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Current Research: Building a Corpus of Crockett Curvilinear Incised Vessels

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Current Research: Building a Corpus of Crockett Curvilinear Incised Vessels

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Current Research:

Building a Corpus of Crockett Curvilinear Incised Vessels

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As presented in an earlier report (McKinnon 2018), I have been compiling, with the help of several Caddo researchers, a comprehensive multi-state database of Caddo vessels (now close to 15,000). The on-going goal is to evaluate landscape scale social interactions and interregional relationships using this growing ceramic database. Some initial explorations have been productive in evaluating relationships between proposed Caddo communities (archaeological phases) and I suggest that these exercises have offered insights into Caddo interaction, identity, and ideological exchange in a visual and (continually) comprehensive way (McKinnon 2011, 2016).

Related, I, along with my students at the University of Central Arkansas, have been synthesizing ceramic data associated with the Bowman (3LR46) or Bowman/Wallace (3LR50) site, a Caddo multi-mound center on the Red River in Little River County, Arkansas (Hoffman 1970:167-168; McKinnon 2017; McKinnon et al. 2018; Suarez et al. 2018). Through this synthesis, several diverse examples of Crockett Curvilinear Incised vessels and sherds have been identified, which became an encouragement to start building and evaluating a corpus of this vessel type with its distinctive design.

Girard et al. (2014:54-57) highlight the frequency of the Crockett Curvilinear Incised type during the early Caddo periods and suggest that early Caddo designs likely contain symbolic referents, which have not been explored in as much detail as later Caddo ceramic types (e.g., Dowd 2011; Gadus 2013; Hart and Perttula 2010; Lambert 2018; Nash 2018). Examples of Crockett vessels are present at several Early Caddo (ca. A.D. 1050-1200) centers that likely were the “locations where social policies were formulated, decisions made, and rituals and social events carried out” (Girard et al. 2014:46). Some of these sites include George C. Davis (Newell and Krieger 1949:98-104), Bowman (Hoffman 1970:169), Crenshaw

(Schambach 1982:152), Harlan (Bell 1972, 1984), Spiro (Brown 1996:231), and Mounds Plantation (Webb and McKinney 1975:80-81).

Crockett Curvilinear was first described in the George C. Davis report (Newell and Krieger 1949:98-101) and has been variously described in later publications (Bohannon 1973; Hoffman 1970; Suhm et al. 1954; Suhm and Jelks 1962). The vessels are carinated (early?) or globular (later?) bowls that contain incised scroll motifs executed with a high degree of variability (Newell and Krieger 1949:98-99). Commonality in design is the presence of an incised scroll motif with punctate or incised-line filled circles as the central element. An incised band frequently connects each circle, which often begins at the bottom of one circle and connects to the top of the next circle. In some cases, triangles are used as the connecting design to the circular element. The circular element is repeated around the rim or body and often contains “plain, ring-like (made with hollow reed?), or hemiconical” (Suhm et al. 1954:262) punctations in the center of the circle. Punctations or hatching (but not cross-hatching) almost always fills the enclosed spaces (see Figure 1b).

Hoffman offers the first consideration of chronology based on vessels at sites within the Little River region. In his analysis, the temporal period for the Crockett type in the Little River region begins during the early Millers Crossing phase, which “appears to have been derived stylistically from French Fork Incised at some time prior to A.D. 1000” (Hoffman 1971:578). The type is in use until the end of the Mineral Spring phase (ca. AD 1400)--a roughly 400-year span. Based on variability in shape, decoration technique, and overall design he offers type varieties associated with an evolution of vessel form and design (Table 1).

Since his chronological assessment almost 50 years ago, there has been no attempt to expand upon and evaluate the temporal and spatial characteristics

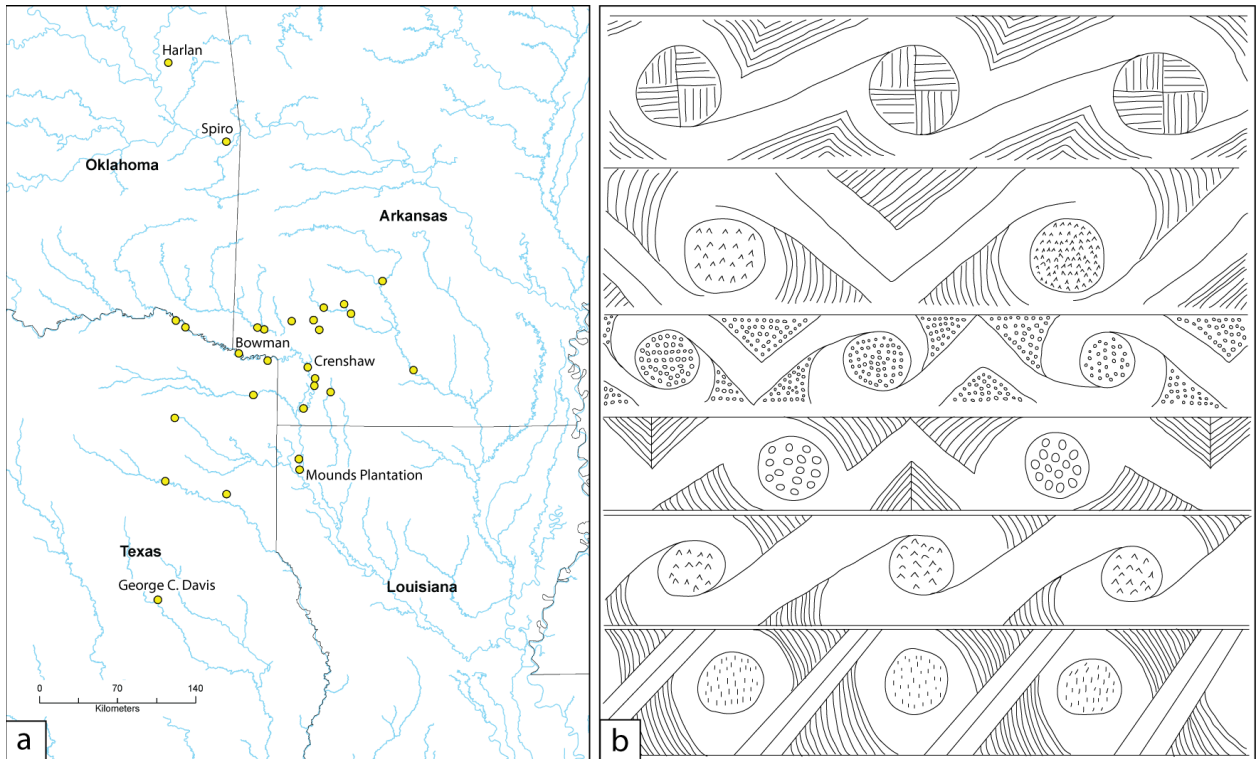


Figure 1. (a) Current distribution of Crockett Curvilinear Incised vessels in the ceramic database. (b) Examples of design variation from Crockett Curvilinear Incised vessels from the Bowman site.

Variety	Form	Design	Sites	Phases
<i>var. Cossatot</i>	Mostly small bowls with straight sides or with a slight shoulder.	The use of hollow reed punctations. Bold designs with negative effect.	Millers Crossing, Mineral Springs	Millers Crossing
<i>var. Crockett</i>	Carinated bowls with convex base and short vertical rims.	Dots, triangle, or fingernail punctations. No hollow reed punctates.	George C. Davis, Crenshaw	Alto, Lost Prairie
<i>var. Ozan</i>	Small high-rimmed jars with suspension holes and large bowls	Central circles filled with dot, fingernail, or slot punctation, or hachuring. No negative effect.	Mineral Springs, Bowman, East	Late, widely distributed
<i>var. unspecified</i>	Untyped sherd collections			

Table 1. A summary of Little River region Crockett Curvilinear Incised varieties as suggested by Hoffman (1971:570-578).

of Crockett forms and designs using ceramic data collected since that time. To that end, this current research summary reports on the development of a comprehensive corpus of Crockett Curvilinear Incised vessels. The goal is to evaluate variability in form and design to build upon and test the varieties first presented by Hoffman (1971). Given the possible “geographical varietal significance” (Hoffman 1971:573) of designs seemingly present in the proposed varieties, the wide-distribution and presence at several influential early Caddo centers, and long duration of use during a time of the development of “complex and socially ranked societies with well-planned civic-ceremonial centers” (Perttula 2012:8), the Crockett Curvilinear Incised type (and more specifically the form and design) seems a viable candidate for evaluating ceramic variability and expression across the Caddo Area and throughout the Early Caddo time period.

As I move forward with this evaluation, I am reaching out to those who are aware of examples (and images) to build and expand the corpus. At present the database contains 142 Crockett Curvilinear Incised vessels from 27 Caddo sites and is biased toward Arkansas and Texas. Potential Louisiana and Oklahoma examples are currently underrepresented (see Figure 1a). I am interested in Crockett Curvilinear Incised examples throughout the Caddo Area (particularly Oklahoma and Louisiana) but also the distribution of similar or “hybrid” types such Pennington Punctated-Incised or French Fork Incised.

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