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# The Caddo Ceramic Sherd Assemblage from the Hawkins Site (41SM144) on the Sabine River in Smith County, Texas

*Timothy K. Perttula*

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## Introduction and Setting

The Hawkins site is an ancestral Caddo habitation site on a Sabine River bluff about 1.7 km southwest of the confluence of Little White Oak Creek with the river, in the Pineywoods of Smith County (Figure 1). The site was located and investigated in the 1950s by Sam Whiteside of Tyler, Texas. This article is concerned with the analysis of the Caddo ceramic wares from the site, as well as an assessment of the probable age and cultural affiliation of the Caddo occupation.

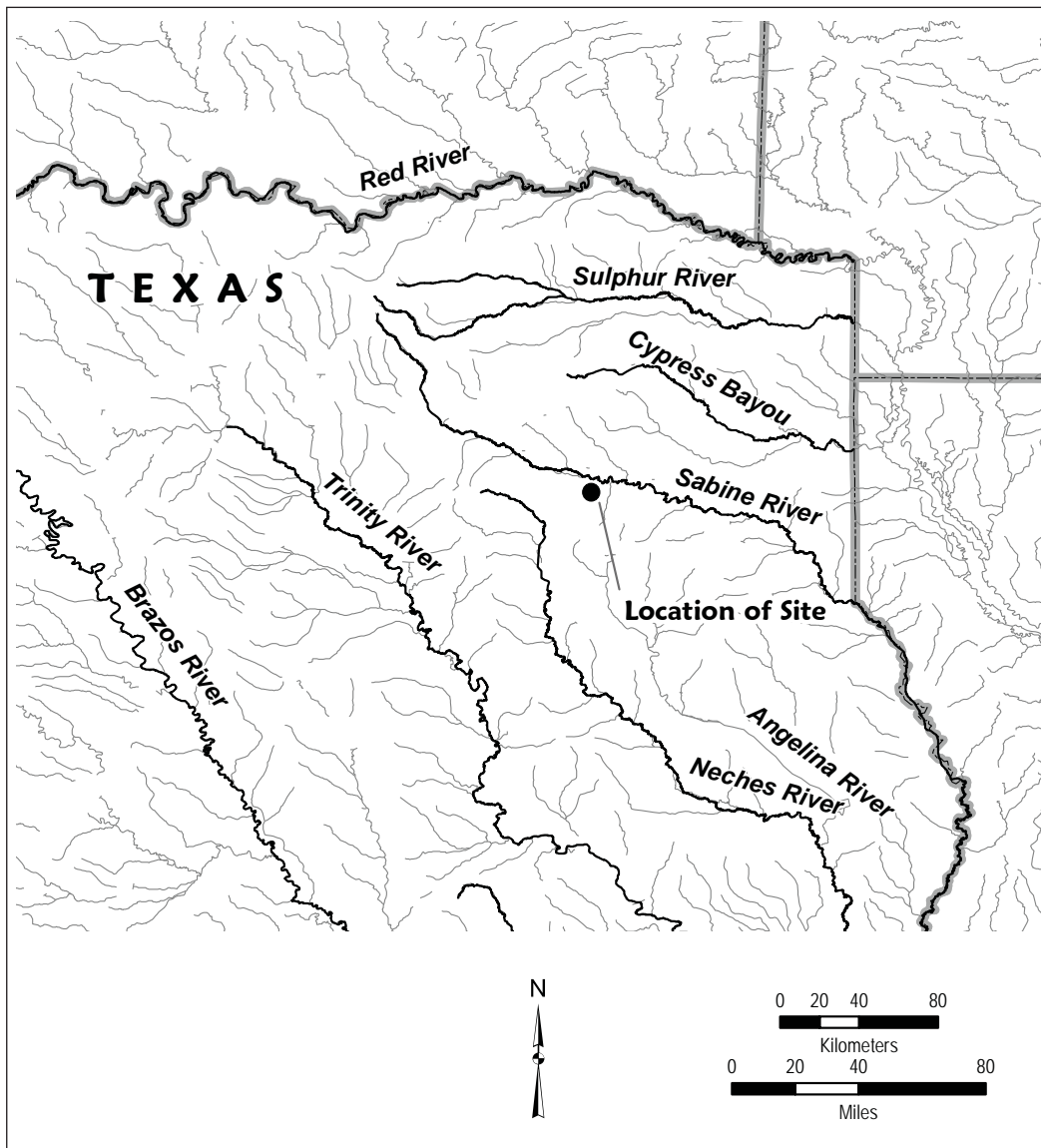


Figure 1. Location of the Hawkins site (41SM144) in East Texas.

### Ceramic Sherd Assemblage

There is a total of 71 sherds in the assemblage from the Hawkins site. The sherds are from plain ware, fine ware, and utility ware vessels (Table 1). About 44 percent of the rim sherds are from plain ware carinated bowls, bowls, and bottles, and another 41 percent of the rims are from fine ware vessels.

**Table 1. Ceramic sherds from the Hawkins site (41SM144).**

Ware	Rim	Body	Base	Grog-temper	Bone-temper	N
Plain	12	26	4	34	8	42
Fine	11	11	-	21	1	22
Utility	4	3	-	7	-	7
Totals	27	40	4	62	9	71

More than 87 percent of the sherds from the site are from grog-tempered vessels (see Table 1). Bone-tempered sherds are best represented in the plain wares (19 percent), and only 4.5 percent of the fine ware sherds are from bone-tempered vessels; none of the utility ware sherds are from bone-tempered vessels. One of the plain ware rims has a flattened and wide Redwine mode lip (see Walters 2010), a form of lip treatment noted in Middle Caddo period contexts in this part of the Sabine River basin.

The decorated sherds from the Hawkins site are dominated by fine ware sherds (76 percent of the decorated sherd sample and 73 percent of the decorated rim sherds, see Table 1). Utility ware sherds comprise only 24 percent of the decorated sherds in the assemblage.

The fine ware sherds include sherds from engraved (n=19), engraved-excised (n=1), excised (n=1), and red-slipped (n=1) vessels (Table 2); the red-slipped sherd is from a Sanders Slipped vessel (Perttula et al. 2016).

**Table 2. Decorated methods and elements in the fine ware and utility ware sherds from the Hawkins site.**

Decorative method/decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b>Fine Ware</b>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
cross-hatched engraved lines	1	-	1
curvilinear engraved lines	1	3	4
diagonal engraved lines	1	-	1
diagonal engraved lines and diagonal hatched ladders	-	1	1
diagonal opposed engraved lines	1	-	1
horizontal engraved lines	2	1	3
horizontal and curvilinear engraved lines	1	-	1
horizontal and diagonal engraved lines	1	2	3
horizontal and opposed curvilinear engraved lines and hatched triangular zone	1	-	1
horizontal and vertical engraved lines	-	1	1
straight engraved line	-	2	2
<i>Engraved and Excised</i>			
curvilinear zones filled with diagonal and cross-hatched lines and excised hole on the wide and flattened lip	1	-	1
<i>Excised</i>			
excised hole on the wide and flat lip	1	-	1

**Table 2. Decorated methods and elements in the fine ware and utility ware sherds from the Hawkins site, cont.**

Decorative method/decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b><i>Red-slipped</i></b>			
Exterior red-slipped	-	1	1
<b>Utility Ware</b>			
<b><i>Appliqued</i></b>			
curvilinear applied ridge and clusters of applied nodes	-	1	1
<b><i>Incised</i></b>			
cross-hatched incised lines	-	1	1
cross-hatched and horizontal incised lines	1	-	1
diagonal incised lines	2	-	2
diagonal opposed incised lines	1	-	1
<b><i>Incised-Appliqued</i></b>			
horizontal incised lines above series of appliqued nodes	-	1	1
Totals	15	14	29

The engraved rim sherds have horizontal, diagonal, and cross-hatched decorative elements (see Table 2) as well as diagonal opposed engraved lines from a Sanders Engraved carinated bowl (Figure 2a). There are also rims with sets of curvilinear engraved lines (Figure 2e), and other rims with horizontal and diagonal (Figure 2f) engraved lines and horizontal and vertical curvilinear engraved lines (Figure 2g). One distinctive rim may be an early stylistic version (ca. 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) of Poynor Engraved, *var. Cook* (see Perttula 2011:Figure 6-64d) with horizontal and opposed curvilinear engraved lines and a hatched triangular zone (Figure 2h).

A lower rim of a carinated bowl has both diagonal engraved lines and narrow diagonal zones or ladders filled with diagonal hatched lines (see Figure 2b). Another carinated bowl sherd has both diagonal engraved lines and a set of diagonal and horizontal engraved lines on the rim panel (see Figure 2d).

The engraved bottle sherds in the fine wares from the Hawkins site feature sets of curvilinear engraved lines on vessel bodies (see Figure 2c) or a set of horizontal and diagonal or vertical engraved lines. One bottle sherd has at least two horizontal engraved lines on the body below the bottle neck.

The one engraved-excised rim sherd in the fine wares from the site is from a vessel with rim peaks and a wide flattened lip. On the rim itself are curvilinear engraved zones filled with either diagonal or cross-hatched engraved lines (see Figure 2i). There is a large excised and drilled hole on the lip of the vessel (see Figure 2i'). Similar vessels with small excised holes on the rim peaks include East Incised bowls of early to Middle Caddo period age (ca. A.D. 900-1400) from the Crenshaw site on the Red River in southwestern Arkansas (Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 21j; Perttula et al. 2014:Figure 148, 150). The one excised rim sherd in the Hawkins site collection has a wide lip and a rim peak, with an excised circular hole on the flattened lip.

Five of the utility ware sherds have incised decorative elements (see Table 2). This includes a Canton Incised rim with diagonal opposed lines (Figure 3c), a Canton Incised rim with cross-hatched lines in a zone on the rim panel, above a horizontal incised line at the rim-body juncture (Figure 3d), and diagonal incised lines (with the incised lines running from right to left across the rim). One body sherd has cross-hatched incised lines.

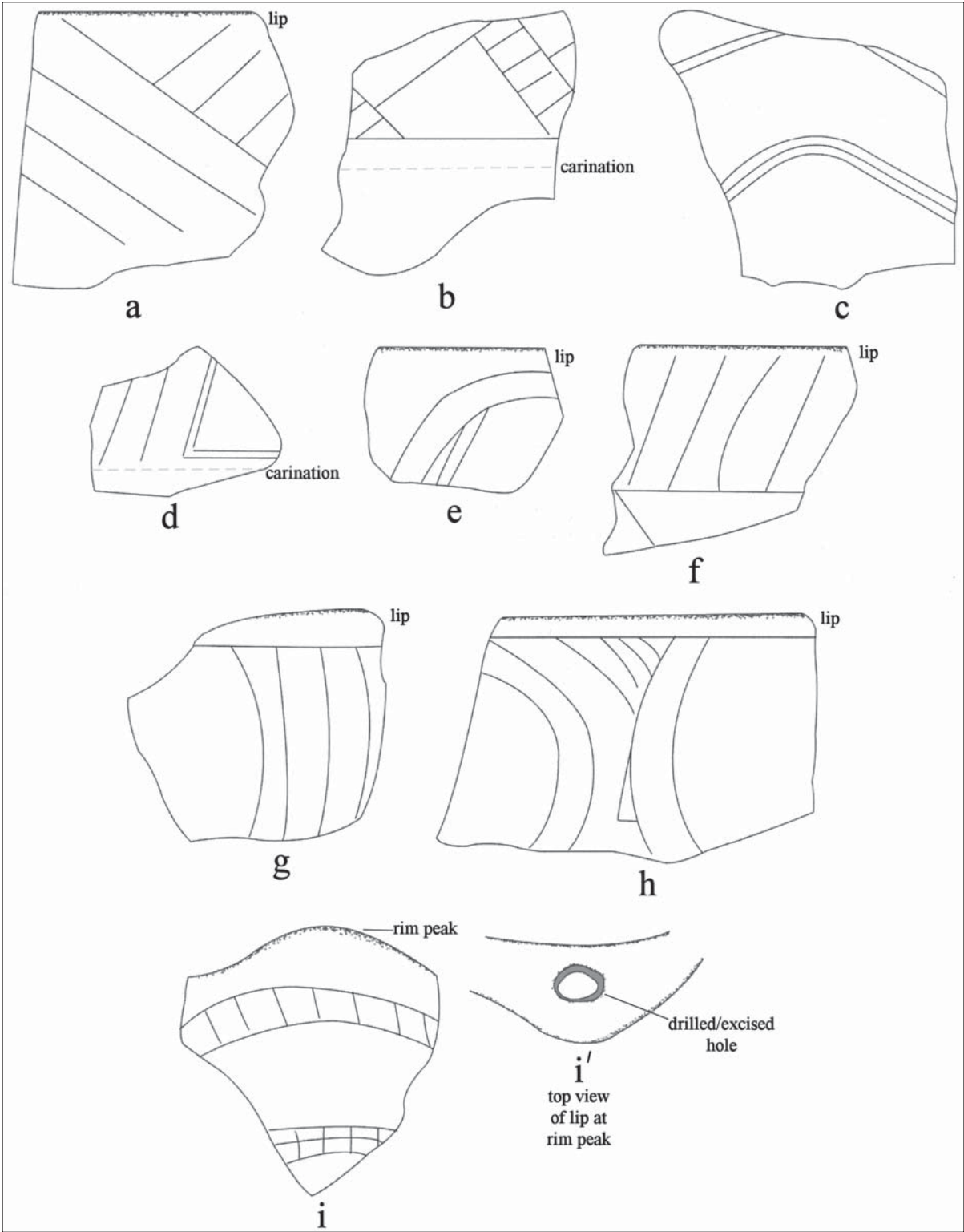


Figure 2. Selected decorative elements on fine ware sherds from the Hawkins site (41SM144).

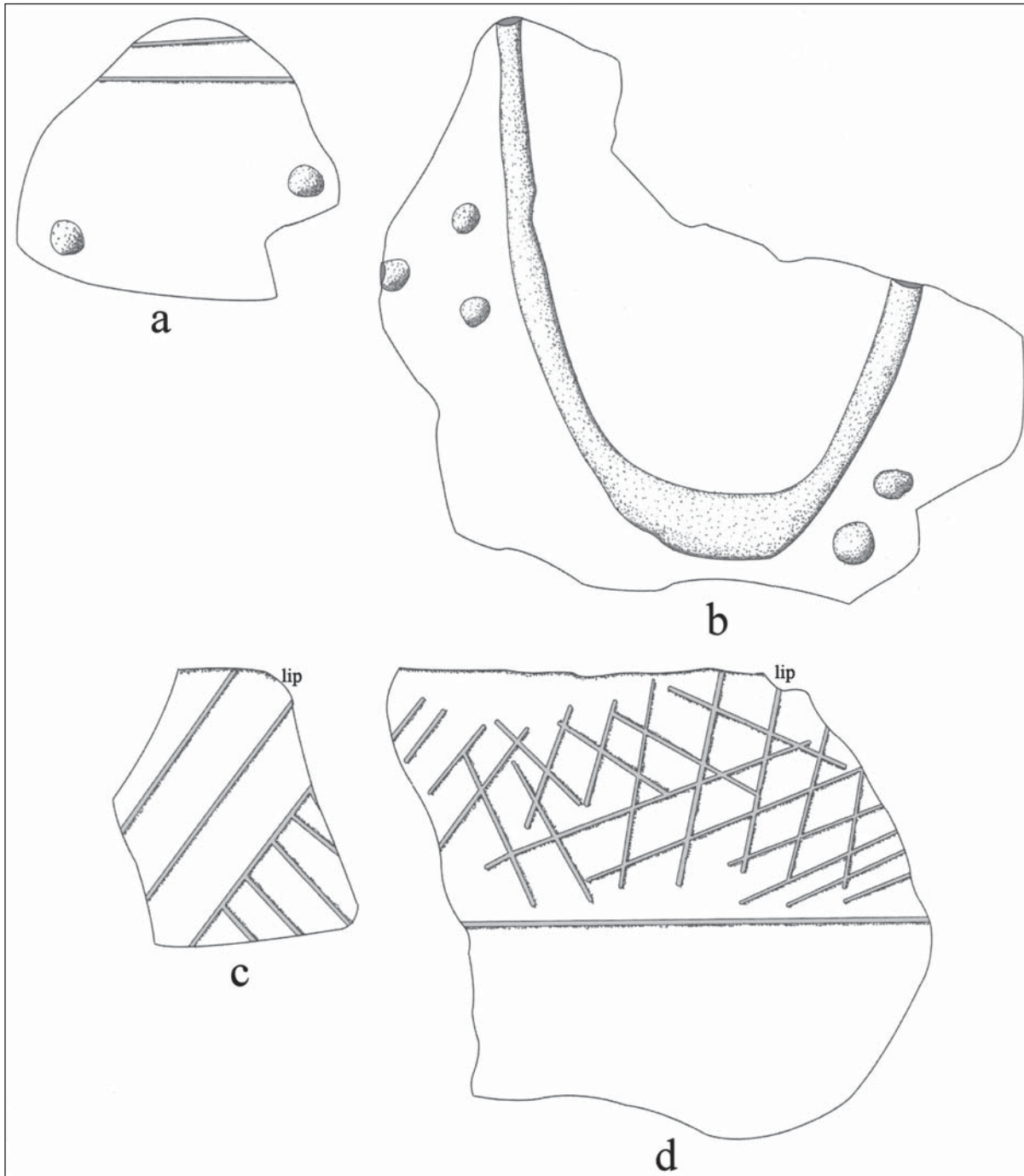


Figure 3. Selected decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the Hawkins site (41SM144): a, incised-applied body sherd; b, applied body sherd; c-d, incised rim sherds.

One of the other utility ware sherds from the Hawkins site has at least three horizontal incised lines on a jar rim panel, and widely spaced applied nodes on the vessel body (see Figure 3a). A large body sherd found at the site has a single large curvilinear applied ridge as well as at least two clusters of small applied nodes (see Figure 3b).



### Summary and Conclusions

The Hawkins site (41SM144) is an ancestral Caddo settlement on the Sabine River in the East Texas Pineywoods. Investigations at the site in the 1950s recovered a small but distinctive ceramic sherd assemblage primarily from jars, bowls, carinated bowls, and bottles tempered with grog.

The fine ware sherds are from carinated bowls and bottles, as well as one red-slipped Sanders Slipped bowl. The fine ware sherds have a variety of decorative elements that feature vessels with hatched ladder elements, diagonal opposed Sanders Engraved rim sherds, bottle sherds with sets of curvilinear engraved lines, and other vessels with horizontal and diagonal or sets of curvilinear engraved lines. Two rims with wide and flattened lips have large excised and drilled circular holes on the lip, similar to East Incised vessels from Red River contexts. One rim in the assemblage is from a probable Poynor Engraved, *var. Cook* carinated bowl with opposed curvilinear engraved lines and an associated hatched pendant triangle.

The utility wares are from Canton Incised jars, and there are incised-appliqued and appliqued jar sherds that feature small appliqued nodes on the vessel body. It is notable that there are no brushed utility ware sherds in the assemblage, as brushed utility ware jars are a common part of post-A.D. 1200 Caddo ceramic assemblages in many parts of East Texas (Perttula 2015). However, Caddo ceramic assemblages without considerable amounts of brushed sherds occur in the upper Sabine, Sulphur, and Red River basins, as is the case at the Early and Middle Caddo period Jamestown site (41SM54, 1.1 percent brushed, Perttula and Walker 2008), the Wolf site (41SM195, 0.0 percent brushed, Walters 2003), and 41SM53 (1.8 percent brushed, Walters and Perttula 2015).

The preponderance of the evidence regarding the kinds of decorated sherds in the assemblage from the Hawkins site (41SM144) suggests that the ancestral Caddo occupation there took place during the Middle Caddo period, perhaps between ca. A.D. 1300-1400. It may be a habitation site that was associated socially and politically with the Middle Caddo period Jamestown mound center not far to the west in the Sabine River basin.

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