal scale seems to be one of years rather than decades in several cases. Ongoing and future research using collections from unambiguously identified, well-dated, short-lived, and spatially segregated sites and proveniences holds considerable promise in this regard. Nonetheless, sufficient data are available now to state unequivocally that for Southeastern North America, and likely elsewhere as well, the equivalency of archaeological phases with polities or ethnies is clearly a proposition that must be demonstrated, not assumed. As archaeological phases represent the material manifestation of patterned human behavior, and the explanation of these patterns of behavior remains only an object of study rather than a predrawn conclusion, it seems only logical that we should initially focus our efforts on the behaviors themselves and how those individual behaviors were situated in a broader social context. More specifically, we need to focus on the actual practice of ceramic production and how such practices came into being and were transmitted both spatially and temporally to create and maintain the patterns that we witness in the archaeological record. In short, we need to turn our attention to the social context of learning and practice for the in-

dividual household potters who made the pots from which phases are indirectly constructed.

Landscapes of Practice

The concept of practice employed here corresponds to that embraced by adherents of broader practice theory, which explores the relationships between individual agency and collective structure, between intentionality and habit, and between tradition and change (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Dobres and Hoffman 1994; Dobres and Robb 2000; Dornan 2002; Giddens 1984; Joyce and Lopiparo 2005; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Ortner 1984:144–160, 1992:11–18; Pauketat 2001; Silliman 2001). As elaborated from foundational concepts proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Anthony Giddens (1984), practice theory posits that individual practice generates collective structure while that same structure reflexively influences and shapes individual practice, and situates human actions within the framework of habitual dispositions, or *habitus*, that governs the conscious and unconscious production and reproduction of these structures through daily practice. Much of this literature focuses on the power relationships viewed as implicit in the concepts of agency and structure, particularly as regards the relative degrees of freedom and autonomy exercised by individual agents within a collective structure, and often implicitly presuming or inferring that this relationship is contested or political at some level, even in the arena of mundane daily activities. Even more importantly, practice theorists commonly seem to explore structure and agency in a more generic and universal sense, without explicitly distinguishing fundamentally different types of social structures beyond the obvious “society” and “individual,” even when examined at different scales. As my intention is to examine the exact nature of the social entity that might be responsible for the spatial patterns of human behavior that we see reflected in the archaeological record of ceramic assemblages, especially given that these patterns do not appear to be equivalent to polities or ethnies, I have expanded my view to incorporate useful insights from social learning theory regarding the specific nature of social structures that derive from routinized individual practice, and how such structures may differ from those principally based on explicit social identity.

Social learning theory, which is grounded in a range of disciplines from anthropology and sociology to psychology and education, provides a useful framework for approaching the relationship between individual practice and its social context. In particular, the concept of community of practice would seem to be especially applicable to the phenomenon of household ceramic production and its relationship to social organization and social identity. Ar-

archaeological applications of this concept have been explored by several authors in recent years (e.g., Minar 2001; Minar and Crown 2001), including prehistoric and historic ceramics in the Southeast and elsewhere (Crown 2001; Michelaki 2007; Sassaman and Rudolphi 2001), but the concept nonetheless remains to be operationalized effectively or extensively in archaeological application. A community of practice is defined by Etienne Wenger (1998:72–85) as a special type of community united by three dimensions of coherence: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and shared repertoires. As “an aggregate of people who come together around a mutual engagement in an endeavor . . . defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginnet 1992:464), it represents “a locus of engagement in action, interpersonal relations, shared knowledge, and negotiation of enterprises” (Wenger 1998: 85) and “a historically constructed, ongoing, conflicting, synergistic structuring of activity and relations among practitioners” (Lave and Wenger 1991:56). Moreover, because communities of practice are maintained and reproduced by patterns of learning, they can also be conceptualized as “shared histories of learning” (Wenger 1998:86).

From a spatial perspective, communities of practice can also be conceptualized as forming part of a broader “landscape of practice” on which “the texture of continuities and discontinuities . . . is defined by practice, not by institutional affiliation” (Wenger 1998:118). Indeed, such communities are qualitatively distinct from formal sociopolitical institutions as traditionally defined: “since the life of a community as it unfolds is, in essence, produced by its members through their mutual engagement, it evolves in organic ways that tend to escape formal descriptions and control. The landscape of practice is therefore not congruent with the reified structures of institutional affiliations, divisions, and boundaries. It is not independent of these institutional structures, but neither is it reducible to them” (Wenger 1998:118–119). Not only are communities of practice often discontinuous with traditional sociopolitical units, but they also display dynamic qualities based on the very nature of learning in practice; “the geography of practice reflects histories of learning, but learning continues to reconfigure relations of proximity and distance . . . the landscape of practice is an emergent structure in which learning constantly creates localities that reconfigure the geography” (Wenger 1998:130–131).

In this vein, I propose that archaeological phases or other equivalent “style zones” based on material culture (particularly ceramics) should not be thought of as behavioral byproducts of polities or ethnies for which ceramic style is seen as a natural outgrowth of ethno-political identity, but should instead be conceptualized as the material and spatial trace of past commu-

nities of practice that were fundamentally based on the routine practices of and interactions between the very craftspeople whose behaviors generated the patterned distribution of material culture that archaeologists study. Seen in this light, archaeological phases would be linked first and foremost to the practices of the individuals responsible for the material manifestation of phases, and only secondarily and indirectly to the ethno-political units that framed the social landscape within which such practices took place. Instead of viewing material practice as a unidirectional outgrowth of ethno-political identity, practice and identity are perceived to be independent dimensions of variability, recursively related but each capable of producing distinct material manifestations on the archaeological landscape.

Building upon this proposal, it is useful to highlight Suzanne Eckert’s (2008:2–3, 57–58) recent delineation of the difference between what she calls “communities of practice” and “communities of identity.” Although not explicitly based on the social learning theory concepts outlined above (Eckert and McConnell-Ginnet 1992; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), Eckert’s conceptual framework provides an important discrimination between two broad categories of community that may influence the practice of potters, coinciding quite nicely with the distinction I have alluded to regarding identification based on membership in polities and ethnies, and identification based on shared practice. In her analysis of prehistoric Pueblo pottery in the American Southwest, Eckert defines communities of practice as “social networks in which Pueblo potters learn their craft from other women in the community . . . defined by a shared history of practice and not by spatial constraints” (Eckert 2008:2). She contrasts these with communities of identity, which are “social networks in which potters share a group identity . . . based in a shared language, migration history, religion, kinship, or some other social process” (Eckert 2008:3). She furthermore observes that “as communities of identity are based on social perception, they may or may not correspond to communities of practice” (Eckert 2008:3). Indeed, a major part of her analysis is based on empirically determining which dimensions of ceramic variability may correspond to either or both types of communities.

Incorporating these concepts into my evaluation of the relationship between archaeological phases and historically documented polities and ethnies, I suggest that the most useful approach is to classify archaeologically defined phases as communities of practice, and to classify historically documented polities and ethnies as communities of identity. This is not to say that practice and identity have nothing to do with one another, but rather that each type of community is principally defined by different dimensions of human culture, and that only by disentangling these units and analyzing

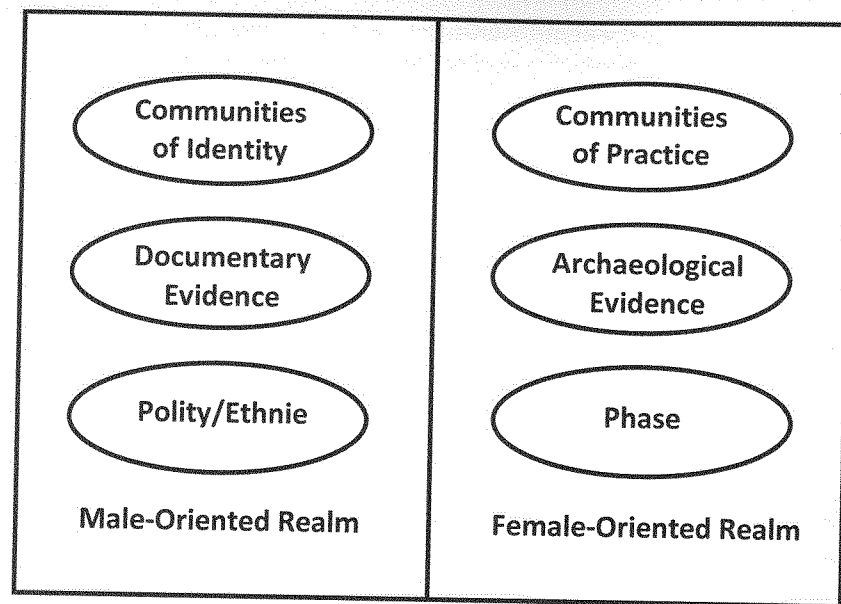


Figure 7.4. Identity vs. ceramic practice for southeastern Indians.

them by separate and appropriate criteria can any correspondence, or lack of correspondence, between the two types of community be demonstrated empirically. Members of a community of identity definitely conceived of themselves (or were identified by others) as belonging to the same social unit but might not necessarily have shared a bond of common practice in all areas of material culture. In contrast, members of a community of practice definitely shared a bond of common practice but might never have conceived of themselves (or have been identified by others) as belonging to the same social unit. Perhaps most importantly from a methodological standpoint, polities and ethnies, as communities of identity, are most readily defined by the belief of membership, whether internal or external, and are therefore most readily observable through the documentary record, which is directly derived from the mental dimension of culture, and which only provides indirect access to the behavioral dimension (Figure 7.4). In direct contrast, phases and other archaeological style zones, as communities of practice, are most readily defined by spatially and temporally distinguishable patterns of routinized behavior, as shaped by learning and interaction, and are therefore most readily observable through the archaeological record, which is directly derived from the behavioral dimension of culture, and which only provides indirect access to the mental dimension.

In detaching social entities based on practice from those based on iden-

tity, researchers will be more effective in their ability to analyze the precise relationship between material practice and ethno-political identity under a variety of different circumstances. Ceramics in particular will no longer be automatically or necessarily linked with political or ethnic identity, but instead with the practices of individual potters whose collective behaviors and interaction made up a different kind of social entity: a community of practice. By no means does this imply that ethno-political identity was never materialized through ceramic practice, or that communities of identity cannot be discovered or reconstructed using archaeological data alone, but rather that the spatial distribution of archaeological ceramics is first and always a function of the landscape of practice, and only when specific practices can reasonably be inferred to have communicated or corresponded to ethno-political identity can those communities of practice be concluded to reflect or equate with corresponding communities of identity. In other words, archaeological materials represent materialized practice, so communities of identity can only be reconstructed indirectly through equivalent communities of practice, and such equivalence must be demonstrated, not assumed.

Worth reiterating here is the fact that in Southeastern North America these communities of ceramic practice were almost certainly made up of women, whereas the more familiar communities of ethno-political identity were traditionally dominated by men, making this distinction between types of communities particularly relevant to archaeological studies of gender. Moreover, in this context, we can actually explore the specific conditions under which ceramic style zones either corresponded to or crosscut political or linguistic boundaries, or under which immigrants or refugees either maintained, modified, or abandoned their ceramic traditions while nonetheless maintaining their distinctive ethnic identities. We can furthermore tease apart those elements, scales, and dimensions of ceramic learning and practice that may have reflected different degrees of correspondence to, or difference from, the ethno-political landscape within which potters found themselves. This includes breaking down the exact operational sequences, or *chaînes opératoires* (Dietler and Herbich 1989, 1998; Gosselain 1998, 2000; Lemonnier 1986; Stark 1998), involved in ceramic production, and the social context of each step, as has been done fruitfully by archaeologists in other areas of North America (e.g., Crown 2007; Michelaki 2007). What this approach really means is that we will be examining archaeological material culture as a result of practice, and separately addressing the extent to which these practices may or may not have been coterminous with political or ethnic categories so familiar to us from the documentary record. Admittedly, the bulk of this research remains to be carried out and will undoubtedly require substantial revisitation of older conclusions and reanalysis of exist-

ing collections and databases in a new framework. Nevertheless, the disentanglement of ceramic practice from ethno-political identity will allow us to make more effective and reliable interpretations based on empirical evidence drawn variously from either the archaeological or the documentary realm, or both simultaneously. Given the undeniable importance to archaeologists of ceramic analysis in reconstructing the social geography of both the prehistoric and historic past, the reconceptualization of archaeological phases as communities of practice instead of communities of identity may provide us with an important tool in bridging the ontological and methodological gap between prehistory and history. To this end, I offer some preliminary proposals toward operationalizing this concept in specifically archaeological analyses.

Operationalizing the Landscape of Practice Concept

Pivotal to any definition of archaeological phases as communities of practice is an acknowledgment of both the geographic and chronological dimensions inherent to their definition. Specifically, communities of practice always exist within a broader landscape of practice, and these landscapes have histories. As practice is ultimately manifested through the actions of individual agents, each with their own histories but acting within a current social context, communities of practice are dynamic entities in daily reinvention by their constituent members interacting with one another. They therefore evolve over time in response to the constant push-and-pull interplay between continuity and change. Simply put, local and regional phase chronologies originally formulated by culture historians are nothing more than the material manifestations of historical landscapes of practice. The socially and historically contextualized practices of individual potters manifested themselves as more or less distinctive communities of practice in a broader landscape of practice, and as those practices and contexts evolved over time, so too did the landscape itself. Practices may have changed yet the community itself may have remained constant, or practices may have remained the same while the community grew or diminished within the broader social landscape.

It is furthermore important to emphasize that defining a community of practice based on surviving archaeological traces of the end-product of that shared practice necessitates a sufficiently detailed and nuanced understanding of what that practice actually entailed. The *chaîne opératoire* involved in producing a finished ceramic vessel encompassed a series of choices and actions in four major domains of practice, including selection and preparation of raw materials for the clay paste, fabrication of the ves-

sel itself, application of decorations or other surface treatments on the surface of the vessel, and its firing (*sensu* Tite 1999:182, 184–191). Even within a model of local-scale household ceramic production under consideration here, the individual practices within each of these four domains may have been performed in a slightly different social context, or even by different individuals within a household. Moreover, not all of these practices had equal relevance in the context of day-to-day social interactions between the potters who made up the broader community of ceramic practice (see discussion by Carr 1995:185–215 on the “visibility hierarchy” of artifact design). Highlighting this, Gosselain (2000:191–193) categorizes stages in the manufacturing process “according to salience, technical malleability, and the social context in which the techniques are learned and conducted,” breaking ceramic production practices down into three broad categories: (1) “techniques that leave visible evidence on the finished products” and that are technically malleable because their “motifs and tools” may readily be changed, (2) techniques that “cannot be ‘read’ on the finished product” but that are nonetheless still malleable, and (3) techniques that “leave no apparent traces on the finished product” and that are more resistant to change because they rely on “specialized gestures” or “motor habits” internalized through early learning and repeated practice.

The importance of these distinctions lies in the relationship between individual practice and its broader social context and more specifically highlights those specific practices that have the greatest likelihood of being altered by postlearning social interaction. This is the foundation of the community of practice concept, which I suggest provides a mechanism to operationalize both the Bourdieuan concept of *habitus* and the Giddensian concept of structuration using archaeological data. In Gosselain’s formulation, techniques in the first category allow “a wide range of people to be aware of potters’ behavior and, consequently, to influence potters’ choices of techniques,” resulting in visual qualities that “render them especially likely to be ascribed aesthetic, economic, or symbolic values and thus consciously borrowed or manipulated” (Gosselain 2000:191). The techniques in the second category are generally only recognized by “a limited category of people—fellow potters and their assistants,” meaning “the adoption of new techniques occurs infrequently, primarily when artisans relocate their homes or clay sources or both, or seek to produce a new type of pottery artifact” (Gosselain 2000:192). The third category involves techniques that are “especially resistant to change” because they are acquired “during early socialization involving deep and formal relationships with a limited set of people, usually close relatives” (Gosselain 2000:192–193).

Elaborating on this point, table 7.3 presents a simplified matrix of rele-

Table 7.3. Ceramic Practice Domains

Domain	Overt/Malleable	Obscure/Malleable	Obscure/ Resistant
Paste Preparation	(some) Clay Selection (some) Tempering Agent(s)*	(most) Clay Selection (some) Tempering Agent(s)* Clay-processing Technique	—
Vessel Fabrication	Vessel Form Secondary Forming of Decorative Features*	Vessel-forming Technique	Motor Habits of Vessel Formation
Surface Treatment	Surface Treatment Technique* Decorative Style (Gross Scale)*	Decorative Style (Fine Scale)*	Motor Habits of Surface Treatment
Firing	Firing Atmosphere	Firing Temperature	—

*Readily observable from sherds

vant practices grouped by domains (Tite 1999) and degrees of visibility and malleability (Gosselain 1999). Within the four domains of ceramic practice, specific practices are grouped as to the relative degree of social visibility (whether more overt or obscure) and the extent to which they were prone to being adopted or manipulated consciously (whether more malleable or resistant to change). Beyond this, I have also highlighted those practices that are more readily observable from sherds alone and thus better suited for routine archaeological analysis. This table illustrates the fact that some practices within the *chaîne opératoire* are more likely than others to be picked up and spread among potters, although only some of these practices are susceptible to identification by analysis of archaeological sherds alone.

A thorough analysis of the entire suite of socially contextualized practices comprising ceramic production would, in theory, permit the comprehensive reconstruction of a "living community of ceramic practice" among the Southeastern Indian groups under consideration here. But archaeologists are necessarily limited to those practices that left material traces readily observed in archaeological assemblages and must therefore rely on a somewhat narrow subset of the original totality of ceramic practice. As archaeologists normally classify ceramics into typologies based on macroscopic attributes observable in broken vessel fragments (potsherds), those domains of the ceramic *chaîne opératoire* that are readily observable in sherds (such as temper and surface treatment) tend to take priority over those (especially vessel form) that do not in definitions of archaeological ceramic types (e.g., Colton and Hargrave 1937:2–3; Krieger 1940:9; Phillips 1958:119, 123; Scarry 1985:199–210; Wheat et al. 1958; Willey 1949:5–6). Furthermore, as

archaeological phases have historically been defined based on the relative proportions of types created in this manner, it naturally follows that if we are to define archaeological phases as communities of practice, we must explicitly acknowledge the specific domains of ceramic practice drawn upon to create these archaeological ceramic types. Consequently, when we speak of an archaeologically defined community of specifically ceramic practice, we are actually referring to an interacting community of potters who can be demonstrated through sherd analysis to have shared a similar set of practices with regard to the domains of paste preparation (particularly tempering agents, or aplastics) and surface treatment (both decorative and otherwise), including not just the techniques (tools and execution of designs), but their stylistic content as well. Practices associated with the vessel form domain, although clearly less evident in assemblages of sherds, nonetheless can still form part of the observed set of practices, especially with secondary decorative features commonly associated with vessel rims.

I suggest that the concept of a community of practice must necessarily remain somewhat flexible in terms of both scale and composition, to allow it to be adapted to particular cases and circumstances where appropriate. Nevertheless, the term "community" must imply something more specific than simply a collection of craftspeople at any scale who happen to share one or two practices in common, which I would relegate to a "horizon of practice" (defined below; see also Carr 1995:236–246 for a broader discussion of what he calls the "geographic distribution hierarchy"). If we accept the documentary evidence that utilitarian household ceramics were indeed normally produced by female potters among the late prehistoric and early historic Southeastern Indians, and furthermore that ceramic production and consumption took place predominantly in the household context, then a community of ceramic practice may be defined as that group of female potters whose individual ceramic *chaînes opératoires* had come to resemble one another as a result of the mutual and reflexive influence of other potters from whom and with whom they learned, with whom they practiced, or whose crafts were routinely available for firsthand inspection. In this context, the empirical evidence reviewed in this chapter supports the following inferences for the region and time periods under consideration:

1. Greater social interaction tended to result in greater similarity of ceramic practice.
2. The current social and material environment of a potter tended to exert a greater influence on her ceramic practice than her past social and material environment.

3. Physical proximity (geography) tended to play a more important role than social proximity (political/ethnic identity) with respect to social interactions within the broader landscape of practice.

These inferences can be summed up by stating that communities of ceramic practice seem to reflect an underlying tendency of household potters to conform to the existing practices of the neighboring potters with whom they interacted most regularly, or whose pots they saw or used routinely. Utilitarian household ceramics therefore may be interpreted to reflect an ethic of conformity and social unity rather than distinctiveness and social division. Consequently, the landscape of practice within which individual communities of practice may be mapped is in actuality a reflection of the landscape of social interaction among female potters, with degrees of similarity or difference in local or regional ceramic practice reflecting the extent of such interaction. Empirical data already reviewed in this chapter make it clear that even profound linguistic differences between neighboring polities, villages, or families did not necessarily hinder the kinds of interaction that led to increasing similarity of ceramic practice.

More specifically to the point of this chapter, if we take archaeological assemblages of potsherds as the material manifestation of *chaînes opératoires* of the female potters who produced them, and the geographical distribution of these assemblages as a reasonably accurate reflection of not just their final location of discard, but also their original production and use in household context, then by evaluating the degrees of geographic variation between these assemblages (continuous vs. discontinuous, homogeneous vs. heterogeneous), archaeologists are actually mapping past landscapes of ceramic practice, corresponding to past landscapes of interaction between female potters. Consequently, to the extent that archaeologists have developed typologies that allow them to define archaeological phases based on the presence/absence and relative percentages of named ceramic types, these phases may be considered the geographically bounded material manifestations of past communities of ceramic practice.

It is important to recognize that archaeological phases have historically been defined and subsequently reified using widely variable standards with more or less rigorous measures of empirical sufficiency, at least as regards the extent to which intraphase assemblage variation is (or is not) demonstrably less than interphase variation and what amount of data is minimally sufficient to make such assertions. One could easily argue, for example, that the many late prehistoric and early historic phases defined for northern Georgia and Alabama (among many other examples across the Southeastern United States) are more a reflection of the geographically discontinu-

ous distribution of settlement across the broader landscape (e.g., "site clusters" located along productive floodplains within major river valleys) than they are a rigorously tested collection of comparably robust site-level datasets demonstrating statistical clustering of ceramic assemblages within each phase (but see Foster 2004). Nevertheless, even though additional research is clearly needed to evaluate the level of ceramic variation both within and between such phases, available literature indicates that archaeological phases are generally distinguished from one another principally using the relative proportion of ceramic types (commonly percentages by count) within sherd assemblages from archaeological proveniences identified as belonging to the appropriate time period (e.g., Blitz and Lorenz 2006:62–73; Hally 1970:13–22, 1986, 1994a:149–152; Hally and Langford 1988:47, 59, 71; Hally and Rudolph 1986:41, 56, 67–68; Knight 1985:9–13, 1994:186–189; Knight and Mistovich 1984:222–228; Moore 2002:174–184; Williams and Shapiro 1990:39–80). Even though many researchers have incorporated additional subtypological stylistic variables in their characterizations of and comparisons between phases, the fundamental definitions of phases seem to rely principally on the ceramic types themselves.

If we examine these ceramic types through the lens of the landscapes of practice framework outlined above, then archaeological phases as traditionally defined represent more or less geographically bounded clusters of contemporaneous archaeological sites bearing evidence for a common set of practices within two primary domains of the overall *chaîne opératoire*, namely clay paste preparation (temper selection) and surface treatment (techniques and decorative styles), as supplemented by limited sherd-based evidence from the vessel fabrication domain (primary vessel form and secondary decorative features). The choice of specific practices employed within each of these domains were rarely if ever completely uniform, and thus the common ceramic *chaîne opératoire* that would be considered definitional for an archaeological phase would normally include a suite of several different practices employed in roughly the same relative proportions by all potters living within the area encompassed by the phase. It is important to emphasize here that whole-site archaeological assemblages commonly comprise the sum total of all discarded sherds from broken vessels of all different types, sizes, and functions, each of which may have been produced, used, broken, and discarded in different relative proportions, meaning that just because two alternative decorative techniques appear in equal proportions in the final archaeological assemblage does not necessarily mean that every vessel had an equal chance of being decorated with either technique. Equally plausible is the explanation that each decoration belonged exclusively to a different vessel form or size category, or perhaps even that the

decorations were applied to different areas of the same vessels. As archaeologists are commonly obligated to work from aggregate data based on shattered ceramic vessels, the proportionality reflected in ceramic type counts also reflects the aggregate of all practices employed by all potters who made many different vessel forms and sizes over the course of their residence at a given archaeological site.

Because archaeological phases have normally been defined by archaeologists based on a common set of choices by female potters with regard to which tempers would be added to their utilitarian household vessels and in what relative proportions, and which surface treatment techniques and decorative styles would be applied to these vessels and in what proportions, and to some extent also by aspects of the shape of some of their vessels, as well as some decorative secondary features, then here we have an operational definition of a ceramic community of practice that can be employed for archaeological assemblages of sherds. Specifically, a ceramic community of practice represents a geographic area within which female potters interacted frequently enough with one another through initial learning or ongoing ceramic practice, or saw enough of each others' finished pottery, to adapt several fundamental aspects of their own individual ceramic *chaînes opératoires* to match that of the rest of the potters in that same geographic area. This included not just the most overt and malleable practices of surface treatment and decoration, which could presumably be perceived and copied individually based solely on the finished vessels in their neighbors' households, but also some of the more obscure practices that seem most likely to have been picked up through the shared collecting and processing of clays and tempers, or through more in-depth conversations with other potters. Nevertheless, the end result of such a community of ceramic practice was a geographic area within which utilitarian household pottery assemblages (analyzed as aggregate collections of sherds) evidenced substantial similarity in both the overt characteristics of surface treatment, vessel form, and temper, as well as more visually obscure characteristics of both temper and decorative style.

Taking this a step further, individual communities of practice are best defined with reference to the broader landscape of practice of which they formed a part. In an effort to map out these landscapes applying the same criteria used to define communities, if we break down each of these readily observable ceramic practice domains into a series of major and readily distinguishable practices (such as brushed vs. stamped vs. incised vs. plain surface treatment), or simply axes of variation along a continuum of practice (such as thick to thin incised lines), it naturally follows that each specific practice, while linked to the *chaîne opératoire* of which it formed a step or

stage, may have been characterized by its own distinct distribution in both time and space, as framed of course within the spatial distribution of inhabited sites on the physical landscape. Experience shows that in Southeastern North America, for example, the geographic distribution of Native American ceramic tempers during the early historic era differed from the contemporaneous distribution of surface decorations, overlapping in some areas and not in others. Furthermore, these geographic distributions changed over time, such that for example one may speak of the "spread" of shell-tempered ceramics over the course of several centuries during the late prehistoric era (e.g., Feathers 2006; Feathers and Peacock 2008; Weinstein and Dumas 2008), or the emergence of a completely new "brushed pottery horizon" during the historic era within the historically documented territory of the Creek Indians (Cantley and Joseph 1991:205; Knight 1985:188). As it happened, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, these two specific horizons overlapped for a time, but this, too, was only temporary, and shell-tempered brushed ceramics (the type Walnut Roughened) were eventually replaced by sand-tempered brushed ceramics (Chattahoochee Roughened), leaving the distribution of shell tempering and brushing largely separate from one another by the end of the eighteenth century (e.g., Foster 2007:90–94; Knight 1994).

Although each of these "horizons of practice" represents the physical manifestation of a geographically extensive group of contemporaneous potters who employed the same specific practice as part of their own individual *chaînes opératoires*, such horizons are not equivalent to communities of practice, but instead form part of the broader landscape of practice within which such communities existed. A single decorative technique forms only one of several ceramic practices in multiple domains used to define an archaeological ceramic type, and a single ceramic type forms only one part of an assemblage of types employed to define an archaeological phase. Furthermore, phases are not defined solely by the presence or absence of types, but rather by their relative proportions among sherd assemblages within each phase. Horizons of practice, therefore, are not simply two-dimensional plots of the simple existence of a particular practice, but should instead be viewed as three-dimensional contour maps showing both the spatial bounds of a practice as well as its proportional frequency with respect to other practice choices within the same domain (see Foster 2004 for one approach). In this context, then, a community of ceramic practice might be mapped out as the spatially bounded locus of overlap between all the various three-dimensional horizons of ceramic practice that formed part of the *chaîne opératoire* used in household pottery production within each community of practice. The geographic configuration of the loci formed by these overlap-

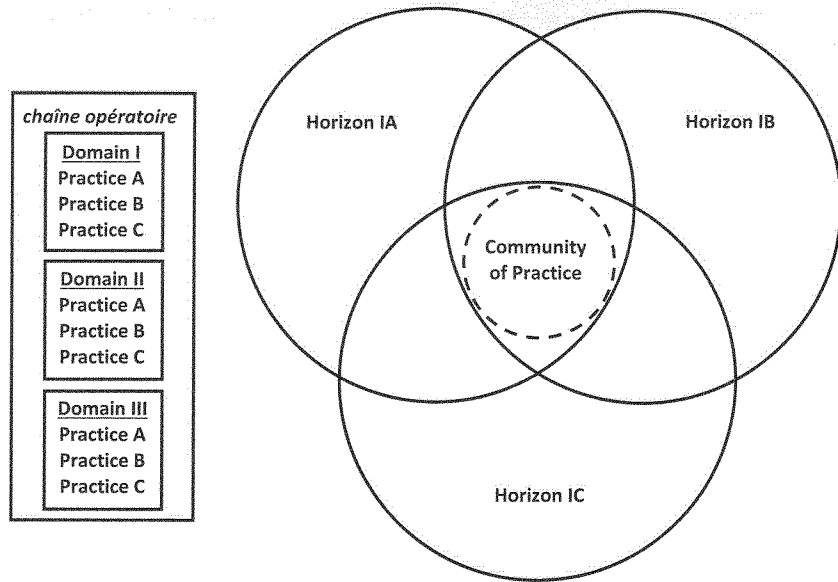


Figure 7.5. Partial schematic of a landscape of practice.

ping horizons of practice would effectively map out the broader landscape of practice which evolved historically as a continually "emergent structure" (Wenger 1998:130). Not only could these horizons expand and contract spatially across the inhabited portions of the physical landscape over the course of time as the pattern of social interaction between potters changed, but also within each horizon the contours of its proportional density changed over time, reflecting the rise and fall of the relative abundance of that particular practice within its domain (Figure 7.5).

For the sake of clarity, a few operational definitions are warranted here, specifically focusing on the operationalization of the landscape of practice theory for studying household ceramic production:

1. *Practice*: A specific technique or technical choice employed as a part of a particular domain in a *chaîne opératoire* (e.g., shell tempering, coil construction, incising); the term also refers in a general sense to the routine habitual behaviors of individual craftspeople in the past.
2. *Domain of Practice*: A category of functionally related practices within a *chaîne opératoire* (e.g., paste preparation, vessel fabrication, surface treatment).
3. *Chaîne Opératoire*: The operational sequence of practices (broken

down into several functional domains) associated with the production of a specific class of material culture, in this case ceramics; this can refer to the specific sequence used to produce one ceramic type or vessel type, or to the aggregate set of practices employed by a potter to produce an entire suite of vessel types.

4. *Horizon of Practice*: A geographically bounded area encompassing the contemporaneous spatial distribution of a single practice, incorporating both the presence and relative frequency of that practice in comparison to alternative practices within a particular domain.

5. *Community of Practice*: The geographically bounded aggregate of craftspeople with a common *chaîne opératoire* resulting from shared histories of learning and practice, as manifested materially as a locus formed by the intersection of multiple horizons of practice reflected in the spatial distribution of material culture produced by this process.

6. *Landscape of Practice*: The geographic space within which communities of practice exist as loci of overlap between the horizons of practices associated with a specific *chaîne opératoire*.

7. *Ceramic Type*: An analytical unit of archaeological potsherd classification characterized by a defined set of practices from multiple domains in a ceramic *chaîne opératoire* that consistently co-occur on individual sherds; as it is based on sherds, two or more ceramic types may be associated with any given ceramic vessel, and each ceramic type may occur independently on multiple vessel types.

8. *Vessel Type*: An ethnographic unit of whole-vessel classification characterized by a defined set of practices from multiple domains in a ceramic *chaîne opératoire* that consistently co-occur on individual vessels; each vessel type may encompass multiple sherd-based ceramic types.

Although several of these definitions clearly correspond to roughly equivalent units employed by culture historians decades ago (e.g., phases as communities of practice, or traits as practices), this is no mere rebranding of antiquated concepts with new terminology or redefinition of old terms (such as ceramic types). Instead, my intent is to shift the focus away from the static, normative culture historical units constructed using the material end results of ceramic practice and redirect our attention toward the underlying practices of individual potters, teasing apart the exact social context of both learning and practice for each step within the entire ceramic *chaîne opératoire*, and weaving these contextualized practices into the fabric of an evolving landscape of practice.

Reconciling Landscapes of Practice and Identity

To bring this chapter full circle, my conclusion that geographic variability in archaeological ceramics is best viewed through the lens of practice, and that archaeological phases correspond better to communities of practice than communities of identity, is only one step in exploring the fundamental and complex relationship between practice and identity and material culture. In this particular adaptation of practice theory, the task of the archaeologist is not just to identify and distinguish the suite of choices that each potter practiced in producing their pottery within their own community of practice, but also to harness empirical data regarding the geographic distribution (horizon) of each practice over time. This should be part of an effort to reconstruct more precisely the social context of learning and practice involved in its origination, spread, reproduction, and eventual replacement or disappearance, all within the operational context of the broader ceramic *chaîne opératoire* that produced the assemblages of vessel types (and subordinate archaeological ceramic types which crosscut vessel types). Moreover, detailed analysis of these contextualized practices may provide insights that will help explain why certain practices persisted longer than others under specific circumstances, such as migration or *in situ* shifts in social interaction networks among potters. Finally, only by examining individual practices within the various practice domains making up such an operational sequence will it be possible to clarify which, if any, of these practices have been connected directly to the communication of social identity at any scale of social integration, from families to communities to polities. As I have emphasized, the coexistence of both communities of practice and communities of identity within the same social landscape does not guarantee automatic correspondence between the two realms, nor even does any demonstrated correspondence necessarily prove a causal link between a community of practice and a community of identity that happen to be coterminous. Each type of community must be studied independently using appropriate and available data, and only by first disentangling the two can any demonstrable connection between communities of practice (such as archaeological phases) and communities of identity (such as polities or ethnies) be established empirically. Only then can the exact reasons for any congruence (or lack thereof) be explored in a systematic and rigorous manner.

Paradoxically, the "norms" of practice shared by potters within each community of practice were in fact produced by the individual agency of female potters, each of whom effectively chose to conform (or was unconsciously habituated to conformity) to a shared *chaîne opératoire* that reproduced itself through the practices of community members. In fact, the relationship de-

scribed here between individual potters and the community of practice that emerged organically from their collective practice bears very obvious parallels to the Bourdieuan concept of *habitus* and Giddensian concept of structuration, as noted above (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984). It is important to highlight, however, that in this instance a ceramic community of practice is actually an aggregate unit comprised solely of female potters practicing their craft within a broader social landscape made up of many other members of the society or societies in which the potters lived. As I have detailed, this more comprehensive social landscape is perhaps best characterized as a landscape of identity, the spatial configuration of which, while obviously shaped and constrained by the natural environment, was likely also dominated by geopolitical concerns of warring chiefdoms and chiefly confederations at different scales and levels of complexity. These two landscapes coexisted and overlapped one another, and while the landscape of ceramic practice (comprising female household potters) may be seen as a subset of the landscape of sociopolitical identity (encompassing everyone inhabiting a given region), this does not necessarily mean that the membership and geographic distribution of communities of practice corresponded directly to that of the communities of identity within which they were situated. In other words, although the constituent members of communities of ceramic practice necessarily lived within communities of sociopolitical identity, the geographic distribution of their interactions was not necessarily constrained by boundaries between communities in the broader landscape of identity. As discussed, the configuration of these two landscapes was based on fundamentally different dimensions of culture; communities of practice were defined by mutually shared histories of learning and practice as opposed to conscious belief in or awareness of membership. Communities of practice and identity interpenetrated one another at various levels, and the complex relationship between both landscapes must be viewed as an object of empirical study rather than a theoretical assumption.

As a final comment, I have identified one approach to this type of research, namely the evaluation of familiar archaeological phases defined by the relative proportions of archaeological ceramic types to determine if they actually correspond to the historically documented polities and ethnies of their makers. But exploring landscapes of practice can and should examine similar questions at both large and small scales of analysis, including dimensions of ceramic variability at the subtypological level. By embracing the perspective of landscapes of practice, however, I am by no means advocating the abandonment of traditional ceramic typological analysis. Instead, I suggest that we must both acknowledge and make use of the fact that existing archaeological ceramic types are the material manifestation of those

ceramic production practices that left the traces most readily observed in the analysis of potsherds. Each of those practices formed part of a specific practice domain within the *chaîne opératoire* followed by each potter in practicing her craft, and each practice was learned and practiced in its own social context, potentially resulting in a distinctive social and resulting spatial horizon for that practice. Even though the best way to recognize communities of practice (phases) may well be the tried-and-true method employing the relative percentages of ceramic types in archaeological assemblages, the most effective way to evaluate the reasons for their geographic distribution (and whether such communities of practice correspond to other social entities such as polities or ethnies) is to break each ceramic type down into the specific practices that it manifested and explore their individual distributions within the broader landscape of practice.

To this end, in an effort to examine stylistic variability within a single ceramic type in a single archaeological phase, more than two decades ago I conducted a study of incised design motifs excavated from households within the well-studied sixteenth-century Coosa chiefdom in northwest Georgia (Worth 2010; n.d.). The ceramic type Lamar Bold Incised was chosen for stylistic analysis principally because the designs seemed to possess characteristics that would make them likely candidates to communicate social identity. They were created freehand for each new vessel, represented a limited range of simple geometric figures, and were crafted on the most visible upper surfaces of vessels commonly employed in serving food. After breaking the designs down into hierarchical design configurations based on primary motifs and secondary (or filler and border) elements, and isolating a series of discrete "design types" generated empirically, I was able to compare the roster of design types present on vessels recovered from 10 individual households in two communities within two distinct archaeological site clusters in the same historically documented chiefdom (Hally 2008; Hudson et al. 1985; Smith 2000). Just as was the case for ceramic assemblages defined by types, there was no level of social integration, from the household to the chiefdom, displaying the kind of ceramic homogeneity that would imply the use of ceramic decorative motifs to signal group identity. Instead, the continuum of stylistic variability observed seemed a much better match for a model of interacting potters drawing upon a small suite of motifs decreasing in similarity with social distance between potters.

Viewed from the perspective of ceramic practice, household potters living near one another in the same community clearly shared a common suite of readily visible design choices for their incised decorations, and although the number of designs was similar for each household, the exact roster of choices decreased in similarity with social and geographic distance. The pot-

ters in each household made use of no more than about 10 design types, slight variability between households increased that number to roughly 15 design types for the community, and additional variability between communities in different site clusters broadened the variation to some 21 design types. Overall, however, similarities seemed to outweigh differences in terms of how members of these communities incised decorations on their pots, which of course accounts for the fact that all of them fall within the same archaeological phase (Barnett), and all the sherds bearing such decorations fall within the same archaeological ceramic type (Lamar Bold Incised). This type has a huge geographic extent, but the individual horizons of practice for each specific design motif are far more limited, although similar stylistic analysis has yet to be conducted in rigorous detail for other Lamar assemblages elsewhere in the Southeastern United States (but see Hally 1994a:151, 153–154). In my view, however, such analyses hold considerable promise for elucidating the landscape of ceramic practice at both the micro- and macroscale, providing an empirical base from which to reconstruct the social landscape of those potters, including the communities of practice and identity to which they belonged simultaneously.

In conclusion, applying the tenets of practice theory and social learning theory to the culture-historical concept of archaeological phases engenders a useful and instructive balance between individual agency and collective social structure within a broader landscape of practice and gives archaeologists a practical mechanism for linking preserved material culture directly to both. For ceramic analysis, each individual potsherd is seen as the material product of routinized practices of individual potters situated in a complex social web comprising not just the community of ceramic practice in which they learned and practiced their craft, but also other communities defined more by perceived identity than shared practice. Ontologically, all of these communities truly existed only in the socially contextualized behaviors and thoughts of the individuals that comprised them (in effect, their *habitus*), and it was precisely this recursive relationship between multiple communities of individuals acting and thinking in relationship to one another, as both individuals and as a collective whole, within interpenetrating landscapes of both practice and identity, that simultaneously imparted both stability and dynamism to the entire cultural system. It should therefore come as no surprise that assemblages of archaeological ceramic types defined using observed traces of these practices can be empirically demonstrated to form the archaeological phases and phase chronologies on which culture historians relied so heavily, any more than it should surprise us that those phases are not directly equivalent to the polities and ethnies portrayed in contemporaneous documentary texts and maps. Practice and identity are

inextricably related to one another in every realm of material culture, and it is in these relationships that individual social identities are formed and reproduced. But defining the nature of that relationship using archaeological materials requires a detailed reconstruction of the historical landscapes of practice that coexisted and overlapped with the landscapes of identity that are much more familiar to the ethnohistorical record. This is one area where a truly historical archaeology, drawing simultaneously on material and textual traces of past cultures in any time or place, can provide an empirical testing ground for robust methodological and theoretical insights that will not only strengthen the practice of archaeology in general, but also contribute to the broader anthropological understanding of the fundamental relationship between practice, identity, and materiality at all scales of social integration.

Acknowledgments

This chapter is the culmination of more than two decades of musing about the nature of ceramics and ethnicity, and I am grateful to many colleagues and students who have encouraged me and given me input and feedback as I developed the concepts expressed herein. Although it would be excessive to attempt to list them all here, Norma Harris deserves singling out because of our many conversations on the subject over the course of many years, as does Becky Saunders, whose extensive work in this arena has continuously spurred me to develop my own sometimes divergent ideas, and with whom I have also had many fruitful and pleasant discussions. For this chapter, I am particularly thankful for valuable direct feedback by Ramie Gougeon, Jennifer Melcher, and Victor Thompson, and for productive in-depth discussions on the implications of the subject with Gregg Harding. I am also grateful for the editorial assistance provided by Greg Waselkov and Marvin Smith, as well as the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript.

8

PLANT USE AT A MISSISSIPPIAN AND CONTACT-PERIOD SITE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA COASTAL PLAIN

Kandace D. Hollenbach

The concept of “foodways” refers to the ways in which people procure, produce, prepare, display, consume, store, and discard food (Johannessen 1993). These activities are tightly wound into culture and identity, both shaping and shaped by the individuals who perform and observe them. Food choices reflect and influence a person’s identities: ethnicity, group, class, religion, family, gender, age, and more (e.g. Goody 1982; Mintz 1985; Twiss 2007). Following the familiar adage, the foods we eat (and how we procure, prepare, eat, and dispose of them) tell us something about who we are.

Fortunately, much of the archaeological record pertains to daily tasks associated with foodways. For instance, projectile points and knives reflect hunting and butchering activities. Ceramics inform us about cooking, display, and storage of food. Plant and animal remains derive from gathering, planting, harvesting, fishing, trapping, sharing, and sometimes feasting. The study of foodways thus provides a perspective for analyzing and interpreting artifacts and ecofacts, and ultimately an avenue for understanding the cultures and identities of the people who made, used, and consumed them.

Here I examine changes in plant use at a location in the South Carolina coastal plain over the course of some seven centuries, by reference to archaeological plant remains from three occupations of the Riverfront Village site (38AK933). From these data, we can see continuity in foodways from the Early Mississippian to the early Contact-period occupations of the site and distinct changes between the early and late Contact-period occupations. How Native people at Riverfront Village managed their local landscape and interacted with their own and European communities in the region changed substantially by the early eighteenth century. These changes in foodways and relationships would have affected their identity as a group, sometimes reinforcing differences between themselves and their neighbors, and other times blurring these lines.