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Two Radiocarbon Dates from the Salt Lick Site (16SA37a) at Toledo Bend Reservoir, Sabine Parish, Louisiana

Timothy K. Perttula

INTRODUCTION AND SITE CONTEXT

The Salt Lick site (16SA37) is an ancestral Caddo site at Toledo Bend Reservoir in Sabine Parish, Louisiana. Before the creation of the reservoir, archaeological investigations on the Sabine River and tributaries in both Louisiana and Texas took place primarily during the 1960s, with survey and excavations, sometimes of a very limited nature (Scurlock and Davis 1962; Scurlock 1964; McClurkan et al. 1966; Jensen 1968a, 1968b; Woodall 1969; Benham et al. 1973) by the University of Texas and Southern Methodist University. The Salt Lick site was investigated by McClurkan et al. (1966) in the Fall of 1964.

The Salt Lick site (16SA37a) was a Caddo habitation site (with midden deposits) on a natural rise south of La Nana bayou, a westward-flowing tributary to the Sabine River. Hand and backhoe trench excavations uncovered 10 burials, six that may have been flexed and four that were extended burials with the deceased placed in an extended supine position on the floor of the grave (McClurkan et al. 1966).

Only two of the flexed burials had funerary offerings: a Pease Brushed-Incised jar and an engraved carinated bowl with a poorly executed design (Burial 1), and two engraved bowls (Burial 4). The engraved bowls resemble varieties of Womack Engraved and Patton Engraved (McClurkan et al. 1966:Figures 21f and 22h). The extended burials, on the other hand, had a number of funerary offerings, including ceramic vessels (n=25), a clay elbow pipe (n=1), a quiver of Perdiz arrow points (n=12), a sandstone ear spool, mussel shells (n=2), and turtle shells (n=3).

Radiocarbon Samples and Results from Vessel Organic Residues

There are currently 22 Caddo ceramic vessels in the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory collections from the Salt Lick site, and organic residue was preserved on two of the vessels from two different extended burials when the collection was recently reanalyzed by Perttula and Walters (2015). Samples of the organic residue were collected from the vessels and submitted to DirectAMS for AMS radiocarbon dating. The 1 and 2 sigma calibrations of the two radiocarbon samples from the Salt Lick site are based on the IntCal13 calibration curve (see Reimer et al. 2013; see also <http://intcal.qub.ac.uk/intcal13/>) for the Northern Hemisphere).

The first radiocarbon sample from the site is from Vessel 1 in Feature 10, one of the extended burials in the cemetery. This vessel is a short-rimmed and grog-tempered Karnack Brushed-Incised jar. The rim of the vessel is plain, but the vessel body has vertical brushed-incised marks and lines that extend from the rim-body juncture to within 20 mm of the vessel base. There was organic residue preserved on the vessel body. The conventional age of the organic residue is 441 ± 22 B.P. (DirectAMS 008418). At 1 sigma, the calibrated age range is 501-511 years B. P. (A.D. 1439-1449), and at 2 sigma, the calibrated age range is 492-518 years B.P., or A.D. 1432-1458.

The second radiocarbon sample from the Salt Lick site is from a grog-tempered Pease Brushed-Incised jar (Feature 12, Vessel 1) with organic residue on the vessel body. The vessel rim has horizontal brushing marks. The vessel body has five sets of upper and lower broad diagonal incised lines with open nested diamond-shaped spaces. The conventional age of the organic residue on the Pease Brushed-Incised vessel

is 411 ± 25 B.P. (DirectAMS 008419). At 1 sigma, the calibrated age range is 483-504 years B. P. (A.D. 1446-1467), and at 2 sigma, the calibrated age range is 461-511 years B.P., or A.D. 1439-1489.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Two AMS radiocarbon dates have been obtained on organic residue preserved on Karnack Brushed-Incised and Pease Brushed-Incised jars from two extended burials at the Salt Lick site at Toledo Bend Reservoir. The vessels are currently curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, and were recently reexamined by Perttula and Walters (2015). The 2 sigma calibrated age ranges from the organic residue on the vessels are A.D. 1432-1458 and A.D. 1439-1489.

Post-A.D. 1400/1430 Caddo archaeological sites at Toledo Bend Reservoir are included in a Salt Lick phase (Perttula and Walters 2015). The radiocarbon dates reported in this article from the Salt Lick site are the first such dates from a Salt Lick phase component. Recognized decorated types in these sites include Belcher Ridged, Glassell Engraved, Keno Trailed, Mound Tract Incised and Brushed, Pease Brushed-Incised, Pineland Punctated-Incised, Ripley Engraved, and Taylor Engraved. Vessels in our analyzed set (Perttula and Walters 2015) include Karnack Brushed-Incised, Pease Brushed-Incised, Ripley Engraved, and Wilder Engraved; there are also cf. Patton Engraved and cf. Womack Engraved vessels.

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