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PHYTOLITHS, POLLEN, AND PALEOECOLOGY AT A MIDDLE WOODLAND SITE IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHEAST

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Phytoliths and pollen are complementary forms of evidence attesting to paleoecological conditions at archaeological sites. When considered together, ancient environmental conditions can be posited, helping to reconstruct the paleoecological contexts that humans lived in and interacted with. Here, we present a study of pollen and phytoliths from a midden context at Rice Farm, a Middle Woodland Native American site in the American Southeast. Sample collection and analysis methods will be presented before discussing the social and environmental significance of the results. Our data contextualizes a record of native vegetation alongside use or discard of the cultigen maize by Native Americans at the Rice Farm site. The pollen and phytolith records couch this local signature within the broader environmental context of north Georgia's Piedmont during the Middle Woodland period. Taken alone, the phytolith data would not have provided an adequate means to properly contextualize past human-environmental interaction at the site, demonstrating the necessity of combining the results with pollen analysis to best reconstruct the paleoecological context at this site and archaeological sites in general.

Keywords

Phytolith, Pollen, Paleoecology, Environment, Middle Woodland, Native American

Note/comment