

Native Colonowares at Fort Rosalie

Vincas P. Steponaitis (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
James A. Nyman (National Park Service)

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In the years of its initial occupation between 1716 and 1729, Fort Rosalie was a locus of exchange and commerce between the French and Native inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley (Barnett 2007:73-74). The French soldiers in the garrison depended heavily on the indigenous population to provide them with food and other materials to supplement the sporadic provisions sent by French authorities. Historic documents (Swanton 1911) and the material record both suggest that the French stationed at Fort Rosalie were accustomed to incorporating Native pottery and foods into their daily routines.

The National Park Service, in its excavations at the site of Fort Rosalie, recovered artifacts of both European and Native origin, including thousands of fragments of Indian pottery ranging in date from the Woodland period through the early eighteenth century (Hardy et al. 2009; McNeil 2012; Cornelison and Hardy 2016). Within this assemblage are some sherds and a few nearly intact vessels that stand out from the rest. They have similar pastes, but different shapes than the traditional Native ceramics in the region. These atypical vessels date to the fort's early French occupation and exhibit characteristics of both indigenous and European pottery traditions. We have categorized these vessels as Native-made colonowares. Colonowares emerged in situations of close cultural engagement among Europeans, Indians, and African slaves in the English and French colonies of the American South in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (see Ferguson 1992; Galke 2009; Noël Hume 1969).

Although relatively common on French colonial sites in the American South (e.g. Cordell 2013; Morgan and MacDonald 2011; Waselkov and Gums 2000), Native-made colonowares in the Lower Mississippi Valley are poorly known. Our goal here is to fill this gap in knowledge. We describe the Natchez colonowares, compare them with colonowares from nearby regions, and define a new variety with criteria for sorting these wares.

Context and Chronology

Fort Rosalie was a key outpost in France's colonization of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Built in the heart of the Natchez nation in 1716, the fort was destroyed during the Natchez uprising of 1729, then rebuilt and occupied by the French until 1763, when the territory was ceded to England. The Fort was subsequently occupied by the English and renamed Fort Panmure. In 1779, during the American Revolution, it passed to Spanish control. The fort was ceded to the United States in 1798 and abandoned in 1800 (Elliott 1990; Wilson 1982).

The fort's ruins, especially the pentagonal earthen embankment, remained a visible part of the Natchez landscape throughout the nineteenth century. A series of landslides in the 1800s

caused portions of the fort to cascade down the bluffs, and in 1869 the so-called “Great Landslide” took away most of what was left (Claiborne 1880: 47). Four of the five sides of the original pentagon are now gone; only the southeastern embankment still remains.

Between 2005 and 2011, the Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, conducted excavations at Fort Rosalie (Hardy et al. 2009; Cornelison and Hardy 2016). A total of 56 sq m were opened atop the remaining embankment, with the goal of gathering information and artifacts that could be used in public interpretation of the site. In the units at the north end of the bluff edge they encountered the remains of a burned structure, indicated by numerous postholes, charred planks, and a dense concentration of fired daub (Cornelison and Hardy 2016: Figure 9-03). Most of the ceramic artifacts included in our analysis came from these excavation units in the vicinity of this structure.

A detailed study of contemporary French maps conducted by Steponaitis shed considerable light on the contexts found beneath the embankment (Nyman and Steponaitis 2014). The map of the second fort (Broutin 1732) was overlaid on a map of the first fort (Broutin 1730), using the common topography shown on both maps as a guide. It is clear from this overlay that the southeastern embankment of the second fort was built directly on top of the site of the barracks in the first fort. These maps were then correlated with the modern topography, based on the location of the pentagonal fort’s southernmost corner, which is still clearly visible. This overlay showed that the NPS excavations were situated directly over the 1729 barracks.

The strata encountered in these excavations were consistent with this interpretation, and consisted of two major units: (1) the original ground surface associated with the 1716-1729 fort, and (2) the earthen embankment above this surface that was built in 1732 as part of the second French fort. Everything sealed beneath the embankment had to predate its construction, and everything in the fill itself (barring minor intrusions or rebuilding) could not postdate the construction. Thus, it is safe to assume that most of the artifacts from the excavations, whether from the embankment fill or the surface beneath it, date to 1732 or earlier. Moreover, given that the embankment’s fill was obtained from the immediate vicinity, most of the French colonial artifacts probably relate to the 1716-1729 fort.

Figure 1 shows a photomosaic profile along the N 500 transect, in the vicinity of the barracks. The remains of a burned structure are clearly visible beneath the embankment’s fill: probably a collapsed *bousillage* chimney associated with either a post-in-ground or post-on-sill building (Gregory Waselkov, personal communication). The evidence of burning is not surprising, as contemporary accounts say the fort was burned during the 1729 uprising (Swanton 1911).

It appears that many of the ceramic artifacts recovered from the excavation units surrounding this dense concentration of *bousillage* are associated with the barracks and the activity areas surrounding it. Determining the layers within the excavation units representing the deposits associated with the first fort allowed us to identify contexts containing aboriginal pottery dating prior to the 1729 uprising for analysis. Likewise, by identifying the function of the structure associated with these pre-1732 deposits permitted us to make better informed inferences about the social context in which these vessels were used.

We decided to focus our attention on sherds we could determine with little doubt were present in and around the barracks around the time of its destruction in 1729. Each field specimen bag containing aboriginal ceramics from the destruction layers in the northern block was examined. The sherds that stood out from the rest of the assemblage from these contexts were the colonoware vessels and other pot breaks. The latter category comprised larger sherds found in close association which appeared to be from a single vessel. Rim sherds and pot breaks with measurable rims were selected for inclusion in our analysis in order to evaluate the types of vessel forms, and in turn vessel functions, represented by the sample. For each unique vessel identified in this sample an orifice diameter measurement was recorded using a simple rim-diameter template. When possible, sherds were mended in order to more accurately gauge vessel form.

Fort Rosalie Colonowares

The bulk of the Indian pottery assemblage recovered at Fort Rosalie falls into the traditional styles associated with the Plaquemine cultural tradition, particularly the Emerald and Natchez phases that postdate AD 1500 (McNeil 2012; Cornelison and Hardy 2016). Typical vessel shapes include hemispherical bowls, bottles, and jars — the former two categories used as serving vessels and the last for cooking and storage (Steponaitis 1981: Figure 2). Most vessels were tempered with grog, some with shell, and some with a mixture of both. The most common decorated type found among bottles and bowls was Fatherland Incised, marked by two- or three-line running scrolls executed with narrow incisions. Jars lacked handles and were mostly undecorated, although some were adorned with the rectilinear designs characteristic of Mazique Incised. Bowls and bottles were sometimes red slipped, a decorative treatment that peaked in popularity during the Natchez phase, after the French arrived in 1682 (Quimby 1942; Phillips 1970; Steponaitis 1974, 1981; Brain 1979, 1988; Brown 1985; Neitzel 1965, 1983).

The sherds we identified as colonowares differ from the rest of the traditional Natchezan pottery in the Fort Rosalie assemblage mainly in their shapes. For the purposes of this chapter, we define colonowares as vessels that were produced by Indians in the style of European pottery, or unique vessel forms made by Native people specifically to meet the needs of European consumers, but executed in ways that were consistent with indigenous norms.

Colonowares are generally found in the Middle Atlantic and Southern United States on sites associated with colonialism or slavery. Noël Hume (1962) first observed the presence on Virginia colonial sites of vessels that were constructed using indigenous Indian paste recipes, but mimicked European vessel forms. Later, Ferguson (1992) posited that hybrid forms like these found at plantation sites in South Carolina and elsewhere shared similarities with West African ceramic traditions, and may have been produced by African slaves. Later still, Heite (2003) pointed out that some of these unglazed, hand-built wares could also have been made by the European colonists themselves. The debate continues over the ethnic origins of this ware dating to the period of European expansion into the Americas. Regardless of the outcome in any particular case, the ethnic origin of colonowares is likely governed enormously by context, and may even involve more than one group (see Cobb and DePratter 2012). Morgan and MacDonald (2011) have argued that indigenous potters produced much of the colonoware in French Louisiana. This had to do with the demographics of the colony in the first quarter of the

eighteenth century when Native peoples far outnumbered African slaves in the areas surrounding French plantations. Cobb and DePratter (2012) posit that colonoware emerged out of the expansion of Europeans across the American South when Native peoples were suddenly embroiled in the effects of colonialism at multiple scales. In this period Native producers of ceramic wares tailored their production to meet European tastes.

Cordell (2001:36) observed at Old Mobile that Apalachee potters who had immigrated to the area from Spanish Florida brought with them both their historical pottery traditions as well as their own colonoware manufacturing techniques they had developed while living among the Spanish (see also Vernon 1988). While at Old Mobile, Cordell observed that the Apalachee potters changed elements of the colonoware production, presumably to conform to the pottery tastes of their new French neighbors. Similarly, the Catawba, who spent some time in the early 1760s living closely alongside the British in South Carolina, began to make European-inspired colonoware forms in the style of earthenware pans, cups, bowls, plates, patty pans, jugs, and pitchers upon their return to their traditional territory in 1762 (Riggs 2010:36).

Our analysis of the colonowares at Fort Rosalie focused mainly on rims and partly reconstructed vessels whose shapes we could readily ascertain. For present purposes, we recognize two broad categories: burnished red colonowares and unburnished coarse colonowares.

Burnished Red Colonowares

As the name implies, these vessels are burnished and decorated with a red slip, which ranges from weak red (10R 4/4) to dark red (10R 3/6) in color. All are grog tempered and hand built, probably by coiling. In cross section, sherds usually exhibit dark gray or black cores and light brown to reddish brown surfaces, often with a sharp boundary between the two zones. This coloration is indicative of a firing in which an extended period of reduction is followed by oxidation and rapid cooling, as pots are removed from the heat and exposed to air (Rye 1981:114-118). All of these traits are common in the indigenous pottery of the region.

What sets these vessels apart as colonoware are their distinctive shapes: plates, bowls, bottles, and jars that are similar to European forms and starkly different from shapes found in pre-colonial Native assemblages. We recognize six different shapes in this category, some more clearly defined than others, each of which is described more fully below.

All of these vessels fall within the type Chicot Red, which is defined as red-slipped pottery, otherwise undecorated, with a grog-tempered paste equivalent to Addis Plain (Steponaitis 1974; Brown 1998). They were originally assigned to two previously defined varieties: most to *var. Fairchild*, which is tempered with medium-sized grog, and a few to *var. Grand Village*, which is finer-grained and can contain some shell, although we did not observe any in our sample (Cornelison and Hardy 2016). These assignments were reasonable given the existing typology. However, we believe that this material warrants a new variety, which we call Chicot Red, *var. Rosalie* (see Appendix).

Le Page du Pratz, the Dutch chronicler of early eighteenth-century Natchez, observed that

Indian women made “dishes and plates like the French.” He went on to say, “ I have had some made out of curiosity on the model of my earthenware. They were of a quite beautiful red” (Le Page du Pratz 1758:II:179, translated by Swanton 1911:62). There can be little doubt that many, if not all, of these burnished red colonowares were made locally.

Simple-Rim Plates. These plates have a simple unadorned lip and a marley (Aultman et al. 2013:14), which is separated by a corner point in the profile from the well in the vessel’s center (Figures 2-4; Table 1). Four of the rim sherds in our sample are large enough to exhibit the distinctive corner point; another ten are too small to show the corner point, but are assigned to this category based on the curvature, angle, and simplicity of the lip. Most of the simple-rim plates have a red slip on the interior surface only (n = 10). Only a few are slipped on both sides (n = 4). All are burnished on the interior, and all but one in our sample are burnished on the exterior also. The few rims that are large enough to measure suggest these plates range in diameter from 22 to 28 cm.

Beveled-Rim Plates. This class is marked by a thickened area on the rim, usually about 1 cm wide, that is set off by a corner point and tapers toward the lip (Figure 5; Table 1). Of the 11 rims in our sample, only two are large enough to exhibit a marley if one were present, and neither does. Thus, it is most likely these vessels had a simple profile, in which the well of the vessel extended all the way to the corner point at the beveled rim. All vessels in our sample were burnished on both sides. Most were red slipped on the interior only; one had a red slip on both sides. The measurable rims yielded estimated diameters of 20-25 cm.

Beveled-Rim Bowls. These vessels are similar to the beveled-rim plates, but have a somewhat deeper profile (Figure 6; Table 1). One sherd shows this deeper profile clearly and has an estimated rim diameter of 15 cm. The other sherd is too small to be sure, and is placed here purely because of the steep angle of the wall just below the beveled rim.

Small Jar. One small rim sherd in our sample is roughly vertical, slightly everted, and embellished with a thin strap on the exterior (Figure 6; Table 1). We presume it comes from a small jar, but there is little more we can say. It appears to be burnished and red slipped on both sides, although the presence of slip on the exterior is not certain. The most likely European analogs, from what little we have, may be small “apothecary jars” like those found in the wreck of the La Belle (Reese 2007:Figures 20-23).

Small Bottle. This is the one complete vessel in our sample, burnished and red slipped on the exterior, with a globular body, a cylindrical neck, and a pedestaled base (Figure 7; Table 1). It is 9 cm tall and has a rim diameter of 4 cm. Although no exact match among European vessels is known, it has a generic similarity to various small bottles and pitchers found on French colonial sites in the South (e.g., Brain 1979:40, 82; Reese 2007:Figures 25, 30)

Unburnished Coarse Colonowares

Vessels in this general category have surfaces that are unslipped and smoothed, rather than burnished. They tend to be larger than the burnished redwares just described. Their ceramic pastes (either grog or shell tempered) and construction techniques (mainly coiling) are entirely consistent with the local indigenous tradition. Again, it is only their unusual form that distinguishes them as potential colonowares.

Large Bottles. These vessels are marked by a large, globular body topped with a roughly cylindrical, slightly everted neck (Figures 8-11; Table 2). Overall, their shape is similar to that of a typical Plaquemine wide-necked bottle (Steponaitis 1981:Figure 2), but the body is much bigger. One might think of them as Native-made equivalents of Spanish olive jars, even though we recognize that the latter are generally not found on French colonial sites.

At least four, and possibly five vessels from Fort Rosalie fall into this class. Rim diameters range from 9 to 15 cm. The one vessel we reconstructed is 34 cm high and has an estimated volume of 17 liters (Figure 11). The other vessels, judging from the curvature of their walls, are probably of comparable size. Three of our examples have grog-tempered pastes and were appropriately classified as Addis Plain, *var. Addis*. Two others are tempered with coarse shell. One of the latter is undecorated and classified as Mississippi Plain, while the other is decorated with broad, curvilinear incisions and classified as Winterville Incised, *var. Winterville* (see Brain 1988:383; Phillips 1970:173; Williams and Brain 1983:205-206). We agree with the decorated vessel's type designation, but given its unusual shape and motif as well as the unusual breadth of the incised lines, we would feel safer calling it Winterville Incised, *var. unspecified*.

Native bottles of this size have not, to date, been identified in assemblages outside of Fort Rosalie, which makes us suspect that they were made specifically for the French garrison there. We recognize the possibility that the absence of this form at other sites may be more apparent than real, in that most of the whole vessels known from Natchez and nearby regions come from burials. Large vessels like these tend not to be used as funerary offerings, and their existence might be difficult to recognize in sherd assemblages, especially in surface collections where sherd sizes are small. That said, we feel it is useful to recognize this form as colonoware, even if tentatively, so as to provide an incentive to look for these vessels elsewhere and to see if this designation is ultimately confirmed.

As to the function of these bottles, Le Page du Pratz may well have been speaking of them when he wrote:

These [Indian] women also make pots of an extraordinary size, jugs with a medium-sized opening, bowls, two-pint bottles with long necks, pots or jugs for bear's oil, which hold as many as 40 pints [Le Page du Pratz 1758:II:178-179, translated by Swanton 1911:62].

In his original narrative, du Pratz uses the term *pinte* as his unit of measure (Le Page du Pratz 1758:II:179), which in the *Ancien Régime* was roughly equivalent to a modern liter (.952 l).¹ Thus, a pot with a capacity of 17 liters would have held approximately 18 French *pintes*.

Whether these bottles were used for bear oil, as du Pratz suggests, or water, which would have been a necessity at a fort perched atop the highest bluff in the region, we cannot say for sure. But given their size and constricted orifice, storage of liquids would seem to be a safe bet in interpreting these vessels' original use (Henrickson and McDonald 1983:633).

Handle. A single, shell-tempered handle was found at Fort Rosalie (Figure 12; Table 2). It exhibits a size and shape combination that is never found on traditional Indian vessels in the region, but is common on European vessels of the period, including pitchers, jugs, and other pots (e.g., Steponaitis 1979; Reese 2007). A shell-tempered colonoware pitcher from Trudeau has a similar handle (Brain 1979:233).

Colonowares in Nearby Regions

How do the Fort Rosalie colonowares compare to other Native-made colonowares in the Lower Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast regions during the same period? Few colonoware vessels had been identified in the Lower Mississippi Valley prior this analysis, except for a few examples from Trudeau, part of the so-called “Tunica Treasure” (Brain 1979). This is largely due to the paucity of excavations at French colonial sites in this area. Thankfully, more work has been performed on similar sites on the Gulf Coast and along the Red River and there is thus a larger sample of colonoware we can use to compare with what was found in the Fort Rosalie excavations. A brief review of these assemblages follows, focusing mainly on eighteenth-century French colonial present-day Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.²

I.P. and Von Drehle

These early-eighteenth-century sites are located along St. Catherines Creek in Natchez, about 3.5 and 4.5 km south of Fort Rosalie, respectively. I.P. contains a portion of the Terre Blanche Concession, a large plantation operated by the French in the 1720s. Von Drehle, less than 2 km northwest of I.P., was a contemporary French or Indian cabin. Recent surface collections by Joseph V. Frank yielded a burnished red colonoware sherd from each location.

The example from I.P. is a beveled-rim plate, red-slipped on the interior bevel only. It is virtually indistinguishable in shape from its Fort Rosalie counterparts (Figure 13, top). The only unusual feature is that its red slip is confined to the rim.

The sherd from Von Drehle is a beveled-rim bowl, red-slipped on both sides, with two parallel, closely-spaced incisions on the exterior just below the lip (Figure 13, bottom). The shape and beveled rim are comparable to those found in the Fort Rosalie colonowares, and the incised design is perfectly consistent with those characteristic of Fatherland Incised, in this case *var. Natchez*. This is the only sherd found thus far in Natchez which combines a traditional incised design with a colonoware shape.

Trudeau

The Trudeau site in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana is located on the Mississippi River about 70 km south of Natchez as the crow flies. It was a Tunica Indian town in the mid 1700s. Its assemblage of indigenous whole pots comes mainly from burials. Among these vessels were two in particular that can be classified as colonoware.

The first vessel is a Winterville Incised, *var. Tunica* jar produced in a style that is reminiscent, but not a perfect copy, of a French kettle (Brain 1979:234). This vessel exhibits all of the distinctive characteristics of a Tunica vessel in terms of incised surface design, paste composition, and to an extent vessel form. It has a much more elongated neck however, and a pair of handles that are unlike the more traditional loop handles on Tunican pots. Most significantly, this vessel also has a piece of brass wire attached between the two handles that was likely meant to perform the same function as a wire bail handle would on a European-made kettle. This vessel form is unique, and while it certainly incorporates elements of European vessel characteristics, it is distinctly not a one-to-one copy.

The second colonoware vessel is a shell-tempered pitcher (Brain 1979:233). The composition of this piece is comparable to Mississippi Plain, *var. Pocahontas*, but is in a form that more closely resembles other European-made pitchers from this period. It has a large loop handle on one side that is distinctive to such vessels. Neither of the forms mentioned above in the Trudeau assemblage were present in the Fort Rosalie assemblage.

Cane River Plantations

A number of eighteenth-century French colonial sites have been investigated near Natchitoches, Louisiana, in the vicinity of Cane River, an old channel of the Red River (Morgan and MacDonald 2011; in press). The colonowares from sites, particularly the earlier ones, have been described only in a general way, which makes them difficult to compare in detail. Comparison is also hindered because the term colonoware is applied to all low-fired, hand-built earthenwares found at these sites, regardless of whether they mimic European forms.

That said, several interesting points of comparison do stand out. First, the assemblages of low-fired pottery at these sites seem very diverse in terms of decoration and temper (Morgan and MacDonald 2011:135-142; in press). Second, red slips are quite common in these assemblages (Morgan and MacDonald 2011:138). And third, it is clear that the potters who produced these assemblages, whether Indian or African, were largely different from those who made the colonowares at Fort Rosalie. Paste composition is the telling indicator: At Lambre Point, which dates to the early 1700s, less than 2% of the low-fired earthenwares were grog tempered, and almost 90% were tempered with shell (Morgan and MacDonald 2011:Table 8.1). Similarly, at the late eighteenth-century Coincoin Plantation, most of this pottery was tempered with various mixtures of bone, shell, and sand (Morgan and MacDonald 2011:Table 8.2). These numbers contrast markedly with those from Fort Rosalie, where the predominant temper was grog. All in all, much of this pottery probably came from nearby potters in the Caddo region (Morgan and MacDonald 2011:141-142), rather than the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Los Adaes

Another assemblage of interest for comparative purposes is that from Los Adaes, the site of an eighteenth-century Spanish settlement on the Red River near Natchitoches. Again, this assemblage has yet to be published in detail, but even the preliminary descriptions are intriguing. With respect to the Native pottery found at this site, Avery writes:

European influences are also present in some of the plainware forms — brimmed plate or bowl fragments occur in moderate amounts, one basal sherd from a small bowl or cup has a foot ring, and handled pitchers are present, but in small numbers [Avery 1995:172].

His illustrations show that the “brim” to which he refers is a marley, and that his “brimmed plate or bowl” is very similar in profile to our simple-rim plate (Avery 1995:Figure 6). He goes on to say that:

The brimmed bowls, found in significant amounts at both Los Adaes and the site of Fort St. Jean Baptiste in Natchitoches, are generally shell tempered and resemble French more than Spanish forms. ... Our working hypothesis is that the place of manufacture will be to the east or southeast of Los Adaes in the area of French occupation [Avery 1995:172].

Whatever that location may be, the fact that these vessels are shell tempered suggests that it was not as far east or southeast as Natchez.

Robleau

Beginning in the mid eighteenth century, a community of Indians and French grew up along Bayou Pierre, a tributary of the Red River upstream from the Cane Creek Plantations and Los Adaes (Girard et al. 2008). Excavations at one of the European settlements, the Robleau site, yielded a substantial collection of colonowares dating to the early nineteenth century. The vast majority of these vessels are unslipped and shell tempered. Forms include “brimmed bowls,” simple bowls, globular jars with vertical necks, and at least one pitcher (Girard et al. 2008:166). Interestingly, shell tempering in the Native wares is far more prevalent at Robleau than at a nearby contemporary Indian settlement, Timber Hill, where less than half of the seemingly local wares are made with shell, the rest being tempered with grog and bone (Girard et al. 2008:167). This suggests that Robleau’s inhabitants obtained their Indian pottery either from a different source, or from the subset of potters at Timber Hill who used shell temper. Either way, the Bayou Pierre colonowares differed markedly from our Natchez sample in their tempering, and differed from both Natchez and the Cane Creek Plantations in the rarity of red slips.

New Orleans

A number of excavations in New Orleans have produced Indian pottery that was used by the city’s eighteenth-century inhabitants, presumably Europeans (Dawdy 2000; Dawdy and Matthews 2010; Matthews 2001; Zych 2015). Although detailed descriptions of these assemblages are yet to be published, preliminary descriptions make certain patterns clear. First is

the overall rarity of forms that specifically mimic European wares (Dawdy and Matthews 2010:282-288). To the extent this pattern holds, it implies that colonowares, in the sense we use the term here, were not common. Second is the great diversity in temper and decoration among the Native pots, suggesting a multiplicity of sources (Matthews 2001:84). Third, these assemblages also include a number of plain, red-slipped sherds which bear a general resemblance to those from Fort Rosalie; indeed, some of the sherds illustrated from the mid-eighteenth-century contexts at St. Antoine's Garden would get lost among the burnished red colonowares from Fort Rosalie, with their bright-red slips, dark cores, plain lips, and marleys (Zych 2015: Figure 7). Ongoing studies of these sherds may ultimately reveal whether any were derived from Natchez (Lauren Zych, personal communication).

La Pointe-Krebs House

The La Pointe-Krebs House is located in Pascagoula, Mississippi, on the site of an early French concession founded around 1718 and subsequently occupied throughout the eighteenth century (Gums et al. 2011). Not surprisingly, excavations there in 1995 and 2010 yielded a good sample of colonowares. The variety of forms included "brimmed" bowls (with marleys), large milk pans, simple bowls with flat bottoms, a pitcher, a plate, a strainer, and a copy of a French cooking vessel called a *marmite*. These pots were mostly tempered with shell or sand, and many were red slipped (Gums et al. 2011:83-110).

The earliest features (ca. 1718-1732), roughly contemporary with the Fort Rosalie colonowares, included a pitcher, a strainer, some milk pans and bowls, apparently none of which were red slipped. Later features from the middle of the eighteenth century (ca. 1732-1763) contained brimmed bowls and a red-slipped *marmite*, as well as sherds from burnished, red-slipped bowls. Even later features (ca. 1763-1780) included milk pans, plates, and burnished bowls with red slips. The temper and construction methods suggest that most these wares were made by local Indians, initially Pascagoulas and later Choctaws, although the possibility exists that some of the later red-slipped wares may also have been made by African slaves (Gums et al. 2011:275-277).

Old Mobile

Old Mobile is the site of *La Mobile*, near present day Le Moyne, Alabama on the Mobile River. It was the capital of the French Louisiana colony from 1702 to 1711 before it moved to the location of present-day Mobile. Excavations at the site yielded 129 colonoware vessels produced by Apalachee Indian potters who had immigrated to Old Mobile from the missions in Spanish Florida (Cordell 2001, 2013; Vernon 1988). Within this assemblage were 52 plain, 34 zoned red-painted, and 30 red-slipped vessels (Cordell 2001:30).

Vessel forms vary within this relatively large sample and include footed pitchers or jugs with strap or loop handles, and even a possible candle holder (Cordell 2001:31). Open bowls do not appear to have been a part of the suite of colonoware forms made by Apalachee potters. Most importantly, the assemblage is dominated by what they call "brimmed" vessels (plates, dishes, and bowls with marleys) that account for 65% of the red filmed and 81% of the plain colonoware

vessel (Cordell 2001:31). What is distinctive about this assemblage of plates and bowls though is the preponderance of “feet” or foot rings at the bases. Among the red filmed vessels at Old Mobile, 48% have foot rings, 42% have a flat/footed base, and only 9% have a strictly flat base (Cordell 2001:34, Figure 12a-b).

Like the Natchez potters, the Apalachee also used red mineral paints on their colonoware vessels. Sometimes they applied this paint in zones that run vertically or horizontally across vessel bodies. A few of the zoned examples also have punctated decoration, a distinctly aboriginal decoration in the Southeast. Some of these vessels also have “flutes” or grooves running vertically that were impressed into the wet clay before firing. In other cases the colonoware vessels are red slipped across their bodies. Cordell (2002:49) notes that the zoned red painting occurs on the interiors and exteriors of brimmed and non-brimmed vessels.

In comparing the Old Mobile assemblage to that from Fort Rosalie, one sees both similarities and differences. Both assemblages have plates and bowls with marleys. However, at Old Mobile these vessels have footrings while the Fort Rosalie they do not. Both assemblages have red filming, but this decoration is applied in different ways: At Old Mobile the red slip is applied in zones on both the interior and the exterior, while at Fort Rosalie it is usually applied on the interiors only, and never in zones.

Dog River Plantation

Rivière aux Chiens, or Dog River, was the location of a French plantation during the 1720s in present-day Alabama (Waselkov and Gums 2000). Colonoware is present at the site, but it is rarer than at Old Mobile. Archaeologists at the site uncovered 12 vessels categorized as colonoware. Identifiable vessel forms include two open bowls with flat bases, two jars with handles, two brimmed bowls (also with flat bases), a handled cup, and a possible pitcher with a handle. Most are either sand or shell tempered; only one vessel, an open bowl, is grog tempered (Waselkov and Gums 2000:130). The researchers do not indicate which, if any of these vessels have red filming present or on what portion of the vessels such decoration may have been located. Ethnic affiliation has not been applied to the production of these colonowares, although traditional Native pottery of Creek, Mobilian, Apalachee, and Chato origin was found.

Discussion

What can clearly be inferred from the above descriptions of colonowares found elsewhere in eighteenth-century Louisiana is that there are certain compositional, morphological, and decorative styles that are distinctive to particular regions or sites. While there is overlap, particularly in terms of certain plate and bowl forms with marleys, there are other distinctive elements that may prove helpful for future archaeologists in determining the ethnicity of colonoware potters, or at the very least the geographical origin of certain colonoware forms or styles.

Sorting Red-Slipped Colonowares from Traditional Pottery

As mentioned previously, the burnished red colonowares at Fort Rosalie were all initially classified as Chicot Red, a type defined as red-slipped pottery with a grog-tempered paste equivalent to Addis Plain. This type, of course, was set up to include not colonowares, but rather the red-slipped examples of traditional pottery in the region. Up to this point, we have recognized colonowares purely on the basis of shape — using rim and vessel form to differentiate colonowares from traditional pottery. Yet the question remains, can red-slipped colonowares be differentiated from traditional forms among body sherds in which diagnostic attributes of vessel shape, such as rims and corner points, are absent? The answer is yes, at least in part, but to understand how we must first review the occurrence of Chicot Red in traditional Native assemblages.

Chicot Red first appears in Plaquemine assemblages after AD 1200, but remains generally quite rare until the historic Natchez phase (AD 1682-1730). In French colonial times, which correspond to this phase, red-slipped bowls and bottles become popular among Indian potters, and are usually decorated with the incised scrolls characteristic of Fatherland Incised. Such red-slipped vessels, when broken, yield sherds that fall into two categories: fragments that retain portions of the incised design are classified as Fatherland Incised, *var. Snyders Bluff*, while those that lack incising fall into Chicot Red, either *var. Fairchild* or *var. Grand Village*, depending on the texture of the paste.

The key to distinguishing colonowares from traditional forms among body sherds lies in noting where the red slip is applied. Based on the assemblage at Fort Rosalie, most red-slipped colonowares are plates, and most such plates are slipped on the interior only. On the other hand, most red-slipped traditional vessels are either bowls or bottles. Bowls are usually slipped on both sides, while bottles are slipped on the exterior only. Thus, sherds slipped on the interior only are almost certainly colonowares, while sherds slipped on the exterior only or both sides are more likely to be traditional forms.

One way to quantify these differences is look at the placement of red slips on two samples of sherds whose status (colonoware versus traditional pottery) can be determined with independent criteria: (1) colonoware sherds that can be identified based on attributes of shape alone, and (2) traditional sherds that bear incised three-line scrolls, i.e., that fall into Fatherland Incised, *var. Snyders Bluff*. To obtain these data we examined every sherd cataloged as either Chicot Red or *Snyders Bluff* in the portion of the Fort Rosalie assemblage to which we had access. We recorded where the red slip was placed (interior or exterior) and noted the presence of shape attributes (such as corner points and rim forms) diagnostic of colonowares. Both rim and body sherds were included in this sample.

Table 3 shows the results. More than 80% of the colonoware sherds were red slipped on the interior only, while none of the traditional vessels were slipped in this way. Thus, a Chicot Red sherd with a burnished, red-filmed interior and a plain exterior can be reliably sorted as colonoware, particularly if its curvature is consistent with that of a plate or bowl. Sherds filmed on the exterior only were almost always bottles, which are more than twice as common among traditional wares than colonowares (4.7% vs. 1.8%). And sherds slipped on both sides are five times more common among traditional wares than colonowares (95.3% vs. 17.9%).

Another way to describe these results is that over 80% of the burnished red colonowares can be reliably identified even among body sherds with no diagnostic attributes of shape, just by looking at the placement of the slip. This strikes us as a good reason to define a new ceramic variety to encompass these burnished redwares, which we call Chicot Red, *var. Rosalie*. A formal definition is presented in the Appendix.

Conclusions

In sum, the colonowares at Fort Rosalie comprise an assemblage of hand-built, unglazed vessels that differ in shape from traditional Native pots and appear to have been made specifically for the French colonists. They fall into two general categories: burnished red wares and unburnished coarse wares. The former category includes red-slipped plates, bowls, and small bottles that generally emulate European dinner wares and apothecary jars. The latter consists of large bottles, some decorated with incising, that may have been used for storing water or bear oil. Our examination of these vessels has led us to three general conclusions.

The first deals with the question of the potters' ethnicity. Although similar wares in other regions may have been made by African or even European potters, there can be little doubt that the potters here were American Indians. The modes of construction, decoration, and firing fit squarely within the local Native tradition. And the paste recipes used — with either grog or shell used as temper — are identical to those typically found at contemporary Indian sites nearby. One could reasonably debate whether the coarse shell-tempered bottles were produced by the Natchez, most of whose pottery was grog tempered, or by closely allied Mississippian groups such as the Tioux. Either way, the producers were local and Indian.

Second, the burnished red wares from Fort Rosalie exhibit a striking uniformity in shape, thickness, paste composition, and firing. The most common vessel is a shallow plate with either a marley or beveled rim, a red-slipped interior, a diameter of 20-25 cm, and a wall thickness of about 6 mm. In cross section, the sherds usually exhibit a reduced core that contrasts sharply with an oxidized surface, all suggestive of a distinctive mode of firing in which the vessels are exposed to air and cool quickly at the end. This relative uniformity, even if not perfect, suggests that the colonowares in our sample were made by relatively few potters.

Third, the Fort Rosalie colonowares are not identical to those found elsewhere in French Louisiana. Although there are broad similarities in the use of red slips for decoration and in the presence of “brimmed” vessels that mimic European plates, there are also significant differences in the range of vessels forms, in secondary shape features (such as rim modes and foot rings), and especially in paste recipes. For example, the dominance of a grog-tempered paste comparable to Addis Plain is found neither on Red River to the west or on the Gulf Coast to the east. In each case, the paste recipes used in the colonowares match those found in the local Native assemblages, which suggests that the French colonists in each area relied mainly on the local indigenous potters and did not import these wares from a distance.

Archaeologists once favored the term “acculturation” to describe the process by which colonowares arose in areas where Europeans came in contact with indigenous people (e.g., Rice 1987:457). This term implies the abandoning of indigenous cultural expressions in favor of

others. This is however unsatisfactory for explaining the complex interaction and strategies indigenous persons followed as they navigated colonial institutions (Silliman 2009). Instead, it is more appropriate to think about objects like hybrid ceramic forms, such as the colonowares from the Fort Rosalie excavations, as expressing both continuity with indigenous traditions and history while making accommodations to appeal to newly introduced ideas or market demands (see Morgan and MacDonald 2011). Through this light, Native producers are not seen as “abandoning” their cultural expressions in favor of those, presumably, “superior” European expressions or materials. Instead, hybridization allows space for Native agency, and their ability to make choices and follow strategies that mitigate the consequences of European expansion. As Cobb and DePratter write (2012:455), “At a local scale, colonoware is a profound testament to the creative agency of peoples striving to maintain a sense of self and community. ... At a broader scope, the widespread occurrence of similar — if not identical — colonoware traditions is the result of the disruptive effects of colonialism.” Colonoware vessels exhibit the materialized evidence of negotiations Native and Europeans made as they dealt with the forces of colonialism at multiple scales.

The results of our analysis indicate that the French used colonoware vessels on a daily basis at Fort Rosalie along with other Native-made vessels in more traditional forms. Given the frequencies in which these aboriginal-made vessels occur in the area around the barracks, the soldiers were likely very comfortable eating from the vessels, as they were just as comfortable incorporating wild foods into their diet (see Dawdy 2010; Hardy 2012). In essence, the colonoware embodies these negotiations as well. On the frontier of the colony, French soldiers ate European meals made with local wild foods off copies of French plates made by their Indian neighbors. Neither the meal nor the plate made them more or less French, but rather embodied their participation in an increasing globalized world.

Notes

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¹ See *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Anciennes unités de mesure françaises,” http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anciennes_unités_de_mesure_françaises#Unités_de_volume_et_de_capacité, accessed May 30, 2016.

² Melcher (2011) provides a useful review of eighteenth-century colonowares found at Spanish sites in neighboring portions of Florida.

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Appendix

Here we present a new variety of the type Chicot Red, defined to encompass the burnished red colonowares from Fort Rosalie and environs. The definition loosely follows the format established by Phillips (1970) and Williams and Brain (1983).

Chicot Red, *var. Rosalie*

Sample. 29 rim sherds, 1 whole vessel.

Description. New variety.

Sorting Criteria. Burnished, red-slipped pottery in forms that mimic European wares, with a paste equivalent to Addis Plain, *var. Addis* or *St. Catherine*. In appropriate contexts, body sherds with a red slip on the interior only can be sorted into this variety with reasonable confidence. Beveled rims are also a reliable marker.

Additional Characteristics. Vessel forms thus far identified include simple-rim plates with a marley, beveled-rim plates, beveled-rim bowls, small bottles, and small jars. In cross section, sherds often show a black or dark-gray core beneath the oxidized surface.

Distribution. Currently this variety has been identified only in the Natchez region, at Fort Rosalie and nearby sites. It would not be surprising to see it at French colonial sites elsewhere in Mississippi and Louisiana dating to the 1720s.

Published Illustrations. None.

Chronological Position. The sample from Fort Rosalie dates between 1716 and 1729. Our strong suspicion is that this variety was mainly produced and used in the 1720s.

References. This paper.

[Figure Captions]

Figure 1. Photomosaic profile of excavations along N 500, between E 501 and E 507, looking north. Note the burned and collapsed *bousillage* between E 501 and E 503.

Figure 2. Simple-rim plates, photographs and profiles of large sherds. Note the distinct corner point separating each plate's marley from its well. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

Figure 3. Simple-rim plates, photographs and profiles of smaller sherds. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

Figure 4. Simple-rim plates, vessel profile reconstructions. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

Figure 5. Beveled-rim plates, photographs and profiles. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

Figure 6. Beveled-rim bowls (left and center) and small jar (right), photographs and profiles. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1. Key: E, exterior; I, interior.)

Figure 7. Small bottle, photograph and profile. (Field specimen number 112.57; see Table 2.)

Figure 8. Large bottles, rim photographs. The upper two are shell tempered, and the bottom one is grog tempered. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)

Figure 9. Large bottles, rim photographs. These two grog-tempered sherds may be from the same vessel. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)

Figure 10. Large bottles, rim profiles. The upper two are shell tempered, and the bottom one is grog tempered. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)

Figure 11. Reconstructed large bottle, photograph and profile. (Field specimen number 44.34; see Table 2.)

Figure 12. Shell-tempered handle, photographs. (Field-specimen number corresponds to that in Table 2. Key: E, exterior; I, interior; S, side.)

Figure 13. Colonoware sherds from I.P. (top) and Von Drehle (bottom), Adams County, Mississippi. (Courtesy of Joseph V. Frank. Key: E, exterior; I, interior.)

Table 1. Burnished Red Colonoware Rims from Fort Rosalie

Vessel Shape:	NATC	Original	Rim	Rim	Wall	Red Slip	
	Catalog		Diameter	Proportion	Thickness	Interior	Exterior
FS Number	Number	Type, Variety	(cm)	(%)	(mm)		
Simple-rim plate:							
13.14	26672	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	yes
102.28	29117	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	yes
103.52	29175	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	yes
106.10	29212	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	5	yes	no
108.8	29251	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	7	yes	yes
131.14	30026	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	24	4	5	yes	no
133.34	30096	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	5	yes	no
133.63[a]	30125	Chicot Red, <i>Grand Village</i>	23	13	5	yes	no
133.63[b]	30125	Chicot Red, <i>Grand Village</i>	--	< 3	5	yes	no
134.43[a]	30313	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	28	12	7	yes	no
134.43[b]	30313	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	24	6	5	yes	no
134.43[c]	30313	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	5	yes	no
143.8[a]	30552	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	22	14	5	yes	no
143.8[b]	30552	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	23	5	5	yes	no
Beveled-rim plate:							
94.28	28755	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	no
95.16[a]	28777	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	no
110.51	29381	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	22	4	7	yes	no
113.51[a]	29515	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	25	3	6	yes	no
113.51[b]	29515	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	20	3	6	yes	no
113.51[c]	29515	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	7	yes	no
114.17	29580	Chicot Red, <i>Grand Village</i>	--	< 3	5	yes	yes
114.18[a]	29581	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	no
114.18[b]	29581	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	no
122.14	29809	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	no
124.2	29871	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	7	yes	no
Beveled-rim bowl:							
42.15	27383	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	yes
47.13	27515	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	15	5	7	yes	no
Small jar:							
95.16[b]	28777	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	--	< 3	6	yes	yes?
Small bottle:							
112.57	29461	Chicot Red, <i>Fairchild</i>	4	100	6	yes	no

Table 2. Unburnished Coarse Colonoware Rims and Handle from Fort Rosalie

Vessel Shape:	NATC	Original	Rim	Rim	Wall	Red Slip	
	Catalog		Diameter	Proportion	Thickness		
	FS Number		Number	Type, Variety	(cm)	(%)	(mm)
Large bottle:							
44.34	27439	Addis Plain, <i>Addis</i>	10	100	8	no	no
80.1	28228	Mississippi Plain, <i>unspecified</i>	9	100	9	no	no
106.11	29213	Addis Plain, <i>Addis</i>	15	12	6	no	no
106.12	29214	Winterville Inc., <i>Winterville</i>	9	100	9	no	no
106.14	29216	Addis Plain, <i>Addis</i>	15	11	6	no	no
Handle:							
150.20	31093	Addis Plain, <i>Holly Bluff</i>	--	--	10	no	no

Table 3. Placement of Red Slip on Colonoware versus Traditional Forms

Placement of Red Slip	Chicot Red with Colonoware Shapes		Fatherland Incised, <i>var. Snyders Bluff</i>	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
Interior only	45	80.4	0	0.0
Exterior only	1	1.8	7	4.7
Both sides	10	17.9	143	95.3
Total	56	100	150	100

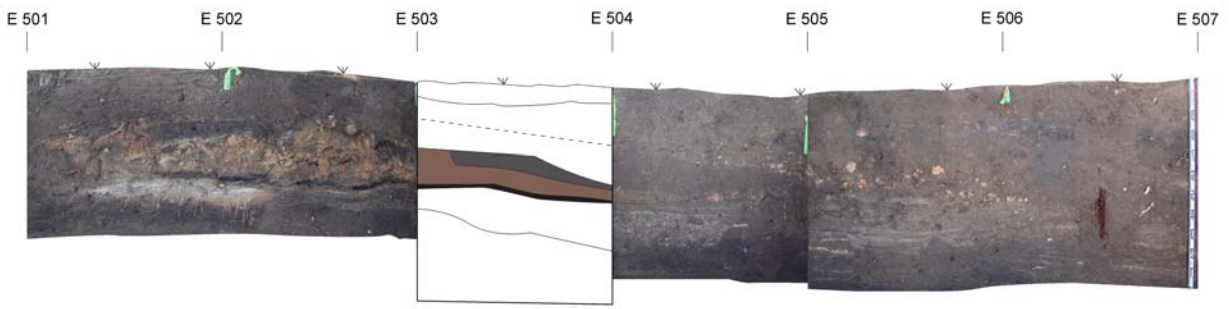


Figure 1. Photomosaic profile of excavations along N 500, between E 501 and E 507, looking north. Note the burned and collapsed *bousillage* between E 501 and E 503.

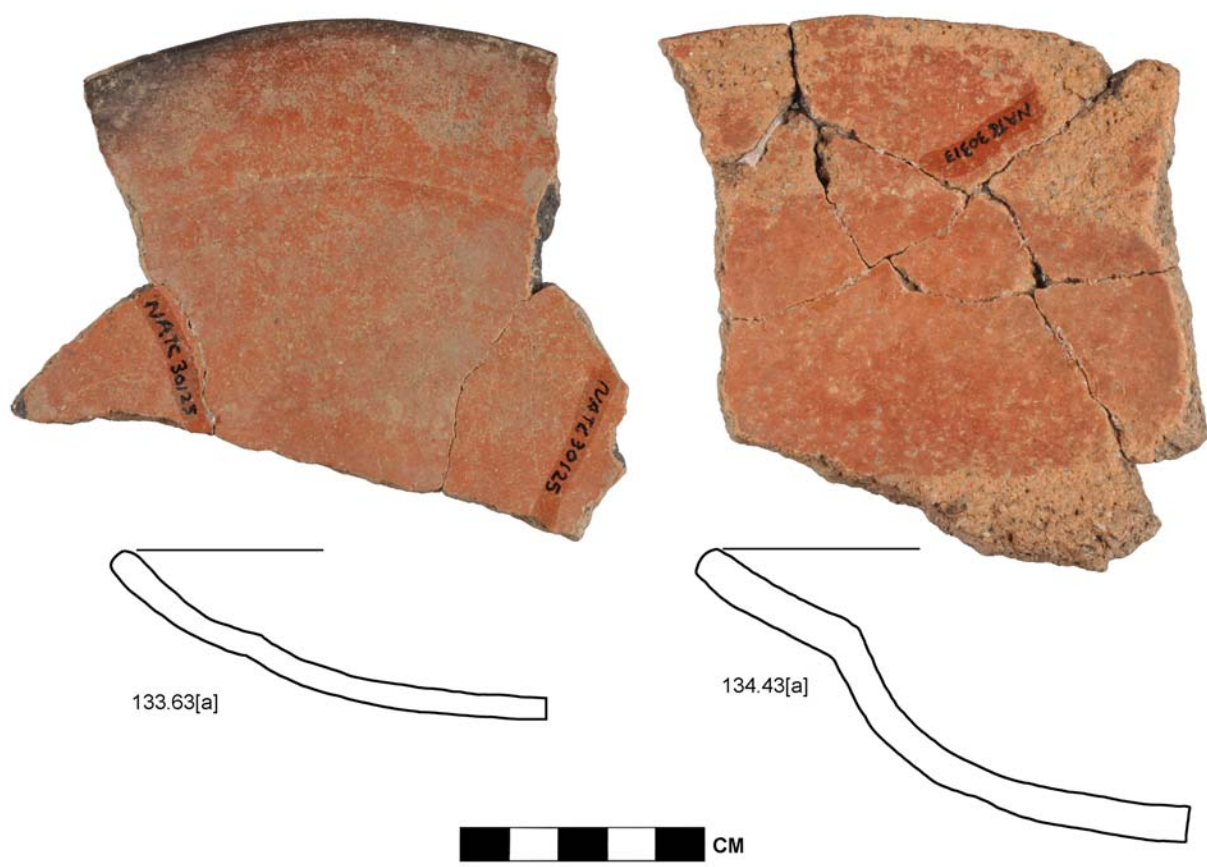


Figure 2. Simple-rim plates, photographs and profiles of large sherds. Note the distinct corner point separating each plate's marley from its well. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

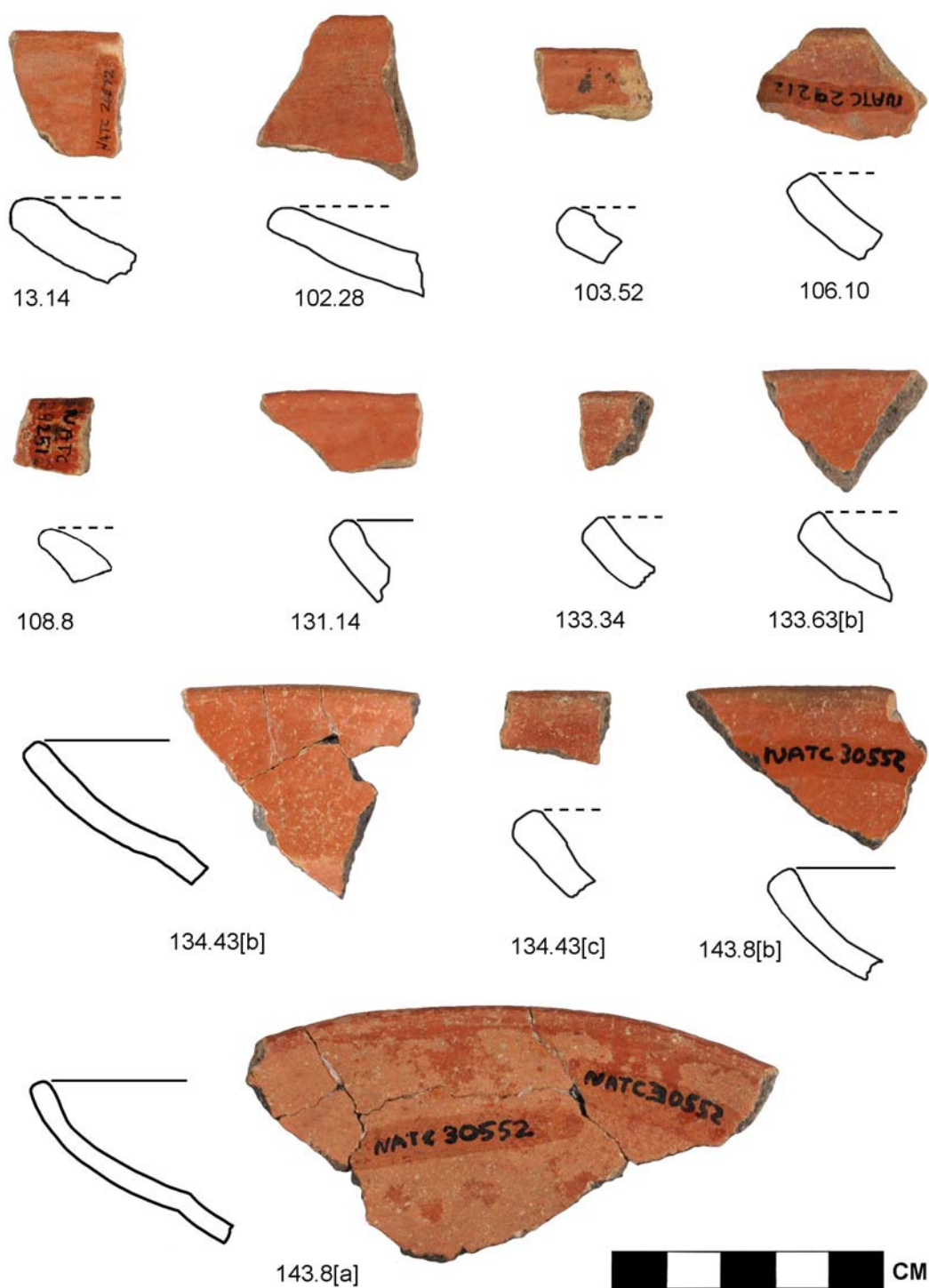


Figure 3. Simple-rim plates, photographs and profiles of smaller sherds. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

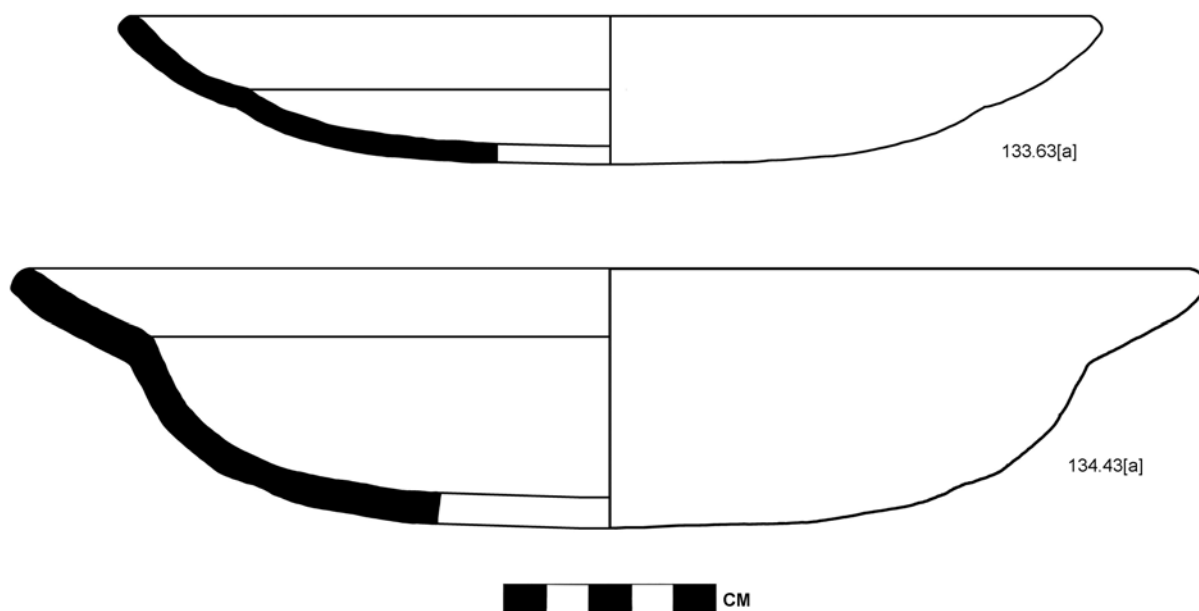


Figure 4. Simple-rim plates, vessel profile reconstructions. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)

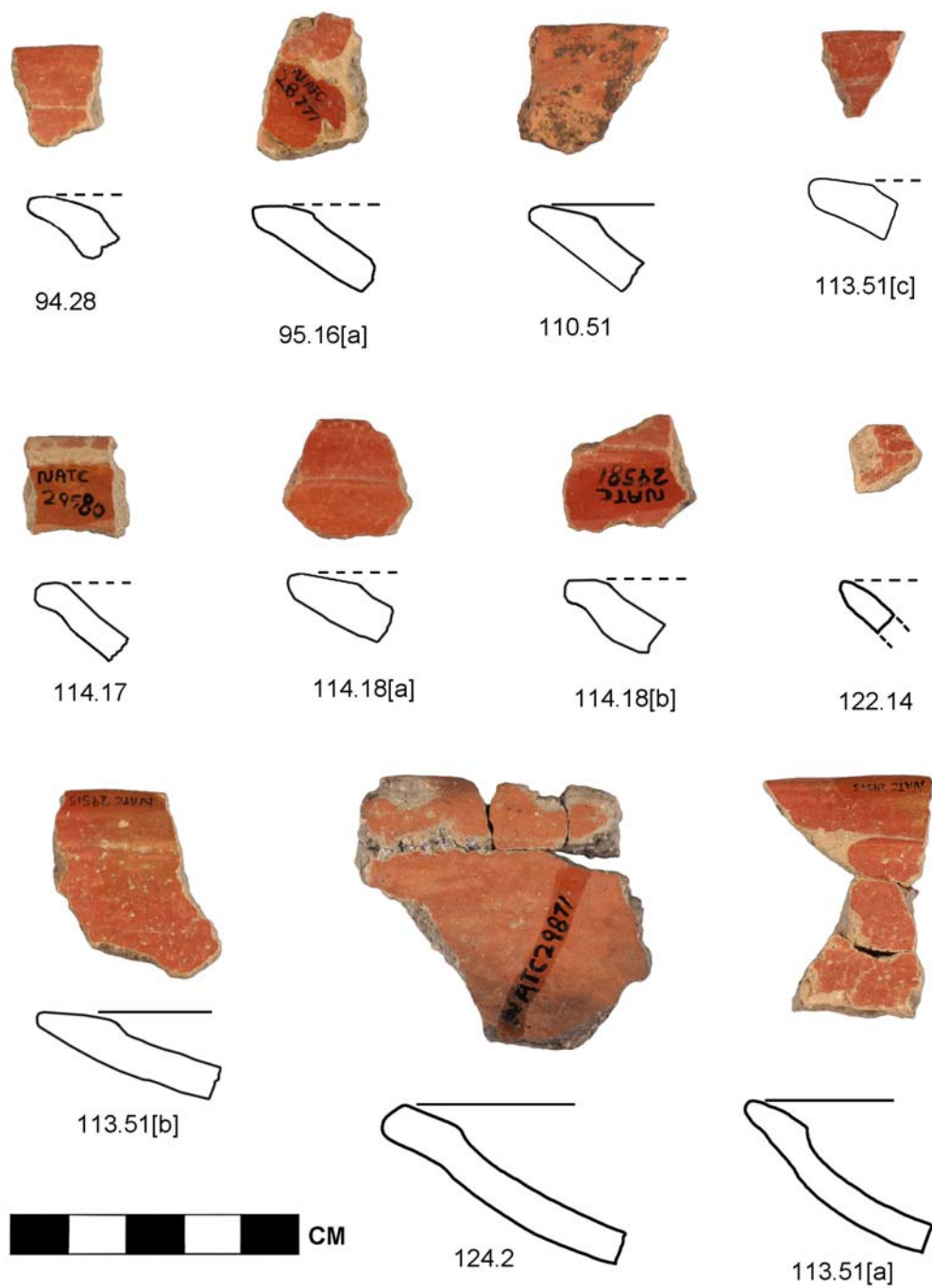


Figure 5. Beveled-rim plates, photographs and profiles. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1.)



Figure 6. Beveled-rim bowls (left and center) and small jar (right), photographs and profiles. (Dotted line at lip means the orientation is approximate. Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 1. Key: E, exterior; I, interior.)



Figure 7. Small bottle, photograph and profile. (Field specimen number 112.57; see Table 2.)



Figure 8. Large bottles, rim photographs. The upper two are shell tempered, and the bottom one is grog tempered. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)



Figure 9. Large bottles, rim photographs. These two grog-tempered sherds may be from the same vessel. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)

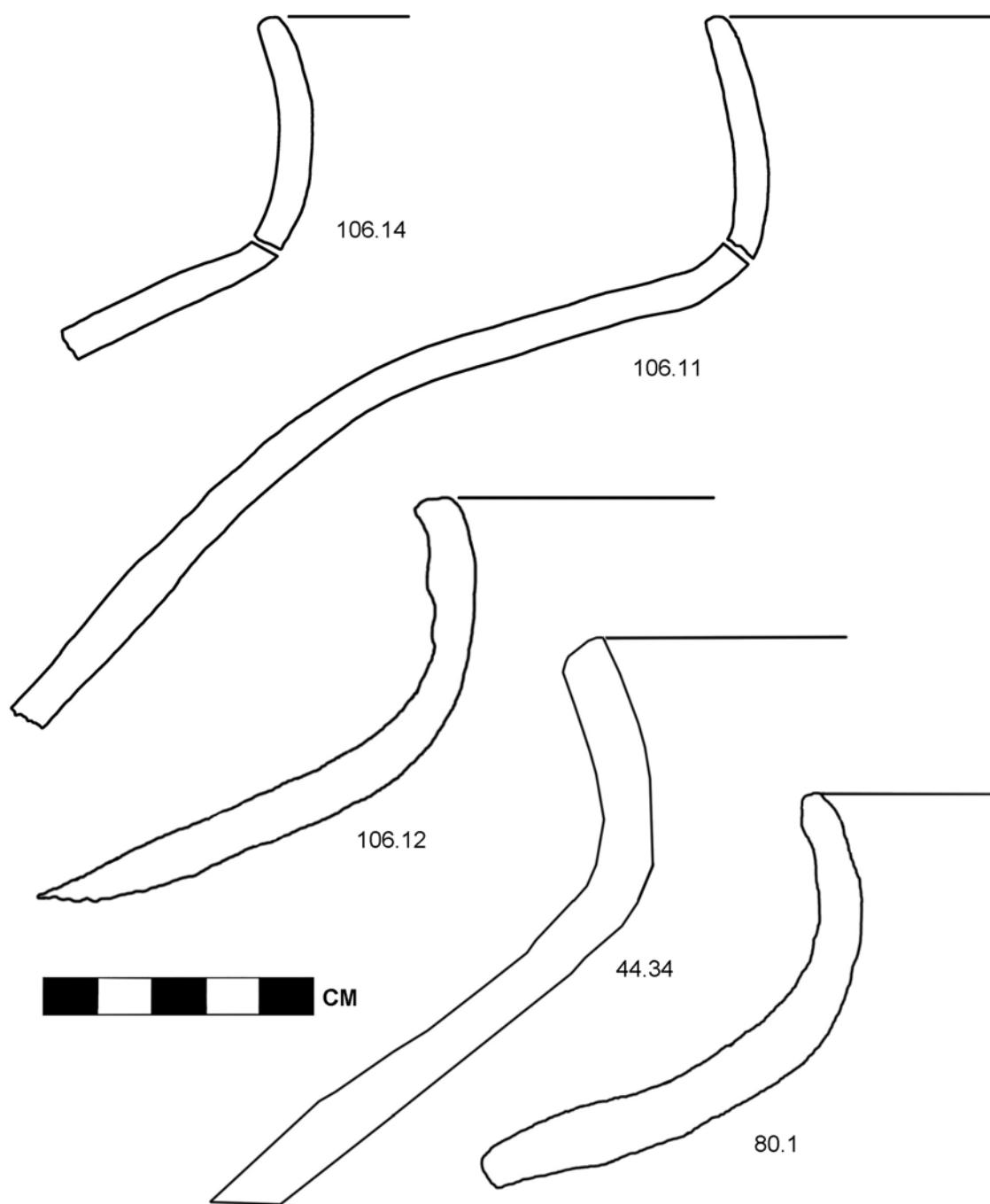


Figure 10. Large bottles, rim profiles. The upper two are shell tempered, and the bottom one is grog tempered. (Field-specimen numbers correspond to those in Table 2.)



Figure 11. Reconstructed large bottle, photograph and profile. (Field specimen number 44.34; see Table 2.)



Figure 12. Shell-tempered handle, photographs. (Field-specimen number corresponds to that in Table 2. Key: E, exterior; I, interior; S, side.)



Figure 13. Colonoware sherds from I.P. (top) and Von Drehle (bottom), Adams County, Mississippi. (Courtesy of Joseph V. Frank. Key: E, exterior; I, interior.)