

POTTERY ANALYSIS

SOUTH CANYON SITE (AZ T: 14: 172 (ASM))

On March 1, 2012 Pierpoint team members David Doyel and Roy and Ella Pierpoint analyzed pottery from one of the rock ring structures that had been excavated decades ago from the South Canyon Site, AZ T: 14: 172 (ASM).

Around 300 sherds were examined with the following provisional findings: parts of four vessels, sherds from a scoop; rim sherds of at least six other jars and one bowl of varying sizes; and four sherds of Hohokam Buff ware were identified. None of the vessels were complete but sufficient evidence was present to estimate the sizes of some of the vessels. These notes summarize our preliminary analysis. More information will be added as it becomes available

Vessel #1: Red-slipped Bowl

This vessel is a red ware bowl with an estimated diameter of 17 cm. The thickness of the vessel from the flat rim at the top was 5 mm, expanding to 8 mm at the base. The height of the partial vessel was 10.5 cm and the whole vessel was probably around 15 cm. Medium size temper grains were up to 1 mm in size. The vessel appears to have a thin red slip on both the exterior and interior surfaces. The vessel was heavily tempered with white and opaque quartz that was not visible on the vessel surface. The vessel was stone polished and exhibited faint vertical striations and faint mica specks on the opaque exterior. The exterior of the pot showed evidence of being burned. Both the inside and outside color were a dark, terracotta orange. The vessel appeared to be within the O'odham pottery tradition.

Vessel #2: Shouldered Jar

The second vessel is a jar with a shoulder located near the base of the vessel where it was estimated to be 35 cm in diameter. The vessel height was estimated to be 17.5 cm, and the rim diameter was about 10 cm at the orifice. The paste appears to be much different than those used by the Hohokam for their pottery. The outside of the vessel looked pinkish-buff to tan with blackish fire clouds and a flat finish although small patches of light polish were observed. The rim was missing completely and the pieces near the rim were badly eroded, but the rim shoulder appeared to curve up about 1.5 cm to the rim. The vessel walls are relatively thin, and were 4 mm thick at the rim but 7 mm thick at the mid-point of the vessel wall. The paste on the interior was pink, grading into purple in the center, and then gray at the outer edges; another section was uniformly pink in color. Abundant temper was present including black inclusions and opaque and clear quartz in a ratio of about 50 to 50%. The temper grains in the fine paste measured 1 mm maximum. Although the vessel shape is clearly reminiscent of Hohokam forms, the finishing technique and especially the paste suggest that this jar is of Patayan in origin.

Vessel #3: Large Jar (Partial)

Pottery Analysis

About ten sherds were present that formed over half of the orifice and part of the shoulder of the upper part of a large globular jar estimated to be about 30 cm high. The rim orifice was estimated to be 11 cm. The rim lip was rounded, sloping down 2.5 cm to the shoulder. The color was tan grading to a light brown with black to gray with large fire clouds on the exterior surface. Polishing striations likely made with a stone tool were visible on the rim both inside and outside. Vessel wall thickness at the rim measured 7 mm varying to 5 mm at the upper shoulder. The paste was pinkish-buff to gray on the exterior, and the temper consisted of black and white specks and quartz with a ratio of 40% (black) volcanic and 60% other elements. The interior was unpolished and uniformly brown in color. The vessel appeared to be within the O'odham pottery tradition.

Vessel #4: Seed jar (Partial)

This vessel represents the fragments of a direct-rim jar commonly known as a seed jar. The vessel was estimated to be 20 cm in diameter at its rim and 20 cm high. The largest sherd measured 15 cm long. The core was mostly black and light brown on the edges. The paste was dense but the temper particles were very fine, including black and gray temper elements along with quartz particles. Treatment around the rim consisted of lines parallel to the rim on the outside and inside that looked like brush marks. The outside surface was fire clouded and blackened along the rim; the lower section was brownish-orange. Hand impressions are visible on the inside pieces. Cultural identification is uncertain, but it may be O'odham.

Scoop fragment:

Three rim sherds fit together to form part of the rim of an elongated scoop similar in form to those commonly found in Hohokam sites. A fourth large thick sherd was found to be an associated body sherd. The rim tapers to a point at the top out to 5 mm thick. It is fire-scarred and gray to brown in color. It is temper rich in quartz and traces of mica. Temper thickness measured up to 2 mm in size, but was mostly smaller. It most resembles Hohokam forms.

Miscellaneous Rim Shards:

- Hohokam Buff ware: Two rim sherds of a Hohokam buff ware flare-rim bowl were found as were other two body sherds.
- Small bowl: One small bowl rim sherd was present. It was a straight rim about 3 cm long and 5 mm thick with brush marks
- Three jar rims: Eight sherds making up three jar rims were located; these ranged from 8-12 cm in size. One rim indicated a high neck of 2 cm with a straight rim and flat top.
- Two other jar rims: These were from different pots. One was a short, re-curved rim with quartz temper and the other one had brush marks around the rim. Both were about 5 cm wide around the rim.

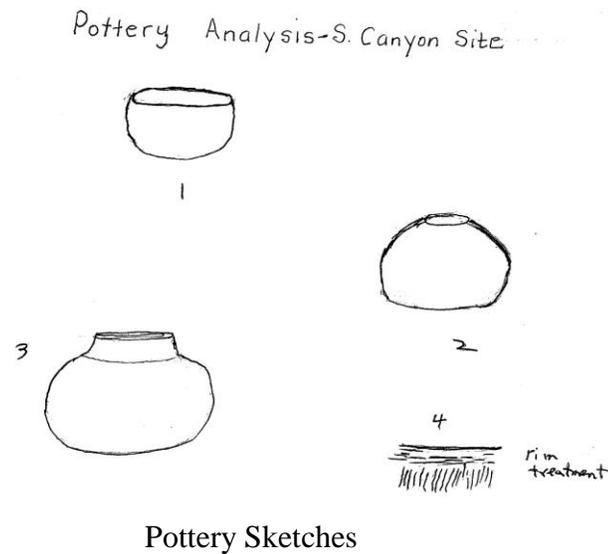
Total Sherd Count:

Pottery Analysis

About 120 additional sherds were present for which no vessel type could be identified, but it was determined that they were from multiple vessels. There were 33 shards of gray pottery for a vessel type unknown. The total number of sherds examined was around 300.

Observation:

Roy and Ella think that the larger Pierpoint site has been looted and collected for decades. Just imagine if we had found materials like these from the south canyon site at the main site! Otherwise there is the interpretation that the site was not occupied intensively as there seems to be so little material culture present. This gives us lots to think about!



Rim Sherds



Scoop Sherds

Pottery Analysis

Vessels

