

5-2023

## The Variability of Age Between Townhouse and Residential Burials for Cherokee of the Southern Appalachian Region

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**The Variability of Age Between Townhouse and Residential Burials for Cherokee of the  
Southern Appalachian Region**

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SBS 402: Senior Capstone II

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19 May 2023

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores how age relates to the burial practices of the Cherokee people and the structures that are significant to this aspect of their culture. It supports the assertion that, at a certain age Cherokee males gain enough prestige to be buried with structures that reflect that. In this specific capstone, I will analyze at what age males gain social status within the Southern Appalachian Cherokee. To do this analysis, I will examine various variables such as sex and non-perishable grave goods and the relationship with burial places. Using the Symbolic Interactionism theory to emphasize the significance of Cherokee Townhouses and Residential Houses I further examine the social status of the Cherokee.

## Introduction

Before the colonization of the Americas, many flourishing native groups were dwelling within each region of the western hemisphere. Each native group maintained both different and at times, similar, cultural practices. However, with the decrease in the population of native people due to colonization and displacement, these cultural practices have been significantly lost to history. In recent decades there has been an increase in the number of people learning about and reconstructing their historical language and cultural practices. This has been accomplished by learning directly from fellow native members who have maintained and now pass down their indigenous knowledge and through ethnohistoric research conducted on native peoples. Anthropologists and archaeologists also learn about Native American people and history through stories passed down through oral traditions and by excavating sites that native groups once inhabited. Those who reconstruct Native American culture do so by examining a variety of data including the role and significance of gender, social structures, cultural practices, and other archaeological artifacts. One of the essential cultural practices that are being examined and reconstructed revolves around indigenous burial practices. This paper explores how age relates burial practices of the Cherokee people and the structures that are significant to this aspect of their culture. It supports the assertion that, at a certain age Cherokee males gain enough prestige to be buried with structures that reflect that.

For the Cherokee, primarily located in the southern Appalachian region of North America, data is abundant regarding their cultural practices, gender roles, and related archaeological artifacts. Certain structures built by the Cherokee appear to have a connection to the people and society. This interconnectedness is of particular interest to archaeologists, especially within the scope of gender and gender roles within Cherokee society. For example, the literature related to Cherokee structures and their social dynamics and usage around the time of colonization is copious. However, literature before contact with Europeans is less so.

Additionally, there is very little in the literature that discusses or focuses on the dynamics of age within Cherokee society.

This study seeks to further understand how age impacts burial practices in Cherokee culture. While the literature analyzes factors related to gender and burial practices extensively, there is little focus on what stage of life that influences this particular social practice, especially for males within Cherokee culture. This lack of information leads to my inquiry of the following questions:

1. What impact does age have, as opposed to other societal factors, in determining the burial location of a Cherokee male?
2. What impact does age have, as opposed to other societal factors, in determining the variety of grave goods placed alongside a Cherokee male at burial?

This paper will show that at a certain age, Cherokee males will start to gain societal prestige and will also demonstrate that it is likely that age, to an extent, does not influence the amount or variety of grave goods.

## **Literature Review**

The current literature about the Cherokee references the Southern Appalachian and Mississippi River regions as the primary locations the Cherokee inhabit. The literature also focuses on mortuary practices in this region and the placements of where people were buried concerning gender, as well as the distribution of grave goods. There is also literature about the significance of townhouses and mounds within Cherokee culture. This literature review will focus on the relationship gender has with the domestic and public societal structures and burial practices of the South Appalachian native people. Understanding the interconnectedness of gender and architecture through symbolic interactionism by emphasizing (1) the significance of townhouses, residential houses, and mounds, (2) the differences in gender relations and roles, and (3) the differences in mortuary practices as it relates to gender.

### *Townhouses, Residential Houses, and Mounds*

Mounds in the Southern Appalachian and Mississippian regions usually had a quadrilateral or square-shaped with rounded corners, with a flat summit which would often have the remnants of older structures buried underneath (Rodning 2010). The significance of the quadrilateral shape of the mounds, within Cherokee culture, is symbolic of the four corners of the world (Rodning 2010). The mounds also often went through stages of building, burning, burying, and rebuilding which served as a representation of life, death, and renewal, which would create a mound composed of the burned remnants from previous generations (Rodning 2010; Rodning 2009, 628). And when documenting parts of Cherokee oral tradition there is a story, or legend, that describes the building of an earthen mound: first by placing stones on the ground in a circle and starting a fire in the middle; then the burial of an important town leader, or several people, is placed near the center and buried; next women would bring baskets filled with earth and placed them on top of the stones, fire, and burials; finally the earthen mound would be smoothed and completed, ready for a townhouse to be built on top; once the townhouse is built, a single man, the fire keeper, would tend to the fire and keep it burning (Rodning 2009, 633).

Cherokee townhouses, in Southern Appalachia, have been known to be placed on top of earthen mounds; they often had a squared structure with four posts that supported the roof and were arranged around the central hearth (Rodning 2010, 62). Inside the supports for the roof, the earth would be integrated into the structure, usually in the section directly over the central hearth; constructing Cherokee townhouses in this fashion would make the structures replicate the appearance of platform mounds, which connect cultural landscapes, in the forms of mounds and townhouses, and the natural landscape, like mountains (Rodning 2010, 62). For the Cherokee, townhouses are an integral part of their society. These townhouses were often the center of life for the Cherokee. Plazas and domestic spaces were built around or near the townhouses and unless a settlement had townhouses, they were not considered by the Cherokee to be towns (Rodning 2010, 61; Boudreaux 2013). The townhouses and plazas were

the main locations for dances, council meetings, and specific rituals; the townhouses are also considered status symbols of local households as well (Rodning 2010, 59; Rodning 2009, 631).

Domestic, or residential, houses were the settings for domestic activities and social gatherings (Rodning 2009, 631). Like townhouses, residential houses had a squared structure with a central hearth and support posts covered in the earth (Rodning 2010, 62). However, there is a difference between townhouses and residential houses, the first difference is the size; while townhouses and residential houses have similar construction, townhouses were often larger than residential houses (Rodning 2009, 631). Residential houses would also be located to the north and south of public plazas, and there is evidence that Cherokee towns started with residential houses that were quite compact around the plaza and then evolved to have a more open ceremonial center (Boudreaux 2013 486-488).

### *Gender Relations and Roles*

In Cherokee society, gendered roles and traditions are often avenues through which potential leaders rise to prominence and gain power within the community (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 107). The traditional roles of men and women in Cherokee society are distinct, and how they gain status within the community differ, but it was not fixed and there have been accounts of female chiefs and warriors (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 111-112). However, one of the most important factors in gender relations and roles is the matrilineal kinship of the Cherokee (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 110). The matrilineal society is significant because Cherokee men are related to their clan and family through their relationship with women, either a mother, wife, or sister, which makes the women in Cherokee society the cornerstone of kinship relations (Rodning 1999, 6).

Women in Cherokee society gain their power and status through different means than men. Women primarily garnered power and status through farming and communal rituals, but importantly through the controlled access to resources and membership into the community



through matrilineal kinship (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 110). Women's control over the allocation of resources required them to handle the dividing of food so that there is enough for visitors and public feast, but also in the case of potential crop failure (VanDerwarker and Detwiler 2002, 22). This would often mean that domestic houses and the household is under the domain of Cherokee women, and they would have been primarily responsible for the gardens and other household resources as well (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 111). Women's status as leaders of the household, however, most likely stemmed from men's absence within the domestic space, which gave women the ability to determine kinship ties (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 111).

Men primarily gained their status and prestige as hunters, traders, warriors, and diplomats, they would negotiate with their peers from other towns, chiefdoms, or tribes and would often spend significant lengths of time away from their homes (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 110). Since war is a possible area in which men can gain prestige, warriors would be divided into varying ranks based on achievements through war; and as they moved through the ranks, warriors collected prestige items to demonstrate prowess and bravery to the public (Sullivan 2001, 106). Due to their place in society is associated with public work, men would occupy council houses, also known as townhouses, with other men from the tribe (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 110). Also, due to the Cherokee being a matrilineal society, made men's kinship within the tribe insecure and irregular (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 110).

### *Mortuary Differences Between Genders*

Since men in Cherokee society were community leaders, warriors, and advisors, townhouses, where public and diplomatic events and ceremonies often took place, are considered the domain of men where male-oriented events took place (Sullivan and Rodning 2001, 89). This connection men had with public and community spaces would often lead to most of the adult males being interned in or around townhouses and other public spaces, such as

plazas and townhouse ramadas. However, there have been a few children buried in and round townhouses along with adult men (Rodning 2011, 166). Although, the people buried in the townhouses were more likely buried during the early stages of the townhouse being built and the burials around the townhouse happened in the later stages of the townhouse lifecycle (Rodning 2011, 166).

Residential burials have often been defined as burials within the subfloor or general structure of residential burials, however, it does not consider the domestic contexts of cultures (Adams and King 2010, 3). Since Cherokee women's prestige is connected to the home and domestic, women are often buried at residential houses, however, the spatial distinctions between them can affect the perceived prestige of women because burials in public spaces are often alaudid as the most prestigious (Sullivan 2001, 111). Unless the adult men were associated with townhouses, they would have been buried in a small cemetery next to the household dwelling, which could have been due to the matrilineal structure of the Cherokee (Sullivan and Rodning, 89).

When considering grave goods, the distance the artifacts travel is important because it could be a testament to the elite status of the person buried (Cobb 2003, 72). This connection with high-value goods, also known as prestige goods, are given their high-value status first through their acquisition by elites from distant and ideologically rich places and are then bestowed the artifacts with ritual importance (Cobb 2003, 73). At the Coweeta Creek site, the more elaborate and varied grave goods were typically found with adult males, while the only type of grave goods found with children appeared to be clay or ceramic pots (Rodning 2001, 87-91). Although, at the same site, the grave goods suggest that there are no strict social or political structures or hierarchies (Rodning 2001, 91). Shell gorgets, however, could suggest that the person buried could have been someone of high social status or a descendant of ancient chiefs (Rodning 2001, 91). Even though the grave goods for adult males and females differ, there is often a greater variety of grave goods for males which could suggest that the

displaying of male social statuses is to emphasize males in public life (Hally 2004, 174).

However, early European contact may have influenced this emphasis on male status and participation (Rodning and Moore 2010, 93).

### *Summary*

While the gendered roles within Cherokee society occupy different spheres, one area is not more important than the other. Even though men are often public leaders, diplomats, and warriors, the Cherokee are a matrilineal society that gives women power in their relationship with the group; men only have ties to the group through their relationship with the women of the household. The roles of women and men are also intrinsically connected to Cherokee architecture as well. Townhouses are structures where public activities would take place, such as public ceremonies and welcoming visitors and guests, while residential houses are central to kinship relationships and activities that support the maintenance of the town. While there is overlap with the types and frequency of grave goods, there does seem to be a distinction in which grave goods are reserved for which demographic. Men seem to be buried with prestige items, while women are buried with items that represent their role in Cherokee society, and simple clay or ceramic pots are buried with children. Regarding the relevance of age, much of the literature does focus on the social dynamics of adults and some elders, however, there is no indication of when Cherokee people reached or gain prestige within their spheres of influence.

### **Symbolic Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism is a social theory used to analyze the interactions between people by emphasizing the meanings of symbols and objects that are assigned to them. Such as the signs at a crosswalk to indicate people walking across the street, the logos on buildings to indicate the store or company, or the symbols used to convey if a piece of trash can be recycled or not. The first print of the term “social interactionism” came from Herbert Blumer to illustrate the sociological approach that is based on the social behavioral philosophy developed

by George Herbert Mead in the 1920s (Dingwall 2001, 237). The predominant variety of the phrase was established by Herbert Blumer while he was at the University of Chicago during the 1950s, explaining that symbolic interactionism centers around the meaning people give objects and how that impacts us (Carter and Fuller 2015, 2; Smith and Bungi 2006, 126).

The theory of symbolic interactionism can also be applied to architecture, which can have a specific meaning and purpose to the builder and others (Smith and Bugni 2006). For instance, a church could have the symbolic meaning of being a holy place and a castle could have the symbolic meaning of wealth. This is apparent with certain Cherokee structures; for instance, public structures in a settlement indicate that there is a community present, and townhouses signify that a settlement is a town (Rodning 2010, 59). This is significant because without a townhouse a settlement is not considered a town by the Cherokee (Rodning 2010, 59). The connotation of the buildings in a Cherokee settlement carries over to the social roles of the people about the buildings. By establishing the relationship between gender and the gendered roles of the Cherokee and public and residential structures, symbolic interactionism can then be used to analyze the relationship between the public and residential structures and age.

## **Methodology**

This capstone utilized secondary data analysis to conduct a meta-analysis of the distribution of burial remains between residential and townhouses, grave goods, and the ages of those buried. I gathered data from three sources that contained relevant information about age, sex, variety of grave goods, and place of burial within the Southern Appalachian area. This data covers five data sets and three locations where Cherokee settlements were once inhabited, which include three data sets from Coweeta Creek (Rodning 2009; Rodning and Moore 2010, Rodning 2011), one data set from Warren Wilson (Rodning and Moore 2010), and one data set from Garden Creek (Rodning and Moore 2010). For the Coweeta Creek site, each of the three

different data sets provides information for eighty-eight burials. The Warren Wilson site data comprises sixty burials and the Garden Creek site data provides information for thirty-six burials. Once I collected the data from the three sources, I proceeded to determine and identify the variables to analyze the possible correlation between age with the place of burial and the variety of grave goods.

The first variable I identified and used to keep the data uniform are the categories for the age groups, which I acquired from one of my sources, where I obtained my data, and applied it to the remaining data sets. These categories for the age groups are elder (E): ages older than thirty-four, mature adult (MA): ages between twenty-five and thirty-four, young adult (YA): ages between fifteen and twenty-four, adolescent (A): ages between eight and fourteen, and child (C): ages younger than eight (Rodning 2009).

Like the age group categories, to keep the data as uniform as possible I used the labels for the burial sites, taken from the same source as the age groups; the labels are Townhouse (T), Plaza (P), Townhouse Ramada (R), and other parts of the site (O) (Rodning 2009). However, for the Garden Creek data set the labels for the burial place are more generalized between the mounds (M) and the village (V) (Rodning and Moore 2010). Although the labels for the Garden Creek site are different from the other two, understanding that Townhouses, Plazas, and Ramadas are associated with public life and are located around the mounds, makes interpreting and analyzing the data simpler.

Another variable I also used to keep the data uniform pertains to sex, determining this variable was quite simple because the labels used are the same with each source and data set. These labels are male (M), female (F), adults older than fifteen of indeterminate sex (I), and subadults younger than fifteen of unknown sex (U) (Rodning 2009; Rodning and Moore 2010; Rodning 2011).

The final variable I determined to keep uniformity throughout the five data sets I accumulated was the different variety of non-perishable grave goods with each burial provided

by the sources. I did this because the column for the non-perishable grave goods listed some items that did not indicate an exact quantity for that type of grave goods. Also, the variety of non-perishable grave goods could be an indicator of prestige.

After establishing uniformity with all five data sets, I began to analyze the data using pivot charts and graphs to determine a relationship between the variables. To analyze the data, I followed these steps:

1. Create the first pivot chart with the variables sex and age group.
2. Create the second pivot chart with the variables sex, age group, and burial area.
3. Create the third pivot chart with the variables sex, age group, and variety of grave goods.
4. Create the fourth pivot chart with the variables age group, burial area, and variety of grave goods.

I started this process with the three Coweeta Creek data sets individually, then the Warren Wilson data, and finally the Garden Creek data. The fourth pivot chart, from all five data sets, was analyzed once I finished the first three steps and analyzed the first three pivot charts.

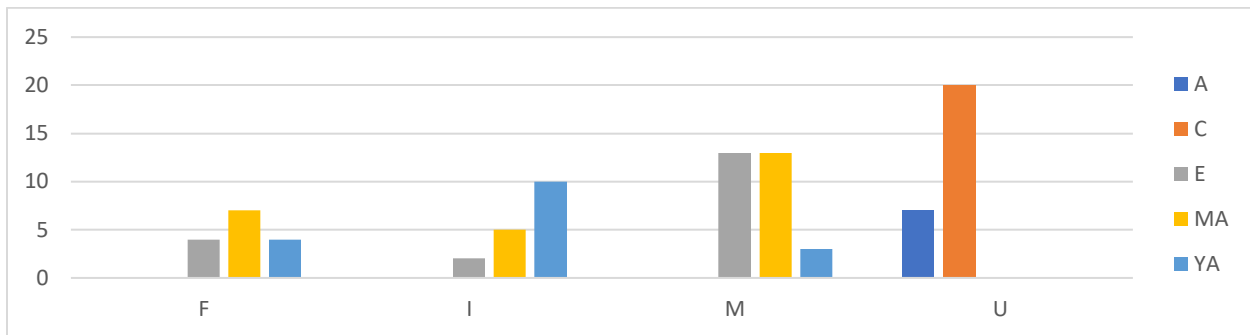
## Findings

The first Coweeta Creek data set provides information for eighty-eight burials which I copied into an Excel worksheet (Rodning 2009). I then started with step one to first create a pivot chart and graph to identify the distribution between the age groups and sex (See Figures 1 and 2 below).

Sex	Age Group					Grand Total
	A	C	E	MA	YA	
F			4	7	4	15
I			2	5	10	17
M			13	13	3	29
U	7	20				27

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>
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**Figure 1:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).



**Figure 2:** This graph was created in the table in Figure 1, using data from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).

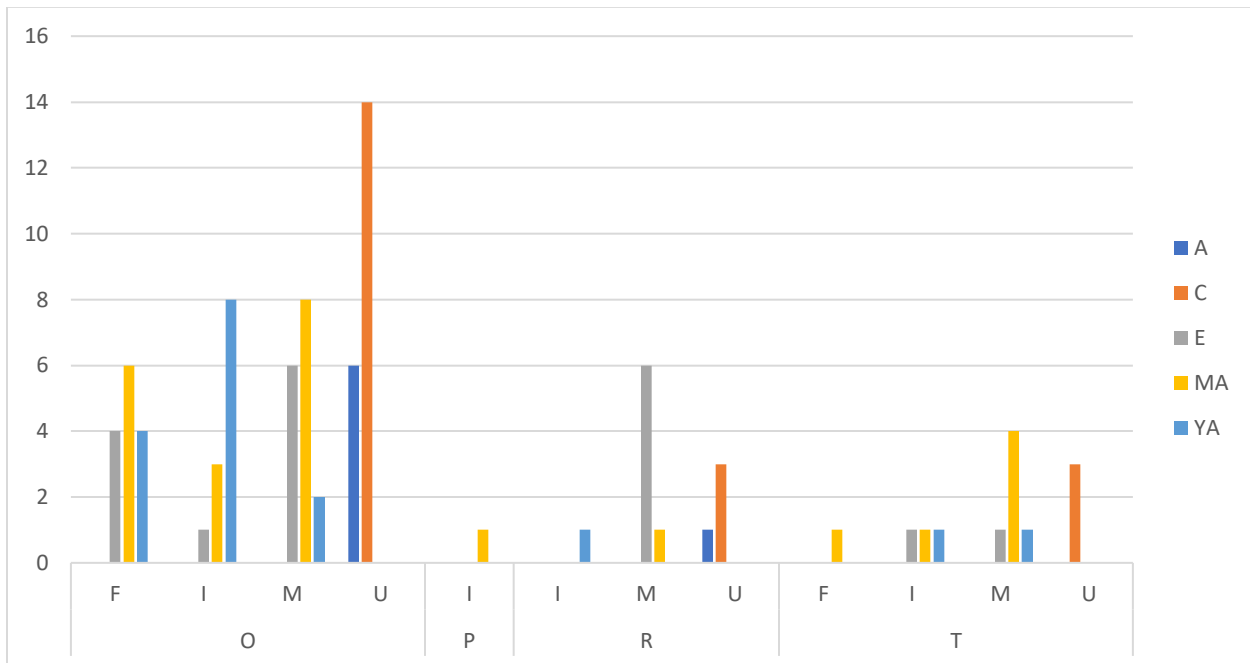
An interesting trend seen in the table and graph is that, besides the children and adolescents, many of the burials for the E, MA, and YA categories belong to people of indeterminate sex or males. Moreover, of the eighty-eight burials, only seven belong to the adolescent age group.

The second pivot chart and graph I created, following step two, displays the distribution of age groups, burial locations, and sex. When analyzing the data from the chart and graph, most of the burial areas are in the O location, with most of the burials belonging to children and adolescents in the age group U and females, males, and indeterminate sex. However, less than half of the burials are found with townhouses and townhouse ramadas, with only one burial found with the plaza (See Figures 3 and 4).

Area	Age Groups					Grand Total
	A	C	E	MA	YA	
<b>O</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>62</b>
F			4	6	4	14
I			1	3	8	12
M			6	8	2	16
U	6	14				20
<b>P</b>				<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
I				1		1
<b>R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>

I					1	1
M			6	1		7
U	1	3				4
<b>T</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>
F				1		1
I			1	1	1	3
M			1	4	1	6
U		3				3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>

**Figure 3:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009). Note the distribution of sexes between the areas, in the public areas (P, R, and T) many of the burials belong to males, however, six children were also buried with these public areas.



**Figure 4:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).

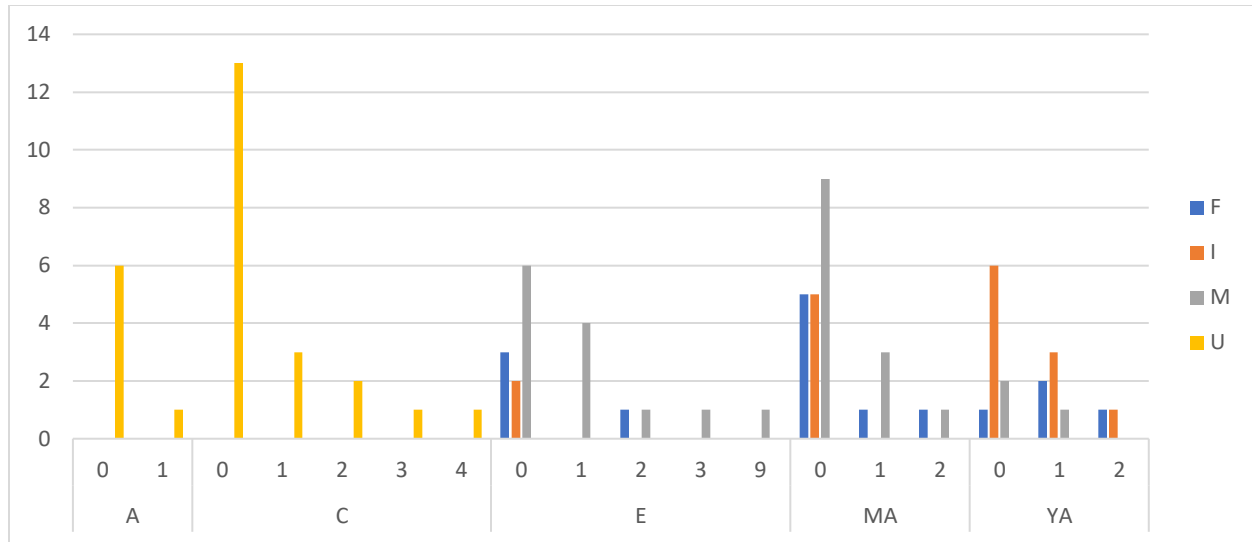
The third pivot chart I created, following step three, using the same data looks at the distribution between sex, age group, and variety of grave goods. This shows that out of eighty-eight burials fifty-eight did not contain non-perishable grave goods. The burials with the most variety of grave goods are found with an elder male followed by a child (see Figures 5 and 6). Although many of the female burials do not have any non-perishable grave goods, it does not imply that there were no grave goods buried with the person, this could be attributed to the



spheres of influence between men and women. The women in Cherokee society were mainly in charge of domestic responsibilities and food storage and distribution, which could imply that the grave goods women were buried with were perishable in nature (VanDerwarker and Detwiler 2002).

Grave Good Variety	Sex				Grand Total
	F	I	M	U	
<b>A</b>				<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
0				6	6
1				1	1
<b>C</b>				<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
0				13	13
1				3	3
2				2	2
3				1	1
4				1	1
<b>E</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>19</b>
0	3	2	6		11
1			4		4
2	1		1		2
3			1		1
9			1		1
<b>MA</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>25</b>
0	5	5	9		19
1	1		3		4
2	1		1		2
<b>YA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>17</b>
0	1	6	2		9
1	2	3	1		6
2	1	1			2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>88</b>

**Figure 5:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).



**Figure 6:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).

For the second and third set of data for Coweeta Creek, I followed the same steps for creating the pivot charts and graphs. Although, there are interesting differences that slightly change the distributions of sex, age groups, areas, and grave goods. The first slight change is in the distribution of sexes between the age groups. Like the first Coweeta Creek data set, the second and third data sets have the same distribution for E, MA, and YA groups. However, the child and adolescent age group categories are off by one number (See figures 7, 8, 9, and 10).

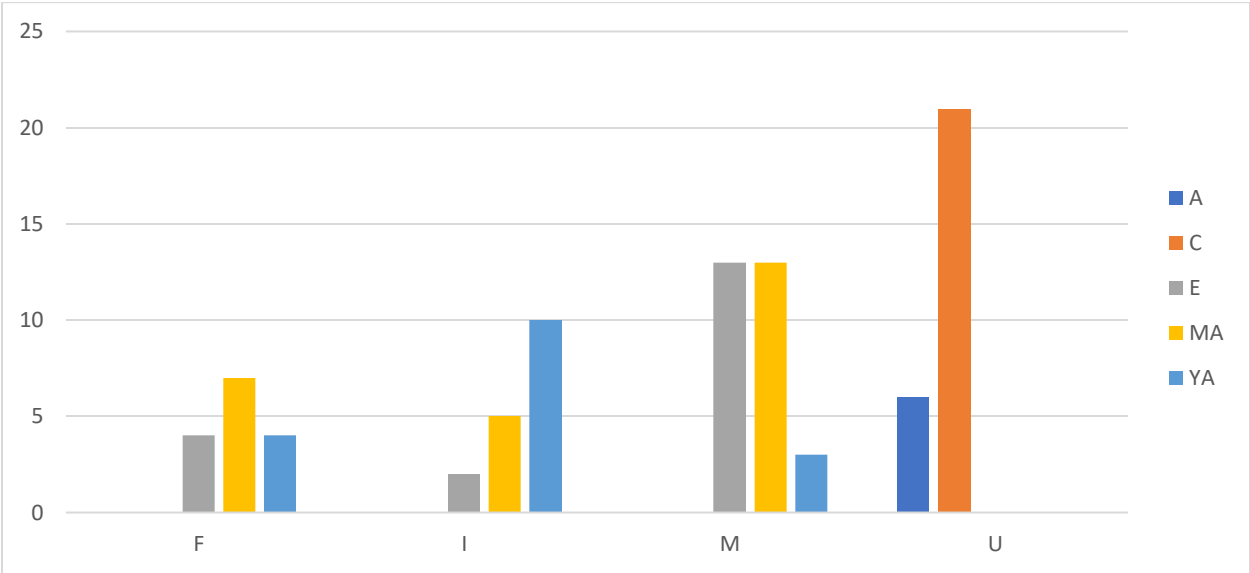
Sex	Age Group					Grand Total
	A	C	E	MA	YA	
F			4	7		15
I			2	5		17
M			13	13		29
U	6	21				27
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>

**Figure 7:** This table was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

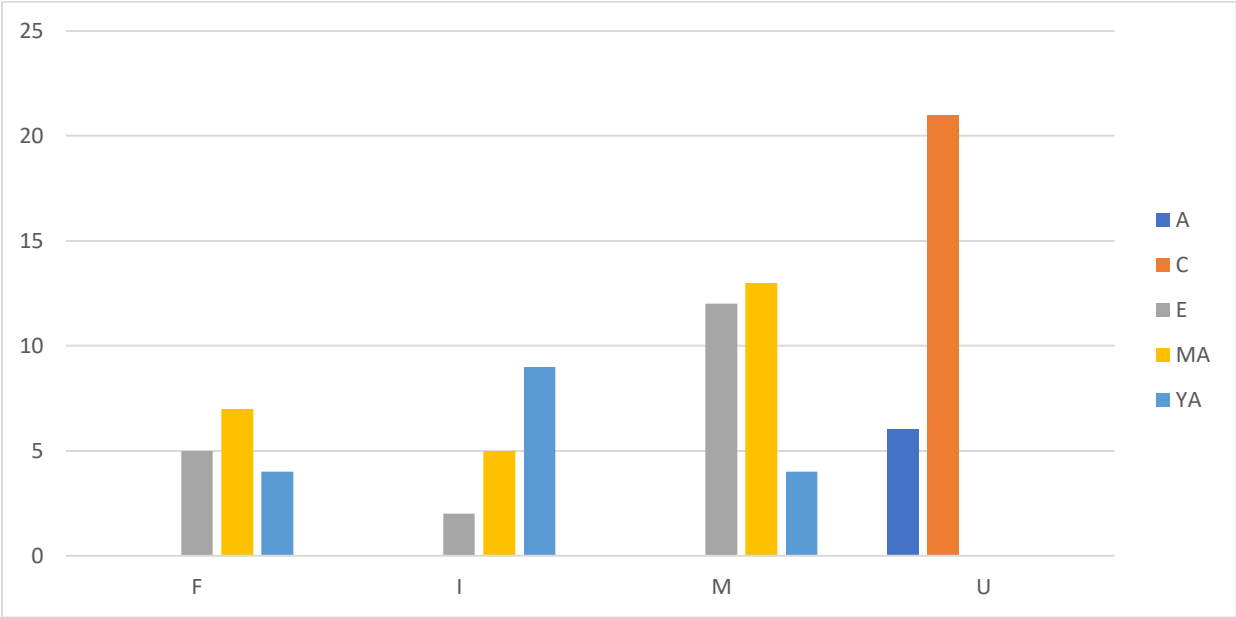
Sex	Age Group					Grand Total
	A	C	E	MA	YA	
F			5	7	4	16
I			2	5	9	16
M			12	13	4	29

U	6	21				27
Grand Total	6	21	19	25	17	88

**Figure 8:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



**Figure 9:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).



**Figure 10:** This graph was created using data from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).

There are also small differences in the distribution with the burial areas as well, the main difference being that there are no burials in or around the townhouse ramada in the second set of data. Moreover, in the third set of data, there is one more burial in the plaza compared to the first and second data sets (See figures 11, 12, 13, and 14).

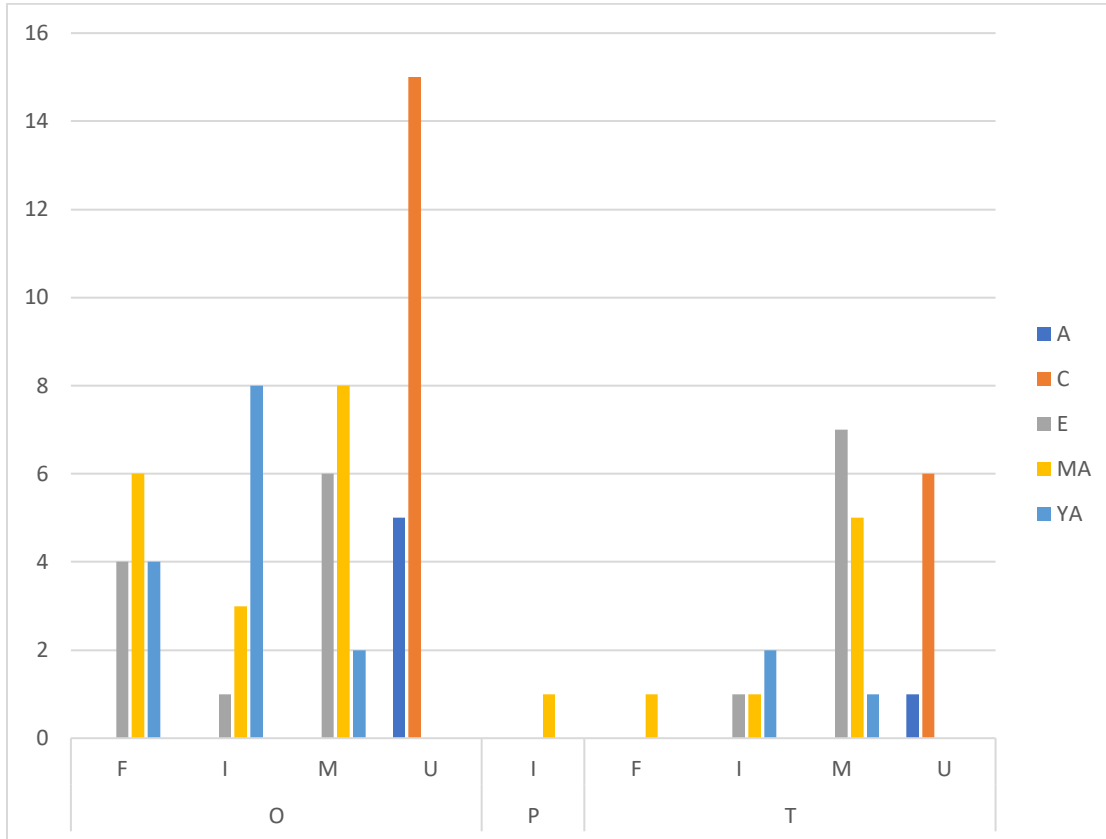
Age Group							Grand Total
Area	A	C	E	MA	YA		
O		5	15	11	17	14	62
F				4	6	4	14
I				1	3	8	12
M				6	8	2	16
U		5	15				20
P					1		1
I					1		1
T		1	6	8	7	3	25
F					1		1
I				1	1	2	4
M				7	5	1	13
U		1	6				7
Grand Total		6	21	19	25	17	88

**Figure 11:** This table was created using the data obtained from "South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina" (Rodning and Moore 2010).

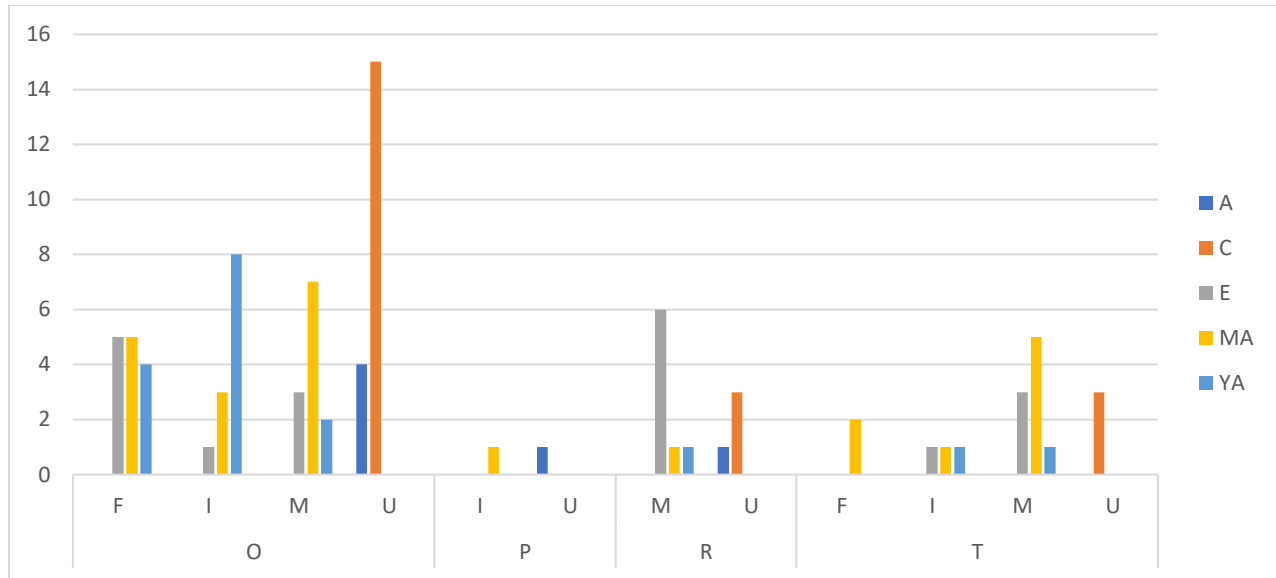
Age Group							
Area	A	C	E	MA	YA	Grand Total	
O		4	15	9	15	14	57
F				5	5	4	14
I				1	3	8	12
M				3	7	2	12
U		4	15				19
P		1			1		2
I					1		1
U		1					1
R		1	3	6	1	1	12
M				6	1	1	8
U		1	3				4
T			3	4	8	2	17
F					2		2

I		1	1	1		3
M		3	5	1		9
U		3				3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>88</b>

**Figure 12:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



**Figure 13:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).



**Figure 14:** This graph was created using data from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).

The distribution of grave goods is also similar between the three data sets source for mature adults and elders. While the distribution of grave goods between children, adolescent, and young adults has changed according to the age group distribution where both the number and sex has changed compared to the first data set (See Figures 15, 16, 17, and 18).

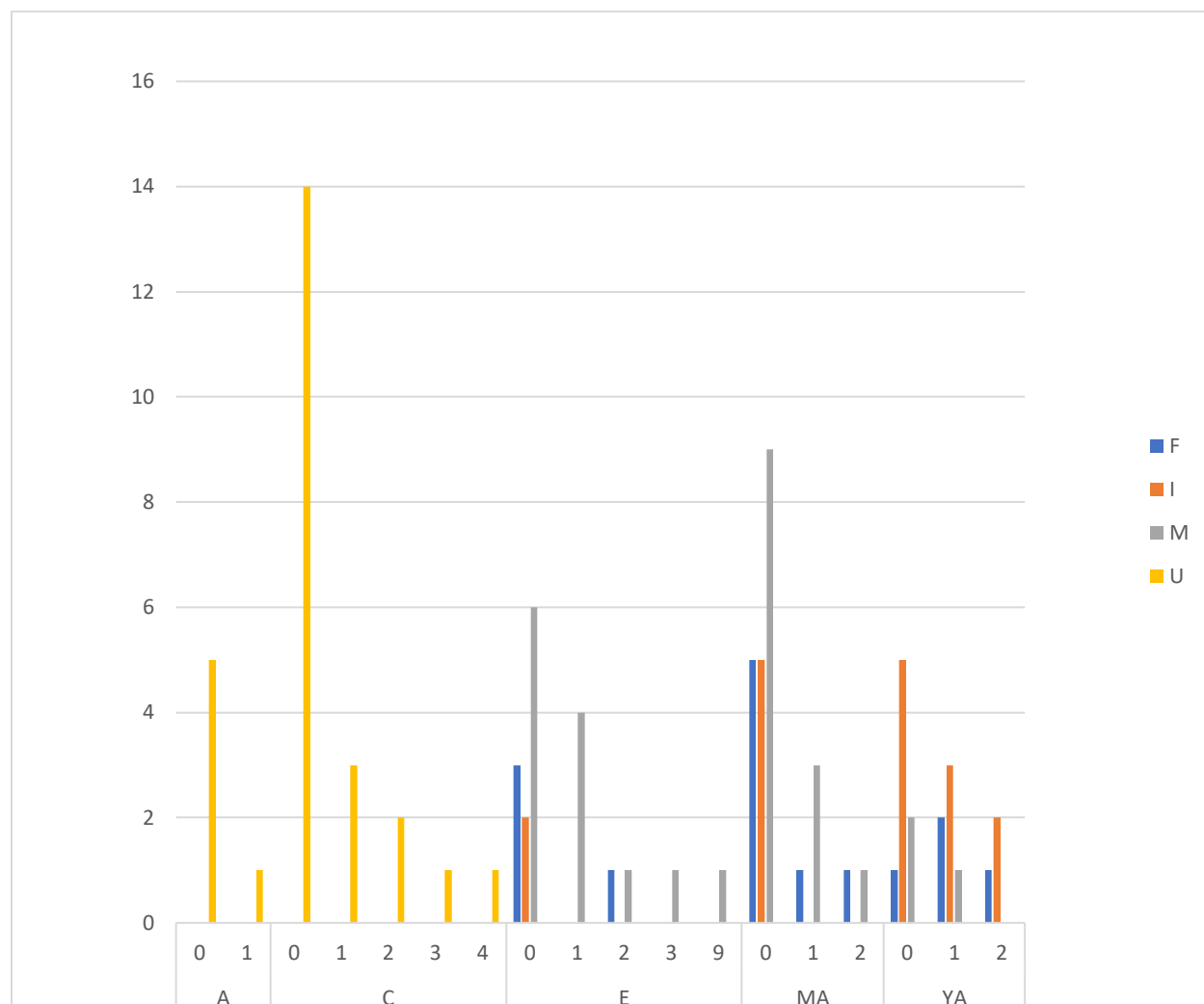
Age Group	Sex				Grand Total
	F	I	M	U	
<b>A</b>				<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
0				5	5
1				1	1
<b>C</b>				<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>
0				14	14
1				3	3
2				2	2
3				1	1
4				1	1
<b>E</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>
0		3	2	6	11
1				4	4
2		1		1	2
3				1	1
9				1	1

<b>MA</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>
0	5	5	9	19
1	1		3	4
2	1		1	2
<b>YA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>
0	1	5	2	8
1	2	3	1	6
2	1	2		3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>
				<b>88</b>

**Figure 15:** This table was created using the data obtained from "South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina" (Rodning and Moore 2010).

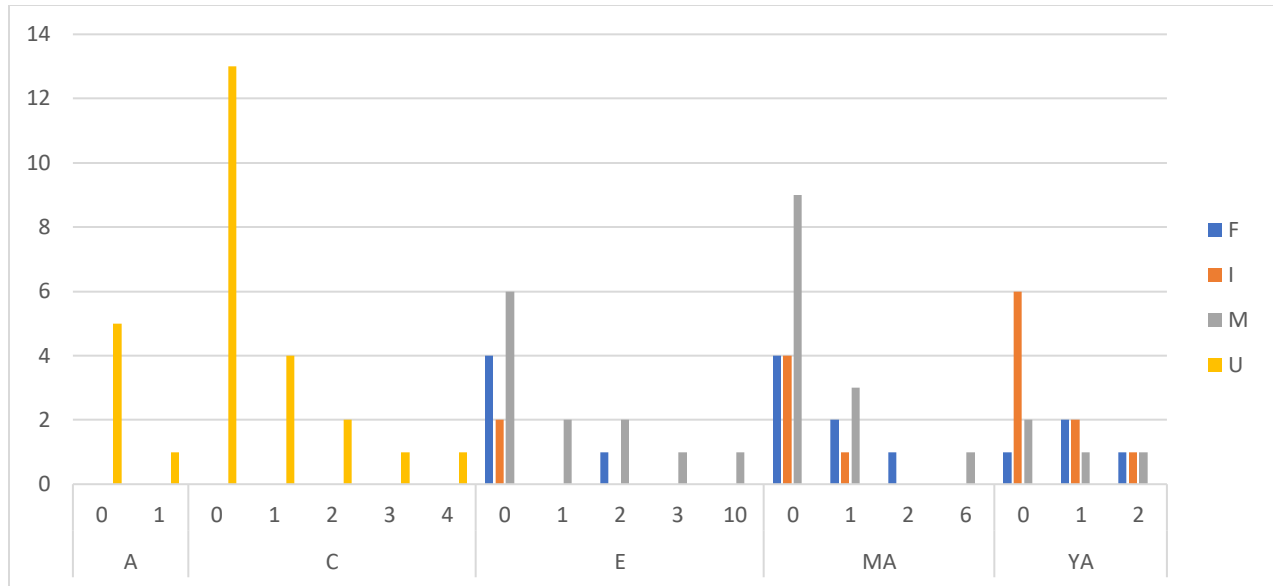
Age Group	Sex				Grand Total
	F	I	M	U	
<b>A</b>				<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
0				5	5
1				1	1
<b>C</b>				<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>
0				13	13
1				4	4
2				2	2
3				1	1
4				1	1
<b>E</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>
0		4	2	6	12
1				2	2
2		1		2	3
3				1	1
10				1	1
<b>MA</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>
0		4	4	9	17
1		2	1	3	6
2		1			1
6				1	1
<b>YA</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>
0		1	6	2	9
1		2	2	1	5
2		1	1	1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>
					<b>88</b>

**Figure 16:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



**Figure 17:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).



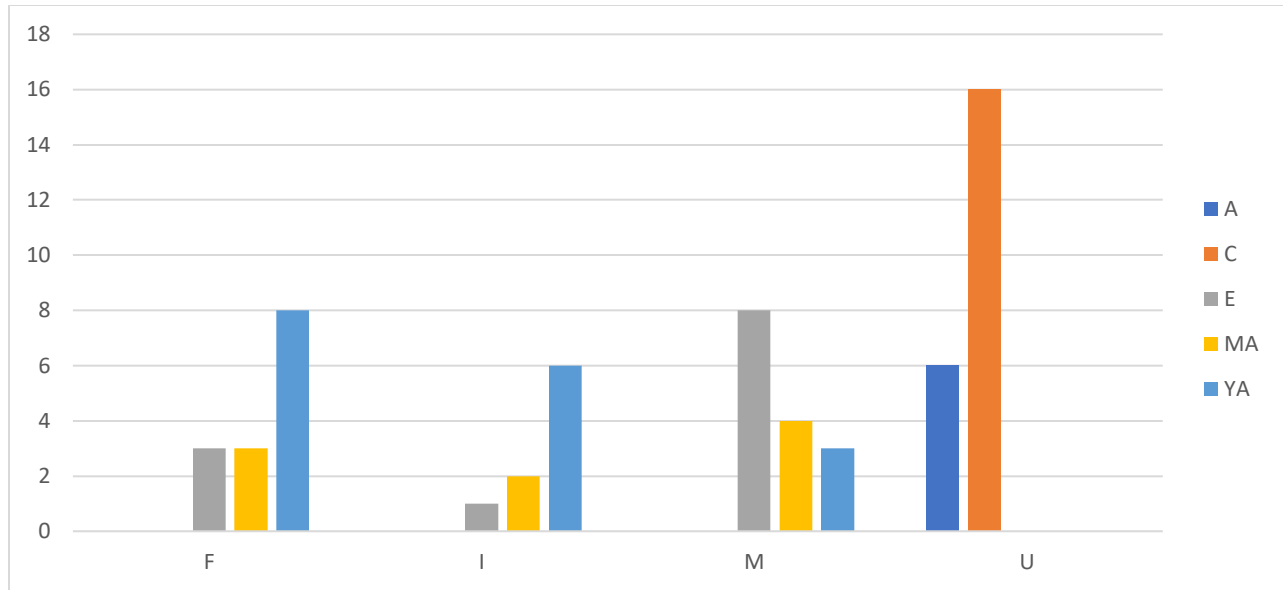


**Figure 18:** This graph was created using data from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).

At the Warren Wilson site, the overall number of burials is significantly less compared to the data sets from the Coweeta Creek site. When analyzing the sex and age group categories, the distribution is almost even. However, the indeterminate sex category is much smaller than the other three categories (See figures 19 and 20).

Count of Area	Column Labels					Grand Total
Row Labels	A	C	E	MA	YA	
F				3	3	8
I				1	2	6
M				8	4	3
U		6	16			
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>

**Figure 19:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).

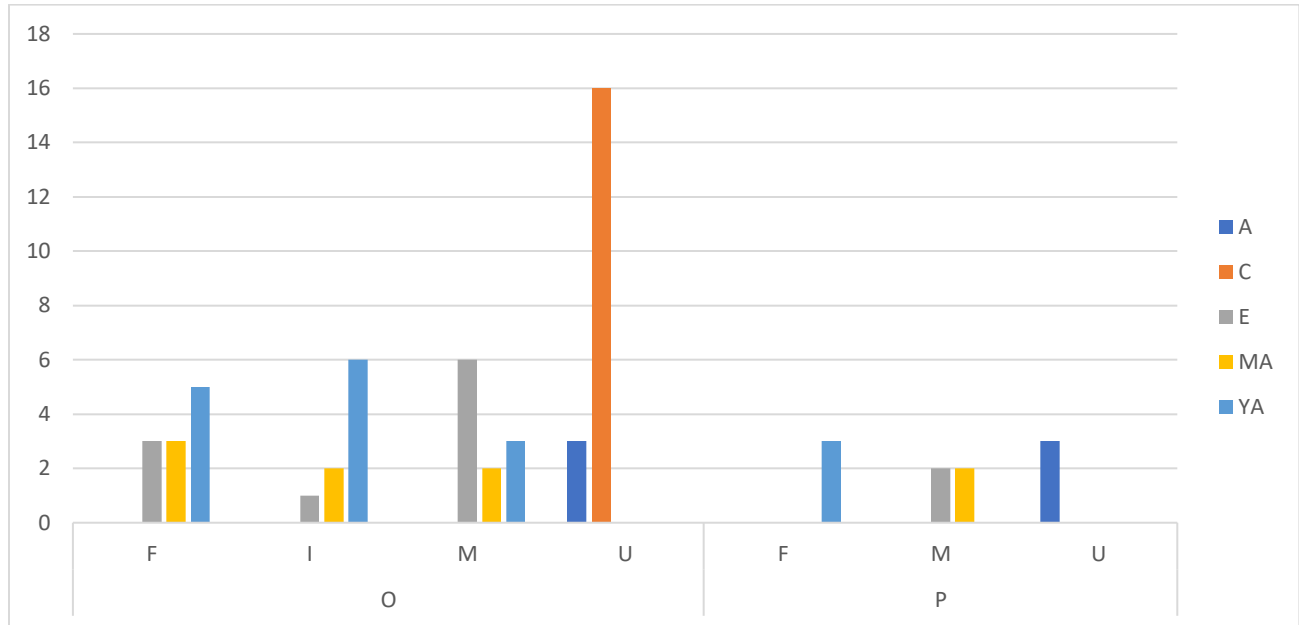


**Figure 20:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

While analyzing the distribution of age groups and the area where they are buried there are only two locations where the burials were found, with many of the burials located in parts of the site not in proximity of public spaces. Also, there are no burials found with townhouses and townhouse ramadas. There is also an even distribution of adolescents between both areas. Although, the total number of adolescents and females combined is more than the total number of males buried in the plaza area (See figures 21 and 22).

Age Group							Grand Total
Area	A	C	E	MA	YA		
O		3	16	10	7	14	50
F				3	3	5	11
I				1	2	6	9
M				6	2	3	11
U		3	16				19
P		3		2	2	3	10
F						3	3
M				2	2		4
U		3					3
Grand Total		6	16	12	9	17	60

**Figure 21:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



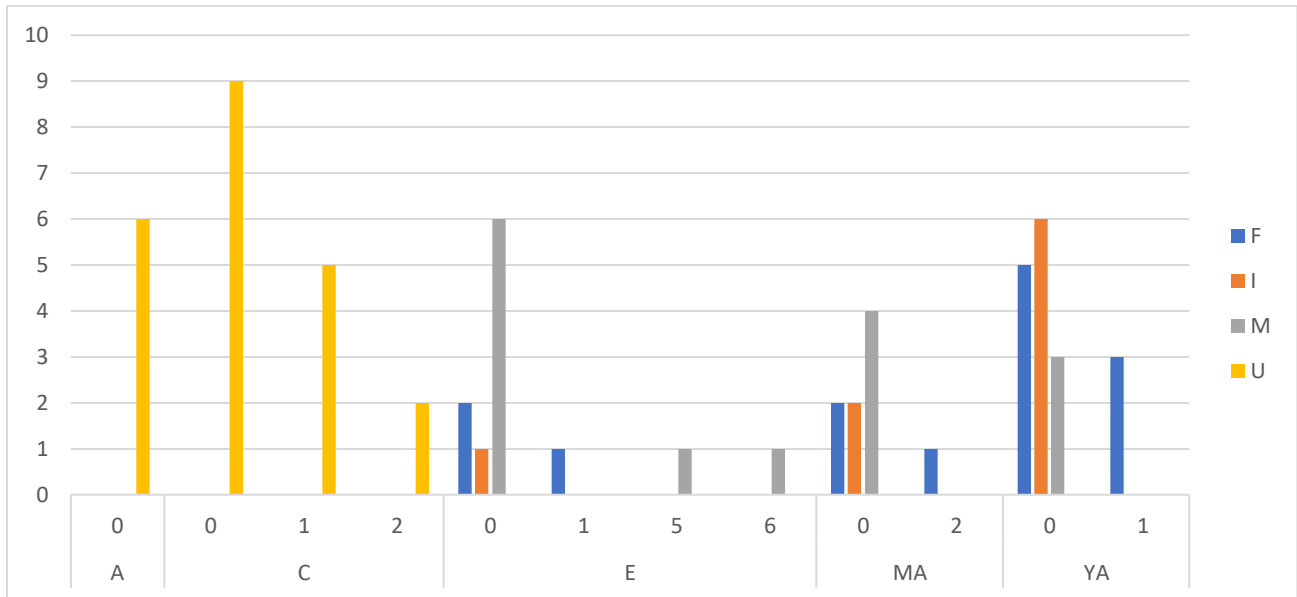
**Figure 22:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

The distribution of non-perishable grave goods is not even, with most of the age categories having no grave goods, while in the elder category, two of the males have the most variety of grave goods. However, the rest of the categories have either mostly no grave goods or one or two different grave goods (See Figures 23 and 24).

Age Group	Sex				Grand Total
	F	I	M	U	
<b>A</b>				<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
0				6	6
<b>C</b>				<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
0				9	9
1				5	5
2				2	2
<b>E</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>
0		2	1	6	9
1		1			1
5				1	1
6				1	1
<b>MA</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>
0		2	2	4	8

2	1	1
<b>YA</b>	<b>8 6 3</b>	<b>17</b>
0	5 6 3	14
1	3	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14 9 15 22</b>	<b>60</b>

**Figure 23:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).

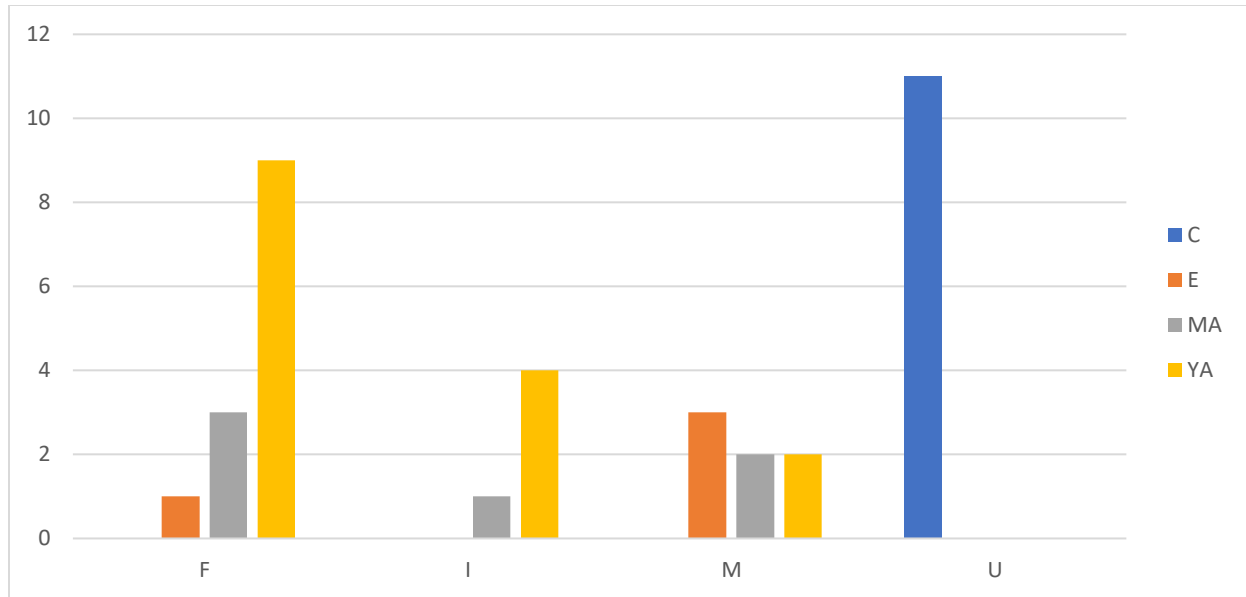


**Figure 24:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010). Note that the adolescents do not have any non-perishable grave goods.

However, the Garden Creek site is significantly different from the Coweeta Creek and Warren Wilson sites. The main difference is that there are no adolescents in the data and a majority of the burials are distributed between children and young adults. While the E and MA age groups are almost evenly distributed (See figures 25 and 26).

Sex	Age Group				Grand Total
	C	E	MA	YA	
F		1		3	13
I				1	5
M		3		2	7
U	11				11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>

**Figure 25:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

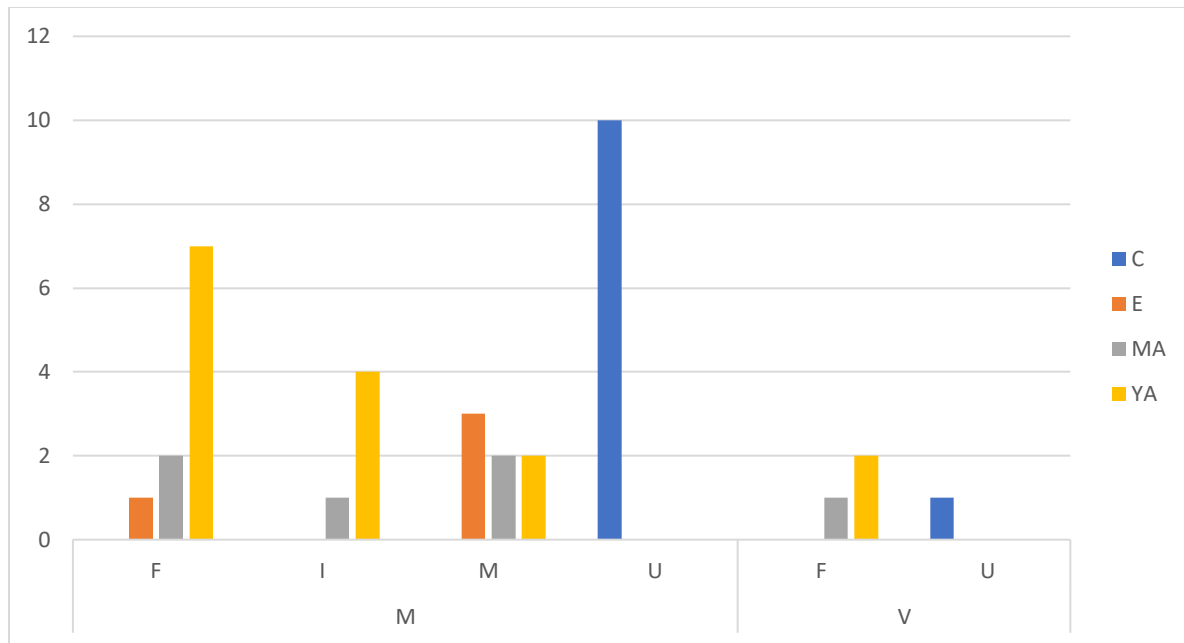


**Figure 26:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

Another significant difference between the Garden Creek site and the Coweeta Creek site and the Warren Wilson site is the labeling of the burial areas. In Garden Creek site data, the labels for burial areas are more general, M being for the public spaces and V for other areas of the site (See Figures 27 and 28). While most of the burials are located near the mound, this does not indicate their proximity to townhouses, townhouse ramadas, and plazas.

Area	Age Group				Grand Total
	C	E	MA	YA	
<b>M</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>
F		1	2	7	10
I			1	4	5
M		3	2	2	7
U	10				10
<b>V</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
F			1	2	3
U	1				1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>

**Figure 27:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



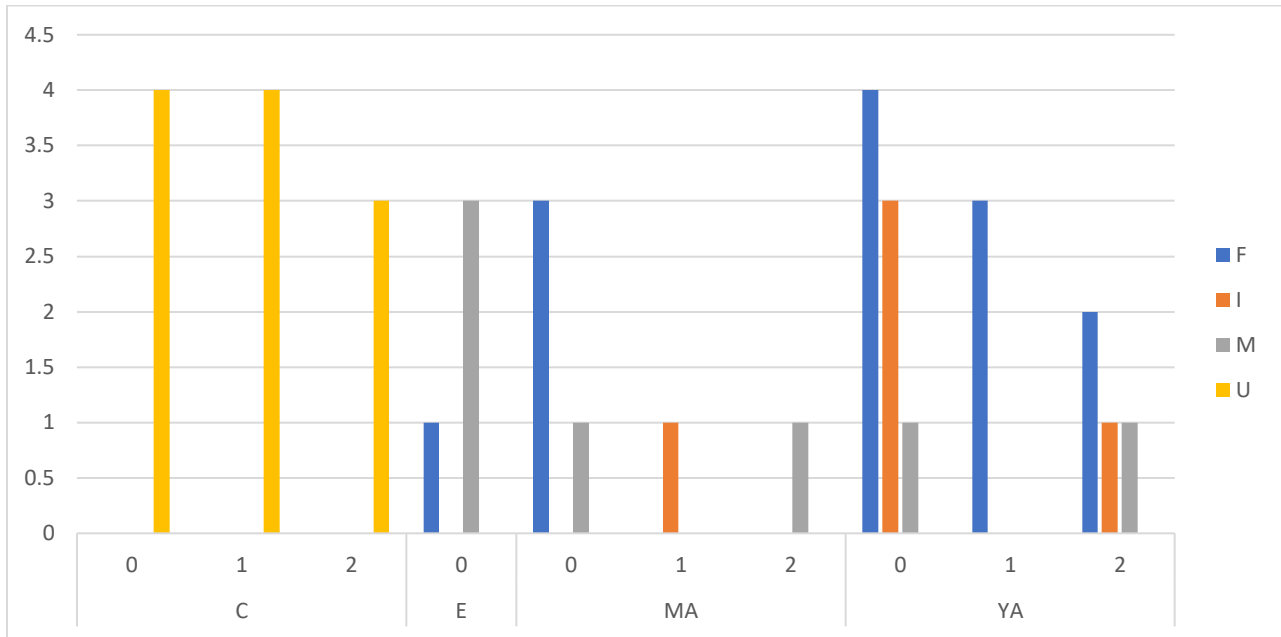
**Figure 28:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

The distribution in the variety of grave goods is also quite different, with children, young adults, and mature adults having none, one, or two types of grave goods. However, the E category is the only age group without any non-perishable grave goods (See Figures 29 and 30).

Sex					
Age Group	F	I	M	U	Grand Total
<b>C</b>				<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
0				4	4
1				4	4
2				3	3
<b>E</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>4</b>
0		1	3		4
<b>MA</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
0		3	1		4
1			1		1
2			1		1
<b>YA</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>
0		4	3	1	8
1		3			3

2	2	1	1	4	
Grand Total	13	5	7	11	36

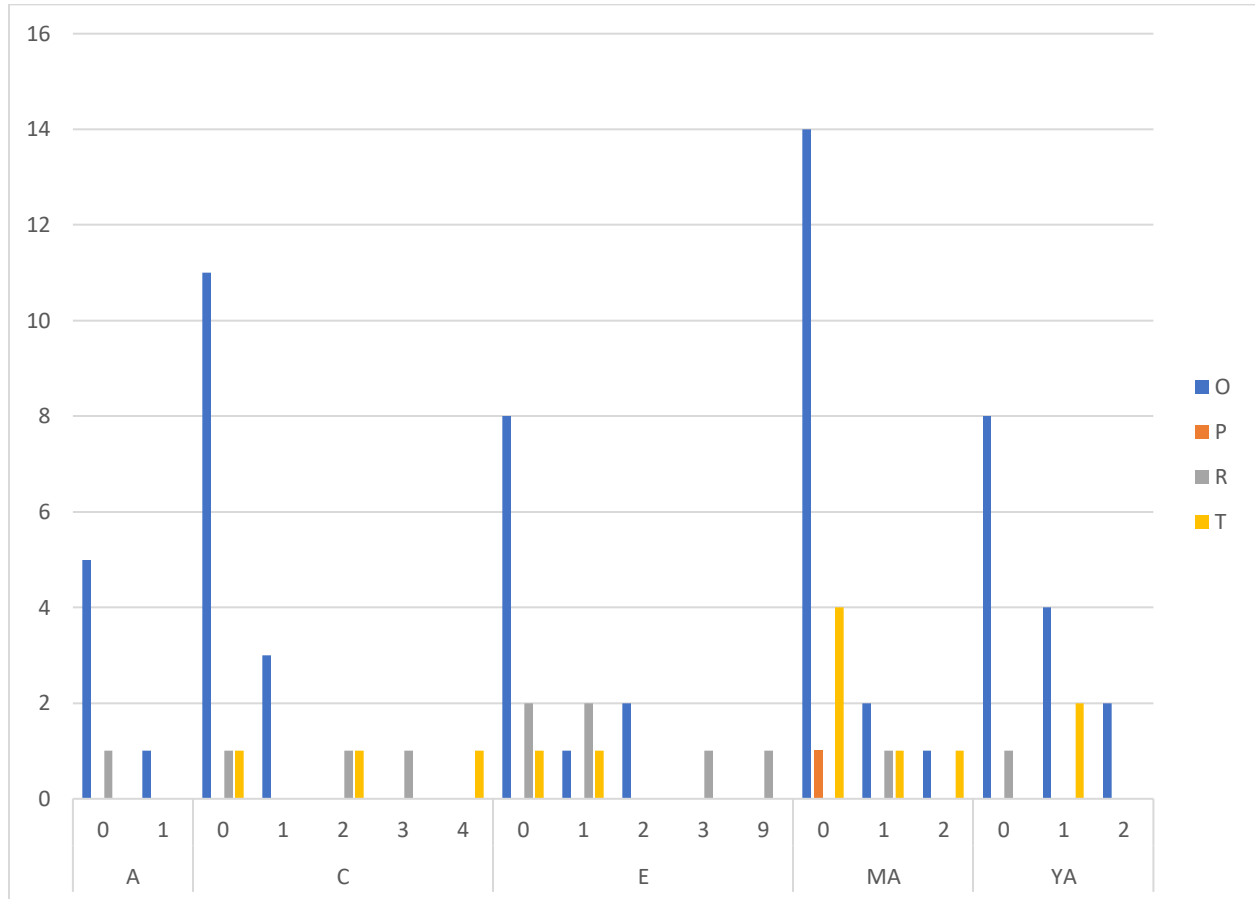
**Figure 29:** This table was created using the data obtained from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



**Figure 30:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

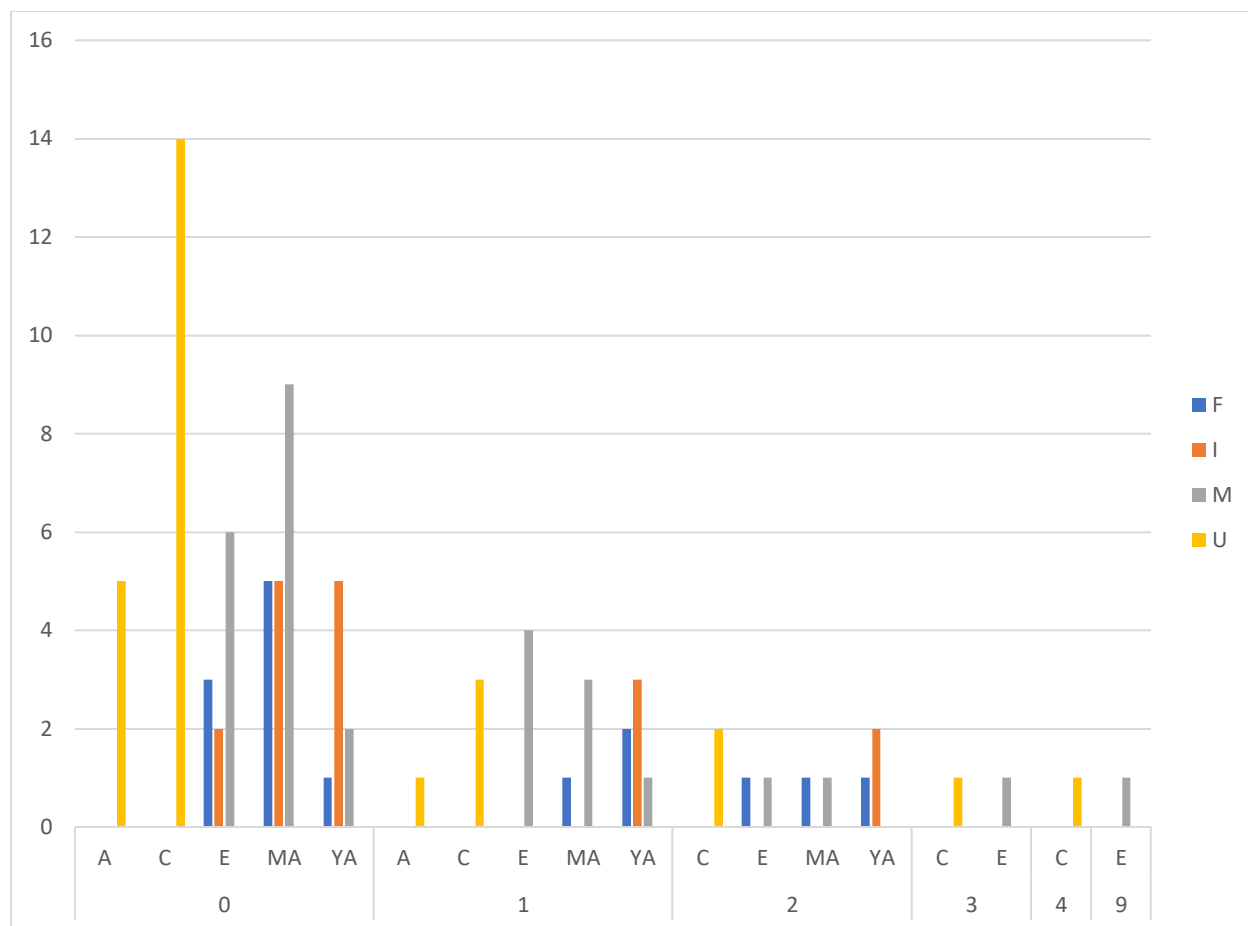
After analyzing the final graphs, from step four, the five data sets from the Coweeta Creek site, Warren Wilson site, and Garden Creek site, most of the females, indeterminate sex, and subadults are more likely to be buried near other parts of the site rather than public structures. However, the burials of mature adults, ages twenty-five to thirty-five of indeterminate sex are almost evenly distributed between public structures and other areas of the site. Although, elder and mature adult female burials are more likely to be found in other parts of the site, most likely due to their status and sphere of influence with food and domestic areas within Cherokee society (VanDerwarker and Detwiler 2002). For the child, adolescents, and young adult age groups, regardless of sex, were found mostly in other areas of the site, however, there is a small number of children, adolescents, and young adults found buried near public structures (See figures 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35). Although, the relationship between those buried and the public structures they are buried nears is not clear, but is clear, based on the non-perishable

grave goods they could have been related to someone of status within the group, considered to be well loved by the members of their family and community, or could have possibly been interred before the buildings were built.

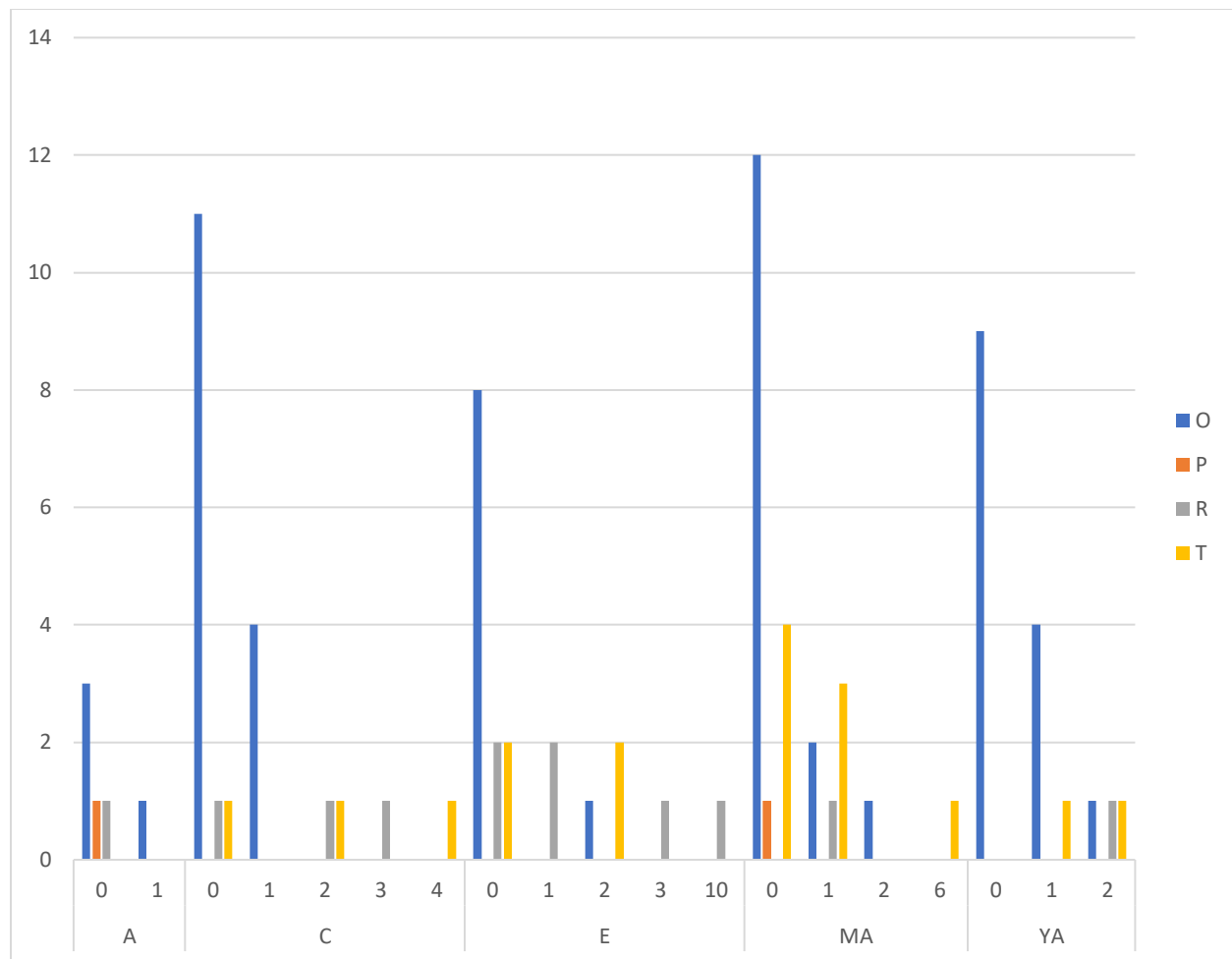


**Figure 31:** This graph was created using data from “Mounds, Myths, and Cherokee Townhouses in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning 2009).

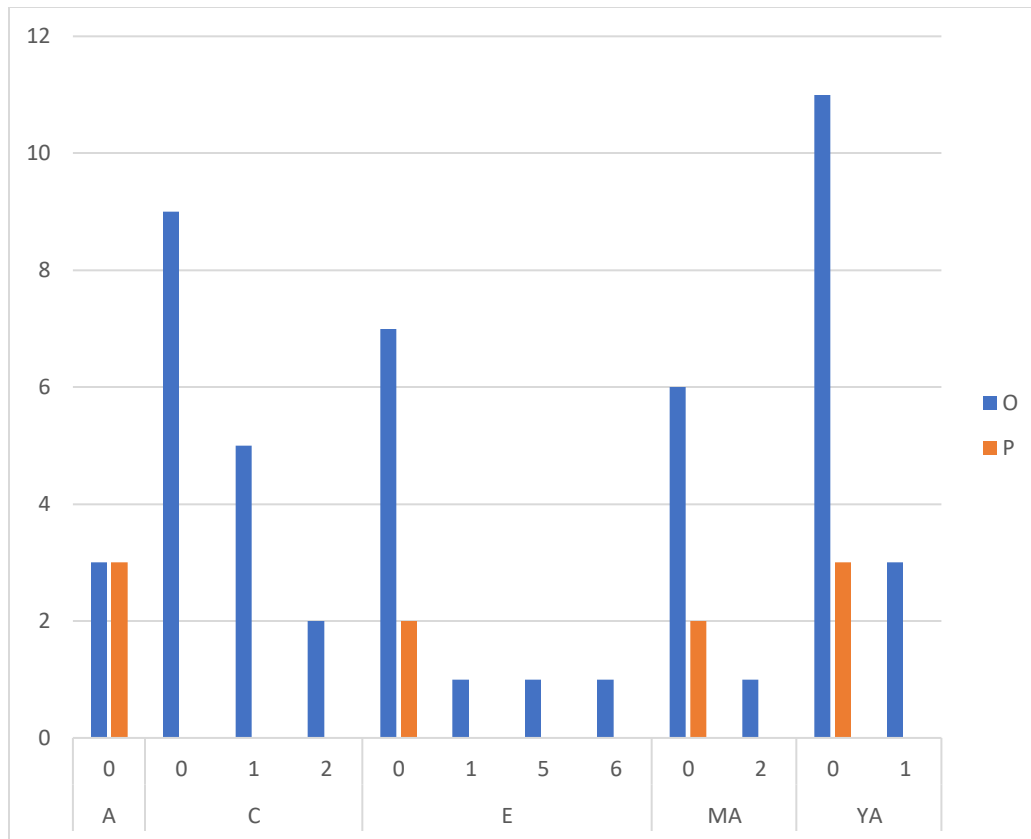




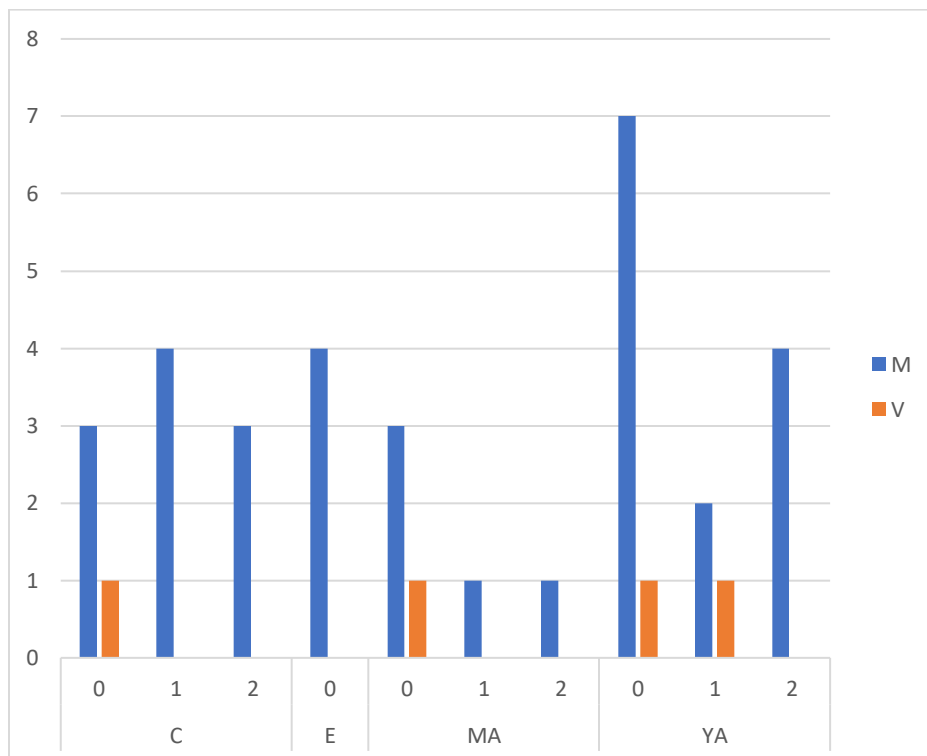
**Figure 32:** This graph was created using the data obtained from "South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina" (Rodning and Moore 2010).



**Figure 33:** This graph was created using data from “Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site” (Rodning 2011).



**Figure 34:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).



**Figure 35:** This graph was created using the data obtained from “South Appalachian Mississippian and Protohistoric Mortuary Practices in Southwestern North Carolina” (Rodning and Moore 2010).

### *Summary of Findings*

In the previous section, I organized the data for three hundred sixty burials across five sets of data. Each of the three data sets for the Coweeta Creek site contains eighty-eight burials, the data for the Warren Wilson site contains sixty burials, and the data for the Garden Creek Site contains thirty-six burials. These burials were organized using the categories of sex, age group, variety of grave goods, and burial place. Once the data was organized, I then created pivot charts to find trends within the categories and determine which sex and age category has the most variety of grave goods and where each sex and age group is buried.

Burials in the child category contain the remains of individuals younger than eight years of age and all in this category are placed in the sex category of subadults, which are under the age of fifteen of unknown sex, for all five data sets. For the three sets of Coweeta Creek data, most of the burials for children are found near residential buildings. Although, there were six burials found near the Townhouse Ramada or Townhouse structures. Most of the burials also did not contain non-perishable grave goods, but there were about one to four burials that had one type of grave good, and the burial with the highest variety of grave goods was found near a Townhouse with four types of grave goods. The Warren Wilson data indicated that all the burials for children were found near residential buildings not related to public structures. Most of the burials were found without non-perishable grave goods, although five burials were found with one type of grave good, and two burials were found with two types of grave goods. The data for Garden Creek revealed that out of eleven burials, only one was found away from any public structures. Four of the burials did not contain non-perishable grave goods, four had one type of grave goods, and three burials had two types of grave goods.

Adolescents are between the ages of eight and fourteen, and like the child category, are classified as subadults. However, the Garden Creek data does not contain any burials belonging to adolescents. For the three data sets for Coweeta Creek, more than half of the adolescent burials were found near residential buildings, while one or two burials were found with public structures. More than half of the burials also did not contain non-perishable grave goods and the burials that did contain grave goods were near public structures. Although, there was a single burial near residential buildings that did contain one type of grave good. The data at the Warren Wilson site showed that half of the burials were found near public and the other half near residential buildings. However, all the adolescent burials did not contain grave goods.

The ages for young adults are between fifteen and twenty-four and were separated into three different sex categories male, female, and indeterminate. For the Coweeta Creek site, all three data sets specified three to four burials belonging to males with either one or two burials being found near the public structures with one or two types of grave goods. The largest sex category of the three data sets is the indeterminate category with nine to ten burials, most of them were found near residential buildings with one or two found near public structures. About half of the burials also did not contain non-perishable grave goods and the other half contained one or two types of grave goods. The female sex category, for young adults of all three data sets, contained four burials found at other areas of the site. One burial did not contain grave goods, two burials contained one type of grave goods, and one burial contained two types of grave goods.

Mature adults, between the ages of twenty-five to thirty-four and like the young adult category, are organized into the sex categories male, female, and indeterminate sex. Across all three data sets for the Coweeta Creek site, most of the burials belong to males, although five to six burials were found near residential houses. Many of the burials did not contain any non-perishable, a few contained one to three grave goods, and the burial with the most variety of grave goods, with six, was found near a Townhouse. For the indeterminate sex category, only

five of the mature adults were in this category, and for all three data sets, three were found near residential buildings and 2 near public structures. Data sets one and three indicated that four did not contain grave goods and the one burial that contained one type of grave good was near a Townhouse. Although, the second data set, showed that none of the burials contained non-perishable grave goods. For the female category, most of the burials were near residential buildings with one or two burials near Townhouses. Also, the burial that contained the most grave goods was found near residential buildings with 2 types of grave goods. At the Warren Wilson site, there were four male burials with two near residential buildings and two near the plaza, although none of the burials contained non-perishable grave goods. There were also two burials near residential buildings belonging to individuals categorized as indeterminate without non-perishable grave goods. The data also shows that three burials contained female remains near residential buildings and only one burial contained grave goods. The Garden Creek site data indicated that there were two male burials near public structures with only one grave containing two types of grave goods. Also, near public structures, there was only one burial belonging to an individual categorized as indeterminate with one type of grave good. The Garden Creek data indicated, as well, that three burials belong to females with two near public structures and one near residential buildings, however, none of the burials contained non-perishable grave goods.

Burials in the elder category contain individuals older than the age of thirty-four and like young adult and mature adult categories, male, female, and indeterminate are the sex categories the individuals are placed in. The sex category with the most burials, indicated by the three data sets for Coweeta Creek, is the male category with most of the burials being found near public structures. The burial with the most variety of grave goods was found near a public structure with nine types of grave goods. Across all three data sets, there were two burials belonging to individuals of indeterminate sex, one found near residential buildings and one near public structures and both did not contain non-perishable grave goods. Also, all three data sets

indicated that there are four to five burials belonging to females with most not containing any grave goods and only one burial with two types of non-perishable grave goods. At the Warren Wilson site, like the Coweeta Creek site, the data indicated that most of the burials belong to individuals in the male sex category with most being found near residential buildings with most also not having non-perishable grave goods, however, one burial contained six types of grave goods. Two burials were found near public structures, although both burials did not contain non-perishable grave goods. The data for the Warren Wilson site indicated that one burial belonging to an individual of indeterminate sex was found near residential buildings without non-perishable grave goods. Furthermore, there were three burials found near residential buildings belonging to individuals categorized as female, two of the burials did not contain non-perishable grave goods and one burial contained one type of grave good. For the Garden Creek site, the data indicated that there were four burials found near public structures, three belonged to males and one belonged to a female, however, all four burials did not contain non-perishable grave goods.

## Discussion

### *Analysis*

Cherokee Townhouses, plazas, and townhouse ramadas are associated with the public aspect of social life, it is the epicenter of ceremonial practices and where leaders would meet. People buried in these public structures, in some facet, had some type of social status as a leader, warrior, or diplomat. Most of the child, adolescent, and female burials, aged fifteen to thirty-four and older, were found near residential buildings. However, there were a few, between one and five, burials discovered near public structures. Also, as indicated by the data, young adult males were mostly buried near residential buildings, although there were a few buried near public structures. The burials of individuals of indeterminate sex are also most likely to be found near residential buildings, which could be inferred that they were more associated with domestic labor and life, like the females. Yet, the age group, where there starts to be an increase of male burials being found near public structures, belongs to mature adults between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four. This implies that many of the males, by the time they are mature adults, ages twenty-five to thirty-four, have gained some type of social prestige, either as warriors, diplomats, or leaders. While the few indeterminate individuals, of the same age, buried near public structures could be inferred as having similar social prestige to the men buried near public structures.

In the case of grave goods for female burials, the lack of non-perishable grave goods could be due to their role within Cherokee society, which centered around domestic life and labor, as well as food accommodations. Similar to female burials, most burials belonging to children, adolescents, and individuals of indeterminate sex did not contain non-perishable grave goods. Although, when considering age as a factor in which burials contain a larger variety of grave goods, many may assume that the burials of elders will contain the highest variety of grave goods, and while some had a few varieties of grave goods one burial did contain nine types of grave goods. A few child and adolescent burials contained one to four types of grave



goods; however, most do not contain grave goods. Many burials of young adults also do not contain grave goods with a few burials containing one or two types of grave goods. Burials containing male remains in the mature age group have the most burials containing non-perishable grave goods and a few burials containing the most non-perishable grave goods. This implies that males at the ages of twenty-five to thirty-four will most likely be buried with the most variety of non-perishable grave goods. This high variety of non-perishable grave goods seen with the burials of mature adult males could be linked to gaining status within Cherokee society.

### **Conclusion**

The social roles of the Cherokee are closely related to the buildings and structures that create their town. Cherokee towns will only be considered as such if there is a Townhouse structure. Cherokee Townhouses, plazas, and townhouse ramadas are places where public life, ceremonial practices, and welcoming diplomats were conducted. These public spaces were the domain of Cherokee men where they led public life and lived within the Townhouses. The women, however, lived and worked around residential buildings, they controlled the distribution of food and the membership for the Cherokee. Even though the areas in which Cherokee men and women influence are different, both are important to Cherokee society, even if the status of men and women differ.

While the precise age at which males gain status within Cherokee society is difficult to determine by analyzing the number of grave goods and the area where they were buried the ages at which males come into the public roles of Cherokee society can be inferred. By analyzing the data from the five data sets and previous graphs, the age groups in which males are most likely to be buried with public structures, like townhouses, townhouse ramadas, and plazas, are elders and mature adults. Which ranges in age from as young as twenty-five to older than thirty-four. Although there are a few young adults, aged fifteen to twenty-four, buried with public structures, some of the burials do not contain non-perishable grave goods, making it

difficult to determine social prestige through grave goods. This leads me to infer that males most likely begin to become associated with the roles of Cherokee public life around the age of twenty-four. While they fully integrate into public roles by age twenty-five through thirty-four.

Although, if I had enough time to delve further into this topic, I would do more research into the different types of grave goods and the significance they have within Cherokee culture. As well as the changes to prestige goods undergo due to colonization and if that affects certain parts of Cherokee culture. Especially if colonization affected the social aspects of the Cherokee before and after mass displacement.

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