

# BIOARCHAEOLOGY of the AMERICAN SOUTHEAST

APPROACHES TO BRIDGING HEALTH AND  
IDENTITY IN THE PAST



Edited by Shannon Chappell Hodge  
and Kristrina A. Shuler

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## ARCHAEOLOGY / ANTHROPOLOGY

Building on the 1991 book *What Mean These Bones? Studies in Southeastern Bioarchaeology*, this new edited collection from Shannon Chappell Hodge and Kristrina A. Shuler marks steady advances over the past three decades in the theory, methodology, and purpose of bioarchaeology in the southeastern United States and across the discipline. With a geographic scope that ranges from Louisiana to South Carolina and a temporal span from early prehistory through the nineteenth century, the coverage aims to be holistic.

The contributors explore questions of identity, ethnicity, gender and the status of women, social status, class, power and exploitation, migration, and conflict. *Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast* contributes to anthropological theory, highlighting improved methods, such as innovative statistical analyses, and incorporating newer technology, including DNA and geographic information system applications.

*"Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast* compares favorably with other southeastern-focused bioarchaeology volumes that survey the various archaeological populations in the American Southeast. It belongs on bookshelves next to volumes such as *Bioarchaeological Studies of Life in the Age of Agriculture: A View from the Southeast* and *What Mean These Bones? Studies in Southeastern Bioarchaeology*."

—Michelle D. Hamilton, associate professor of anthropology at Texas State University

*"A wonderful successor to What Mean These Bones?, Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast* demonstrates the current diversity seen in theoretical approaches in the discipline, from traditional population-based analyses of health to more socially focused studies of the individual. It will be a valuable addition to courses in both bioarchaeology as well as southeastern prehistory."

—Marie Danforth, professor of anthropology at the University of Southern Mississippi

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Cover image: Engraved bottle, ca. A.D. 1550 to 1650, Bradley site (3CT7), Crittenden County, Arkansas; courtesy of David H. Dye

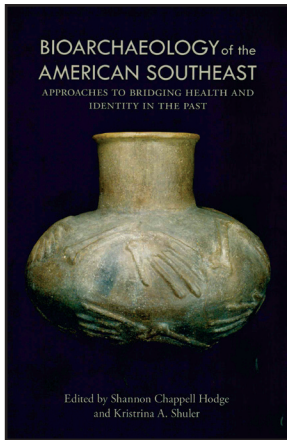
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## Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast: Approaches to Bridging Health and Identity in the Past

Shannon Chappell Hodge and Kristrina A. Shuler, Eds. 2018. [The University of Alabama Press](#). xx+302 pp., 58 B&W figures, 7 maps, 32 tables, references, index. \$74.95. (Hardcover, Ebook).

*Reviewed by Ryan M. Campbell, Center for Archaeological Investigation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.*

In 1991, Mary Lucas Powell, Patricia Bridges, and Ann Marie Wagner Mires produced the edited volume *What Mean These Bones?: Studies in Southeastern Bioarchaeology*. The book became a foundational text for bioarchaeologists working in the southeastern United States but also made a broader impact in the field as each chapter served to highlight current research trends. I found inspiration for my own dissertation research within its pages after reading Patricia Bridges' chapter on the relationship between subsistence activities and long bone robusticity. In *Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast: Approaches to Bridging Health and Identity in the Past*, Shannon Chappell Hodge and Kristrina A. Shuler have produced an edited volume that may very well provide similar inspiration for budding researchers and those looking to broaden their understanding of recent trends in the field.

The editors explicitly situate their volume as a successor to *What Mean These Bones?* The volume's authors provide the reader an updated snapshot of modern bioarchaeological research in the southeastern United States, with chapters based on papers given at symposia during the 65th, 66th, and 67th Southeastern Archaeological Conferences and the 79th American Association of Physical Anthropologists annual meeting. They organize the top-ics from these symposia by dividing the book into two parts: Context and Culture History in Bioarchaeology and Social Identities in Bioarchaeology.

The first four chapters provide the reader with examples of how bioarchaeologist are examining temporal trends in the region. In Chapter 1, Steven Byers and Rebecca Saunders illustrate the utility of using the biological distance concept to augment archaeological data as they attempt to understand whether genetic intrusion accompanied cultural change during the Woodland Period in Louisiana. Ginesse Listi explores health among Coles Creek Period populations in Chapter 2. The author examines linear enamel hypoplasias and cranial lesions to explore the consequences of social stratification among the Lower Mississippi River Valley groups. In Chapter 3, Tracy Betsinger and Maria Ostendorf Smith take a biocultural approach to understanding patterns of maize consumption among Late Mississippian groups in East Tennessee through an analysis of carious lesions. They illustrate their approach can produce a more nuanced view of broad temporal trends in the region, illuminating differences among broadly defined, geographically-dispersed cultural groups. Mark Griffin examines oral health at Tennessee Mississippian site in Chapter 4, with his research leading him to pose several interesting scenarios regarding maize consumption at the site.

In the second half of the volume, authors explore social identities through the bioarchaeological record. The first three chapters in this section provide the reader with case studies from precontact sites in the region. In Chapter 5, Shannon Chap-pell Hodge discusses broad themes of violence during the Archaic Period through the examination trauma and pathology on a skull with evidence of non-lethal scalping. Chapter 6 returns to an examination of health at a protohistoric site in north-west Georgia. Matthew Williamson's chapter could fit in either section of the book but includes an interesting discussion of the identity of one of the burials—a female skeleton buried with artifacts that would typically be found with the male “warriors.” In Chapter 7, Della Collins Cook examines a curated collection of skulls recovered from private collectors that likely originated from late-precontact sites in northwest Mississippi. The crania exhibit extensive modification and provided for an interesting discussion regarding the practice of cranial modification as a marker of identity and the potential health consequences of the practice.

The last three chapters provide the reader with examples of how bioarchaeology is being used to inform us about historic sites in the southeast. J. Lynn Funkhouser and Barbara Thedy Hester look at historic burials from a French colonial cemetery in Biloxi, Mississippi in Chapter 8. Their research gives us some insight into the socio-economic conditions that produced the exiled French immigrants in the settle-ment. In Chapter 9, a team of researchers including Kristrina A. Shuler, Emily Jateff, Eric C. Poplin, Ralph Bailey Jr., Eric Sipes, and Charles F. Philips Jr. present data from two historic cemeteries excavated on the property of the Citadel in South Carolina. The chapter serves to illustrate how cultural resource management projects produce meaningful bioarchaeological data that can be used to discuss demography, health, mortuary practices, and burial patterning. And in the final chapter, William D. Stevens, Carlina de la Cova, Christopher Judge, and Christopher Young examine human remains from the School of Anatomy at DeSaussure College in South Carolina. Their research illuminates how the practice of medical training has changed over time.

Hodge and Shuler's *Bioarchaeology of the American Southeast* is not a synthesis of the entirety of what we know about human biology and burials in the southeastern United States. The reader will not come away with a full understanding of the temporal trends and broad cultural shifts that characterize the region from the Paleoindian Period through the historic era. They will, however, find a series of thought-provoking research papers that provide a snapshot of current research in the region. Perhaps it would be best to characterize the volume as current bioarchaeology *in* the region rather than the bioarchaeology *of* the region. Most readers should find something that piques their interest within the pages of this volume, and perhaps some will, like me, find themselves envi-sioning how they might apply similar research questions within their own work.

## References Cited

- Powell, Mary L., Patricia S. Bridges, and Ann Marie Wagner Mires, Eds. (1991) *What Mean These Bones?: Studies in Southeastern Bioarchaeology*. University of Ala-bama Press, Tuscaloosa.