

CHAPTER 1
GLADES TRADITION ART

Introduction

This study brings together a corpus of southern Florida art, and develops a structural model of the position of this material culture within the broader sphere of the Glades tradition and related cultural phenomena of the Florida peninsula. The objects figured and described here represent the product of human activity at several levels, ranging from technical achievement, to symbolism, to expression. Examination of formal or stylistic aspects of Glades and related arts is used to interpret meaning and function, and the position of the objects between human actors.

The Glades Tradition

John Goggin (1949:17) applied the concept of a cultural tradition to Florida archaeology with a broad stroke, and created a flexible, integrative organizational system. Goggin (1949) envisioned ten major culture traditions, ranging temporally and geographically, with some occasional overlap, from Paleo-Indian through Seminole. Southern Florida became equated with the Glades tradition. Willey and Phillips (1958:36) discuss the metamorphosis that the concept of tradition experienced in Goggin's hands, emerging from the ceramic tradition as used in South American

archaeology to the culture tradition of Florida archaeology.

Goggin defines his organizational tool as follows:

My concept of Florida cultural traditions is similar in theory but more inclusive in content than a ceramic tradition. A cultural tradition is a distinctive way of life, reflected in various aspects of the culture; perhaps extending through some period of time and exhibiting normal internal cultural changes, but nevertheless throughout this period showing a basic consistent unity. In the whole history of a tradition certain persistent themes dominate the life of the people. (1949:17)

The concept of horizon, or horizon style, helps provide some periodicity to the tradition, and is usually characterized by an intense, distinctive, short-lived art style spread over a broad geographic area. In the Florida case, major horizons correlate with the occurrence of Hopewellian and Mississippian art styles (see Table 1-1).

Specifically regarding the Glades tradition, Goggin (1949:28-29) notes a strong correspondence between geography, adaptation, and cultural development. The Glades tradition is characterized by exploitation of the aquatic environments that predominate in southern Florida. Technology reflects this adaptation, with major industries in shell, bone and wood, giving the tradition an "Archaic cast" (Goggin 1949:28). In terms of art and ceremonialism, Goggin (1949:31-32) suggests a late development referred to as the "Glades Cult." As demonstrated below, and throughout the following chapters, Goggin's temporal understanding of the phenomena and paraphernalia included in the cult was limited, with a much greater time depth than he originally

expected. For this reason Goggin (1949:28, 31-32) included temporally distinct phenomena in the "Glades Cult," including earthworks, large wooden plaques, and artifacts of precious metals.

Time and Space in Southern Florida

Goggin (1947b, 1948, n.d.), relying on a series of relatively distinct decorated pottery types, created a temporal sequence for the Glades Area. Table 1-1 presents the Glades sequence, as revised and correlated with radiocarbon dating (Griffin 1988:120-129; Widmer 1988:Table 2). These pottery types are characterized by an assortment of simple, repetitive geometric designs. While primarily recognized as temporally sensitive markers, the decorated Glades series types also vary in their geographic distribution. Some regions of southern Florida lack quantities of the decorated Glades types for reliable seriation, or have only a few specific types. This has led to the generation of a number of additional chronologies, though more often than not, the Glades decorated types or extra-areal marker types (i.e., St. Johns Check Stamped) are relied on in dating sites or assemblages.

Geographically the Glades Area, or southern Florida region, comprises approximately one-third of the Florida peninsula. "The Everglades or "Glades" is a major hydrographic feature of the region, hence Goggin's designation as the "Glades Area." In fact, hydrographic