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**Notes on Caddoan Vessels Collected from the Mosquito
Island Site (41AG66), Lake Sam Rayburn**

Tom Middlebrook

This paper documents four Caddoan ceramic vessels from the Mosquito Island site (41AG66) at Lake Sam Rayburn. The vessels were obtained from the site by two individuals who violated the provisions of the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), and were arrested on the site while in the act of disturbing the archaeological site. They were subsequently convicted under ARPA for their illegal actions.

Vessel 1, Engraved Bowl

Height: 6.4 cm
Orifice Diameter: 18.0 cm
Diameter of Base: 7.5 cm
Height of Rim: 4.0 cm
Thickness of Rim: 5.2 mm
Weight: 427.08 g

Vessel Form: carinated bowl

Lip: flattened

Rim: vertical attachment; straight to slightly everted; slightly thinned on the interior

Color: dark red (2.5YR3/6) and weak red (10R4/4); smudges of dark brown and charcoal colors

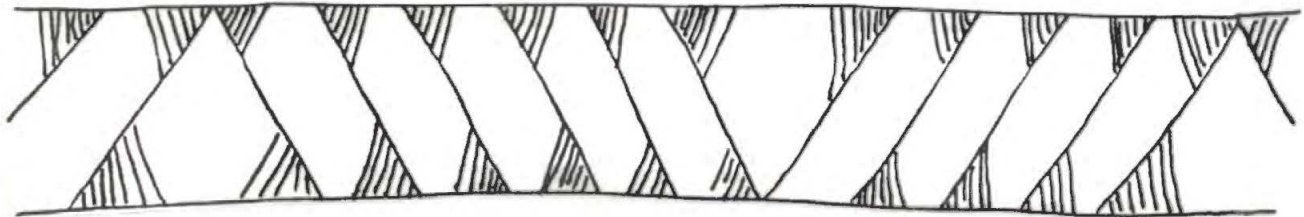
Temper: grog, bone, and hematitic sand

Surface: burnished

Decorative Technique: engraved

Notes on design:

Geometric design with three types of straight lines: (1) parallel horizontal lines 3.0-3.3 cm apart, forming the top and bottom of the design; (2) parallel or perpendicular diagonal lines at 45 degrees from the baselines; and (3) nearly vertical parallel lines in sets of six to eight connecting baselines and diagonal lines in inferior and superior acute angles. The diagonal lines change directions, each forming 90 degree isosceles triangles; two triangles "point" up and two "point" down. The number of diagonal lines varies from three to five between the triangles.



Condition of Vessel:

Rim nicks=2; rim sherds missing=3; lip to shoulder cracks=6; vessel has been restored; body and base had at least five large pieces; glue and colored filling material evident in and over seams in the vessel body and interior rim (but not exterior rim) surface.

Discussion:

This vessel is well-made and the engraved design is carefully executed. The vessel does not, however, fit into a recognizable ceramic type. The form is typical of carinated bowls from Early Caddoan to Historic Caddoan contexts. Triangles and diagonal lines are seen on carinated bowls from diverse types such as Sanders Engraved, Hempstead Engraved, and Poynor Engraved, but clear differences are seen between this vessel and each of these types.

Sherds illustrated from the Carlisle site (41WD46) have close similarity to this vessel (Perttula et al. 1993:Figure 13); the age of the Carlisle site is ca. A.D. 1400. No direct relationship is seen to designs on whole vessels from Washington Square (41NA49), but geometric designs with diagonal connecting lines are seen on three vessels (Vessels 95-3, 95-6, and 95-19; see Hart 1982:Figures 3-13b-c and 3-14d). Middle Caddoan period engraved ceramics from East Texas commonly display ladders, cross-hatching, and connecting lines and fillers reminiscent of the ones seen here. Therefore, this vessel may be associated with a Middle Caddoan period component.

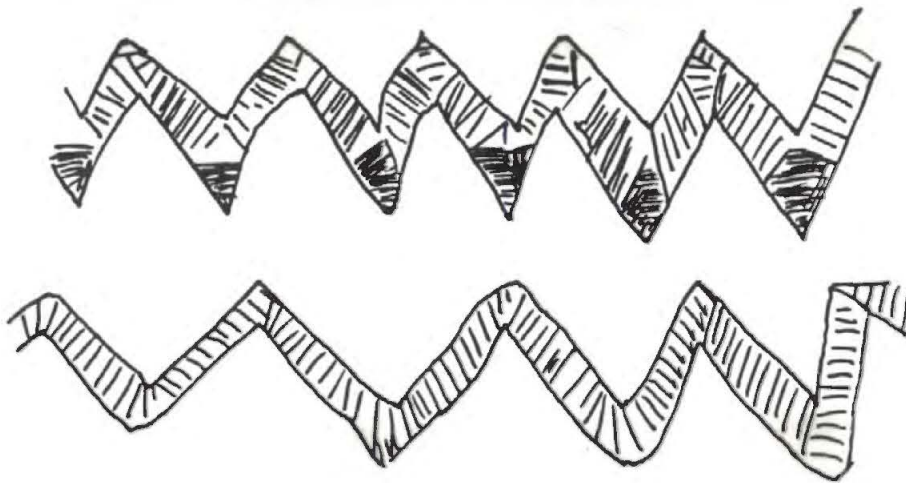
Vessel 2, Engraved Jar

Height: 17.0 cm
 Orifice Diameter: 9.4 cm
 Diameter of Base: 6.6 cm
 Thickness of Wall: 7.4 mm
 Weight: 612.12 g

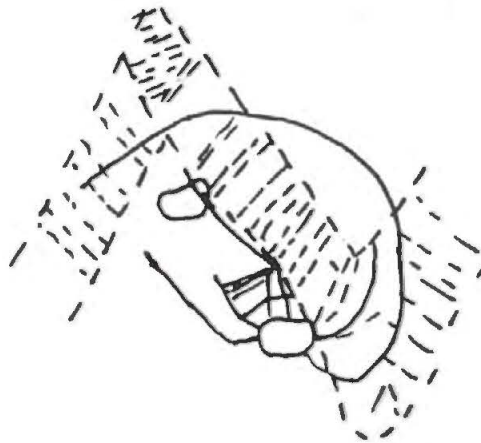
Vessel Form: beaker-shaped jar
 Lip: unevenly flattened
 Rim: direct, slightly everted
 Color: dark gray (10YR4/1) and pale brown (10YR6/3), with a reddish-yellow (5YR6/6) patch near the base
 Temper: very finely crushed bone and grog
 Surface: burnished to polished
 Decorative Technique: engraved

Notes on design:

The principal design consists of two sets of parallel up and down chevron lines connected by perpendicular lines forming two zigzag ladders. The pattern on the superior portion of the vessel has seven peaks and valleys, while the one closer to the base has only five peaks. In the upper pattern, the "ladder" lines between the parallel lines are perpendicular except in the upper acute angle (peak) where they are horizontal, and in the lower acute angle (valleys) where the surface is excised. The lower pattern shows only perpendicular "ladder" lines. The ladders are about 1 cm wide (range 0.5-1.9 cm) and the lines are 3-5 mm apart. The distance from "peak" to "valley" is 6.5-8.5 cm in the upper design, and 5.0-7.5 cm in the lower pattern.



The secondary design consists of (1) a line just below the rim; (2) two "scratches" diagonally from near the top of the vessel to near the bottom; and (3) an unusual engraved design that overlaps a chevron:



Condition of vessel:

Rim nicks=1; overall, the vessel is well preserved; loss of polish on surface (an area of oxidation) in a patch near the base on one side; curvilinear surface scar on one side is probably a loss of polish at the location of a root.

Discussion:

This is a crudely made and decorated vessel. The vessel is slightly lopsided, and the lip is somewhat uneven. The base is very flat. The vessel form (a relatively tall beaker shape) is striking. Two episodes of engraving appear to have taken place on Vessel 2. The design does not fit any described ceramic type, and comparison vessels are unknown. "Ladders" appear to be especially common in Middle Caddoan ceramics, however (Middlebrook and Perttula 1997).

Vessel 3, Punctated-Incised Bowl

Height: 7.4 cm

Orifice Diameter: 14.8 cm

Diameter of Base: 8.4 cm

Thickness of Wall (mid-body): 9.2 mm

Weight: 500.85 g

Vessel Form: simple bowl

Lip: rounded

Rim: direct, very slightly thinned

Color: pale brown (10YR6/3) and gray (10YR5/1), and darker smudges

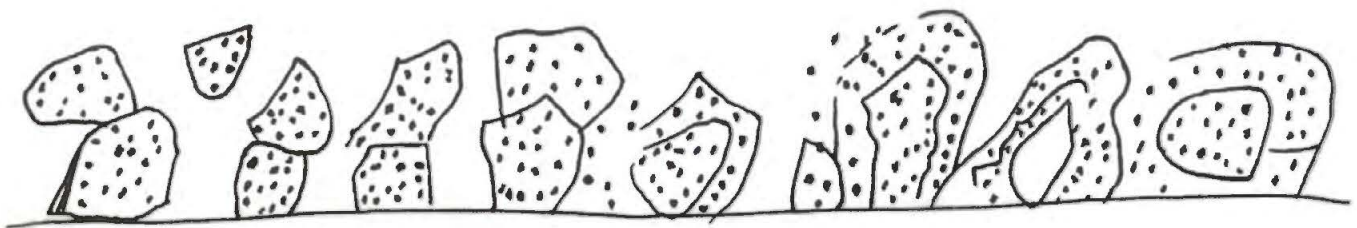
Temper: grog and bone; the bone is much more coarse than Vessels 1 and 2

Surface: slightly smoothed surface; paste very "lumpy;" poorly fired

Decorative Technique: punctated-incised

Notes on design:

There is an uneven and carelessly drawn incised line 0.5-2.3 cm below the lip. The main design includes very sloppy drawing of curvilinear incised zones of punctations. There are four "stacked" zones (one on top of the other) followed by four "surrounded" zones (one inside the other). All punctations are round, tool punctations.

**Condition of vessel:**

The vessel is intact. There are several small cracks in the wall and base. One "scratch" on the interior surface (from 1.5 cm below the lip to the bottom) may have been associated with looter probing or excavation of the vessel.

Discussion:

This is a very crudely made and decorated vessel. The walls are of uneven thickness, especially around the lip. One could easily imagine that this vessel could have been made by a child, or was very hastily made. Given the location of the Mosquito Island site, this vessel is readily comparable to Pineland Punctated-Incised wares. This group of ceramics has instrument punctations in zones formed by vertical, diagonal, or curvilinear incised lines. This vessel falls in the last group. There is no clear temporal relationship of the design other than to suggest that it is likely to be related to ceramics made following the Early Caddoan Alto phase.

Vessel 4, lower, plain portion of a bowl

Height: unknown, broken at around 7 cm
 Diameter: >27 cm
 Diameter of Base: 10.7 cm
 Thickness of Wall: 6.7 mm
 Weight: 796.68 g

Vessel Form: probable base and lower body of carinated bowl
 Lip: not present
 Rim: not present
 Color: reddish-yellow (5YR6/6) to dark brown and gray/charcoal
 Temper: grog
 Surface: smoothed
 Decorative Technique: none

Condition of vessel:

The vessel is broken, but has been glued together from 18 sherds. Two small sherds are packaged separately. The base and a section of the body is one large sherd. The vessel may have been destroyed by plowing or erosion that removed the rim of the vessel, or the rim sherds are elsewhere with the looters (unlikely).

Discussion:

The vessel is likely the lower body of a very large carinated bowl. It may have been a simple bowl, but it would have been very shallow to have been so large. No age for this artifact is suggested.

References

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