

**An Ethnohistorical Synthesis of Southeastern Chiefdoms:
How does Coosa compare?**

John E. Worth
Randell Research Center
Florida Museum of Natural History

Abstract

During the nearly two decades since the publication of Hudson et al.'s landmark study of the Coosa chiefdom, a considerable amount of new ethnohistorical research has been directed at this and many other chiefdoms across the Southeast. This is particularly the case with chiefdoms that were either assimilated within or had more regular contact with greater Spanish Florida than did Coosa between the 16th and 18th centuries. This paper examines the Coosa chiefdom within the context of an overall ethnohistorical synthesis of Southeastern chiefdoms, and also presents recently-discovered documentary evidence confirming details of the 1560 Spanish-Coosa raid on the Napochies.

Paper presented in the symposium "Coosa: Twenty Years Later" at the 60th annual Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Charlotte, North Carolina, November 15, 2003.

One of the difficulties that has always plagued ethnohistorical interpretations of Southeastern chiefdoms is the fact that researchers are only afforded fleeting glimpses of these societies during the 16th-century expeditions of Soto, Luna, and Pardo, after which no further good ethnohistorical data is available until decades or even centuries later, long after these same chiefdoms have disintegrated or transformed. This is particularly evident in the case of the paramount chiefdom of Coosa, which has received considerable research attention over the past two decades by archaeologists and other researchers, but which was only directly visited by Spanish explorers three times, and for a grand total of less than one year spread across the years 1540, 1560, and 1568 (Priestly 1928; Hudson et al. 1985, 1989; Hudson 1988, 1990, 1997; Hally et al. 1990; Langford and Smith 1990; Clayton et al. 1993; Smith 2000). While narrative accounts describing these visits have provided researchers with a comparative wealth of fodder for comparisons with rather extensive archaeological data from this same region, the amount and time-depth of ethnohistorical data available regarding Coosa is actually quite limited in comparison to other chiefdoms that were subjected to more lengthy periods of direct colonial interaction with Spanish explorers, missionaries, soldiers, and colonists. Unfortunately, Coosa's remote location with respect to the early Spanish colonial hub at St. Augustine, and later English hubs at Charleston and Savannah, left it far outside the realm of intensive European interaction, leaving archaeologists with more questions than answers regarding the precise nature of the Coosa polity.

In contrast, however, chiefdoms located nearer to Spanish Florida experienced far lengthier and more regular periods of direct contact and interaction, ultimately providing a much fuller and more intricate portrait of the dynamics of chiefly sociopolitical organization in these regions (see Milanich 1999 for the best overview of Spanish Florida). For a variety of reasons,

many researchers in the past have tended to dismiss much of this comparatively rich database from Spanish Florida as a source of information about late prehistoric Southeastern chiefdoms in general, most of which are commonly associated with the widespread Mississippian culture (Griffin 1985). First, most of Spanish Florida was at or beyond the edge of what archaeologists conceive of as the broader Mississippian world (e.g. Payne and Scarry 1998: 22-27), which for many researchers limits the utility of direct comparison. If this opinion is widely held regarding the Timucuan Indians of northern Florida (e.g. Milanich 1996: 150-166), it is overwhelmingly so for the Calusa and other South Florida groups, whose lack of agriculture and semi-tropical location makes them almost the “forgotten stepchildren” of chiefdom studies in the interior Southeast (but see Goggin and Sturtevant 1964; Widmer 1988; Marquardt 2001). Beyond this, most researchers have always presumed that missionized societies in and around Spanish Florida were at the very least significantly diminished from the late prehistoric era, or even somehow directly transformed or altered by Spanish missionaries and other colonists. For these reasons, with the almost sole exception of the narrative accounts of the earliest French colonial attempts among the Timucuan and other chiefdoms along the Atlantic seaboard during the 1560s (e.g. Ribaut 1927; Laudonniere 2001; Bennett 2001), supplementing the previous expeditions of Narváez and Soto through central and northwestern Florida (Cabeza de Vaca 1993; Clayton et al. 1993), the detailed ethnohistorical record of chiefly social organization among the indigenous residents of greater Spanish Florida is widely under-utilized by archaeologists studying Southeastern chiefdoms.

In contrast, during the course of my own ethnohistorical and archaeological research over the past 15 years, I have been somewhat surprised to realize the remarkable degree to which the well-documented chiefdoms of Spanish Florida can inform us about the fundamental structure

and operation of all indigenous Southeastern chiefdoms. Not only has it become clear to me that chiefly social organization was allowed, encouraged, and fully able to persist in a largely intact form within the mission system of Spanish Florida well into the 17th century (e.g. Worth 2002), but I have also recognized that many of the fundamental elements of chiefly social organization in the Southeast extended well beyond the Mississippian culture area as normally defined by archaeologists, and were replicated again and again at different scales of size and population across Spanish Florida (e.g. Worth 1998a: 1-34, 77-102, 162-168; n.d.a.), to a certain extent even including the patrilineal fisherfolk and hunter-gatherers of South Florida. This is not to say, of course, that 17th-century mission provinces in Spanish Florida were organized identically to late prehistoric Mississippian chiefdoms like the Coosa polity, but rather that the “classic” Mississippian chiefdoms of interest here actually form a subset within a relatively uniform constellation of similarly organized polities that extended across the entire Southeast. Considerable variation of course existed within this extensive range of societies, but the basic norms, variables, and parameters seem to have been remarkably similar.

On the occasion of this symposium commemorating 20 years of modern research on Coosa, I have drawn on a wide range of available ethnohistorical and archaeological data from across Spanish Florida and beyond to generate a synthetic overview exploring the basic structure and operation of Southeastern chiefdoms in general, which I then employ to re-examine the Coosa polity within this broader context. Since the time frame of this presentation precludes extended discussion of the extensive data employed in generating this ethnohistorical synthesis, a brief overview supplemented by several tables will have to suffice.

For my primary analysis, I included ethnohistorical, and to the extent possible, archaeological data regarding chiefdoms in the following mission provinces and other regions:

all the small-scale Timucuan chiefdoms from North-Central, Northern, and Northeastern Florida and Southeastern Georgia (including Potano, Timucua, and Yustaga in the interior, all the St. Johns River chiefdoms, and the Mocama chiefdom along the coast), the Guale chiefdom, the Apalachee chiefdom, and also the constituent chiefdoms of the Calusa paramountcy in South Florida (e.g. Jones 1978; Hann 1986, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1996; Johnson 1992; Worth 1995a, 1995b, 1998a, 1998b, n.d.a.; Scarry 1996; Laudonniere 2001). Secondly, I also incorporated comparable ethnohistorical data from other more distant regions of greater Spanish Florida, including the chiefdoms visited and documented in considerable detail during the Juan Pardo expeditions (Hudson 1990; Beck 1997). In addition, I then compared these data with a wide range of archaeological and ethnohistorical analyses of the structure, size, and population of other Southeastern chiefdoms, including not only that of the Coosa paramountcy, but also such diverse regions as the Oconee, Flint, and Savannah Rivers in Georgia, the Catawba and Wateree Rivers in western North Carolina, and the Moundville, Cahokia, and Parkin polities farther west (e.g. Hudson et al. 1985; Worth 1988; Hally et al. 1990; Langford and Smith 1990; Levy et al. 1990; Morse 1990; Welch 1991; Anderson 1994; Williams and Shapiro 1996; Smith 2000; King 2003). In addition, I incorporated the results of several broader data-based archaeological studies regarding specific facets of Southeastern chiefdoms, primarily focusing on the South Appalachian region associated with the Coosa chiefdom and the immediate margins of Spanish Florida (e.g. Anderson 1994, 1996; Hally 1993, 1996; Williams and Shapiro 1990).

Without reviewing the full details of my analysis, a few comments regarding some of the more perplexing quandries I encountered are useful here, since they served as springboards to better understanding. It is important to note that the core of my ethnohistorical analysis revolves around the internal political structure of each chiefdom, and most particularly the relationship

between the number and reported rank of headmen or chiefs within each political unit and the number, size, and distribution of individual communities on the landscape. The principal variables I examined are the number and relative groupings and rankings of headmen or chiefs, the population of each polity or subordinate administrative unit, and the spatial distribution of individual communities and administrative jurisdictions on the landscape. In other words, I looked most closely at political organization, demography, and settlement systems. And during the course of my research, I was struck by the comparison on the one hand between large and obviously complex chiefdoms like Apalachee, possessing probably 30,000 people distributed in more than 100 communities within a 75-kilometer area, and governed by two administrative levels above that of the community, and on the other hand by smaller chiefdoms like Guale, possessing perhaps less than 5,000 people within about 60 kilometers, who were nonetheless distributed in more than 50 small communities with two overarching administrative levels. Guale's entire population was roughly parallel to each of the constituent chiefdoms of the Coosa paramountcy, but each of those apparently contained between 5 and 13 communities, only 4 to 7 of which were significant in size (Hally et al. 1990). In terms of political and spatial organization, Coosa's chiefdoms actually better resembled the tiny Timucuan chiefdoms of northern Florida, with perhaps only 1,000 people distributed in half a dozen communities, while Guale better resembled the Apalachee chiefdom, which in overall population rivaled the entire Coosa paramountcy. Nevertheless, the organizational structure of the broader Coosa paramountcy formed a direct parallel with the Timucua and Yustaga regional chiefdoms, though on a considerably different scale of size and population.

For many years, I have been puzzled by these comparisons, but during my recent preparation for this symposium, I believe I have settled on a satisfactory explanatory model that

fits the available data. Considerable further work is indicated, and this brief paper should only be viewed as a beginning, rather than an end product. Nevertheless, for this presentation, I will present the basic elements of the overall synthesis, examining specific examples within that context.

The root “building block” for all Southeastern polities of any size appears to have been an administrative unit that we can call the simple chiefdom, which was normally comprised of a local area cluster of roughly 5 to 10 communities under centralized leadership. Importantly, this small number of subordinate communities seems to have been relatively fixed; that is to say, individual polities with larger numbers of communities apparently tended to form complex chiefdoms, discussed below, which normally comprised substantially more communities than the 5 to 10 observed for simple chiefdoms.

Depending on the local settlement system, which of course was influenced by environmental structure, subsistence technology, and overall population density, these communities could range from individual nucleated villages separated by uninhabited zones to a more or less defined neighborhood within a more dispersed pattern of evenly-spaced farmsteads or hamlets. Regardless of the settlement pattern, however, the defining characteristic of each local community was the presence of a single hereditary leader, normally drawn from a single noble lineage. A small hamlet with a scattering of nearby farmsteads might look like a cluster of separate communities on an archaeological site map, for example, but would form only a single community with respect to the overall chiefdom, since the entire area was governed by only a single headman.

Ethnohistorical evidence indicates that there was considerable variation in population size both for individual communities and for simple chiefdoms or their equivalent administrative unit

within complex chiefdoms. Nevertheless, there seems to have been a normal range for both. The smallest discrete communities appear to have comprised as little as 30 or 40 people, while the largest documented communities may have held as many as 750 or even 1,000 people. The most typical size for individual communities, however, seems to have been around 300 people. Simple chiefdoms comprised of multiple communities also ranged considerably in population, with the smallest discrete chiefdoms comprising less than 1,000 people, and the largest comprising perhaps as many as 5,000 or slightly more.

One of the most important variables affecting chiefly social integration appears to have been distance, and more specifically the geographic size of individual chiefdoms or administrative units within chiefdoms. David Hally (1993, 1996) has explored this variable with respect to the distribution of platform mounds across North Georgia, and has discovered that mounds, as correlates for chiefly administrative centers, were normally spaced either less than 18 km. apart from one another, or greater than 31 km. apart. Nearby mounds were likely part of the same chiefdom, while more distant mounds were part of distinct chiefdoms. Individual chiefdoms were characterized by “well-defined clusters” of habitation sites (i.e. communities) around contemporary mound centers, and “seldom if ever exceeded 25 km in spatial extent” (Hally 1996: 98, 116). Chiefdoms were normally surrounded and separated from one another by uninhabited “buffer zones,” which typically extended across 20 km. or more. Other researchers studying chiefdoms around the world have noted similar territorial limits for discrete polities, typically ranging from 25 to as much as 40 km. (see summary in King 2003: 11).

The underlying variable in the Southeastern U.S. seems to have been the maximum distance that chiefs could effectively administer subordinate populations. Hally suggests that this distance is related to the distance that could be traveled in a single day (see also Hudson

1997: 216). The upper distance does appear to have been identical with a single day's travel, which is confirmed by my own analysis of Spanish travel journals or diaries from 17th and 18th-century Spanish Florida, the average daily rate of travel for small parties on foot as recorded between sites with known locations was consistently between 5 and 7 Spanish leagues, averaging about 6 leagues, or just over 25 km. This also fits the estimates reached by Hudson and his colleagues for the Soto and Pardo expeditions, at between 24 and 27 km (coincidentally using the longer league measurement of 3.45 miles instead of the 2.63 miles common to later periods; Hudson 1997: 469). Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to calculate a similar average daily rate for historic aboriginal canoe travel, which would perhaps better apply to estuarine chiefdoms such as Guale and Calos, though the land rate clearly applies best to most chiefdoms.

My own analyses of the geographic size of documented simple chiefdoms in the Southeast suggests that they normally ranged between about 5 and 25 kilometers in maximum diameter. The smallest simple chiefdoms, such as those characterizing the interior Timucuan of northern Florida and southern Georgia, are represented archaeologically by small clusters of between about 5 and 10 archaeological sites distributed within an area about 5 km. in diameter, generally focused on a local "patch" of arable soil and fresh water (see Johnson 1991; Worth 1998a: 26, 29, 33, 85-86). These chiefdoms, typically comprising no more than 1,000 to 1,500 people (Worth 1998b: 2-8), were separated from one another by more or less uninhabited buffers commonly ranging from about 22 to 40 km., averaging about 30 km. in distance between centers. The largest simple chiefdoms, including what I would argue to be all of the constituent chiefdoms of the Coosa paramountcy, form remarkably similar clusters of between 5 and 10 archaeological sites, though on a considerably larger scale of area and population, as noted above.

As an administrative unit, the simple chiefdom was nominally ruled by a single hereditary chief, apparently the highest-ranking member of the highest-ranking lineage in the highest-ranking community within the cluster. In practice, however, the ethnohistorical record makes it clear that simple chiefdoms were commonly governed by a chiefly council consisting of all the local community headmen, occupying the first rank (and thus the highest seats in the council house), as well as their noble counselors or assistants. Among most groups within the study area, hereditary community headmen were called *holatas* or *oratas*, while their highest-ranking noble assistants were called *inihas* or *henihas*, all of whom as a group ranked figuratively and physically lower than all the *holatas* within the council house (see Worth 1998a: 100). Spaniards called these headmen *caciques*, or sometimes the diminutive *caciquillos* in comparison to local chiefs. The highest-ranking *holata* served as the overall chief of the chiefdom, and was additionally afforded an additional title equivalent to the term chief as used here. Among the Guale this term was *mico*, and among the Timucua it was apparently *paracusi* (see Hann 1992; Worth 1998a: 86-87). Spaniards commonly used *cacique* or principal *cacique* for local chiefs.

There are some examples of geographically larger discrete polities in the ethnohistorical record, but these are surprisingly limited in number, including only Guale and Apalachee within Spanish Florida. These chiefdoms range in overall size between 60 and 75 km. respectively, and bear remarkably different characteristics from the more common simple chiefdoms above. Based on extensive ethnohistorical data, both are clearly complex chiefdoms, as defined by a second level of administrative control above that which is equivalent to the simple chiefdoms described above. Apalachee is documented to have had perhaps just over 100 named communities organized into roughly 10 local administrative jurisdictions managed by mid-level

chiefs, all of whom were then ranked below a single principal chief, who served as head of a regional council in charge of the local-area chiefs. Guale also seems to have had perhaps 50 or so communities organized into 5 or 6 local jurisdictions under the control of a principal chief. For the Guale, this leader seems to have been the *mico mayor*, or principal *mico*, but for interior chiefdoms visited during the Pardo expeditions the term *mico* seems to have been reserved for “chief of chiefs,” either in reference to the leader of a complex chiefdom, or possibly also the leader of a multi-chiefdom polity or paramountcy, discussed below. In Apalachee, these principal chiefs may have been referred to as *holata chuba* or *hinachuba* (Hann 1988: 98-99; Hudson 1990; Hann 1992).

In effect, these complex chiefdoms appear to have comprised adjacent clusters of communities that would elsewhere have formed independent simple chiefdoms, but because of their close physical proximity within an area larger than 25 km. in diameter, they were fused into a single organizational unit or polity. Curiously, the catalyst for the formation of complex chiefdoms does not seem to have been population alone, because Guale’s entire population probably did not exceed that of the simple chiefdoms comprising the Coosa paramountcy. This meant that in order to form the organizational complexity apparently typical for a complex chiefdom, Guale’s 50 individual communities probably averaged only around 100 people each, while Coosa’s communities may have commonly been 5 to 7 times larger. Based solely on population size, each of Coosa’s constituent chiefdoms could have formed a small complex chiefdom like Guale, but since the inhabitants of these discrete polities were able to pack as many as 5,000 people into perhaps half a dozen nucleated villages within a 25 km. stretch of floodplain, they evidently had no need for additional organizational complexity beyond that of the simple chiefdom. The biggest difference between Guale and the Coosa chiefdoms seems to

have been areal size, namely the fact that Guale was continuously settled across more than twice the 25 km. upper limit on simple chiefdoms. Presumably due to the relatively dispersed nature of the Guale settlement system in the estuarine environment of the northern Georgia coast, the discrete polity that formed there was necessarily complex because of its physical size. For Southeastern chiefdoms, size *did* matter.

Of considerable interest, both Guale and Apalachee both appear to have been characterized by relatively dispersed settlement patterns, at least in comparison to the more nucleated communities of the Coosa and Timucua chiefdoms (e.g. Pearson 1977; Scarry 1995; Payne and Scarry 1998: 32; Saunders 2000: 19-22). This, in addition to their larger size and internal organizational complexity, makes them remarkably similar to other prehistoric polities across the Southeastern U.S. which also happen to exceed significantly the 25 km. limit. Notable examples are be Moundville and Cahokia, both of which were characterized during key periods by a pattern of dispersed farmsteads outside the primary centers and communities, and both of which were 50 km. or more in size (e.g. Welch 1991: 31; Pauketat 1994: 74-76; Mistovich 1995; Mehrer and Collins 1995; Milner 1996: 39-43). Furthermore, both of these polities had a very obvious multi-mound regional center, with multiple subordinate local mound centers distributed across the landscape.

Curiously, several of these characteristics also happen to correspond to the most anomalous archaeological polity in North Georgia, namely the Oconee province. Many archaeologists have made note of the unusually dispersed settlement pattern across the Piedmont uplands in this area during certain periods, and this fact, combined with the relatively close proximity of several local mound centers (particularly those north of the Fall Line within a 50 km. diameter area), suggests to me that the Oconee province might represent Georgia's only

other true complex chiefdom beyond Guale (Smith and Kowalewski 1980; Kowalewski and Hatch 1991; Williams and Shapiro 1996).

It is worth noting here that most Southeastern archaeologists use an archaeological definition of chiefdoms that posits a direct relationship between the number of contemporaneous platform mound sites within a single chiefdom and its relative level of hierarchical complexity. Specifically, they argue that chiefdoms containing only one platform mound site can be equated with simple chiefdoms, while chiefdoms containing two or more platform mound sites should be equated with complex chiefdoms (e.g. Hally 1993, 1996: 98, 113-115, 124-125; King 2003: 15). Hally, for example, notes that there are 13 groups of close-spaced mound sites across North Georgia, arguing that these represent “primary and secondary centers in complex chiefdoms.” Rejecting Williams and Shapiro’s (1990) earlier suggestion that such “paired towns” might in many cases represent “alternating settlements” with only a single functioning mound center at any given time, he demonstrates that all of these groups show evidence of simultaneous mound construction and use at two or more sites in the same cluster or chiefdom, suggesting that “as many as eighteen complex chiefdoms may have existed in the region at one time or another” (Hally 1998: 114, 125). This would imply that complex chiefdoms were actually quite common in prehistory, and that the most common manifestation was that of a principal mound center with just one secondary mound center.

The ethnohistorically-based model that I have developed does not square with this interpretation. There are no apparent examples in the ethnohistorical record of Spanish Florida in which clearly complex chiefdoms were comprised of one primary administrative center and one subordinate administrative center. The few complex chiefdoms that can be identified in the ethnohistorical record within Spanish Florida appear to have had somewhere between 5 and 10

mid-level chiefs acting as subordinate administrators of local clusters of communities, and typically contained a total of between 50 and 100 such communities. Discrete chiefdoms containing only 5 to 10 subordinate communities never appear to have had subordinate administrative centers, or secondary chiefs below the principal chief.

In contrast, however, there are several examples of twin administrative centers that seem to have either shared a central administrative role for a local chiefdom, or alternated generationally back and forth between continuously-occupied centers based on chiefly inheritance rules. This was not the dominant pattern in all areas, but occurred frequently enough to suggest that it was common. In observed cases, twin centers were governed by relatives and heirs from the same noble lineage. This was clearly the case with the 16th-century Guale towns of Tolomato and Guale, and also Asao and Talaje, both ruled by two brothers, one of which was heir to the other, and also with the Timucuan towns of Antonico and Enacape, ruled by a brother and his sister whose son was the heir. It was also probably the case with Tupiqui and Espogache in Guale, and perhaps also with Anhaica/Talimali and Ivitachuco in Apalachee (see Jones 1978: 203, 206; Hann 1988: 98-99; Worth 1998a: 62-63). This evidence suggests to me that paired mound centers within what is otherwise clearly a simple chiefdom were probably contemporaneous expressions of public architecture related to a single chiefly lineage, and did not in fact represent a first and second administrative level above the community. In short, two mound centers could easily have coexisted in a simple chiefdom.

Up to this point I have discussed discrete, bounded polities with centralized leadership and uninhabited buffers or even war zones along their edges. Nevertheless, there is abundant ethnohistorical evidence in Spanish Florida and elsewhere for mechanisms of sociopolitical integration that transcended the simple or complex chiefdom as defined above. To draw an

analogy from grammar, chiefdoms, like sentences, were not just simple or complex, but also compound. Whereas simple and complex chiefdoms were discrete and internally continuous, compound chiefdoms incorporated two or more such local polities into a discontinuous regional structure. Indeed, if anything, the simple chiefdom that was completely autonomous and independent seems to have been the exception to the rule. The reasons why independent chiefdoms would become part of multi-chiefdom polities or alliances were undoubtedly varied, but the most obvious reasons were probably mutual defense and redistribution of resources. Simple chiefdoms (even large ones) never had enough population alone to be militarily competitive with some of the larger complex chiefdoms. While some independent chiefdoms may have been conquered militarily and forced into a subordinate role within a multi-chiefdom polity (which is the classic definition of a paramountcy), my own impression based on the repeated attempts of chiefs across Spanish Florida to subordinate themselves willingly to the Spanish suggests that entrance into such regional organizations was normally a willing election on the part of local chiefdoms (e.g. Worth 1998a: 36-40), and that military action was typically used only to force breakaway chiefs to return to submission once they had tried to join an opposing polity. One of the best examples of such repeated aggression is actually found in the Calusa paramountcy in South Florida, where the Calusa paramount conducted multiple military raids against separatist towns and provinces in Tocobaga, Mocoço, Tequesta, and Tatesta, as many as 200 km. away from the paramount center, once even dancing with the severed heads of four rebel chiefs (Hann 2003: 173-174, 176; Worth n.d.b.). Similar actions are also documented for the Coosa paramountcy, including not just the breakaway chiefdom of Talisi along the frontier with the Tascaluza paramountcy in Alabama, but also the thoroughly-documented Spanish-Coosa military action against the Napochies near Chattanooga (Hudson 1988; Hudson et

al. 1989; Hudson 1997: 228). Though the veracity of this pivotal event described in detail by Dominican Davila Padilla has been questioned by some modern scholars, I recently discovered an earlier military service record from one of the Spanish participants confirming the story, and additionally providing the actual name of the breakaway province, which was Napochín (Luna 1575).

Multi-chiefdom polities, or what might be called compound chiefdoms, seem to have been extremely common in and around Spanish Florida, and ranged in size from perhaps as little as 5,000-10,000 people distributed in 4-5 local chiefdoms up to a maximal size of perhaps 20,000 to 40,000 people distributed in perhaps 8-10 chiefdoms. All appear to have been nominally ranked, especially within regional council meetings, but not all were military paramountcies in the classic sense. Only the largest and most populous of these regional polities, like Coosa and Calos seem to have had a strongly centralized or hierarchical structure, while others like Timucua and Yustaga were much more like regional alliances between near-neighbors (Worth 1998a: 83-84). My general sense is that the larger the polity and the more distant its constituent chiefdoms, the more short-lived and ephemeral it was, partly because real autonomy was encouraged by size and physical isolation. Perhaps in part due to this, despite their immense populations, compound chiefdoms rarely seem to display much evidence for substantial differentiation in public architecture like mounds at regional administrative centers. Whereas large complex chiefdoms are typified by internal hierarchies of mound centers, paramountcies are not. It is thus to be expected that the paramount center of Coosa at the Little Egypt site is no more substantial than any other mound site in any other local chiefdom within the paramountcy. After all, Coosa was an ephemeral patchwork of large but simple chiefdoms.

In conclusion, synthetic analysis of ethnohistorical data from Spanish Florida suggests that the traditional archaeological definitions of simple, complex, and paramount chiefdoms may need revision and considerable clarification, and that researchers need to be more cautious and uniform in their application of these terms to specific circumstances. This is especially true when paramount chiefdoms are somehow viewed as the apex of a three-stage hierarchy of chiefly social organization, beginning with simple, progressing to complex, and culminating in paramount. Viewed in this light, there has been an unfortunate tendency among archaeologists to treat paramountcies (one type of what I call compound chiefdoms) as the rarest of social formations, and to presume that complex chiefdoms were consequently much more common, since they formed a necessarily intermediate step after simple chiefdoms. In contrast, ethnohistorical data suggest to me that compound chiefdoms such as paramountcies were probably much more common than complex chiefdoms, and in fact were normally the first and only step after simple chiefdoms. Complex and compound chiefdoms seem to have represented alternate, not sequential, paths toward regional sociopolitical integration.

With continued research such as that outlined above, I am confident that the application of detailed and voluminous ethnohistorical data from greater Spanish Florida to ongoing archaeological research will result in many new insights regarding Southeastern chiefdoms such as Coosa.

References Cited

Anderson, David G.

1994 *The Savannah River Chiefdoms: Political Change in the Late Prehistoric Southeast*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

1996 Fluctuations between Simple and Complex Chiefdoms: Cycling in the Late Prehistoric Southeast. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, ed. by John F. Scarry, pp. 231-252. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Beck, Robin A., Jr.

1997 From Joara to Chiaha: Spanish Exploration of the Appalachian Summit Area, 1540-1568. *Southeastern Archaeology* 16(2): 162-169.

Bennett, Charles E.

2001 *Laudonniere & Fort Carolina: History and Documents*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar Núñez

1993 *The Account: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's Relación*, translated by Martin A. Favata and José B. Fernández. Houston: Arte Público Press.

Clayton, Lawrence A., Vernon James Knight, Jr., and Edward C. Moore, eds.

1993 *The DeSoto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Galloway, Patricia, editor

1997 *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Goggin, John M. and William C. Sturtevant

1964 The Calusa: A Stratified Nonagricultural Society (with notes on sibling marriage). In *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology: Essays in Honor of George Peter Murdock*, ed. by Ward H. Goodenough, pp. 179-219. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Griffin, James B.

1985 Changing Concepts of the Prehistoric Mississippian Cultures of the Eastern United States. In *Alabama and the Borderlands: From Prehistory to Statehood*, ed. by R. Reid Badger and Lawrence A. Clayton, pp. 40-63. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Hally, David J.

1993 The Territorial Size of Mississippian Chiefdoms. In *Archaeology of Eastern North America, Papers in Honor of Stephen Williams*, ed. by James B. Stoltman, pp. 143-

168. Archaeological Report No. 25, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.
- 1996 Platform Mound Construction and the Instability of Mississippian Chiefdoms. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, ed. by John F. Scarry, pp. 92-127. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Hally, David J., Marvin T. Smith, and James B. Langford, Jr.
 1990 The Archaeological Reality of de Soto's Coosa. In *Columbian Consequences: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East*, ed. by David Hurst Thomas, pp. 121-138. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Hann, John H.
 1986 Spanish Translations. *Florida Archaeology* 2. Tallahassee: Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research.
- 1988 *Apalachee: The Land between the Rivers*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- 1992 Political Leadership among the Natives of Spanish Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71(2): 188-208.
- 1993 Visitations and Revolts in Florida, 1656-1695. *Florida Archaeology* 7. Tallahassee: Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research.
- 1996 *A History of the Timucua Indians and Missions*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Hudson, Charles
 1988 A Spanish-Coosa Alliance in Sixteenth-Century North Georgia. *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 72(4): 599-626.
- 1990 *The Juan Pardo Expeditions: Exploration of the Carolinas and Tennessee, 1566-1568*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 1997 *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Hudson, Charles, Marvin T. Smith, Chester B. DePratter, and Emilia Kelley
 1989 The Tristán de Luna Expedition, 1559-1561. *Southeastern Archaeology* 8(1): 31-45.
- Hudson, Charles, Marvin Smith, David Hally, Richard Polhemus, and Chester DePratter
 1985 Coosa: A Chiefdom in the Sixteenth-Century Southeastern United States. *American Antiquity* 50(4): 723-737.

Johnson, Kenneth W.

1992 The Utina and the Potano Peoples of Northern Florida: Changing Settlement Systems in the Spanish Colonial Period. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Jones, Grant D.

1978 The Ethnohistory of the Guale Coast through 1684. In *The Anthropology of St. Catherines Island: I. Natural and Cultural History*, by David Hurst Thomas, Grant D. Jones, Roger S. Durham, and Clark Spencer Larsen, pp. 178-210. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 55(2), New York.

King, Adam

2003 *Etowah: The Political History of a Chiefdom Capital*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Kowalewski, Stephen A., and James W. Hatch

1991 The Sixteenth-century Expansion of Settlement in the Upper Oconee Watershed, Georgia. *Southeastern Archaeology* 10(1): 1-17.

Langford, James B., Jr., and Marvin T. Smith

1990 Recent Investigations in the Core of the Coosa Province. In *Lamar Archaeology: Mississippian Chiefdoms in the Deep South*, ed. by Mark Williams and Gary Shapiro, pp. 104-116. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Laudonniere, René de

2001 *Three Voyages*, translated by Charles E. Bennett. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Levy, Janet E., J. Alan May, and David G. Moore

1990 From Ysa to Joara: Cultural Diversity in the Catawba Valley from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century. In *Columbian Consequences: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East*, ed. by David Hurst Thomas, pp. 153-168. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Luna, Christóbal de

1575 Testimony regarding the military service of Luís de Soto during the expedition of Tristán de Luna y Arellano, February 1, 1575, Mexico City. Archivo General de Indias, Mexico 213, No. 1.

Marquardt, William H.

2001 The Emergence and Demise of the Calusa. In *Societies in Eclipse: Eastern North America at the Dawn of European Colonization*, ed. by David S. Brose, C. Wesley Cowan, and Robert C. Mainfort, Jr., pp. 157-171. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Mehrer, Mark W., and James M. Collins

- 1995 Household Archaeology at Cahokia and in Its Hinterlands. In *Mississippian Communities and Households*, ed. by J. Daniel Rogers and Bruce D. Smith, pp. 32-57. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Milanich, Jerald T.
1996 *The Timucua*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- 1999 *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord: Spanish Missions and Southeastern Indians*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Milner, George R.
1996 Development and Dissolution of a Mississippian Society in the American Bottom, Illinois. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, ed. by John F. Scarry, pp. 27-52. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Mistovich, Tim S.
1995 Toward an Explanation of Variation in Moundville Phase Households in the Black Warrior River Valley, Alabama. In *Mississippian Communities and Households*, ed. by J. Daniel Rogers and Bruce D. Smith, pp. 156-180. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Morse, Phyllis A.
1990 The Parkin Site and The Parkin Phase. In *Towns and Temples Along the Mississippi*, ed. by David H. Dye and Cheryl Anne Cox, pp. 118-134. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Payne, Claudine, and John F. Scarry
1998 Town Structure at the Edge of the Mississippian World. In *Mississippian Communities and Households*, ed. by J. Daniel Rogers and Bruce D. Smith, pp. 22-48. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Pearson, Charles E.
1977 *Analysis of Late Prehistoric Settlement on Ossabaw Island, Georgia*. Laboratory of Archaeology Series, Report No. 12. University of Georgia, Anthropology.
- Priestly, Herbert L, translator and editor
1928 *The Luna Papers*. Deland: Florida State Historical Society.
- Ribaut, Jean
1927 *The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida*, edited by Jeannette Thurber Connor. Deland: Florida State Historical Society.
- Saunders, Rebecca
2000 *Stability and Change in Guale Indian Pottery, A.D. 1300-1702*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Scarry, John F.

1995 Apalachee Homesteads: The Basal Social and Economic Units of a Mississippian Chiefdom. In *Mississippian Communities and Households*, ed. by J. Daniel Rogers and Bruce D. Smith, pp. 201-223. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

1996 Stability and Change in the Apalachee Chiefdom. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, ed. by John F. Scarry, pp. 192-227. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Smith, Marvin T.

2000 *Coosa: The Rise and Fall of a Southeastern Mississippian Chiefdom*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Smith, Marvin T., and Stephen A. Kowalewski

1980 Tentative Identification of a Prehistoric "Province" in Piedmont Georgia. *Early Georgia* 8: 1-13.

Welch, Paul D.

1991 *Moundville's Economy*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Widmer, Randolph J.

1988 *The Evolution of the Calusa: A Nonagricultural Chiefdom on the Southwest Florida Coast*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Williams, Mark, and Gary Shapiro

1990 Paired Towns In *Lamar Archaeology: Mississippian Chiefdoms in the Deep South*, ed. by Mark Williams and Gary Shapiro, pp. 163-186. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

1996 Mississippian Political Dynamics in the Oconee Valley, Georgia. In *Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States*, ed. by John F. Scarry, pp. 129-149. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Worth, John E.

1988 Mississippian Occupation on the Middle Flint River. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Georgia, Athens.

1995a Fontaneda Revisited: Five Descriptions of Sixteenth-Century Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73(3): 339-52.

1995b *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama*. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Number 75.

1998a *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida, Volume I: Assimilation*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

1998b *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida, Volume II: Resistance and Destruction*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

2002 Spanish Missions and the Persistence of Chiefly Power. In *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*, ed. by Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, pp. 39-64. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

n.d.a. Guale. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 14: Southeast*. Raymond D. Fogelson, vol. ed.; William C. Sturtevant, gen. ed., in press. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

n.d.b. Pineland during the Spanish Period. In *The Archaeology of Pineland*, by William H. Marquardt and Karen J. Walker, in preparation. Institute of Archaeology and Paleoenvironmental Studies, Monograph Number 4, Gainesville.

Levels of Sociopolitical Integration in Southeastern Chiefdoms

Community	Cacique, Caciquillo, Holata/Orata	40-1,000 people under leadership of single hereditary headman
Simple (Local) Chiefdom	Cacique, Cacique Mayor, Mico, Paracusi?	1,000-5,000 people in 5-10 communities under leadership of hereditary local chief
Complex (Local) Chiefdom	Cacique, Cacique Mayor, Gran Cacique, Mico, Mico Mayor, Paracusi	5,000-30,000 people in 50+ communities organized into 5-10 mid-level administrative units under leadership of hereditary local chief
Compound (Regional) Chiefdom	Cacique, Cacique Mayor, Gran Cacique, Mico, Mico Mayor, Paracusi	5,000-30,000 people in 4-10 local chiefdoms and 50+ communities under leadership of single paramount chief

Comparisons

Simple Chiefdoms	Complex Chiefdoms	Compound Chiefdoms
6 – 12 communities	50 + communities	50 + communities
5 – 25 kilometers maximum diameter	50 – 80 kilometers maximum diameter	50 – 450 kilometers maximum diameter
1,000 – 5,000 people	5,000 – 30,000 people	5,000 – 30,000 people
no second order centers (though sometimes paired primary centers)	5 - 10 second order centers	4 - 10 second order centers