

ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON FORT WALTON CERAMIC TYPOLOGY:
A VIEW FROM ALABAMA

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I wish to thank the editor of The Florida Anthropologist for this opportunity to comment on Scarry's thoughtful Fort Walton ceramic typology. My own practical exposure to these issues has developed with a western and northern bias, first indirectly through Pensacola, Moundville, and Piedmont Lamar in Alabama, and more recently through studies of Rood Phase Mississippian ceramics on the lower Chattahoochee. This perspective, naturally, has much bearing on the issues I see as important in viewing Fort Walton ceramic style.

Scarry, much to his credit, tells us specifically the kinds of issues he wants to see confronted with this new classification. I am not so sure that his objections to previous typologies should be framed, necessarily, in terms of inherent deficiencies seen in those alternatives. Scarry's purposes are simply different from those to which the earlier typologies were oriented, either implicitly or explicitly.

Scarry wishes his typology to reflect cultural continuities through time. More specifically, many of the continuities sought are with Weeden Island. This is an old Fort Walton problem, and one which comes into renewed focus in efforts to explain early Fort Walton development by reference to processes affecting late Weeden Island societies. Scarry's typology does a good job in accenting those continuities which seem reasonable, for example by merging Carrabelle Incised into the Marsh Island Incised type (some might argue that this should have been done the other way around). There are a few such ceramic conservatisms and these deserve emphasis.

Still, I am impressed by the fact that those types and varieties defined here that exhibit continuities with Weeden Island, despite receiving emphasis, remain greatly outmatched by the proportion lacking clear late Weeden Island derivation or counterpart. What should emerge here intact is the burgeoning innovativeness and diversity in ceramics across the late Weeden Island to Fort Walton boundary. Use of Scarry's typology should lead to further questions about the context and tempo of these innovations. It should tell us at least as much about discontinuity as it does about continuity.

Scarry's typology also recognizes the need for a classification which incorporates Safety Harbor within a unified Fort Walton ceramic system. It remains to be seen how well this will work, especially since the Safety Harbor decorated varieties are to be divorced of any reference to "Pinellas paste." Our suggestion in the Cemochechobee typology (Schnell et al. 1981) was that this problem be handled by controlling ware groups, or paste classes, independently from the formal typology. Scarry's solution is more like the one employed by Sears (1967) for Tierra Verde, in which paste categories were used primarily to differentiate plain types, while at the same time they were allowed to crosscut the decorated classes.

The other major difference between this and the Cemochechobee typology lies in different emphasis placed on the variable of vessel shape. At Cemochechobee, vessel shape was employed as an integral part of the definition of types, whereas for Scarry it occasionally appears as a determi-

nant at the variety level. I see this difference primarily as a matter of differing research orientations rather than as a function of general practicality. At Cemochechobee we were less interested in compatibility with other type-variety systems in current use, than in orienting the typology to address topics of more immediate concern. We wished to clarify, for one thing, the basic Middle Mississippian character of the Rood phase ceramic assemblage. Types such as our Lake Jackson Decorated, comprising all collared Mississippian jars, and Columbus Incised, the interior incised flared-rim bowls whose closest relationships lie with standard Mississippian forms to the north and west, exemplify the kinds of broad-scale relationships we wished to emphasize. Another influencing factor was our interest in defining the prestige or elite sub-assemblage at Cemochechobee, consisting of beakers, bottles, and other forms. We wanted to avoid a typological system which would crosscut, and thus submerge, these functionally significant groups.

Concerning the Cemochechobee typology, I might add that there is an apparent misconception about the relative effectiveness of that system in classifying assemblages of sherds rather than whole vessels. While it certainly targets rims as indicators of vessel shape, there were few problems involved in using it to classify many thousands of sherds both at Cemochechobee and at Singer-Moye. Though plain body sherds were usually not assignable to a type, they were nevertheless sorted and tabulated by ware classes at about the same level of specificity as the plain types used in alternative schemes.

I hope it is clear that these remarks are not intended to defend one typology as somehow inherently better than an alternative. "Better" is always in relation to specific research intentions, and these are always going to

differ among investigators. Scarry's typology of Fort Walton ceramics is designed principally to measure similarities and differences at the assemblage level which will contribute to the definition of significant regional and temporal Mississippian phenomena (e.g., phases) in the Fort Walton area. In relation to this goal, the proposed system appears generally sound in its selection of space and time-sensitive ceramic characteristics. I look forward to seeing it used and subsequently refined, along with many other kinds of classifications that will address much of the stylistic, technological, and functional variability in Fort Walton ceramics which cannot be tapped by traditionally phrased binomial typologies.

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