Scratching the Surface: A Spatial Analysis of Precontact Artifacts and Features from the Topper Site (38AL23)

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Abstract

Current excavations at the Topper Site (38AL23), reflective of diverse Late Precontact communities in the Savannah River Valley, indicate the systematic analysis of Feature and Artifacts as an effective strategy for understanding the prehistoric landscape. Given the rich diversity of the Topper Site, we seek to explore the Nature of the sites and their spatial characteristics as a means of understanding the cultural systems that occupied the landscape. This paper presents an introduction to the Topper Site and the results of the current excavations, with a focus on the analysis of lithic materials and features.

Keywords: lithic size grade analysis, Woodland Period, Savannah River Valley, Southeastern Archaeology

Introduction

The Topper Site (38AL23) is located on the Savannah River in South Carolina, USA, and is a Late Precontact site that has been occupied for several thousand years. The site is known for its rich archaeological record, which includes a wealth of artifacts and features that provide insights into the lives of the people who lived there. The current excavations at the Topper Site have been ongoing since 2001, and have resulted in the excavation of two blocks totaling an area of 40m². These excavations have revealed a great deal of information about the occupation of the site, including the production of lithic materials and the presence of various types of features.

A lithic size grade analysis was conducted where the lithic material from each excavated 1x1m unit was sifted through a series of five nested screens of mesh sizes, 1in, 3/4in, 1/2in, 1/4in, and 1/8in. The materials captured within each category were recorded. For the portions larger than 1/2 in, the amounts of cortex and debitage were also noted. As noted above the 1x1m units were located. This map served as our base layer for project mapping and GIS analyses. Our first step was to georeference the hand drawn feature maps from the field. Next two polygon layers were created to enable the tracing of each individual units and feature distributions, lithic reduction, and presence of differing groups. Overall, the combined patterns of deviation class level (Figure 4).

Discussion

We present here a size grade lithic analysis of Woodland Block East (Figure 4). While all size production sequences of lithic manufacturing, and the evidence of these

References

Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology. Society for American Archaeology Press, Washington, D.C.
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Appendix

We would like to thank Archroma Inc. for their hospitality and continued support of the ongoing research at the Topper Site. We are also thankful for the support provided by the Southeastern Archaeological Survey, 28 October 2016. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Paleoethnobotanical Remains from the Topper Site (38AL23). Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Society, 2001:8). Stephenson and Civitello's work on the Topper Site was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation. We are also grateful to the volunteers for their hard work.

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