

CHIAN KRATERS FROM THE EXCAVATION IN BEREZAN

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to present examples of Chian black-figure style pottery discovered in Berezan in 2006 and 2011. In the 6th century Chian workshop produces kraters painted in the black-figure style.*

The oldest Greek settlement in the Northern Black Sea region - Borysthene on the island of Berezan, provides the richest items of painted pottery. Of particular interest is the Ionian painted pottery from various centers. Chian potteries occupy a relatively small part, but rare specimens are found among the main typical finds. In recent years, in the northwestern part of the island, in study area "O", interesting specimens of Chian pottery were discovered. In 2006, three fragments were found. They all belonged to larger vessels, which are very few in Chian pottery. Due to the fragmentary state of the material it was impossible to determine the vessels' shape. Only two large fragments of a massive vessel found in 2011 allowed us to determine its shape - a krater -, as well as its painting style (**Fig. 1** and **Fig. 2**)¹. As it is typical in Chian painted pottery, the surface of the vessel is covered with a white slip under the dark paint. These are fragments of a high neck, which was decorated with rectangular metopes and had riveted ring-shaped handles. Part of the rectangular metope decoration and the contour of the ring-shaped handle's joining spot under the rim are still preserved on one of the fragments. Under the handle's joining spot, on the neck, part of the dotted concentric circles motive in white paint is preserved. The rectangular metopes are framed on both sides by straight lines, executed in a casual manner. At the bottom of the metopes there are two narrow horizontal stripes, and between them there are oblique strokes. The black-figure depiction in the metope has been partially

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¹ INV. No BH 2011.20/284 Clay is light brown. Length 13,0 cm. and 10,5 cm. Found in room 16. The pottery complex is characterized by numerous ceramics: Ionian, Attic, Corinthian.

preserved - two figures of women in long dresses. On the other fragment, a part of the dotted concentric circles motive in white paint, two narrow horizontal stripes, and between them, oblique strokes, can be seen (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The rim is flat, massive and covered in brown colour. On the inside the neck is covered with dark brown glaze and narrow belts filled with purple and white paint.

The fragments belong to a large krater with a high neck and a rounded body. Until now this shape was not known in Chian pottery. Such kraters are very rare among Ionian painted pottery. Vessels of this shape are found among products of workshops in Northern Ionia. Two entire vases are known - one comes from an excavation in Rhodes, the other from the Campana collection, allegedly found in Italy². These kraters have a rounded bottom. It is also possible to assume that, by analogy with a krater of unknown origin from Aachen, they could have had a low foot³. This type of krater is even rarer. The vases were painted by using the black-figure technique and by also keeping reserved portions – the first one was applied on the neck, other areas are reserved on the body. Fragments of similar kraters and vases of other shapes are well known in Berezan⁴. The products of the workshops in Northern Ionia occupy the leading place in the composition of the pottery complex originating from the excavations on the island. As for how the body of the Chian krater was painted, we cannot say anything, but perhaps it also combined two techniques: black-figure and reserve.

The painting on the neck is made in black-figure technique by using engravings and purpura to highlight details. On the neck of the vessel there were four rectangular metopes between which handles were placed. On the neck, under the handle, a field ornament was placed. Its type is characteristic to Chian pottery and it is found on vessels painted in the style of M IWG and Animal chalice⁵. Perhaps different compositions consisting of several figures were placed in the metopes. On one fragment a very small part of the image has been preserved. It can be interpreted as a part of the arm and leg of a *komast*. The painting is located at a great distance from the edge of the metopes. The size of the fragment does not allow the reconstruction of the painting. On another fragment a procession of women in long dresses can be seen. The features of the face, the marking of the pelvis with purple and engraved lines, find analogies in the paintings on the chalices bearing the depiction of a dancing *komast*⁶. At the same time though, differences can be noted in the round earrings one of them is wearing and in her headdress, which is not represented as a tall turban like on most naked *komasts*⁷. However, the painting was stylistically executed in the tradition characteristic to the Komast group, with a specific feature for this group - the marking of the pelvis. This technique is found on all the chalices with the

² WALTER-KARYDI 1973, pl. 115, no. 941; pl. 114, no. 938.

³ WALTER-KARYDI 1973, pl. 115, no. 939.

⁴ SKUDNOVA 1960, p. 165, fig 13,1; KOPEIKINA 1970, p. 93-100.

⁵ LEMOS 1991, figs. 38, 48.

⁶ LEMOS 1991, pl. 199, nos. 1559, 1560.

⁷ LEMOS 1991, p. 171-172, figs. 95-98.

image of the *komast*, which are divided into six groups⁸. It is also possible to note single samples of Ionian pottery painted in the back-figure technique where joints on the legs of sphinxes on the chalice from Naucratis are also marked⁹.

Images of women in long dresses – chitons – are rarely found on the chalices of this group. Only two fragments depict *komasts* and women¹⁰. The figures of women on our fragment differ from the images on the chalices from the excavations in Chios¹¹. These differences are significant – in silhouette, hairstyle and clothing. The only closest analogy to the painting on this fragment is the procession of women in long dresses depicted on a krater from Naucratis¹². They are represented as tall silhouettes with thin necks, small heads, graceful legs, and long hands with outlined fingers. Clothing fits the body; the bottom edge reaches the ankles. All the painting is careless in details, but expressive. A fragment of the neck of a krater, cited as an analogy, is attributed by most researchers to the production of Chios¹³. However, there is another opinion, which treats this as a rare sample of painted pottery – the predecessor of the Clazomenian black-figure style¹⁴. In the painting of our fragment a very mixed style can be seen. At the beginning of the 6th century one workshop started using black-figure technique and produced vases from the Sphinx and Lion group. Vases with lid were painted with animal friezes comprising lions and sphinxes, but also bulls, bird, sirens, and very rarely a human figure. It is interesting in the group, but not a chalice. But later, around 560 B.C., the chalices (very rarely *kantharoi*) were decorated with black-figure *komasts* and roosters, hens, geese and dolphins¹⁵. Chalices with black-figure *komasts* on one side and black-figure roosters on the opposite side were scarcely found in Berezan in 2005¹⁶. It seems that kraters were the last items of painted pottery this workshop produced.

The dating of this fragment is also difficult to assess. The chronology of the Komast group does not cause controversy among researchers and is established between 570-540 B.C.¹⁷. Some believe the date limits can be placed between 575-560 B.C.¹⁸ or 560-550 B.C.¹⁹. These dates are also accepted by publishers of materials from the excavations in Olbia and Berezan²⁰. The sloppy painting, as well as the absence of the filling pattern are characteristic to late chalices, which

⁸ LEMOS 1991, p. 169-173.

⁹ WALTER-KARYDI 1973, p. 82, Taf. 125, no. 1012; GARDNER 1888, p. 38, pl. 7,5; PRICE 1924, pl.8,13.

¹⁰ LEMOS 1991, fig. 94, 1487; fig. 96, 1468.

¹¹ BOARDMAN 1967, p. 160-161, 748 fig. 108, pl. 59.

¹² GARDNER 1888, p. 45, pl. 13,1; LEMOS 1991, pl. 219, no. 1656.

¹³ WALTER-KARYD 1973, p. 67-73; LEMOS 1991, p. 179 pl. 219, no. 1656.

¹⁴ COOK & DUPONT 2003, p. 95-96, fig. 12.

¹⁵ WILLIAMS 2006, p. 129-130.

¹⁶ IL'INA 2010, p. 64-65.

¹⁷ COOK 1992, p. 126; COOK & DUPONT 2003, p. 75-76; BOARDMAN 1998, p. 146; LEMOS 1991, p. 163-165, 189; LEMOS 1987, p. 248; BOARDMAN 1967, p. 158; BOARDMAN & HAYES 1966, p. 59; 1973, p. 25; BAYBURTIUOĞLU 1978, p. 30; KOPEIKINA 1986, p. 33.

¹⁸ SCHAUS 1985, p. 81, nos. 486-488.

¹⁹ PAUTASSO 2009, p. 92-93, 105.

²⁰ BUISKICH 2013, p. 159; IL'INA 2005, p. 100-101.

stand out for groups E and F and we consider the end of the style to 540 B.C.²¹. The later groups of black-figured Chian pottery are attributed to the second half of the 6th century B.C.²² as well. The dating of the krater's neck from Naucratis differs, depending on which group the researchers attribute it to. If they refer to the production of the Chian workshop, it can be dated after the middle of the 6th century B.C., but within the third quarter of the century. A later date is also envisaged - 530 B.C.²³. The earliest one is offered by Cook - 560 B.C.²⁴. Considering these opinions, our fragments can be dated to 560-540 B.C. The painting combines the style of Komast group and the late black-figure style. Images of religious processions appear in Chios ceramics under the influence of mainland schools and reflect religious practices²⁵.

The workshops in Northern Ionia had close contacts and this does not always allow us to unambiguously determine the center of production of rare and interesting vessels²⁶.

The archaeological context where samples of Chian pottery were found does not contradict the dating of the Komast group and its related groups. Fragments were found in the rooms of houses. Room 6 refers to the stratigraphic phase II-A (the third - beginning of the last quarter of the 6th century B.C.)²⁷. It was built around the middle or at the beginning of the third quarter of the 6th century B.C. and destroyed by fire in the last quarter of 6th century B.C.²⁸.

Room 16 refers to the same stratigraphic phase and has come up with a few rearrangements that are well fixed. It ceased to function in the last quarter of the 6th century B.C.²⁹. Interesting specimens of Chian pottery were found in the inventory of this room: fragments of *phialai*, cups, *hydriai*, and jugs. Of particular interest are fragments of *kantharoi*³⁰.

Found in 2006, a neck fragment preserving the traces of the imitation ring handles on the lower area is actually part of the massive neck of the crater found in 2011 (**Fig. 5**)³¹. Its painting is part of the field ornament - the dotted concentric circles - white paint is completely identical.

In 2006, a fragment of a massive vessel with two field ornaments painting - dotted concentric circles - similar in paste, quality and white paint, was also made available (**Fig. 6**)³². However, it is impossible to reliably reconstruct its shape. It can be assumed that this is part of a flat handle with rollers on the edges, preserved very fragmentary.

²¹ LEMOS 1991, p. 189.

²² LEMOS 1991, p. 190.

²³ WALTER-KARYDI 1973, p. 70.

²⁴ COOK & DUPONT 2003, p. 96.

²⁵ KOPEIKINA 1979, p. 7; LEMOS 1986, p. 248.

²⁶ COOK 1952, p. 149-152; KOPEIKINA 1979, p. 9.

²⁷ CHISTOV *et alii*, 2012, p. 6.

²⁸ CHISTOV *et alii*, 2012, p. 41, 50-53.

²⁹ KRUTILOV & CHISTOV 2011, p. 48-61.

³⁰ IL'INA 2017, p. 40-43.

³¹ Inv. no. BH.2006.10/58 Clay is light brown. Length 8,2 cm. Found in room 6.

³² Inv. no. BH.2006.45/364 Clay is light brown. Length 5,4 cm. Found in pit no. 111.

Fragment of a flat flap handle Corinthian type krater collonette found in 2006 (Fig. 7)³³. In quality of the clay, the color of the glaze, it shows a clear resemblance to the Chian pottery. However, the only krater of this shape was found in Kavala and is a vase of the Chios workshop located in eastern Macedonia. This workshop worked in the first - second quarter of the 6th century B.C.³⁴.

Fragments of Chian kraters found in 2006 and 2011 complement the idea of the shapes of vessels that were painted by masters working in black-figure technique³⁵. Along with the traditional thin-walled chalices, lekaneis or bowl with lids known in significant quantities, there are also very rare shapes: vessels for carrying lamps and kraters³⁶. A fragment of a massive vase was also found; its shape is not yet clear.

The materials from the excavations on the island of Berezan give new rare samples of the vases which allow to present more details of painted pottery in black-figure style of the workshops, active on the island of Chios.

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Abbreviations

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³³ INV. No BH 2006.5/26 Clay is light brown. Length 9,4 cm.

³⁴ LEMOS 1991, pl. 221-225; LEMOS 1992, p. 173.

³⁵ KOPEIKINA 1986, p. 33.

³⁶ BAYBURTIUOĞLU 1978, p. 27.

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Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.