

eas, including periodic aggregation by members of two or more bands into larger groups on a temporary basis is assumed to have occurred, to facilitate information exchange and maintain mating networks (Anderson and Sassaman 1996). Regularly interacting bands formed groupings called macrobands, but these were fluid in composition, and the presence of a band within a particular macroband was determined by regional physiography and resource structure (i.e., conditions promoting interaction, population levels, and the number and proximity of groups to one another), and mating network requirements, than by any overarching organizational structures, which are assumed to have been absent.

The temporary aggregation of large numbers of people thus appears to have appreciable antiquity in the Southeast, extending back into Paleoindian times. But these aggregation events appear to have been between essentially equivalent bands, and do not directed toward the creation

or maintenance of more complex organizational forms, that is, tribal level societies. There is little evidence for unusual ceremony and no evidence for monumental construction during the Paleoindian and Early Archaic periods across much of the region, activities that might hint that these bands were tied together in a more permanent fashion. Essentially egalitarian bands, loosely tied together into macroband scale interaction networks, are all that are thought to have been present during the Paleoindian and Early Archaic periods.

There are hints however, that a more complex society may have developed during the Late Paleoindian era in the central Mississippi Valley, during what has been called the "Dalton efflorescence" from ca. 12,500 to 11,200 cal. B.P. (Morse and Morse 1983:70-97; see Fig. 2). This hunting and gathering culture was apparently characterized by formal cemeteries, such as that found at the Sloan site in northeast Arkansas (Morse 1997), and by the manufacture, exchange, and apparent

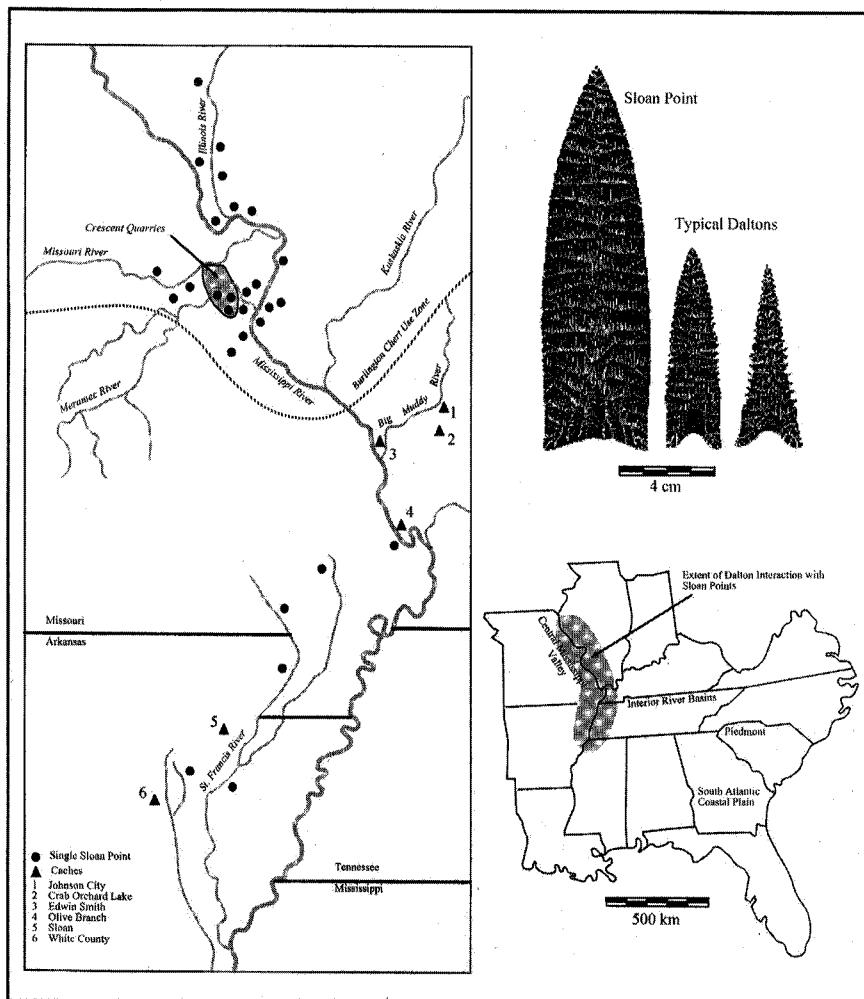


Fig. 2. Sloan points and the Extent of a Hypothesized Dalton Culture Interaction Network in the Central Mississippi Alluvial Valley (adapted from Walthall and Koldehoff 1998:260-261, courtesy The Plains Anthropological Society).