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Timothy K. Perttula
Center for Regional Heritage Research, Stephen F. Austin State University

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The Chasteen Site (41UR18) on Big Cypress Creek, Upshur County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

INTRODUCTION

The Chasteen site (41UR18), also known as the W. S. Chastain site (Thurmond 1990:212 and Figure 27) appears to be an early Titus phase (ca. A.D. 1450-1550) mound center and village (with an associated cemetery) on an upland landform overlooking Big Cypress Creek. The small mound (18 m in diameter and 1.5 m in height) at the Chasteen site, apparently constructed over an important building, is part of a larger complex of Titus phase mound centers at this locale, including the Harroun (41UR10), Camp Joy (41UR144), and the Dalton (41UR11) sites (Perttula 2012:Figure 13-2).

The village deposits at the Chasteen site are estimated to cover 3-4 acres around the mound, and contain numerous ceramic sherds and concentrations of daub from ancestral Caddo house structures contemporaneous with the house mound (Thurmond 1990:212). Other artifacts in the village indicate some very limited use of the upland in Late Archaic and Early Caddo periods. The Robert L. Turner, Jr. surface collection from the site came from a midden area within the village.

LITHIC ARTIFACTS

Only one lithic artifact is in the surface collection from the Chasteen site. This is a multi-platform flake core on a heat-treated quartzite.

CERAMIC ARTIFACTS

There are 61 ceramic sherds in the Turner surface collection from the Chasteen site, including 33 plain rim and body sherds and 28 decorated sherds. The plain to decorated sherd ratio is 1.18. As with many Late Caddo Titus phase ceramic assemblages, the vast majority of the sherds in the surface collection are from grog-tempered vessels (98%); the one remaining sherd is bone-tempered.

Ten of the decorated sherds (36%) are from engraved or red-slipped fine ware vessels, primarily carinated bowls. The red-slipped body sherd has a slip only on the exterior vessel surface. The carinated bowl and compound bowl sherds have horizontal engraved lines with open and hatched pendant triangles on them (Figure 1a-c). These are likely from Ripley Engraved vessels.

Figure 1. Engraved compound bowl and carinated bowl sherds: a, compound bowl; b-c, carinated bowl sherds.

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Other engraved rim sherds have horizontal engraved lines under the lip (n=2) (direct profiles and rounded, exterior folded lips). Two body sherds have hatched triangle and hatched divider elements from different Ripley Engraved vessels.

The two bottle body sherds have either curvilinear engraved lines or curvilinear engraved lines with open and hatched spurs and triangular elements (Figure 2a). This sherd is likely from a Ripley Engraved bottle.

The 18 decorated sherds from utility ware vessels are from tool punctated (10.7% of the decorated sherds and 16.7% of the utility ware sherds) (Figure 3a, e), incised (3.6% of the decorated sherds and 5.6% of the utility ware sherds) (Figure 4b), neck banded (La Rue Neck Banded, 3.6% of the decorated sherds and 5.6% of the utility ware sherds) (Figure 3d), and appliqued-incised (3.6% of the decorated sherds and 5.6% of the utility ware sherds) vessels (Figure 3c). The appliqued-incised body sherd is likely from a Harleton Appliqued jar, while the incised sherd is a rim (everted profile and a rounded lip) with closely-spaced horizontal lines.
Two of the punctated sherds are rims (direct and everted rim profiles and rounded lips). One has a row of tool punctations on a collar below the lip (see Figure 3a), while the other has rows of tool punctations (see Figure 3e). The third punctated sherd is a body sherd with a row of tool punctations on it.

Most of the utility ware sherds, however, have brushed decorations, either as the sole decoration (36% of the decorated sherds and 56% of the utility ware sherds) (Figure 4a, c-e), or in combination with incised (3.6% of the decorated sherds and 5.6% of the utility ware sherds) or punctated (3.6% of the decorated sherds and 5.6% of the utility ware sherds) elements (see Figure 3b). The brushed sherds include a rim with horizontal brushing marks, eight body sherds with parallel brushing marks, and another body sherd with overlapping brushing.

One rim (everted rim profile and a rounded lip) from a peaked rim jar has horizontal brushing on the rim and a row of tool punctations under the vessel lip (see Figure 3b). A body sherd in the surface collection is decorated with parallel brushed marks and incised lines.

**MISCELLANEOUS ARTIFACTS**

Miscellaneous artifacts from midden deposits at the Chasteen site include one mussel shell valve fragment, five animal bones (one burned), 17 pieces of wood charcoal, and 25 pieces of daub. The frequency of daub suggests that there were burned Caddo structures in the area of the surface collection.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The Robert L. Turner, Jr. surface collection from a midden area at the Chasteen site is primarily from a Late Caddo Titus phase habitation deposit in the village area. The Titus phase nature of the ceramic assemblage is indicated by the occurrence of sherds from Ripley Engraved carinated bowls, compound bowls, and
bottles, as well as Harleton Appliqued and La Rue Neck Banded utility ware cooking jars. Brushed vessel sherds are common in the assemblage, with 36% of the decorated sherds having brushing marks, and this is also consistent with a Titus phase ceramic assemblage. The proportional representation of brushed sherds in this small surface collection suggests that the occupation here took place prior to ca. A.D. 1550, during the early part of the Titus phase.

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