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Prairie Caddo Sites in Coryell and McLennan Counties in Central Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

INTRODUCTION

Did ancestral Caddo peoples live and settle on the prairies of Central Texas in prehistoric times (i.e., before A.D. 1680)? Story (1990a:364) had noted that there is little known about “the nature of the Caddo connections” in these sites, and she wondered what these settlements represented: “(1) groups from the east who occupied the area year round and/or seasonally; or (2) local groups who were interacting with Caddoans [sic] through trade, marriage, and visitations...?” In this article, I am concerned with the consideration of “Caddo connections” as expressed in the character of the ceramic assemblages from four sites in Central Texas that have been considered to have Caddo pottery and were occupied by Prairie Caddo peoples (Shafer 2006:2). Of particular importance are the stylistic (i.e., decorative methods and decorative elements) and technological (i.e., choice of temper inclusions) attributes of the sherds from the sites that are from utility ware and fine ware vessels. According to Shafer (2006:1), the term “Prairie Caddo” refers to “Caddo groups [that] occupied portions of central Texas prairies in Late Prehistoric times,” from ca. A.D. 1000–1300.

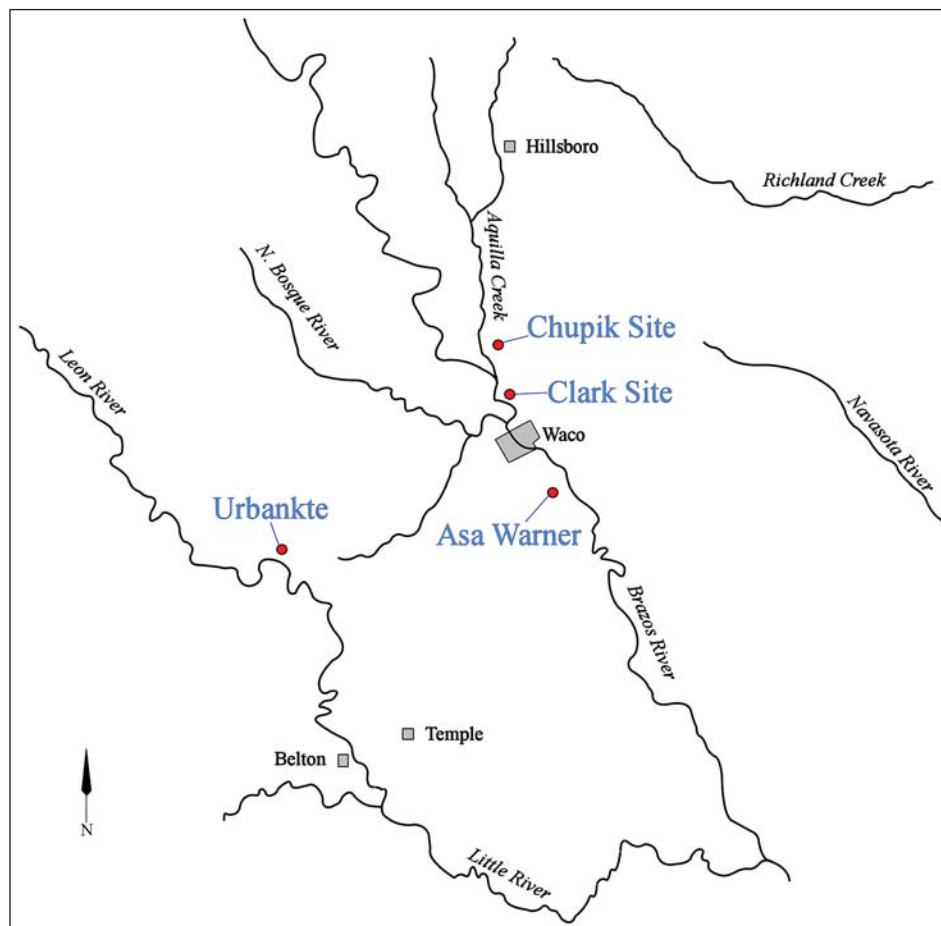


Figure 1. Location of the Urbankte (41CV26), Clark (41ML39), Chupik (41ML44), and Asa Warner (41ML46) sites in Central Texas.

Prairie Caddo Concept

The Prairie Caddo concept has been proposed by Shafer (2006). His hypothesis is that Caddo peoples occupied “the Middle Brazos and its tributaries—especially the Leon and Bosque Rivers and their tributaries” (Shafer 2006:1), and that these Caddo peoples (i.e., southern Prairie Caddo) had connections that were more than the product of trade and exchange with the East Texas Caddo group that settled the George C. Davis site (41CE19) on the Neches River in the East Texas Pineywoods. Specifically, Shafer (2006:4) has argued that these prairie peoples “were affiliated with the George C. Davis site, and . . . that the George C. Davis site Caddo were affiliated with the people of the prairie.” In this model, the George C. Davis site was a major regional center between ca. A.D. 1000–1300 and “attracted visitors from adjacent and distant regions,” including the Central Texas prairies, especially because of feasting events and ritual activities (Shafer 2006:9–10, 33). Shafer (2006:32) characterizes the site as a “gateway to the prairies.”

One of the important attributes in recognizing Prairie Caddo sites is Early Caddo pottery, but pottery that was produced by local Caddo groups on the prairie, and thus not representing trade goods from Caddo peoples to Central Texas groups. As Shafer (2006:25) notes, most of the Caddo pottery found on Central Texas sites is either grog- or bone-tempered, perhaps the product of “two different technological styles” among Caddo potters. The pottery from the George C. Davis site is primarily grog-tempered (see Newell and Krieger 1949), but bone-tempered Caddo pottery is common in several areas in East Texas (see Pertulla 2015:Figure 11), most notably in the Angelina and mid-Sabine River areas.

Pottery on Central Texas sites is “not nearly as common in prairie sites as they are in sites in the Caddo heartland” (Shafer 2006:25), likely because of mobility and transportation constraints on these Prairie Caddo groups, since they were relatively mobile hunter-gatherers. According to Shafer (2006:25):

Ceramics, while often used, played a far less significant role than in the sedentary sites in the Caddo heartland. Jars were used for cooking and, when broken, were not replaced as they were in the heartland. Bottles carried as canteens were broken in village and outlier sites, and likewise not replaced. The general paucity of ceramics in Prairie Caddo sites is partly due to the fact that there was no replacement rate for the imported styles. It remains to be demonstrated that locally made ceramics replaced broken imported vessels.

What Shafer (2006:25) suggests is that “Caddo parties leaving Davis after ceremonial occasions [and returning to the Central Texas prairies] brought pottery with them obtained through various mechanisms of exchange and used the pottery essentially for domestic roles.” He further suggests that the analysis of the ceramic assemblages from prairie Caddo sites should:

look for the presence of fine engraved pottery in central Texas collections. The absence of fine engraved pottery would be expected. Central Texas sites are mostly small campsites that were probably short-term hunting and gathering localities. Ceramics in such instances would be for practical rather than presentational purposes. Jars that are either plain or with wet-paste decorations for practical uses around the hearth would be expected (Shafer 2006:38).

This East Texas Caddo pottery found on Central Texas Prairie Caddo sites ought to be identifiable, among various analyses, through a comparison of ceramic decorative motifs and elements from the George C. Davis site to the Prairie Caddo sites, as well as through the instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA) and petrographic analysis of a sample of pottery sherds from the George C. Davis site and ceramic sherds with Early Caddo period styles from Prairie Caddo sites (see Shafer 2006:26).

Prairie Caddo Sites

The artifact assemblages of four Prairie Caddo sites are examined in this article: three sites on the Brazos River in the Waco, Texas, area, and one site on the Leon River. The collections from these sites are held by the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin. These sites were investigated by several archaeologists from the 1940s to the mid-1970s. Ceramic artifacts from these sites are of particular interest given the Prairie Caddo concept proposed by Shafer (2006), and each of the sites have aboriginal ceramics: Urbankte (n=118 sherds), Clark (n=19), Chupik (n=1470), and Asa Warner (n=311). Two of the sites (Chupik and Asa Warner) also have sherds from long-stemmed Red River clay pipes.

Urbankte (41CV26)

The Urbankte site is on the Leon River in Coryell County, at Belton Reservoir; the Leon River is a southward-flowing tributary to the Brazos River. The site was investigated in December 1950 before the reservoir was constructed, and two test pits and a number of small auger holes were excavated there, along with obtaining a surface collection (Miller and Jelks 1952:189). The archaeological deposits extended from the surface to ca. 40 cm bs.

The 118 ceramic sherds in the TARL collections are from both bone- (88 percent) and grog-tempered (12 percent) vessels, including both plain ware, utility ware, and fine ware bowls and jars (Table 1). According to Miller and Jelks (1952:190), “[m]ost of the sherds are too fragmentary for positive typological identification, but the ceramic assemblage as a whole is unquestionably Caddoan.” The two plain ware rims have direct profiles and rounded lips. The bone and grog temper in the vessel sherds is large in size and coarse, not finely crushed, as would be common in East Texas Caddo wares.

Table 1. Ceramic artifacts from the Urbankte site (41CV26) in TARL collections.

Ware	grog-tempered	bone-tempered	N
<i>Plain Ware</i>			
plain rim	–	2	2
plain body	11	88	99
base	1	3	4
<i>Utility Ware</i>			
Brushed	2	4	6
Incised	–	2	2
Punctated	–	2	2
<i>Fine Ware</i>			
Engraved	–	3	3
Totals	14	104	118

Forty-six percent of the decorated sherds are from brushed vessels (see Table 1). These include a rim (direct profile with a rounded, exterior folded lip) with horizontal brushing marks (Bullard Brushed), and body sherds with parallel (n=4) and overlapping (n=1) brushing marks on utility ware jar bodies. Both incised sherds have parallel incised lines. The two punctated sherds both have rows of circular punctations.

There are three engraved fine ware sherds of unidentified type in the Urbankte site ceramic collection (see Table 1), all from bone-tempered vessels. Two have either parallel or straight lines, while the third sherd has horizontal and vertical opposed engraved lines (Figure 2).

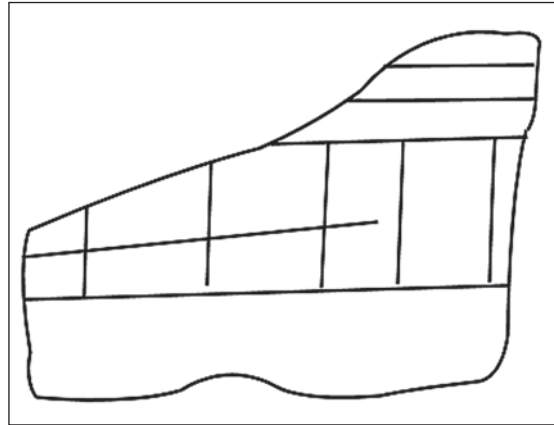


Figure 2. Engraved body sherd from the Urbankte site.

In addition to ceramic artifacts, there are nine arrow points in the TARL collections from the Urbankte site. They include eight Perdiz arrow points and one Scallorn arrow point on local Central Texas cherts. The common occurrence of both Perdiz points and brushed ceramic sherds suggests that the occupation at the Urbankte site took place sometime after ca. A.D. 1200–1300.

Clark (41ML39)

The Clark site is located on the Brazos River about 1.2 km below its confluence with Aquilla Creek, a southward-flowing tributary of the river, and ca. 10 km upstream from the city of Waco. The site consists of a buried midden deposit (ca. 50–95 cm bs) in an alluvial terrace of the Brazos (Watt 1965:99). The Central Texas Archeological Society completed excavations at the site in 1955, and recovered a small number of arrow points of the Perdiz type (n=20) and 63 ceramic sherds (Watt 1965:Figures 3a–n and 5c–h). The three decorated sherds in the collection have either diagonally opposed incised lines or an incised–punctated rim sherd. A single uncalibrated radiocarbon date of A.D. 1275 ± 150 was obtained on charcoal from a hearth (Watt 1978:121); most of the pottery sherds recovered from the site came from excavations nearby the hearth.

There is a small collection of ceramic artifacts from the Frank Watt collection in the holdings of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin (TARL). This consists of 19 plain or decorated sherds from grog- or bone-tempered vessels (Table 2). Many of the plain sherds have burnished surfaces.

Table 2. Clark site (41ML39) ceramic artifacts in TARL collections.

Ware	grog-tempered	bone-tempered	N
<i>Plain Ware</i>			
plain rim	–	1	1
plain body	4	7	11
base	1	–	1
<i>Utility Ware</i>			
Brushed	3	1	4
Incised	–	1	1
Incised–Punctated	–	1	1
Totals	8	11	19

About 58 percent of the sherds are from bone-tempered vessels, and the remainder are from grog-tempered vessels. The one plain rim has a direct or vertical profile and a rounded lip.

Four of the decorated sherds are from brushed utility ware vessels, including a rim (direct profile and a rounded, exterior folded lip) with horizontal and vertical opposed brushing marks (Figure 3a). The occurrence of brushed ceramic vessel sherds is consistent with the one radiocarbon date from the site. The one incised sherd is from the body of a vessel and has a set of parallel incised lines. The incised-punctated rim sherd (direct profile and a rounded lip) is likely from a Maydelle Incised jar. It has diagonal incised triangle elements filled with rows of circular punctations (Figure 3b).

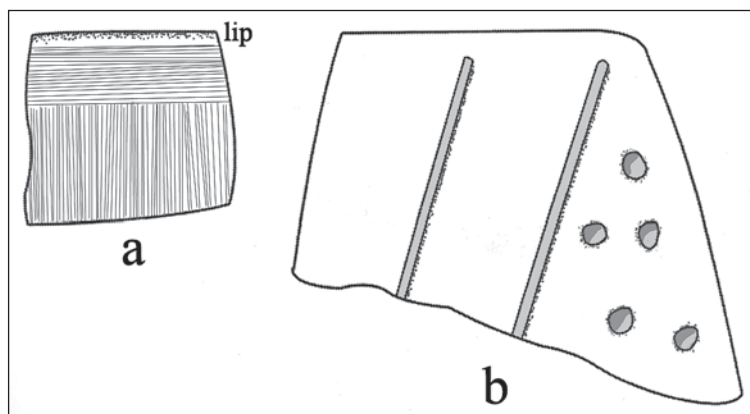


Figure 3. Decorative elements on sherds from the Clark site (41ML39): a, brushed rim; b, incised-punctated rim.

Chupik (41ML44)

The Chupik site is located on an alluvial knoll in the Brazos River floodplain, a few km north of the confluence of the Brazos River and Aquilla Creek (Figure 4). Substantial numbers of ceramic sherds (n=78) have been collected from the site by Frank Watt (1941a), and a much larger ceramic sherd assemblage was recovered from the site during the 1972 University of Texas (UT) Field School (Dillehay 1972; Locke 1975).

During the UT Field School investigations at the Chupik site, nine different aboriginal ceramic sherd clusters were recognized across the knoll (Figure 5). These clusters cover a ca. 80 x 90 m area and are arranged in a large circle, with seven of the ceramic clusters on the perimeter of the circle, an eighth on another knoll just to the east, and the ninth in the center of the circular clusters of ceramic sherds. Several of the ceramic clusters at the northern and southern ends of the site are associated with significant amounts of animal bone, and these clusters probably mark trash midden deposits. The smaller ceramic clusters on the northern, western, and eastern portions of the site may mark structure locations and/or outside activity areas. It is clear that the Chupik site has a significant residential component.

The assemblage of sherds from the site are almost exclusively from grog- or bone-tempered vessels (Table 3); one sherd has a sandy paste and may be from a Woodland period (ca. 500 B.C.–A.D. 800) Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* vessel. About 83 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels, and about 17 percent of the sherds are from bone-tempered vessels. The highest proportion of bone temper use is in the fine wares (26.6 percent) from the Chupik site.

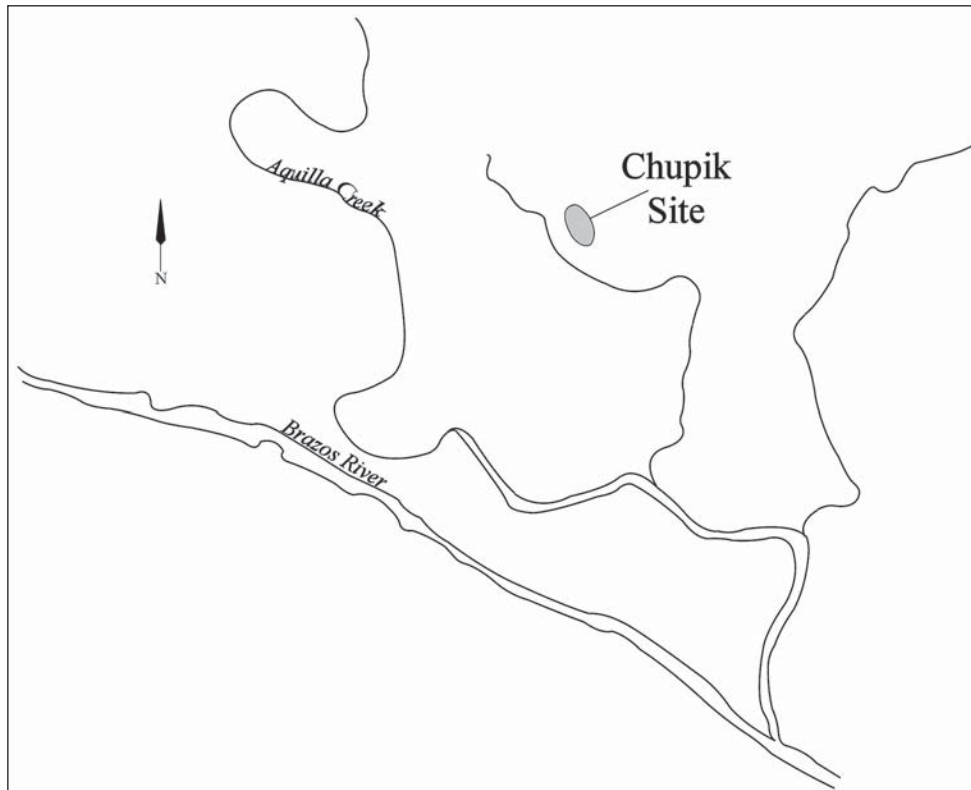


Figure 4. Location of the Chupik site (41ML44) in the Brazos River floodplain, based on Gholson 7.5' USGS topographic quadrangle.



Figure 5. Ceramic artifact clusters at the Chupik site (41ML44).

Table 3. Ceramic sherds from the Chupik site in TARL collections.

Ware	grog-tempered	bone-tempered	SP	N
<i>Plain Ware</i>				
plain rim	42	12	–	54
plain body	714	135	–	849
base	62	16	–	78
Subtotal, Plain Ware	818	163	–	981
<i>Utility Ware</i>				
Brushed	–	3	–	3
Brushed–Incised	1	–	–	1
Incised	135	28	–	163
Incised–Punctated	31	7	–	38
Punctated	171	33	1	205
Subtotal, Utility Ware	338	71	1	410
<i>Fine Ware</i>				
Engraved	55	21	–	76
Red–Slipped	3	–	–	3
Subtotal, Fine Ware	58	21	–	79
Totals	1214	255	1	1470

Note: this does not include four decorated sherds that were submitted for INAA and petrographic analysis from the site (Perttula et al. 2003:13–14 and Figure 3).

About 33 percent of the sherds in the collection have decorative elements, and the plain to decorated sherd ratio is 2.0. Almost 84 percent of the sherds with decorative elements in the Chupik site ceramic assemblage are from utility wares (i.e., vessels with wet paste decorations), and sherds from fine ware vessels (decorated after the vessel was leather-hard or after firing) comprise 16.2 percent of the sample of decorated sherds. Furthermore, approximately 77 percent of the rim sherds in the assemblage (n=52) are from utility wares, and 23 percent are from fine wares. Both proportions indicate that sherds from utility ware vessels overall are by far the most common kind of decorated vessel sherds in the assemblage.

A total of 50 percent of the utility ware sherds are from vessels with punctated decorative elements (Table 4). Sherds from incised vessels account for 39.8 percent of the utility wares, followed by sherds with incised–punctated decorative elements (9.3 percent). Sherds from brushed (0.7 percent) and brushed–incised (0.2 percent) elements comprise only approximately 1 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage.

Table 4. Decorative methods and elements in utility ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44).

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
<i>Brushed</i>			3
opposed brushing marks	–	1	1
parallel brushing marks	–	2	2
<i>Brushed–Incised</i>			1
curvilinear brushed zone and parallel incised lines	–	1	1

Table 4. Decorative methods and elements in utility ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44), cont.

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
<i>Incised</i>			163
curvilinear lines	–	2	2
curvilinear hatched lines and zone	–	1	1
diagonal lines	9	–	9
diagonal opposed lines	3	25	28
horizontal lines	10	1	11
horizontal and diagonal lines	3	5	8
horizontal and diagonal opposed lines	3	–	3
horizontal, diagonal, and vertical lines	1	–	1
horizontal and vertical lines	1	–	1
opposed lines	–	2	2
parallel lines	–	77	77
straight line	–	23	23
<i>Incised–Punctated</i>			38
curvilinear incised zone filled with circular punctates	–	3	3
diagonal lines above fingernail– punctated rows	–	1	1
diagonal incised panels filled with tool punctates	–	1	1
diagonal opposed lines above tool punctated row/rows	–	2	2
diagonal opposed triangle el. filled with tool punctates	1	3	4
horizontal incised line above circular punctated row at rim–body juncture	–	1	1
horizontal panel filled with circular punctates	1	–	1
horizontal incised panels filled with large crescent– shaped fingernail punctates	4	7	11
horizontal incised panels filled with large crescent– shaped fingernail punctates above rows of tool punctates	1	2	3

Table 4. Decorative methods and elements in utility ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44), cont.

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
horizontal and diagonal lines above fingernail punctated rows	–	1	1
parallel lines and adjacent fingernail punctated zone	–	1	1
rectangular incised panel filled with tool punctates	–	1	1
rectilinear incised panel filled with circular punctates	–	1	1
straight line and adjacent circular punctated zone	–	1	1
straight line and adjacent fingernail punctated zone	–	2	2
straight line and adjacent tool punctated zone	–	4	4
<i>Punctated</i>			205
circular punctated, single punctuation	–	1	1
circular punctated rows	–	4	4
fingernail punctated rows	2	179	181
fingernail punctated rows, int. vessel surface	–	1	1
fingernail punctated curvilinear rows	–	3	3
fingernail punctated, diagonal opposed rows	–	1	1
fingernail punctated opposed curvilinear rows	–	1	1
fingernail punctated, single punctuation	–	5	5
tool punctated rows	–	6	6
tool punctated, single punctuation	1	1	2
Totals	40	370	410

The sherds from punctated vessels are overwhelmingly decorated with rows of fingernail punctations (95 percent), including one bowl that has rows of fingernail punctates on the interior vessel surface (see Table 4). A few sherds have curvilinear or diagonal opposed rows (Figure 6a), but most have horizontal rows of fingernail punctations on the rim and/or the vessel body. These are likely from Kiam Incised and Weches Fingernail Impressed jars. The vessel sherds with either circular punctated or tool punctated rows comprise 2.4 and 3.9 percent, respectively, of the punctated sherds in the assemblage.

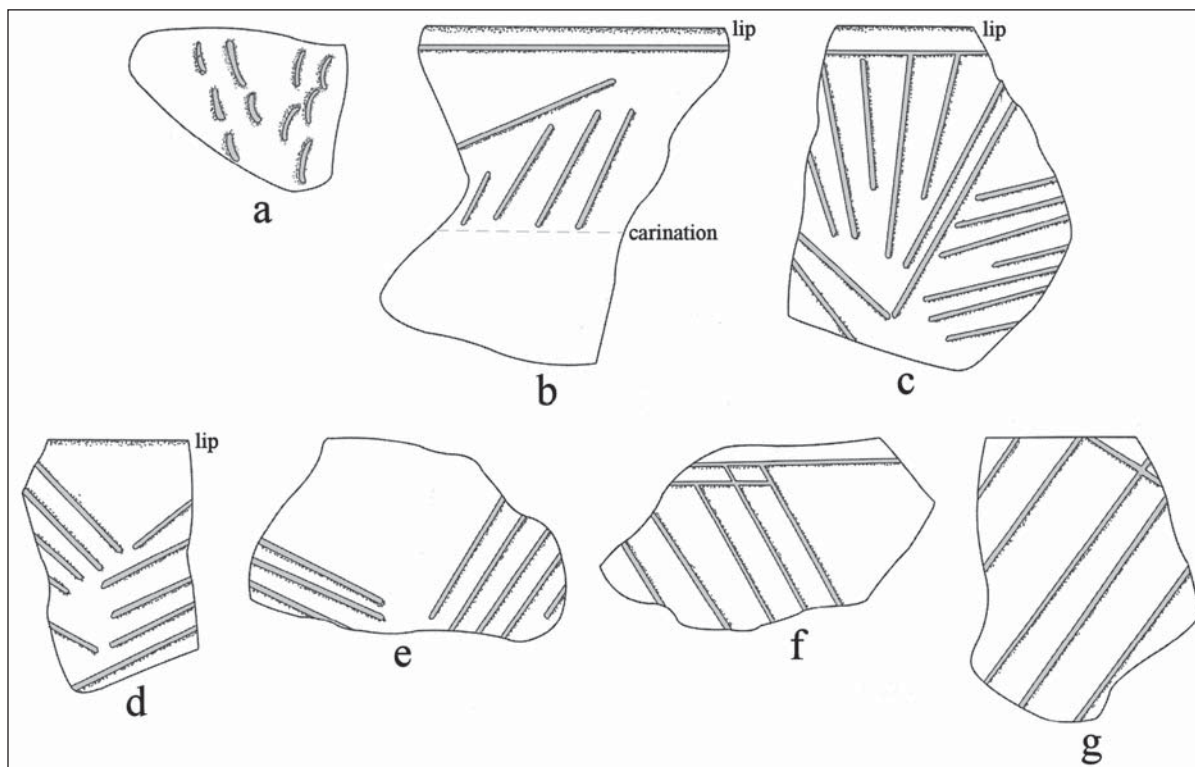


Figure 6. Selected decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44): a, body sherd with diagonal opposed fingernail punctated rows; b–g, incised rim and body sherds.

The sherds from incised vessels at the Chupik site have horizontal, diagonal, and diagonal opposed incised elements on the rim and vessel body (see Table 4 and Figure 6b–g). These incised sherds are likely from Davis Incised and Dunkin Incised vessels. Less than 2 percent of the incised sherds have curvilinear lines or hatched zones.

The most common decorative elements on the incised–punctated sherds are rim and body sherds with horizontal incised panels filled with large crescent-shaped fingernail punctations (Figure 7a–g; see also Table 4); 71 percent of the incised–punctated rim sherds are from vessels with these decorative elements. These sherds are from Weches Fingernail Impressed, *var. Weches* vessels (see Stokes and Woodring 1981:Figure 22n–q). These vessels also often have rows of punctations on the vessel bodies (Figure 7d, h).

Other incised–punctated vessel sherds feature incised triangles filled with punctations (Figure 8a, e), or horizontal panels filled with small circular punctations (Figure 8b). Other sherds from Dunkin Incised vessels have horizontal and diagonal as well as horizontal and diagonal opposed incised lines on the vessel rim and rows of tool punctations or fingernail punctations on the vessel body (Figure 8g–h). About 16 percent of the incised–punctated sherds are from Crockett Curvilinear Incised and Pennington Punctated–Incised vessels (Figure 8c–d, f).

The few brushed body sherds account for only approximately 1 percent of the utility ware assemblage from the site (see Table 4). The presence of sherds from at least two vessels with brushing decorative elements suggests that the occupation at the Chupik site likely lasted past ca. A.D. 1200, when brushed utility ware vessels began to be made in East Texas Caddo sites.

Among the fine ware sherds, 96.2 percent are from engraved vessels; the 12 fine ware rim sherds are from engraved vessels (Table 5). Only 4 percent of the engraved sherds have had a red clay pigment rubbed in the engraved lines. The remaining 3.8 percent of the fine ware sherds are from red-slipped vessels, probably from Sanders Plain bowls or carinated bowls.

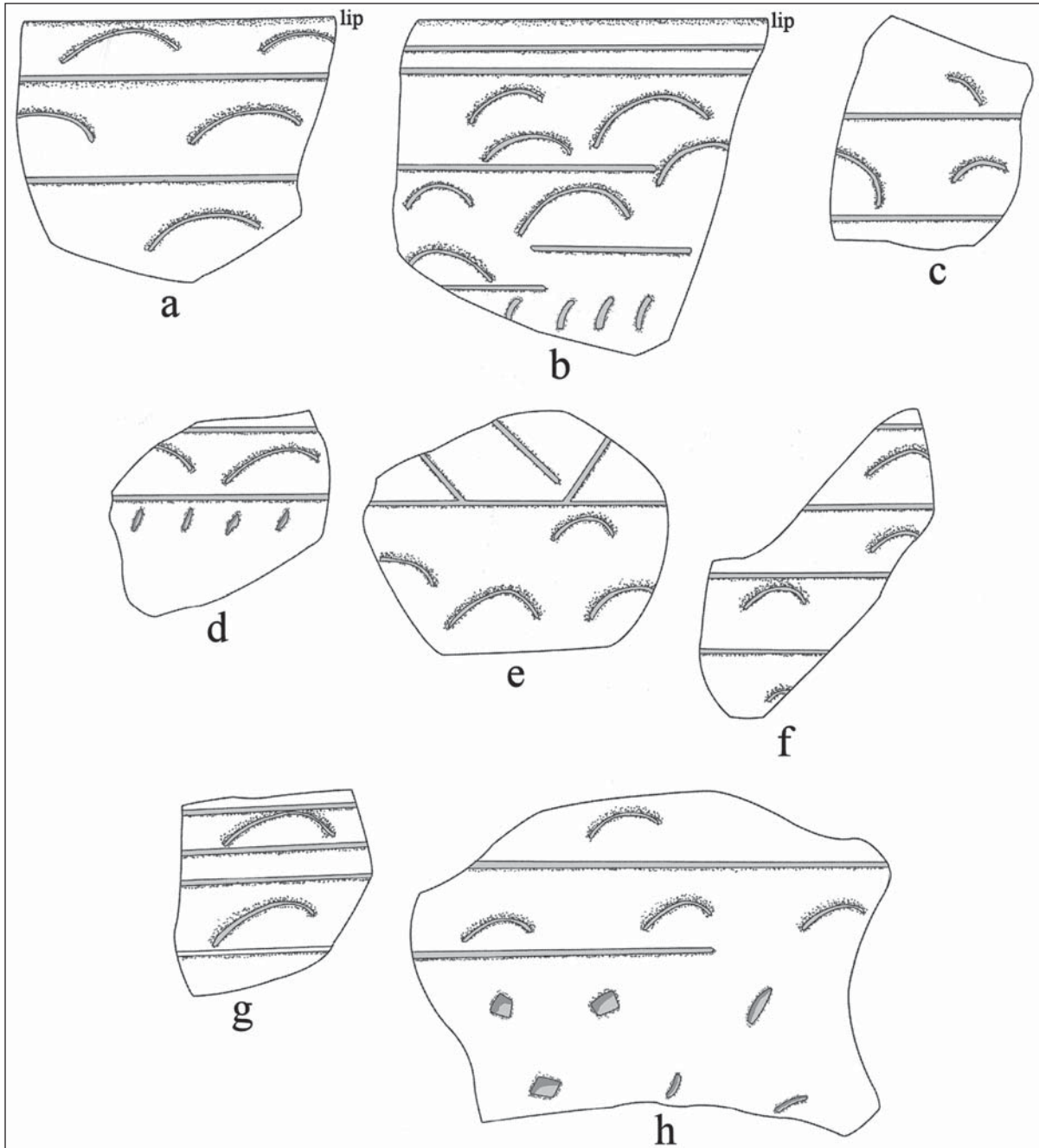


Figure 7. Weches Finger nail Impressed rim and body sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44).

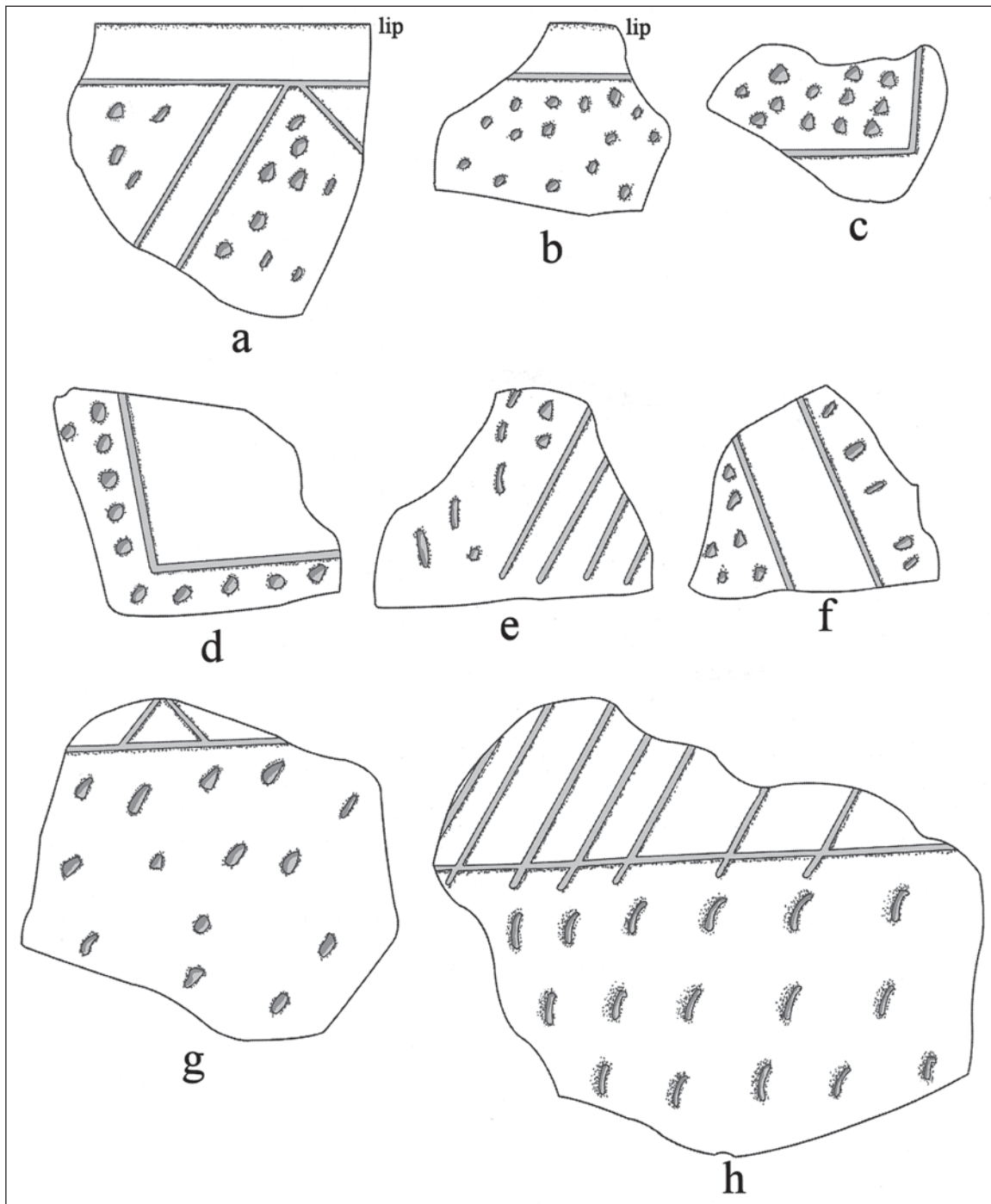


Figure 8. Selective decorative elements on incised-punctated utility ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44).

Table 5. Decorative methods and elements in fine ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44).

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
<i>Engraved</i>			76
cross-hatched lines	–	4	4
curvilinear lines	1	2	3
curvilinear lines and nested hatched zones	–	1	1
curvilinear and diagonal opposed lines	–	2	2
curvilinear and straight lines	–	1	1
diagonal lines	2	–	2
hatched zone	1	–	1
horizontal lines	3	–	3
horizontal and cross-hatched lines	1	2	3
horizontal and curvilinear lines and cross-hatched circle el.	1	–	1
horizontal and diagonal lines	1	5	6
horizontal and diagonal opposed lines	1	–	1
horizontal lines and rectilinear panel	–	1	1
horizontal line and vertical panel with excised zone	–	1	1
opposed lines	–	4	4
parallel lines	–	16	16
parallel and curvilinear lines	–	1	1
parallel lines and excised pendant triangle	–	1	1
straight line	–	17	17
vertical hatched and cross- hatched panels	1	–	1
zig-zag lines and excised triangles	–	3	3
<i>Red-Slipped</i>			3
ext. red-slipped	–	2	2
int./ext. red-slipped	–	1	1
Totals	12	67	79

The engraved rim sherds have horizontal lines (Hickory Engraved), diagonal lines, a hatched zone (Figure 9a), and combinations of horizontal lines and cross-hatched, curvilinear, diagonal (Figure 9b), or diagonal opposed lines (Figure 9c–d; see also Table 5). One rim has vertical hatched and cross-hatched panels (Figure 9j). Three distinctive Holly Fine Engraved body sherds have zig-zag engraved lines with excised triangles (Figure 9f; see also Stokes and Woodring 1981:168–169 and Figure 20j). A body sherd from a carinated bowl has a horizontal line as well as a vertical engraved panel partially filled with an excised zone (Figure 9h), while another carinated bowl sherd has a horizontal engraved line above the carination as well as a panel with cross-hatched engraved lines (Figure 9i).

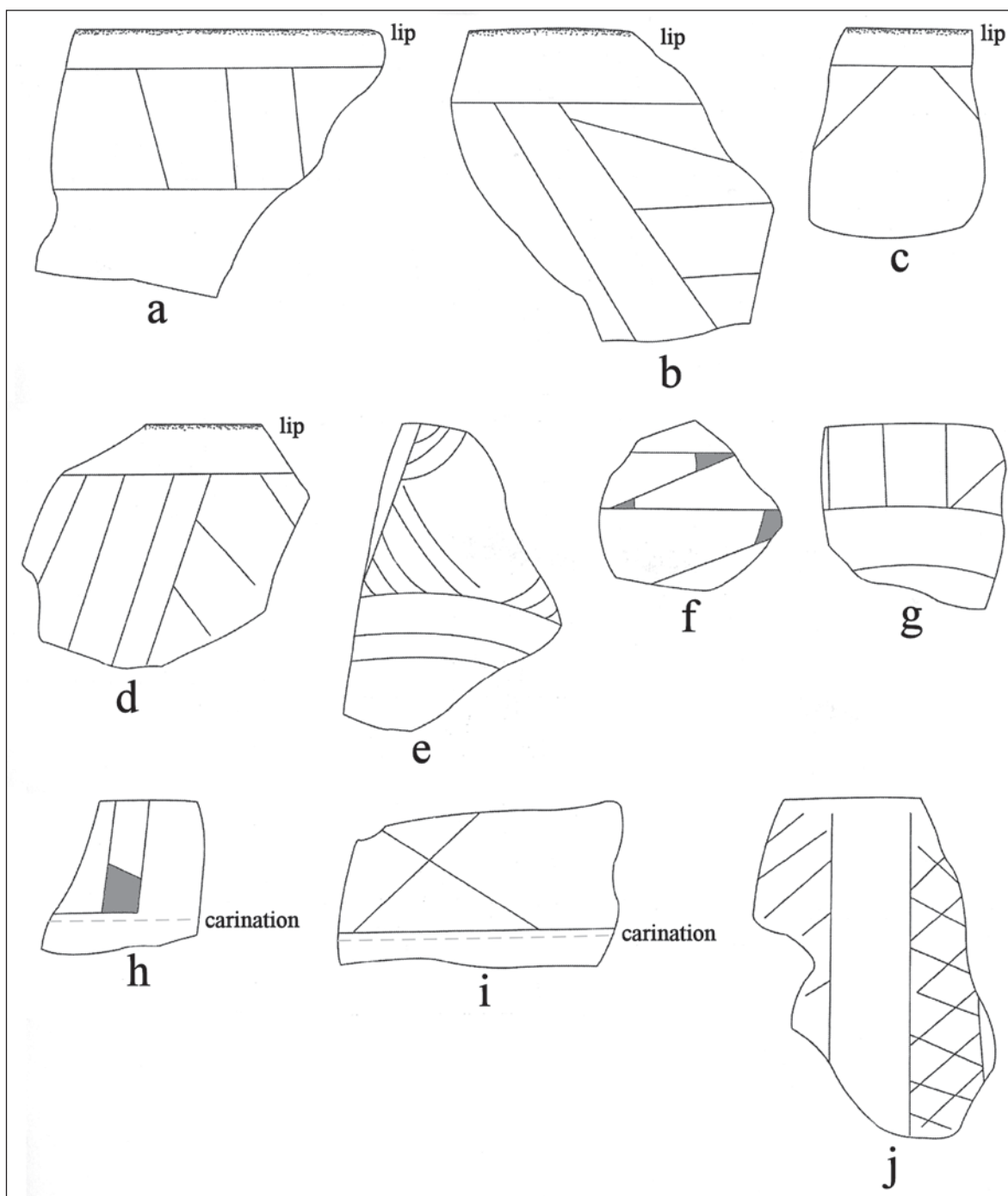


Figure 9. Selected engraved decorative elements in the fine ware sherds from the Chupik site (41ML44): a–d, f, h–j, carinated bowl sherds; e, g, bottle sherds.

Sherds from engraved bottles, likely Holly Fine Engraved vessels (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 40e, g) have sets of curvilinear engraved lines with opposed vertical and diagonal lines (see Figure 9g) on the vessel body. Another body sherd from a bottle at the Chupik site has curvilinear engraved lines and a panel on the vessel body with sets of short curvilinear engraved lines in each of the corners of the panel (see Figure 9e).

In summary, the ceramic artifacts from the Chupik site are from a component that dates between ca. A.D. 1000–1200 or a bit after ca. A.D. 1200 (because of the few brushed and brushed–incised sherds in the assemblage); Krieger (Newell and Krieger 1949:196) and Story (2000) had previously classified the site as being an Early Caddo Alto focus or phase component.

The three uncorrected radiocarbon dates from the site are A.D. 1060 ± 340, A.D. 1190 ± 320, and A.D. 1210 ± 260 (Story 1990b:674–675); their extreme standard deviations render these dates of little analytical value. This component has numerous decorated ceramics of Early Caddo period style, including Pennington Punctated–Incised, Dunkin Incised, Weches Fingernail Impressed, Holly Fine Engraved, and Hickory Engraved (see Locke 1975:6). Locke’s (1975:65–66) preliminary X–ray diffraction analysis of a few Chupik ceramic sherds and local clay sources “suggests material from the Chupek site represents tradeware, not locally manufactured pottery.”

There is one bone–tempered long–stemmed Red River style pipe stem sherd in the Chupik site collections. The sherd is bone–tempered, and has an exterior stem diameter of 10.7 mm; the stem hole itself is 4.5 mm in diameter. This sherd is probably from the Graves Chapel variety of Red River pipe, which was made by Caddo groups between ca. A.D. 1000–1200 (Hoffman 1967:9).

Chipped stone tools from the Chupik site include a bifacial flake drill fragment (3.8 mm bit thickness) and 16 arrow points, all made from Central Texas cherts. These include three of the Alba type, seven Bonham, one Alba–Bonham, and five Perdiz points (Figure 10).

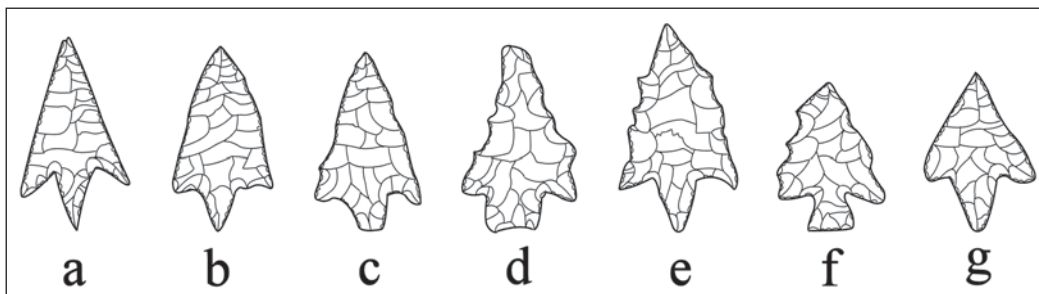


Figure 10. Arrow points from the Chupik site (after Watt 1941a)

There are also marine shell and bone artifacts in the TARL collections from the Chupik site. The marine shell artifacts include two marine shell beads (7.0–8.0 mm in diameter) and an 81.5 mm long conch shell pendant with a single drilled suspension hole (Figure 11a). The proximal end to a polished bone eye needle (6.2 mm in width) is also in the collection (Figure 11b). Such bone needles have been linked with Prairie Caddo sites by Shafer (2006:15, Figure 4, and Table 3).

Asa Warner (41ML46)

The Asa Warner site is on an alluvial terrace of the Brazos River about 12 km southeast of the city of Waco (Watt 1956; Wright 1997). The TARL collections from the site include collections donated by J. Shannon and Frank Watt as well as material culture remains from the 1973 Texas Archeological Society (TAS) Field School (Richmond et al. 1985:149–150; Wright 1997). Prior to the TAS Field School, the Central Texas Archeological Society periodically carried out excavations at the Asa Warner site (Watt 1941b, 1942, 1953, 1956).

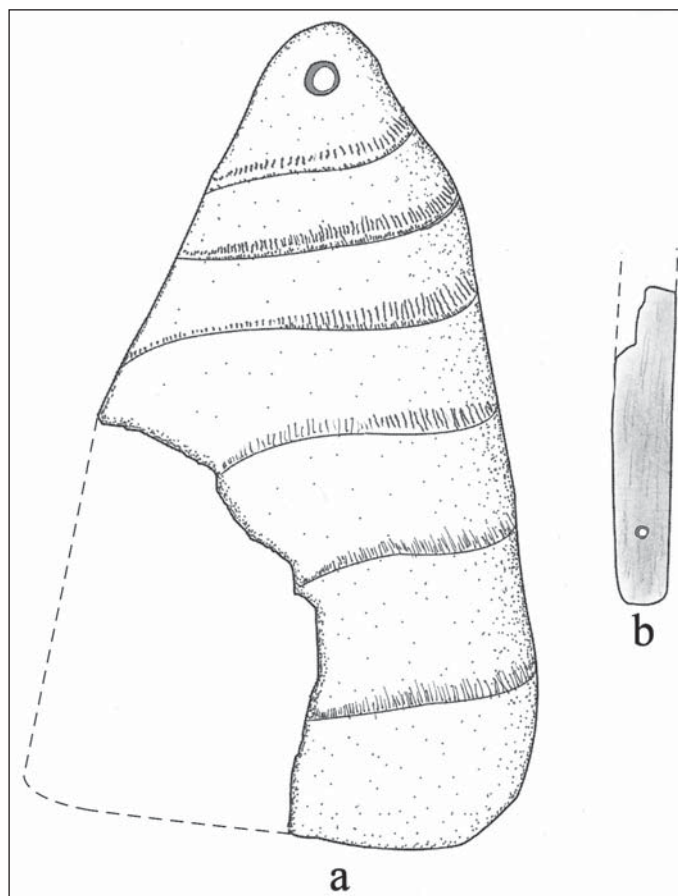


Figure 11. Conch shell pendant and bone needle fragment from the Chupik site (41ML44): a, conch shell pendant; b, proximal end of bone needle.

There are 311 sherds from ceramic vessels in the TARL collections from the Asa Warner site (Table 6). About 75 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels, and the remainder are from bone-tempered wares. The 159 decorated sherds in the collection include sherds from both utility (67 percent) and fine ware (33 percent) vessels. The decorated sherd sample discussed herein does not include the four decorated sherds from the site that were analyzed for instrumental neutron activation analysis and petrographic analysis (Perttula et al. 2003:14–16 and Figure 3): two engraved sherds, one fingernail punctated body sherd, and one diagonal opposed incised lines.

Table 6. Ceramic sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46).

Ware	grog-tempered	bone-tempered	N
Plain Ware			
plain rim	14	7	21
plain body	94	23	117
base	8	6	14
Subtotal, Plain Ware	116	36	152
Utility Ware			
Brushed	2	–	2
Incised	47	17	64

Table 6. Ceramic sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46), cont.

Ware	grog-tempered	bone-tempered	N
Incised-Punctated	8	–	8
Punctated	21	11	32
Subtotal, Utility Ware	78	28	106
<i>Fine Ware</i>			
Engraved	27	15	42
Engraved-Punctated	10	–	10
Red-Slipped	1	–	1
Subtotal, Fine Ware	38	15	53
Totals	232	79	311

Among the utility ware sherds from the Asa Warner site, 60.4 percent are from vessels with incised decorative elements (and 75 percent of the utility ware rims) (Table 7), another 30.2 percent are from vessels with punctated decorative elements (and 17 percent of the utility ware rims), 7.5 percent have incised-punctated decorative elements (and 8.3 percent of the utility ware rims), and 1.9 percent have brushed decorative elements.

Table 7. Decorative methods and elements in utility ware and fine ware sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46).

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
Utility Ware			
<u>Brushed</u>			
overlapping brushed marks	–	1	1
parallel brushing marks	–	1	1
<u>Incised</u>			
cross-hatched lines	2	15	17
diagonal lines	6	–	6
diagonal opposed zones	–	1	1
horizontal lines	1	1	2
opposed lines	–	12	12
parallel lines	–	24	24
straight line	–	5	5
<u>Incised-Punctated</u>			
diagonal incised triangle filled with tool punctates	–	1	1
horizontal lines (rim)-fingernail punctated rows (body)	1	–	1
horizontal-vertical lines above rows of tool punctates	–	1	1
straight incised line and adjacent fingernail punctated zone	–	2	2
straight incised line and adjacent tool punctated zone	–	3	3

Table 7. Decorative methods and elements in utility ware and fine ware sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46), cont.

Method/Element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Punctated</u>			
fingernail punctated rows	2	28	30
tool punctated rows	–	2	2
Fine Ware			
<u>Engraved</u>			
cross-hatched lines	4	6	10
cross-hatched zone	–	3	3
curvilinear lines	–	4	4
diagonal lines	3	3	6
diagonal opposed lines	–	2	2
diagonal, rectilinear, and cross-hatched zone	1	–	1
hatched curvilinear zone	–	1	1
hatched panels	–	2	2
horizontal and curvilinear lines and excised pendant triangles	–	2	2
opposed lines	1	6	7
parallel lines	–	2	2
straight line	–	2	2
vertical lines	–	1	1
<u>Engraved-Punctated</u>			
parallel engraved lines and excised punctated zone	–	6	6
straight engraved line and adjacent excised punctated zone	–	4	4
<u>Red-Slipped</u>			
int. red-slipped	–	1	1
Totals	21	138	159

The few brushed sherds in the utility ware assemblage (see Table 7) indicate that at least two jars with brushing marks (at least on the vessel bodies) were used, broken, and discarded at the Asa Warner site. In East Texas, sherds from brushed utility ware vessels, particularly jars, are a distinctive characteristic of both Middle, Late, and Historic Caddo sites in much of East Texas. It also appears to be the case that the relative proportions of brushed utility wares increase through time in those areas where brushed vessels were made and used, such that sherds with brushing marks may comprise as much as 90 percent of all the decorated sherds in some post-A.D. 1400 East Texas ceramic assemblages. These sherd data suggest that the Asa Warner site was occupied at least sometime after ca. A.D. 1200. In the East Texas Caddo ceramic sherd database (Perttula 2015), only a few ca. A.D. 1200–1430 sites have assemblages with high proportions (>60 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage) of brushed sherds; these occur in the mid-Sabine and Big Cypress Creek drainage basins. Late Caddo ceramic assemblages in East Texas with high proportions of brushed sherds occur in the upper and mid-Neches (Frankston phase sites), Angelina, middle Sabine and Big Cypress (Titus phase sites), and sites on tributaries of the Sabine River west of the Toledo Bend Reservoir area (Perttula 2015:Figure 5). Caddo ceramic assemblages without considerable amounts of brushed sherds occur in the upper Sabine, Sulphur, and Red River basins.

Rims from incised vessels have cross-hatched, diagonal, and horizontal decorative elements (see Table 7). These are likely from Davis Incised and Dunkin Incised jars. Cross-hatched and opposed incised line elements are predominant in the body sherds, and there is one distinctive Dunkin Incised body sherd with diagonal opposed triangle elements (Figure 12a–b).

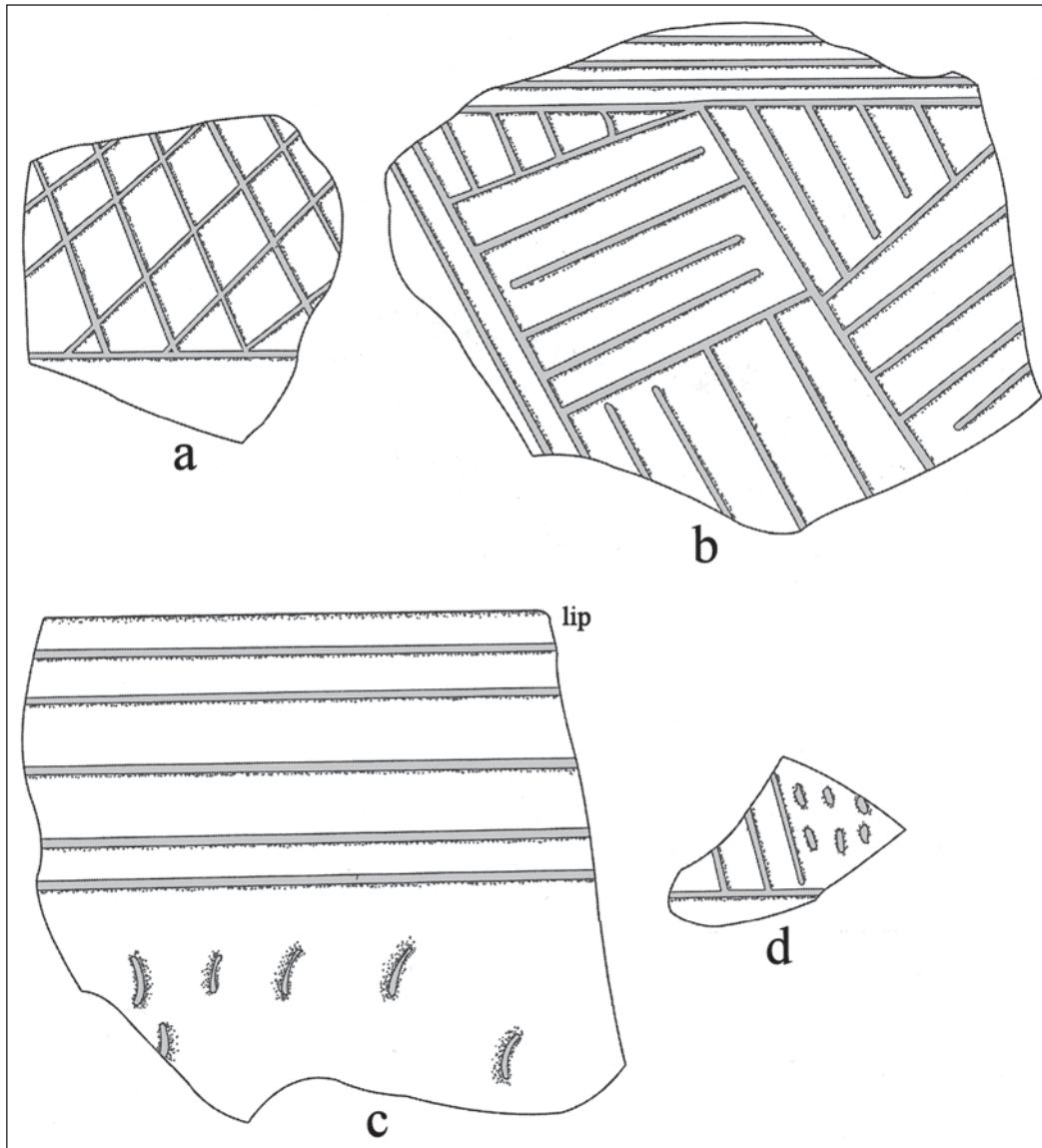


Figure 12. Decorative elements on selected utility ware sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46): a, cross-hatched incised body sherd; b, Dunkin Incised body sherd; c, Kiam Incised rim sherd; d, incised-punctated body sherd.

The one incised-punctated rim sherd is from a Kiam Incised jar. The rim has five horizontal incised lines, with at least two rows of large fingernail punctates on the upper vessel body (see Figure 12c). Other incised-punctated sherds feature either zones of fingernail or tool punctations adjacent to one or more straight incised lines, or have diagonal opposed lines forming incised triangles filled with tool punctations (see Figure 12d). This body sherd may be from a Canton Incised jar.

The engraved rim sherds feature geometric elements, namely cross-hatched lines, diagonal lines, opposed lines (Figure 13a), or one sherd with a combination of diagonal, rectilinear, and cross-hatched

zone elements (see Table 7). Except for the latter, these engraved sherds are from Sanders Engraved vessels. Body sherds feature similar decorative elements (Figure 13b). Other engraved sherds have hatched zones and panels (Figure 13c–d)

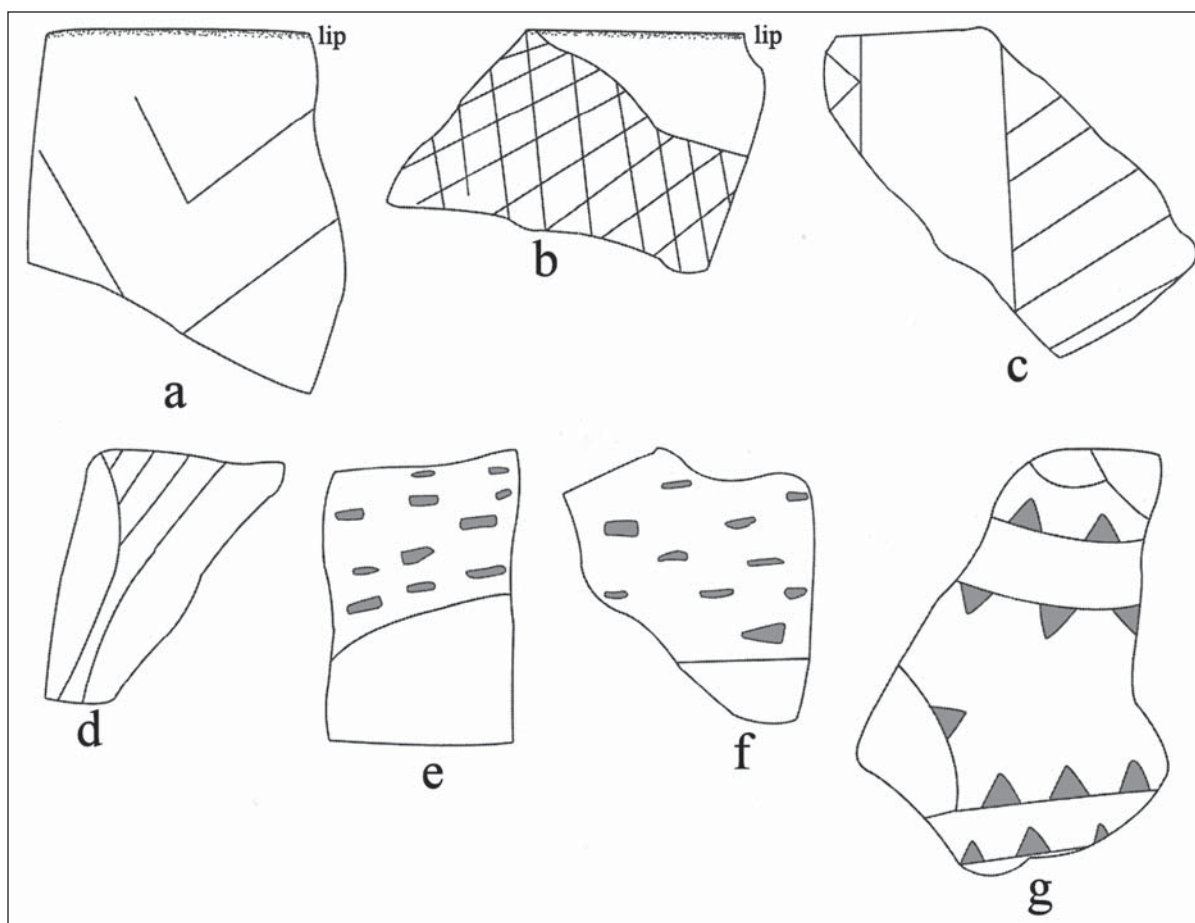


Figure 13. Decorative elements on selected fine ware sherds from the Asa Warner site (41ML46): a, opposed engraved rim sherd; b, cross-hatched engraved zone body sherd; c–d, body sherds with hatched zones and panels; e–f, engraved-punctated bottle body sherds; g, engraved bottle sherd.

One body sherd from a bottle has horizontal and curvilinear engraved lines with excised pendant triangles (see Figure 13g); Turner (1997:231) suggests this vessel may date to the latter part of the Middle Caddo period. Ten body sherds—four from bottles and six from carinated bowls—have engraved lines and adjacent zones of excised punctations (see Figure 13e–f). These may be from Spiro Engraved vessels (cf. Suhm and Jelks 1962:147 and Plate 74b, f, i). One of the engraved-punctated carinated bowl sherds has a red pigment rubbed in the engraved lines. Four other engraved sherds also have a red pigment rubbed in the engraved lines; a total of 9.6 percent of the engraved fine ware sherds from the Asa Warner site have a red pigment added to the decorative elements.

The single red-slipped sherd from the Asa Warner site may be from a Sanders Plain bowl. Red-slipped fine wares (bowls, carinated bowls, and an occasional bottle) are a common part of ancestral Caddo ceramic assemblages in several parts of East Texas, most notably in sites that predate ca. A.D. 1400 in the middle Red River, the Big Cypress Creek basin, the upper Sulphur and Sabine River basin, and the middle Sabine River basin (Perttula 2015:Figure 3).

The decorated ceramic assemblage from the Asa Warner site suggests that the main occupation at the site took place after ca. A.D. 1200, and ended by ca. A.D. 1400, if not earlier. Turner (1997:235) dates most of the ceramics from the site to the period from ca. A.D. 1200–1300. Turner (1997:235) also considers the ceramics to be Caddo in origin, and in particular he noted that:

...the quantity of pottery sherds was extremely small at Asa Warner. It is possible that some of the ceramic vessels may have been manufactured at the site, but if so, it was only in very small numbers. Due to the diversity of paste, coloration, and vessel form observed in the Asa Warner collection, it is more probable that the vessels were transported to the site from East Texas over a period of several hundred years. This would indicate that the ceramics are either the product of short occupations by Caddoan [sic] peoples or conversely the trade of Caddo vessels to a Central Texas people who did not manufacture their own pottery.

One long-stemmed Red River pipe stem sherd is in the TARL collections from the Asa Warner site. It is from a bone-tempered pipe, and has 4.0 mm thick stem walls.

Chipped stone tools from the Asa Warner site include several different types of arrow points, flake drills (n=11), and bifacial drills (n=1) (Figure 14a–d). The flake drills range from 31–45 mm in length, 17–19 mm in width, and 4.0–6.0 mm in thickness; bit width thicknesses range from 2.8–3.3. The one bifacial drill is 62.9 mm in length and 19 mm in width, with a drill bit thickness of 6.1 mm.

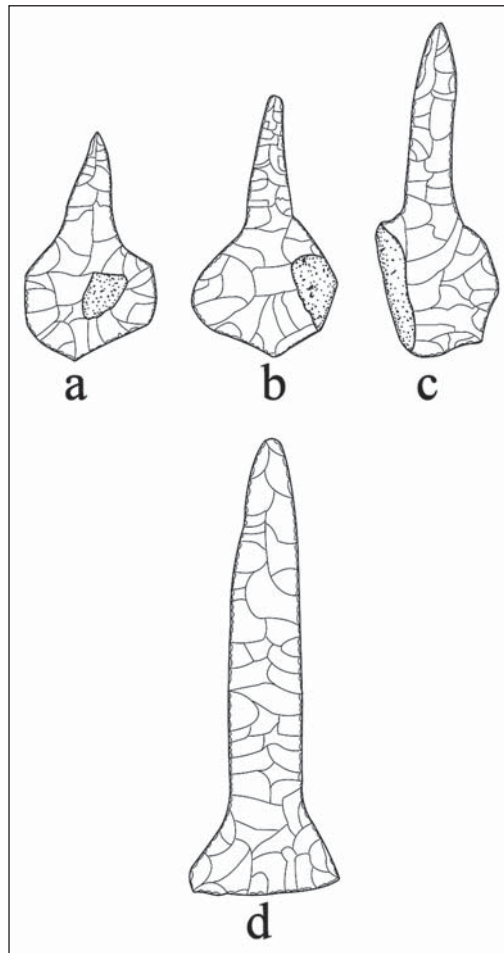


Figure 14. Chipped stone drills from the Asa Warner site (41ML46): a–c, flake drills; b, bifacial drill.

The arrow points from the Asa Warner site are predominantly post–A.D. 1200 Perdiz points, as they account for more than 70 percent of the assemblage (Table 8). Other common arrow point types include Scallorn, Alba, and Bonham points, which are indicative of some use of the site between ca. A.D. 800–1200. The two arrow points that compare favorably in style to the Cuney point may be indicative of a post–A.D. 1650 use of the Asa Warner site.

Table 8. Arrow points from the Asa Warner site (41ML46).

Type/Form	No.	Percent
Alba	13	7.1
Bonham	12	6.6
Bonham–Alba	5	2.8
cf. Cuney	2	1.1
Perdiz	128	70.3
Scallorn	19	10.4
UID side–notched	3	1.7
Totals	182	100.0

UID=unidentified

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The ceramic sherds and other material culture remains have been analyzed from four sites in the Brazos River basin in the Central Texas prairie that have been identified as Prairie Caddo sites by Shafer (2006). The term “Prairie Caddo” used by Shafer refers to Caddo groups affiliated with Caddo communities in East Texas, most likely affiliated with the George C. Davis site in the Neches River valley, that occupied portions of the Central Texas prairies in Late Prehistoric times, from ca. A.D. 1000–1300.

The ceramic assemblages from the four sites—Urbankte (41CV26), Clak (41ML39), Chupik (41ML44), and Asa Warner (41ML46)—are small, ranging from as low as 19 sherds from the Clark site to 1470 sherds from the Chupik site. The number of decorated sherds at the four sites ranges from six sherds at the Clark site to 489 sherds at the Chupok site (Table 9). Each of the assemblage has sherds that stylistically compare closely to decorated Caddo vessels from East Texas Caddo sites, and the distinctive character of these decorated sherds suggest that the four sites were occupied between ca. A.D. 1000–1200 (Chupik), ca. A.D. 1200–1300 (Asa Warner), ca. A.D. 1200–1400+ (Clark), and post–ca. A.D. 1400 (Urbankte). Where these ceramic assemblages differ from East Texas Caddo ceramics is in their manufacture: the grog and bone temper inclusions added to the paste of the ceramic vessel sherds from these sites are numerous, large, and coarse–grained, while East Texas Caddo ceramics tend to have more fine–grained temper inclusions, even in the manufacture of utility ware jars (cf. Perttula 2013).

Table 9. Comparison of the ceramic sherd assemblages from four Prairie Caddo sites in Central Texas.

Attributes	Urbankte	Clark	Chupik	Asa Warner
No. of Sherds	118	19	1470	311
Grog Temper	12%	42%	83%	75%
Bone Temper	88%	58%	17%	25%
No. of Decorated Sherds	13	6	489	159
Brushed	6	4	3	2

Table 9. Comparison of the ceramic sherd assemblages from four Prairie Caddo sites in Central Texas.

Attributes	Urbankte	Clark	Chupik	Asa Warner
Brushed–Incised	–	–	1	–
Incised	2	1	163	64
Incised–Punctated	–	1	38	8
Punctated	2	–	205	32
Engraved	3	–	76	42
Engraved–Punctated	–	–	–	10
Red–Slipped	–	–	3	1

There is a clear temporal trend in the use of bone temper in these four Prairie Caddo assemblages. The use of bone temper increases from 17 percent in the ca. A.D. 1000–1200 Chupik site ceramics to 25–58 percent in ca. A.D. 1200–1400 ceramic assemblages at the Clark and Asa Warner sites, and to 88 percent in the post–A.D. 1400 ceramics from the Urbankte site (see Table 9). If the ceramics from these sites were made by East Texas Caddo potters, ceramic assemblages with considerable amounts of bone–tempered sherds occur only in the mid– to upper Sabine River basin and in post–A.D. 1400 sites in the mid–Sabine and Angelina River basins (see Perttula 2015).

The decorated sherds from these assemblages fall into two groups: Group I assemblages (Urbankte and Clark) have a high proportion of brushed sherds (53 percent); Group II assemblages (Chupik and Asa Warner) have few brushed sherds (0.9 percent), and are dominated by sherds from incised (35.0 percent), punctated (36.6 percent), and incised–punctated (7.2 percent) utility ware vessels (see Table 9). Engraved and slipped fine wares are also relatively abundant (20.4 percent) in the Group II ceramic assemblages. The high proportion of engraved fine ware sherds in the Chupik and Asa Warner sites—as well as at Urbankte (23 percent)—is notable for Prairie Caddo sites (e.g., Shafer 2006:38) and suggests that the Group II sites are residential villages where a “variety of vessels in both form and decoration” (Shafer 2006:10) were used; in fact, the proportion of engraved fine ware sherds at these sites is more than has been documented at many East Texas Caddo residential sites (see Perttula 2015).

Another apparent temporal trend in the ceramic assemblages from these Central Texas Prairie Caddo sites in the relative proportion of brushed sherds among all the decorated sherds. At the ca. A.D. 1000–1200 and A.D. 1200–1300 ceramic assemblages at the Chupik and Asa Warner sites, brushed sherds represent only between 1.0–1.3 percent, respectively, of the decorated sherds from the sites. Conversely, in the ca. A.D. 1200–1400 assemblage at the Clark site, 67 percent of the decorated sherds have brushing marks, and 46 percent of the decorated sherds at the Urbankte site have brushing marks (see Table 9). The highest proportion of brushed sherds in East Texas ceramic assemblages occur in the upper Neches River basin and in post–A.D. 1400 sites in the mid–Sabine and Angelina River basins (see Perttula 2015).

Associating these two temporal trends in Central Texas Prairie Caddo sites to the character of East Texas Caddo ceramic assemblages suggest that if the ceramics found on these sites were made in East Texas by Caddo potters, the likely regions where they were made would include the upper Neches River basin and the mid– to upper Sabine River basin—in the westernmost parts of Caddo settlement in East Texas. The decorated ceramics from the Chupik site, however, suggest stylistic affiliations with the area in and around the George C. Davis downstream from the upper Neches Caddo settlements in the Neches River basin as well as other Early Caddo period sites in the upper and mid–Sabine River basin.

The question remains: are the grog– and bone–tempered plain and decorated ceramics from these four Prairie Caddo sites in the Brazos River basin made by Caddo potters living in East Texas and exchanged with Prairie Caddo hunter–gatherers, or were they made by local Brazos River Caddo peoples? The evidence

from the INAA and petrographic analysis of sherds from the Chupik and Asa Warner sites (see Perttula et al. 2003), similar analyses from other Central Texas sites (see Creel et al. 2013; Perttula et al. 2010), and the INAA of a large comparative sample of Caddo sherds from East Texas Caddo sites (see Descantes et al. 2004; Perttula and Ferguson 2010) indicates that there is a not too confident likelihood that “some Caddo pottery may have been made in Central Texas” (Creel et al. 2013:66, but see the discussion concerning a grog-tempered engraved carinated bowl sherd from 41BQ285 on the North Bosque River in Perttula et al. [2010]), particularly Caddo ceramics found in the “Waco, Belton, to Austin area, mostly from the vicinity of Waco, Temple, and Belton. Practically none of the many Caddo pottery samples from the Edwards Plateau/west central Texas area has a meaningful probability of membership in any of the Central Texas compositional groups.” In the main, however, the petrographic and INAA analysis of much of the Caddo decorated pottery sherds found on Central Texas sites would seem to indicate that they are from vessels not produced using Central Texas clays by Caddo peoples who had settled in or were periodically using the Central Texas region (Perttula et al. 2003:63), but were obtained by Prairie Caddo groups from East Texas Caddo groups living in the Neches and Sabine River basins.

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