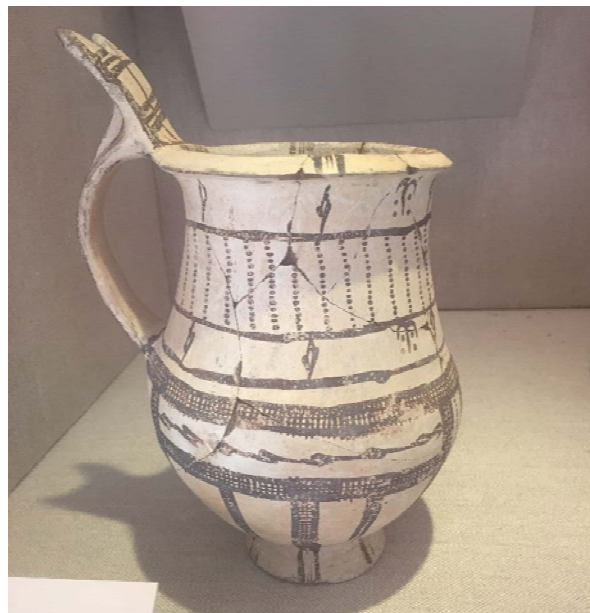


Decorative Styles

Amanda Talaski

atalaski@umich.edu



Both of these vessels are featured, or about to be featured, at the Kelsey Museum. The first vessel is the third object featured in the Jackier Collection. This vessel was donated to the Kelsey Museum without any information associated with it, which leaves its origin and style to be undetermined. Through hands on analysis and research, it can be inferred that the Jackier Collection vessel is from the Bronze Age, with emphasis on the Late Bronze Age. This piece most likely came from Cyprus where trade along the Mediterranean most likely took the vessel to its final resting place which was most likely a tomb. The second piece, a tankard is already featured in the Kelsey Museum's Late Bronze Age Pottery display. It is recorded that the tankard came from Cyprus, which supports my hypothesis about the Jackier Collection piece. Both of these pieces have stylistic elements that can both draw similarities but also differences between these two pieces of pottery.

The first vessel from the Jackier Collection has a lot of stylistic elements that can later help to determine which era this piece is from. This vessel contains two openings: a spout with a miniscule hole for a liquid to flow out of and a much bigger opening where the liquid would be poured into. The Jackier Collection vessel has two small handles protruding from the sides of the piece. From the inside, the piece appears to be made out of terra cotta with a white slip painted on the outside. Red cross-hatched lines were painted on top of the slip. These lines were painted in two different sections that covered most of the piece.

From further analysis on the inside, it was revealed that the Jackier Collection vessel had been repaired. This repair remained undetected from the outside until the knowledge about the crack was revealed. The coloring was slightly different in that area, but it was covered due to discoloration along the entire piece. The vessel does not have much weight to it, leaving it mobile. The piece's bottom was flat and did not contain any markings as to tell who made this

piece or where it came from. The Jackier Collection vessel is covered in what appears to be a dirt coating, probably acquired from where it was found. The damage this appears to cause is to hide the crack from first glance and to interfere with pottery analysis as the original piece is now compromised. This vessel is very intriguing with its small handles, decorative style, and size.

Next is the tankard from the Late Bronze Age Pottery display at the Kelsey Museum. The piece is made out of clay and is a white slip ware. The tankard has one opening in the top to allow for liquids to both be poured into the pottery and out of the pottery. One long handle is attached on the side along with two decorative shapes attached on top of the handle. The tankard is decorated in what appears to be grey markings. Dotted lines, symbols, and cross-hatching decorate most of the piece. The tankard does possess cracks throughout the piece, suggesting the piece had broken but had been put back together. The cracks do seem to be big enough to suggest that the piece, even though it had been repaired, had become unusable. The tankard has a flat bottom and appears to be lightweight. The tankard can be a reference for Late Bronze Age pottery in comparison to the Jackier Collection piece.

The first vessel from the Jackier Collection comes from unknown origins, as it was donated to the Kelsey Museum without any background knowledge on the piece. According to Steele, the piece could have originally been a Mycenaean piece that was traded in Cyprus to Egypt or other areas where it would become of use. Most of the pots with similar painting styles were found among tombs. Or, according to Hemingway, Cyprus islanders made clay vessels out of terra cotta that they painted on a white slip and decorated patterns in red. Trade was exceptionally common around that area, with the Mediterranean Sea easily accessible. Both support the fact that this piece more than likely came from Cyprus and was shipped out to Egypt from trade.

The Jackier Collection vessel's painting style can help to identify its origin, but the piece can be classified into different types of styles. Erani C is one of the styles that this vessel resembles, which was characteristic during the Early Bronze Age. Erani C featured small to medium sized jars that were covered in a heavy white slip. These jars were then painted with red vertical lines. However, the Erani C style often was decorated with incisions around the neck of the piece and the handles were also adorned with these incisions (Braun). The Jackier Collection, did not have any incisions in the piece, so even though it fits the other criteria, this piece is more than likely one of the other styles.

One of the other styles of painting that was found in the Early Bronze Age was the pajama style. Pajama style also featured small to medium sized jars. Open vessels were also included in on this design but mostly came from southern countries. There is evidence that this style was used before or even alongside the Erani C style, which it represented. The pajama style featured pieces covered in heavy white slip with narrow, vertical lines painted on top. Unlike the other two styles, the color is not specified for the narrow, vertical lines. This is the only style that does not specifically call for narrow, red lines. An example of pajama style piece was found in a tomb at Ai and it so happened to be a spouted piece which resembled the Jackier Collection piece (Braun).

The final style is the basket style which featured thin, red lines atop of lightly washed vessels. Again, these were typically of small to medium size, with some having spouts. Originally, in the Early Bronze Age, these pieces were painted carefully to replicate the woven characteristic of baskets, but over time the pieces were painted less and less carefully. By the Late Bronze Age, these lines more closely resembled cross-hatching than basket weaving. Because of the regression and carelessness of the lines painted on the Jackier Collection vessel,

this piece would be dated later in the Late Bronze Age where the focus of painting was switched towards cross-hatching. This style can even be linked to the Erani C style as nicknames for this style suggested that the pieces just had to have multiple lines painted on top of a light background. Two different vessels were found with this style, both in tombs. In Egypt, a piece was found in Tomb U-j, Abydos and there was also a piece found in a Late Bronze Age tomb at Bâb edh Dhrâc (Braun). The different painting styles all tie together, suggesting that this piece was made sometime during the Bronze Age, most likely the Late Bronze Age, and was most likely used before being traded and along the way placed in a tomb.

Now, the tankard dates back to the Late Bronze Age. This piece most likely came from Cyprus where international trade and wealth became popular along the Mediterranean. This piece could have been made using a new emerging style where the vessels were made without using a potter's wheel. These styles were transported to Egypt, the Near East, and Aegean. If this piece was made without the use of the wheel, it could have been molded on a gourd or something similar. This piece came from Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age. This piece also seems like it could have been decorated using the different style of painting: Erani C, pajama, and basket. However, since the piece was decorated in gray lines, not red, the style is most likely pajama as the requirements were thin, narrow lines painted a top of a white slip. The tankard is a Late Bronze Age piece from Cyprus that incorporates the pajama style of painting.

From the painting on the Jackier Collection vessel, I can infer that the vessel came from a sophisticated society. This piece could have been specially made to reside in tombs, in which case decoration was important. If not, and it was used before being placed in a tomb, the decoration suggests a more elite usage as the pottery that was used every day was characteristically plain. Even though this piece does have decorative features, the piece is worn

on the handles and had been damaged and repaired. Because of the repair on the piece, it is suggested that it was a very functional piece and was depended upon. Repairing a piece to that extent in the Bronze Age suggests an importance of the piece.

The use of the Jackier Collection vessel is also up for interpretation. The spout on the piece suggests that it was used for storing and pouring liquid such as water, oil, and wine (Rice). The hole on the spout, however, is miniscule and upon analysis, it was not apparent if there was actually a hole drilled all the way through to the inside, suggesting that maybe the spout was an added attachment for decoration. The main hole in the piece easily allowed for liquids to be poured into the piece for storage. The handles on the side of the piece suggest that it could have been carried long distances, although they are again small enough to suggest that they were also for decoration. The piece is of reasonable size that it could have been carried by its two handles, say, to a river where it was filled and then brought back to the town for consumption. The piece, without anything in it, was also fairly light which adds to its portability. This vessel was a functional piece that more than likely was used to carry or pour liquids, most likely water.

There is also another interpretation of its use. During the Bronze Age, there was a change from individualized feasting sets, such as goblets, to more communal sharing pottery. During this time feasting became prominent where the ruler of the land would invite the whole territory to redistribute and share the resources acquired from the land. The size of this vessel suggests that it could have been one of these communal pieces before being traded and shipped a different country where it would have been used in tombs. The Jackier Collection piece would have more than likely been a serving vessel. Serving vessels were unrestricted or open, had handles, and flat supportive bases (Rice). The open nature of the vessel combined with the handles and flat bottom easily hypothesize that this piece was a serving piece. Because of the dirt on the Jackier

Collection piece, it can reasonably be inferred that the piece was in fact buried in a tomb after its use. Because the piece had been repaired, its functional use had been taken away, transforming it into strictly a decorative piece. This piece could have been part of a feasting set or traded and sent to be buried in a tomb.

There is also question about whether or not the Jackier Collection vessel was used for cooking or processing. According to Rice, vessels that were in fact used for cooking and processing had “larger orifices” than those used just for storage (Rice). The vessel does contain a very large hole at the top which would suggest that the vessel had been used for cooking. The flat bottom of the piece would have made both processing and cooking easier as it allows for the Jackier Collection vessel to have a sturdy base. According to shape, cooking vessels could have been round, conical, or spherical and did not have very many angles (Rice). The Jackier Collection piece is round in shape and is not angular. The transport vessels had handles, were lightweight, could be conveniently stacked, and had smaller orifices (Rice). The Jackier Collection piece only follows two of those stipulations: it is lightweight and has handles. The Jackier Collection vessel could have been used for cooking or processing.

With regards to storage, the longer the intended storage period was, the larger the vessel (Rice). Judging by the small to medium size of the piece, if it was used for storage, it would not have stored anything for long. Storage vessels also had smaller orifices, which makes it highly unlikely that the Jackier Collection vessel was used for long term storage. Storage vessels did include orifices suitable for pouring, which includes the spout located on the Jackier Collection piece (Rice). Rice also states that the storage containers have “appendages for storage and movement” which would include the handles located on the sides of the Jackier Collection vessel. The evidence suggests that the Jackier Collection piece could have been used for storage.

The tankard, more than likely had a similar use, but in a different setting. The single, long handle on the tankard seems more suitable for pouring liquids at a table and would not have been carried long distances. This piece is ornately decorated, also suggesting that it belonged to an elite class. This piece, however, seems more like a family owned piece as this would not be the ideal size for a communal feast. The decorative feathers extending from the handle suggest that this piece was not used for everyday use, most likely for when the family hosted their feast, as this was common much later during the era of the symposiums. Even though the tankard seems mostly a decorative piece, the repair of the piece suggests that it had to be of some functional value. If it was purely decorative, mending the piece took away its aesthetic. The tankard theoretically was used to pour liquids, most likely, at a dinner table.

These two, different vessels may not be all that different. The tankard and the Jackier Collection vessel both hailed from the Late Bronze Age and are thought to have come from Cyprus. The decorative styles of these two vessels is very similar. They both have thin, narrow lines adorning the top of a white slip, which ranges from either the Erani C, pajama, or basket style of painting. Both of these vessels feature the cross-hatching type style. The shape of each vessel also suggests a common use: pouring and storing some type of liquid, probably water. As it turns out, both of these pieces were both broken and cracked, but also repaired. This suggests that both of these pieces were valuable either in function or worth. These vessels were decorated in similar thin, cross-hatched lines and both had a common function.

The tankard and the Jackier Collection piece are also both unique in their own ways. The tankard is more ornately decorated than the Jackier Collection vessel. The tankard, unlike the Jackier Collection vessel and other pottery from the Erani C and basket style was not painted in red lines, but gray. This would be consistent of the pajama style as no color was specified about

the lines that were painted on top of the white slip. The Jackier Collection vessel only had two big sections of carelessly cross-hatched lines while the tankard has symbols, thin, fine cross-hatching, and dots painted on. The pajama style lines on the tankard are painted on neat and close together. They also appear in smaller, precise patches along the tankard. The two different pieces had similar yet different markings painted on top of their white slips.

The different style, or shape, of these pieces, suggests different uses. The Jackier Collection vessel's larger size suggests that the piece was more than likely a communal vessel. The tankard, with its small size and more ornate decoration, suggest a more private use. Their handles differ tremendously and show even more differences between the two pieces. The Jackier Collection vessel has two smaller handles located on two sides of the pottery. These two handles would have made transportation for the piece easier, making it mobile by allowing for the distribution of weight between the two arms. This piece could have easily brought liquids such as water from farther distances. The handle on the tankard may be larger, but there is only one that is located on side. This would have isolated the weight of the tankard to only one arm, which makes it difficult to carry long distances. This handle also had two decorative elements located on top of the handle, suggesting that this piece was used in a more elite setting, such as dining. The two different styles suggest both portable pieces and either communal or private pieces.

The condition between the Jackier Collection vessel and the tankard differ vastly. The Jackier Collection piece shows more wear and tear than the tankard. The handles are worn down in both shape and appearance. The slip and paint has worn off on the sides of the handles showing off its true terra cotta color, as well as even parts of the handle itself have been broken and chipped off. The original color of the slip on the piece has been tampered by what appears to

be dirt. Discoloration marks the piece, which made it hard to notice that the piece had even been repaired. Overall, this piece is worn and dingy, with the white color from the slip blocked by outside contaminants.

The tankard appears to be in better condition than the Jackier Collection vessel, even though it is also damaged. The tankard's color is in mostly impeccable condition. Each design can easily be identified whereas the Jackier Collection piece's lines start to run together. There is one area visible from the case that does have slight discoloration, probably where the piece was resting against something for a long period of time, but other than that and the crack, the tankard is in excellent condition. The tankard does not appear to be worn in any way except for the tiny missing pieces that were lost when the piece was broken and then put back together. The tankard, besides the repaired cracks and the tiny spot of missing color, appears to be in better condition than the Jackier Collection piece.

Both the Jackier Collection piece and the tankard that are featured at the Kelsey Museum. Even though the Jackier Collection vessel was donated without any known information about it, it can be inferred that the piece came from the Late Bronze Age due to its markings. Both of these pieces feature thin decorative lines which are typical of Erani C, pajama, and basket styles of pottery. However, since the tankard has gray lines, and not red, the tankard bears resemblance to only the pajama style, while the Jackier Collection piece resembles all three. The tankard would most likely have belonged to an elite family while the Jackier Collection piece suggests a more communal use with its two handles.

These Late Bronze Age pieces of pottery can both be traced back to Cyprus where trade along the Mediterranean was popular. The Jackier Collection piece was more than likely traded

after it was broken and mended to later end up in a tomb such as other pajama and basket style pieces that were mentioned by Braun. The tankard is known to have come from the Late Bronze Age where it was made in Cyprus. The Jackier Collection piece and the tankard both compare and contrast vastly.

References

- Braun, Eliot. "On Some Levantine Early Bronze Age Ceramic 'Wares' And Styles." *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 144.1 (2012): 5-32. Web. 11 Nov. 2016.
- Hemingway, Colette, and Sean Hemingway. "Prehistoric Cypriot Art and Culture." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. (October 2004)
- Rice, Prudence M. 1987. *Pottery Analysis*. Chicago- The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 411-426.
- Steele, Louise. "The Social Impact of Mycenaean Imported Pottery in Cyprus." *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 93 (1998): 285-96. *Cambridge University Press*. British School at Athens. Web. 29 Nov. 2016