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Timothy K. Perttula

Introduction

Over the years, R. King Harris and his Dallas Archeological Society colleagues excavated a number of ancestral Caddo burials (Burials 1-19) from cemeteries exposed along the eroding bank of the Red River at the Sam Kaufman site (41RR16) and have published their findings (see Cobb 1983; Harris 1953; Harris and Wilson 1956; Harris et al. 1954; Huff 1960). These burials are from upper and lower cemeteries of McCurtain phase and Historic Caddo age both north and east of the principal mound at the Sam Kaufman site (see Perttula 2008; Skinner et al. 1969) on the Red River (Figure 1).

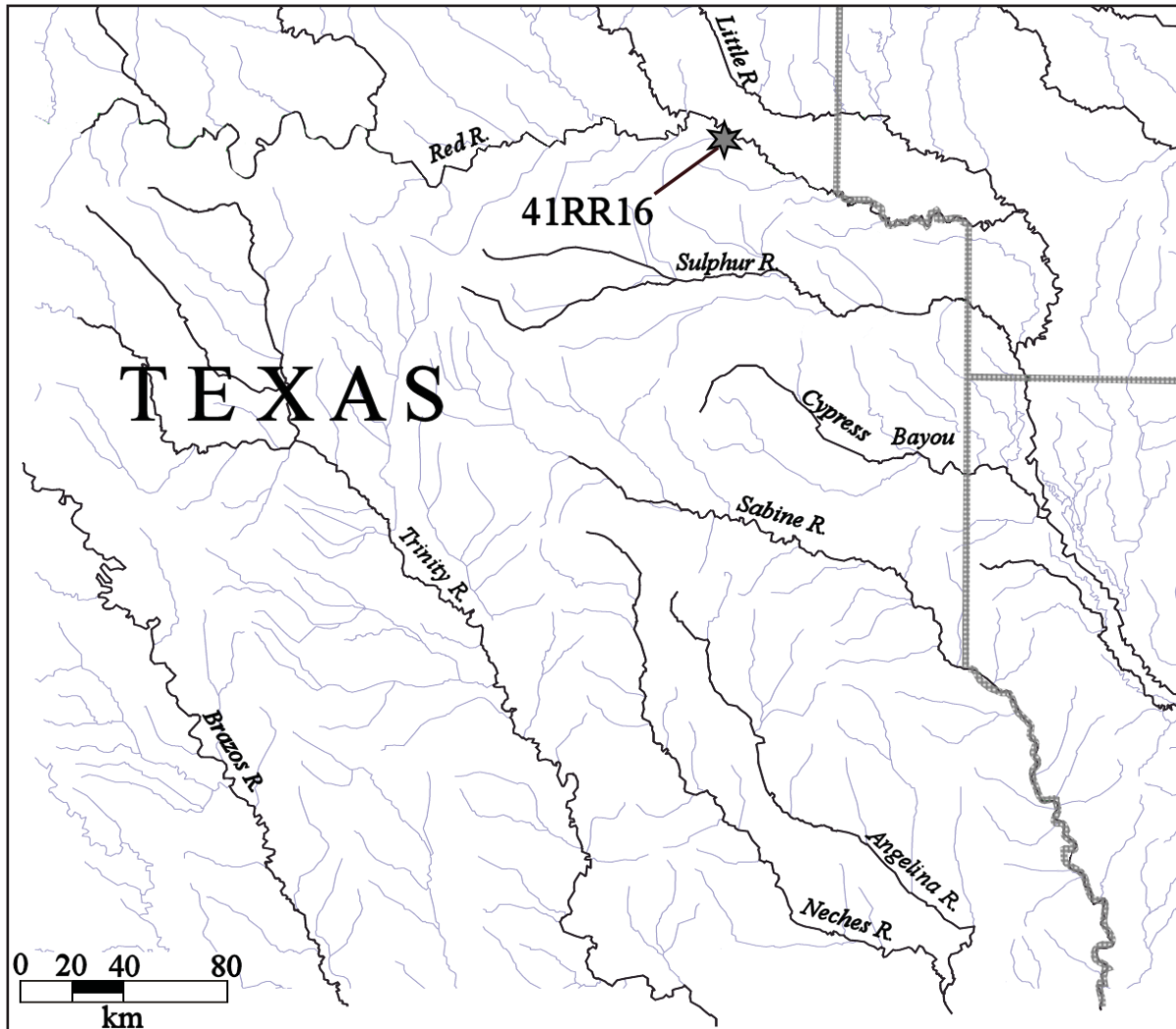


Figure 1. Location of the Sam Kaufman site on the Red River in East Texas.

During a 2005 documentation visit to the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution (NMNH), I had the opportunity, along with Bo Nelson, Mark Walters, Robert Cast, and Bobby Gonzalez, to examine vessels from the Sam Kaufman site in the R. King Harris collections. His collections included vessels from Burials 20, 21, 22, and 25 at the Sam Kaufman site, and information and images of these vessels (or for that matter, information about the burial excavations) have not been previously put on record. This article provides the available information on the eight vessels known to have been included as funerary offerings with these four burials; no information could be found for any vessels or other funerary offerings in Burials 23 and 24.

Ceramic Vessels

At least three ceramic vessels were in Burial 20, and Vessel 3 in that burial excavated by King Harris was identified in the NMNH collections. The vessel is a plain shell-tempered bowl with prominent lip tabs (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Plain shell-tempered bowl from Burial 20 (Vessel 3) (A513509).

The three documented vessels in Burial 21 at the Sam Kaufman site are also shell-tempered. The first is an Avery Engraved bottle with an everted neck (Figure 3), the second is an everted rim Emory Punctated-Incised jar (Vessel 1) with four rim peaks and strap handles (Figure 4), and a Nash Neck Banded jar (Vessel 3) (Figure 5).

The one vessel (Vessel 1) in Burial 22 is a shell-tempered Avery Engraved bottle (Figure 6).

Three ceramic vessels were identified from Burial 25 at the Sam Kaufman site, but at least four vessels were recovered in the excavations from this burial. One of these vessels is a shell-tempered spool-necked Taylor Engraved bottle (Figure 7). Another is a large shell-tempered and red-slipped Avery Engraved compound bowl (Vessel 2, Figure 8). Vessel 4 in Burial 25 is a shell-tempered Nash Neck Banded jar with four rim peaks and four lug handles (Figure 9).



Figure 3. Avery Engraved bottle from Burial 21 (A513514).

Summary and Conclusions

These eight ancestral Caddo vessels in the R. King Harris collection at the NMNH from the Sam Kaufman are from burials 20, 21, 22, and 25 in McCurtain phase cemeteries that were eroded by the flood actions of the Red River. These burials were excavated by Harris and/or colleagues in the Dallas Archeological Society, as were Burials 1-19. Burials have also been excavated by others from these cemeteries, among them Buddy Calvin Jones in 1961-1962, who excavated eight burials in the upper cemetery (Perttula et al. 2012:Figures 1 and 2). The range in identified ceramic types and vessel forms found in Harris Burials 20-22 and 25—including Avery Engraved bottles and compound bowl, a spool necked Taylor Engraved bottle, and Emory Punctated-Incised and Nash Neck Banded jars—suggest that these burials date to the late McCurtain phase (ca. A.D. 1500-1700).

Acknowledgments

The vessel photographs were taken by Bo Nelson during a 2005 documentation visit to the NMNH. Lance Trask prepared Figure 1 for this article.



Figure 4. Emory Punctated-Incised jar, Burial 21, Vessel 1 (A513511).



Figure 5. Nash Neck Banded jar, Burial 21, Vessel 3 (A513513).



Figure 6. Avery Engraved bottle from Burial 22, Vessel 1 (A513516).



Figure 7. Taylor Engraved bottle from Burial 25 (A513517).



Figure 8. Avery Engraved compound bowl from Burial 25 (Vessel 2, A513518).



Figure 9. Nash Neck Banded jar from Burial 25 (Vessel 4, A513520).

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