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Karissa Annis is pursuing her Master's degree in Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, in addition to a graduate certificate in museum studies. She received her BA in Classics and Anthropology from the University of Alabama in 2018. Her research interests include European archaeology, mortuary archaeology, historic cemeteries, and media studies. She is currently writing her thesis, which is focused on the intersection of past and present found in archaeological themes in popular culture.

Samantha A. Bomkamp finished her MS in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee in May 2020 with certificates in Museum Studies and Nonprofit Management. She has done archaeology and museum work in the Midwest and Southwest. Her thesis research and interests are focused in the Southwest region, especially in museum collections management. She currently works at the Blackwater Draw Museum at Eastern New Mexico University.

Katrina N Schmitz received her Master of Science in Anthropology and a Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2020. Her master's thesis was an analysis of the Milwaukee Public Museum's Hopewell site collection from Ross County, Ohio. She is pursuing a career in the museum field .

Emily R. Stanton is an Anthropology PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. She is currently writing her dissertation on gendered grave goods and elite burials in Iron Age Central Europe. Emily is also involved in an experimental archaeology project focused on re-creating a set of Iron Age grave goods. More about this project can be found here: https://experiarchaeuwm.wixsite.com/deathmetal.

Casas Grandes Ceramics at the Milwaukee Public Museum

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Abstract: Museums across the world hold unprovenienced artifacts with valuable data left unresearched because of their lack of context. The Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) holds one such collection of Casas Grandes vessels. The intent of this paper is to present an example of how a museum collection can be contextualized in order to be compared to others of its kind and contribute to the knowledge of a prehistoric culture. Using a coding scheme, this research will present data for: 1) type and time period for each of the Casas Grandes vessels and 2) iconography analysis on the polychromes. With Northwest Mexico being under-researched compared to the American Southwest or Mesoamerica, utilization of these museum collections is more important than ever.

Key Words: ceramic analysis, Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico, iconography, typology, museum, collections.

Introduction

The Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) currently houses 80 ceramic vessels with labeled origins of "Casas Grandes, Mexico", but site-specific context is absent making this collection unprovenienced. The majority of these objects were donated in 1977 in a single accession. Since then, little research has been conducted on the collection and no background information can be gleaned. Research on this collection began in spring 2018 as part of my graduate thesis. Drawing upon published studies of Casas Grandes pottery, a detailed coding scheme was developed in order to record formal and stylistic data that could be used to classify the vessels typologically and chronologically. Iconographic analysis was also conducted in a separate coding scheme to determine the stylistic patterning represented in this particular collection, thus allowing it to be compared to similar collections at other institutions in the United States and Mexico, especially those with provenience information. Through the utilization of a previously unresearched collection, this paper demonstrates the usefulness of unprovenienced museum collections as well as artifacts from Northwest Mexico. This research represents a portion of the analysis presented in my master's thesis (Bomkamp 2020).

Casas Grandes Region

The Casas Grandes region is located primarily within the modern Mexican state of Chihuahua, but also extends into Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas (Figure 1). The boundaries of this culture have not yet been exactly defined, and debate continues over the nature and extent of Casas Grandes cultural influence. Due to their location, people in the Casas Grandes region had extensive trade relationships with groups in the American Southwest to the north, as well as Mesoamerican societies to the south. The archaeological chronology for the Casas Grandes region spans from about AD 700 to 1475, and the Casas Grandes cultural tradition is famous for its beautiful polychrome pottery (Minnis and Whalen 2015).

Compared to the intensively studied Southwestern cultures north of the United States-Mexico border, the Casas Grandes region has received less attention from archaeologists. This stands with exception to the primary center of the Casas Grandes world, Paquimé. This site was extensively excavated during the Joint Casas Grandes Expedition (JCGE), an expedition conducted with the Institute Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) and the Amerind Foundation (Dragoon, AZ) by Charles Di Peso and colleagues from 1958 to 1961. It was the largest archaeological excavation ever undertaken in Chihuahua and resulted in eight volumes covering the intensive analysis of artifacts found at the site. It remains the largest internationally collaborative archaeological project in the United States-Mexico borderlands (Minnis and Whalen 2015, 5). Today, Paquimé is a UNESCO world heritage site and is extremely important in our understanding of the region. Much more recently, archaeologists have done excavations on smaller Casas Grandes sites throughout the region, particularly Paul Minnis and Michael Whalen (2009), as the cultural area extends much farther north and south from the primary center and includes a variety of cliff dwelling sites (e.g. Madera municipality). Archaeologists in Mexico have also published research on Casas Grandes sites. Eduardo Gamboa Carrera, the director of the Museo de las Culturas Norte at Paquimé, is conducting ongoing excavations and conservation treatments at the site. He and other INAH archaeologists in the area are tasked with maintaining smaller cliff dwelling sites all over the region (Eduardo Gamboa Carrera, personal communication, 2019).

Casas Grandes Ceramic Studies

Because the Casas Grandes region is well known for the polychrome pottery produced there, ceramic studies have constituted much of the research conducted in the area. Early studies focused on the relationship between Casas Grandes and sites in the U.S. Southwest and Mesoamerica (e.g. Brand 1935;

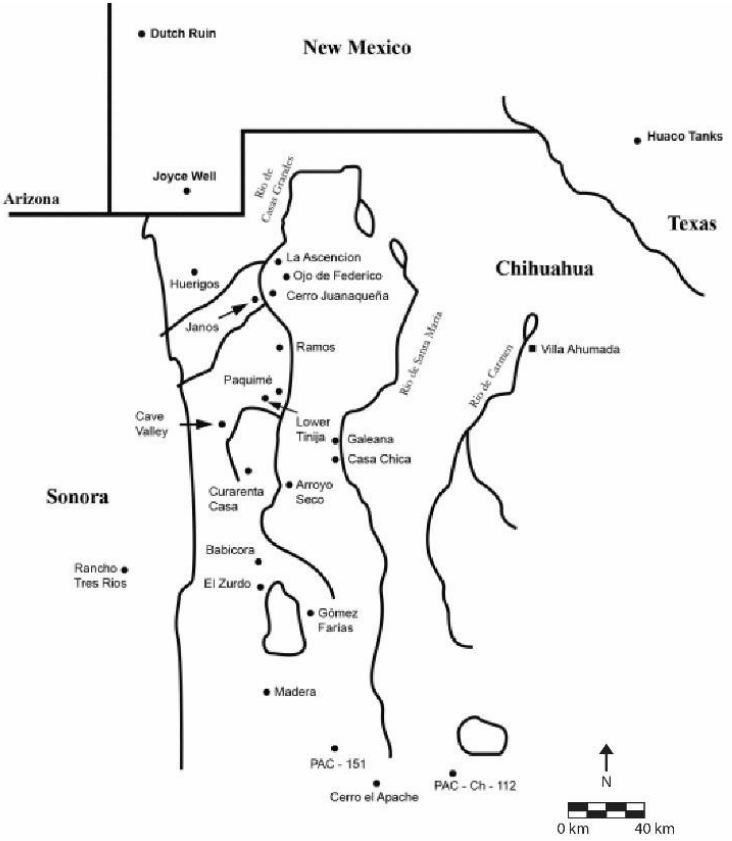

Figure 1: Map of the Casas Grandes region (adapted from VanPool 2003b, 2).

Carey 1931, Kidder 1916; Lumholtz 1902; Sayles 1936). Kidder (1916) was one of the first archaeologists to classify Chihuahuan (Casas Grandes) wares, dividing them into four categories: Rough dark ware, Polished blackware, Redware, and Painted ware (253). Later archaeologists built heavily on Kidder's typology. Unfortunately, not all Casas Grandes collections have associated provenience information or authenticity. For example, the collection that Kidder studied was "acquired by purchase in lots from local diggers and are accompanied with few or no data" (Kidder 1916, 253). The MPM collection likewise lacks specific provenience information.

Recent investigations undertaken in the area are quite varied, especially those focused on ceramics. Much of this research has also involved iconographic analysis. Iconography can provide windows into the ideology of its creators, and patterns or similarities can suggest relationships between and

within cultures. Although iconographic representations can differ considerably from culture to culture, decorated pottery is a common medium that tends to preserve well in the archaeological record.

Many pre-Hispanic cultures in the American Southwest produced pottery with painted designs and motifs. The elaborately painted ceramics of the Mimbres culture are perhaps the most famous. While representational painting mainly occurs on bowls, these images include a wide range of figures from humans to animals to mythical figures. Through a combination of ethnographic research and ceramic analysis, painted figures on Mimbres ceramics can be linked to origin stories and myths (Cordell and McBrinn 2012, 218-19). Although there are no clear living descendants of pre-Hispanic Casas Grandes society, inferences about ideology and other facets of Casas Grandes culture can be made based on iconographic representations on pottery.

Valuing Museum Collections

> Old collections are frequently undervalued as a basic research resource. Because they lack the documentation and collection controls that are standard today, the research value of old collections is often dismissed. But research potential depends on the integrity of a collection, which is the product of any systematic feature of observation and collection, no matter how primitive…. Because the systematic features of a collection may not be obvious, it is only possible to determine potential from a detailed examination of each case. (Brown 1981, 65)

The largest collection of archaeologically recovered Casas Grandes material culture is curated at the Museo de las Culturas del Norte, an INAH museum located at the site of Paquimé. Because most sites in the Casas Grandes region remain unexcavated, many artifacts that exist or can be researched from the region have been donated to other museums by collectors and do not have associated provenience information. However, one should not overlook such collections and the potential contributions they can make to our understanding of Casas Grandes culture. Much of what we know about the culture has come from the analysis of material remains. Existing collections from the Casas Grandes area can be valuable sources of information, which is one of the main reasons I chose to undertake research on the collection at the MPM; from my own findings, few collections of this type exist in the midwestern United States.

The MPM Casas Grandes Collection

The majority (67 out of 80) of the Casas Grandes ceramic vessels at the MPM were donated in 1977 by a single donor. The only recorded information associated with the items simply states from "Casas Grandes" or "Casas Grandes, Mexico"; no specific site information was given. My research has helped to provide basic contextual information about the collection that was previously lacking (i.e. type and time period).

The Casas Grandes collection at the MPM includes jars (n=67), bowls (n=12), and eccentric vessels (n=1) representing a variety of types and wares, including plain, textured, and painted styles (Figure 2). I identified 15 different type classifications in the collection, including a handful of variants (Table 1). The majority (80%) are polychromes—and 42.5% of the collection is of a single type, Ramos Polychrome. Often referred to as the Casas Grandes Polychrome or Paquimé style, Ramos Polychrome exhibits fine line work and generally more decorative motifs than other types (Di Peso et al. 1974b, 250). Because of this, it is a favorite among collectors and pot hunters, so it is not surprising that it is well represented in the MPM collection. Interestingly, Ramos Polychrome was also the most abundant type found in the Paquimé excavations of the JCGE (Di Peso et al. 1974b, 543). Utilitarian wares (Casas Grandes Plainware, Playas Red, and Ramos Black) also made up a major portion of the collection (18.75%).

The first phase of my research included both formal and typological analyses of all 80 vessels, and data were recorded using a coding scheme. Phase II was focused solely on vessels with iconography, which included all of the polychromes and excluded many of the utilitarian wares. In depth description of methods and analyses can be found in the master's thesis (Bomkamp 2020).

Phase I: Typological and Chronological Analyses

During the spring of 2018, I began my analysis by typing and dating all 80 vessels; this provided valuable contextual data for the collection that was previously unavailable to the MPM. I developed a detailed coding scheme that included 26 attributes (e.g. catalog number, vessel form, effigy or miniature, orifice, vertical section, neck, rim, horizontal section, exterior treatment, interior treatment, paint, decoration, texture, orifice diameter, maximum height, maximum width, and ware). Vessels were individually examined while I worked my way through the coding scheme. Condition comments and other notes were added at the end of the spreadsheet.

Figure 2: Variety of vessels from the MPM collection. From left: A57365, A55615, A57403. Photos used with permission from the MPM.

Typology

Following the completion of the coding scheme, I was able to use this information to determine typology for each vessel. Because a vessel type is a classification system based on specific attributes (OAS n.d.), my coding scheme allowed for the framework in analyzing these attributes and assigning a Casas Grandes type to each vessel. Various sources were referenced to determine typology for each vessel. Volume 6 from the JCGE was used as a base reference for all types (Di Peso et al. 1974b). More recent sources were referenced, especially for updated classifications. The New Mexico Office of Archaeological Studies "Pottery Typology Project" website (OAS n.d.) was heavily referenced. This website provided excellent information for eleven main types of Casas Grandes pottery (OAS n.d.). An additional resource used, especially for less common vessels, was Phillips (2010). For more difficult vessels (e.g. variants), JCGE's Casas Grandes ceramic types were referenced in volume six (Di Peso et al. 1974b).

Time Period

I was able to type 78 of the 80 vessels. Once this was completed, I was then able to infer their age based on established ceramic sequences for the Casas Grandes region. The following period dates were based on Minnis and Whalen (2015): Viejo (AD 700-1200) and Medio (AD 1200-1475). Because there are no excavation records or other provenience data associated with the collection, most vessels could only be assigned to relatively wide time periods. While only 78 of the vessels were able to be typed, all were able to be dated

because both indeterminate vessels were effigies, which were only produced during the Medio Period (Di Peso et al. 1974b).

Table 1: Types and vessel forms represented in the MPM collection.

Type	Jars	Bowls	Total	Percentage
Ramos Polychrome	30	4	34	42.50
Ramos Black	7	2	9	11.25
Villa Ahumada Polychrome	8	-	8	10.00
Babícora Polychrome	5	-	5	6.25
Carretas Polychrome	-	4	4	5.00
Playas Red	4	-	4	5.00
Madera Black-on-red	3	-	3	3.75
Ramos Black-on-white	3	-	3	3.75
Casas Grandes Plainware	2	-	2	2.50
Indeterminate	2	-	2	2.50
Corralitos Polychrome*	1	-	1	1.25
Huerigos Polychrome	-	1	1	1.25
Leal Red-on-brown	1	-	1	1.25
Mata Red-on-brown	1	-	1	1.25
Pilon Red-on-brown	1	-	1	1.25
Villa Ahumada Black-on-white	-	1	1	1.25
TOTAL	**68**	**12**	**80**	**100.0**

* The Corralitos Polychrome vessel is an eccentric vessel (double jar)

Ph. I Results

My analysis revealed that there are 15 different types of Casas Grandes vessels represented in the MPM collection (see Table 1). As previously mentioned, Ramos Polychrome makes up the majority of the vessels representing 34/80 or 42.5% of the total. Ramos Polychrome is also believed to be one of the most mass-produced and heavily traded types of the Casas Grandes tradition. When we compare Ramos Polychrome to the other polychromes in this collection, it makes up 64.7% of the count; this is quite similar to the findings in Di Peso's Paquimé excavations where Ramos Polychrome made up

68.7% of the Chihuahuan Polychrome sherds recovered (Di Peso et al. 1974b, 543).

Additionally, I found that 77 of the 80 vessels in the MPM collection dated to the Medio period (AD 1200 to 1475), while only three belonged to the Viejo Period (AD 700 to 1200).These dates were not surprising either, as it was during the Medio Period that ceramic production in the Casas Grandes region flourished and new types were introduced. During the Viejo Period, brownware pottery that was plain, textured, or decorated with red geometric designs was typically produced (Di Peso et al. 1974b).

Phase II: Iconographic Analysis

The second part of my research focuses on the iconography represented on polychrome and effigy vessels. A second coding scheme was created to organize and analyze the iconography represented in the MPM collection. The attributes used in this coding scheme were customized using a variety of other ceramic studies to best suit the needs and designs represented in this collection. The coding scheme records two main design features: layout and motifs. Layout was largely derived from the coding scheme developed by Di Peso et al. (1974b, 7-12). Layout analysis looked at how designs are organized across a vessel in a horizontal fashion which provides the greatest design structure available on a vessel (Figure 3).

Motifs are attributes within the layout that are representative of an idea or object, such as the highly popular macaw motif (Figure 4). This motif is often considered to be one of the most distinctive and diverse symbols on Casas Grandes pottery (Di Peso et al. 1974b, 282). The curved beak of the bird is highly recognizable and depicted in a variety of ways. The painted macaw has been compared to Mimbres pottery. The heads are quite similar, although on Casas Grandes pottery the entire body of the macaw is not depicted while on Mimbres pottery it is (Di Peso et al. 1974b, 99-100). Macaw designs on Casas Grandes pottery are represented in various ways including painted or sculpted in effigy form.

Iconographic analysis is extremely important in providing a window into the ideology of the people that produced the vessels. Many inferences can be made based on designs found on the polychromes alone. For example, VanPool (2003b) has examined animal imagery on Casas Grandes vessels. The author has been able to match effigies to specific species from the Casas Grandes landscape, an area which covers five environmental zones, providing us with information about which animals were important to its people (Di Peso

1974b, 12-3). The MPM collection alone likely includes depictions of an owl, badger, quail, macaw, and snake.

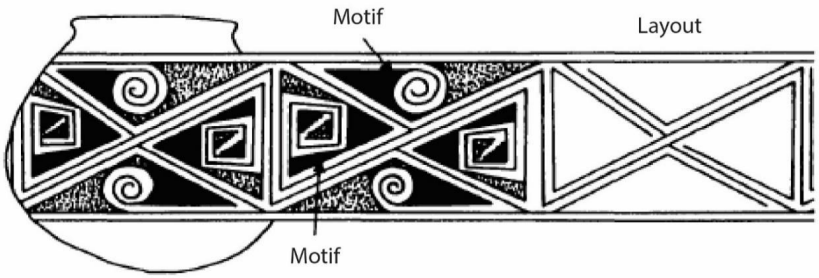

Figure 3: Example of motif and layout (adapted from Hendrickson 2000, 206).

VanPool (2003b) has also done extensive research on duality symbolism. This is pertinent to the analysis of Casas Grandes pottery, which exhibits a high level of dualism and balance in the designs. The author argues that these themes are related to broader concepts in Casas Grandes life and belief systems. For example, this dualism can be seen in the architecture at Paquimé in the Mound of the Cross (VanPool 2003b), which shows a balanced cross shape with four dots extending from each arm. Similar patterns and styles can be seen on the pottery in the MPM collection, with most vessels displaying several forms of balance. The most common motifs found in Casas Grandes pottery generally include parallel lines, scrolls, opposed and interlocking stepped elements, macaws, coiled, plumed, horned, and modified plumed serpents, opposed and interlocking hooked triangles, bull's eye, and dotted squares (Lee 2013, 213).

Eight motifs were recorded from the MPM collection: Swirl/Scroll, Interlocking Scroll, Barbed, Stepped, P/Club, Circles, Running Band of Circles, and Macaw (Figure 5). Arecognizing recurring motifs on Casas Grandes ceramics throughout the region (e.g. Carey 1931, 346). All eight correspond well with other publications recognizing recurring motifs on Casas Grandes ceramics throughout the region (e.g. Carey 1931, 346).

Effigies

The MPM collection contains 20 effigy vessels including 11 human effigies and 9 animal effigies. These special vessel forms are a crucial part in analyzing iconography and design within the collection. Researchers have argued that the paint on the faces of human effigies could be tattoos and/or face

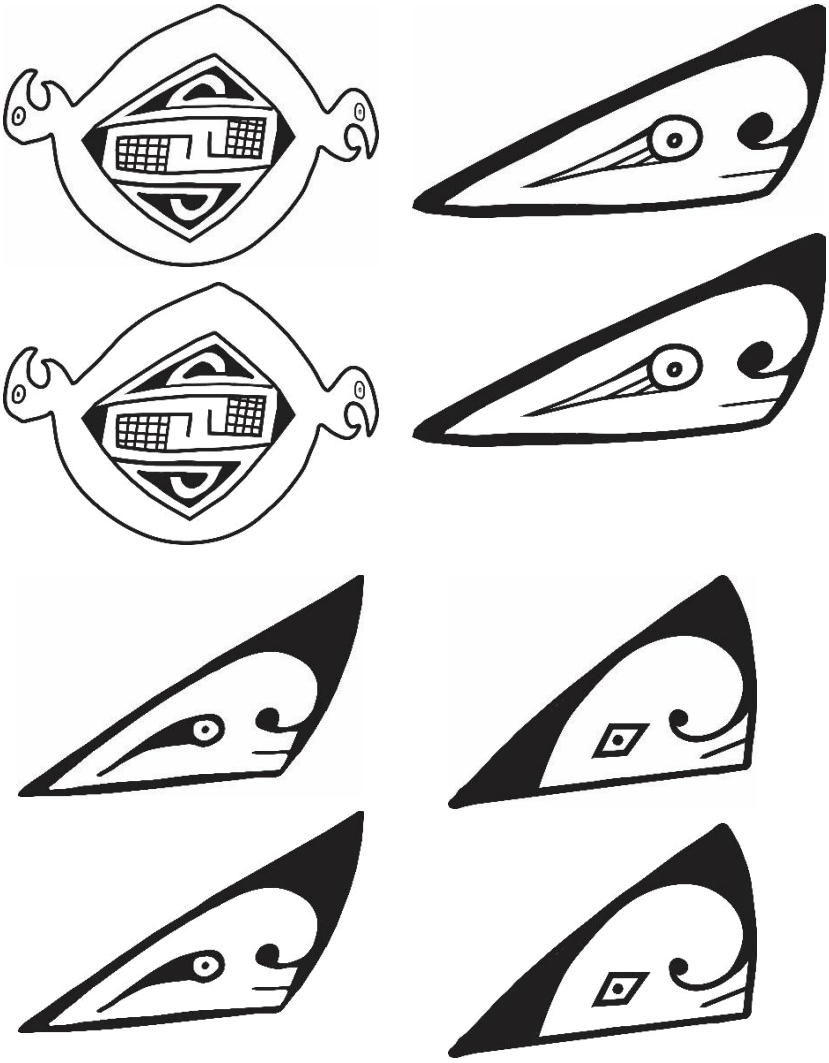

Figure 4: Examples of Macaw motifs from the MPM collection (drawn by author).

painting (Sprehn Malagon 2001; VanPool 2003b). Often, these human faces are decorated with stepped designs on the cheeks or lines on the chin and could represent real people or a type of person. VanPool (2003a) argues that some effigies may represent shamans. Others believe that the tattoos are linked to rites of passage or important stages in an individual's life (Sprehn Malagon 2001). The most unique of the human effigies in the MPM collection is a full-

bodied male effigy with a bird on the left breast (see Figure 2). All other human effigies in the collection are "hooded effigies", meaning their body is sculpted from the jar and the head emerges from the top on the rim of the vessel. Therefore, I observed that it is usually impossible to determine sex from these types of effigies without the lower portion of the body. Data collection was finished in the fall and spring of 2020.

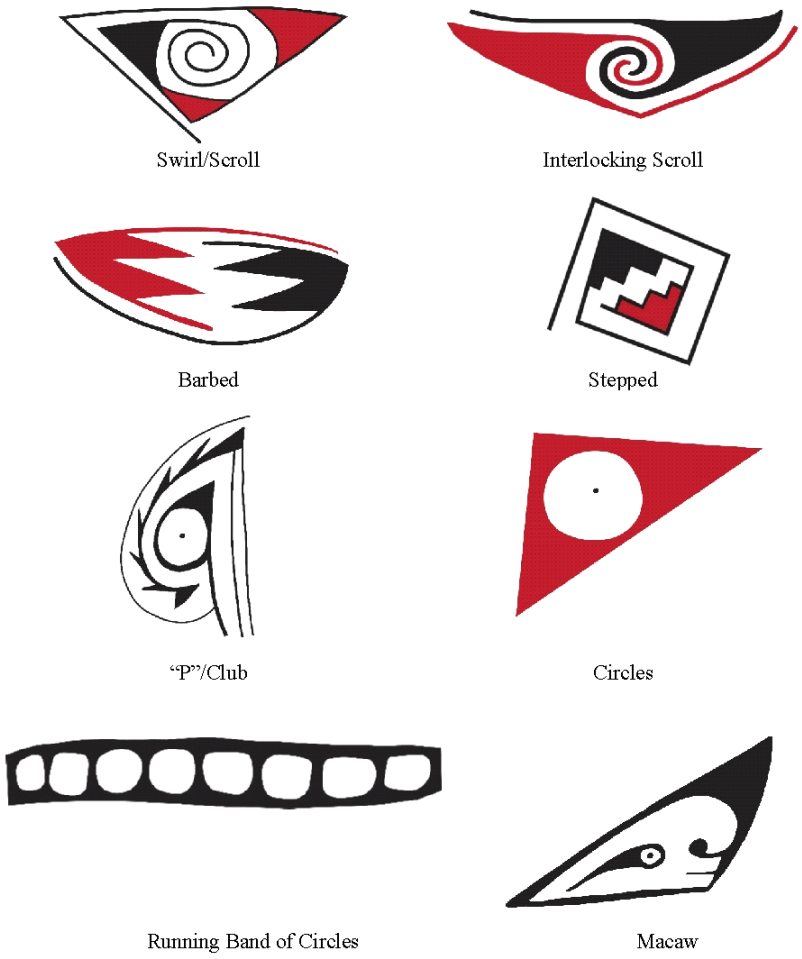

Figure 5: Examples of the eight motifs in the MPM collection (drawn by author).

The iconographic analysis of this collection will allow the MPM ceramic vessels to be compared to others of its kind, especially those with excavation information (e.g. Lee 2013). At the start of this project, several aspects were already clear. The MPM Casas Grandes materials follow the same patterns found on ceramics throughout the entire region. Painted designs were highly planned and designed with excellent precision. Horizontal designs are often divided along the vessel with bilateral symmetry (e.g. halves or quadrants); this means that the "same unit of design is repeated on the opposite side of the vessel" (Lee 2013, 213). This accuracy in spatial division shows how precisely the artisans planned and executed their designs. The MPM collection has a high number of polychromes representing this quadrant division. Additionally, MPM vessels exhibit several common motifs from the region, showcasing balance and dualism.

Figure 6: Three hooded human effigies at the MPM. From left: A57310, A55632, A57375. Photos used with permission from the MPM.

Conclusion

The methods described above provide a great framework for allowing the MPM collection to be compared to others of its kind. Di Peso and colleagues' publications from the 1970s have made comparing ceramic collections much easier; no researcher is tasked with reinventing the wheel. Several other pieces of research have been published with similar methods and goals following Di Peso's methods, adjusted for each collection's unique needs (e.g. Hendrickson 2000; Lee 2013).

The research presented here also opens the door for the collection to be used in other ways in the future. Further research on the vessels' morphological attributes and collection of additional quantitative data would complement the results presented here. Comparisons between Chihuahuan rock art and ceramic iconography is also an area that could be explored. Some of the earliest records of cave art in the area were published by Carl Lumholtz in 1902 (Figure 7). These geometric forms bear a strong resemblance to the ceramic iconography. Lastly, the discussion of fakes and reproductions is always a hot topic with museum ceramic collections, especially with those that are unprovenienced. While PhD candidate Thatcher Rogers (University of New Mexico) and I have thoroughly looked through all 80 ceramic vessels in the MPM collection, a future researcher may want to build upon this examination. One interesting direction to explore could include looking at fakes, forgeries, and reproductions of Casas Grandes ceramics, especially those made from contemporary Mata Ortiz pottery, which can find their way into museum collections.

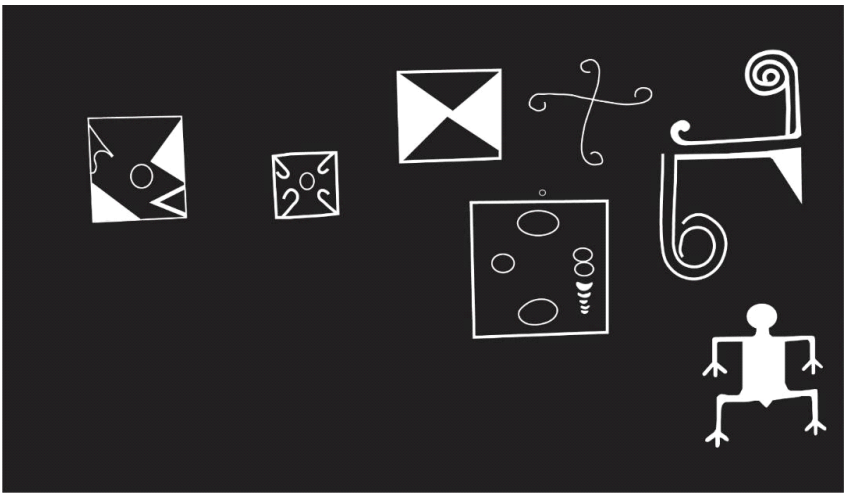

Figure 7: Cave Valley rock art (adapted from Lumholtz 1902, 72).

Ultimately, this research enhances knowledge of the Casas Grandes culture by providing another type collection of whole vessels and bringing awareness to a brilliant collection. The information from the MPM collection will expand the known dataset of Casas Grandes type samples, as well as bring the MPM to the attention of the Casas Grandes archaeological community. Indeed, many researchers with whom I have spoken have been surprised to find that a collection of this type exists in Wisconsin. As the largest collection

of Casas Grandes ceramics at a public institution in Wisconsin, this research will enhance community knowledge of and appreciation for the Casas Grandes cultural tradition. No Casas Grandes exhibitions currently exists at museums in the region and it is my hope that this research encourages future exhibits or programming about this important culture.

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