

TWO FRAGMENTARY VASES FROM MILETUS IMITATING (?) CHIAN POTTERY

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Abstract: *Two fragmentary vases from the Aphrodite sanctuary at Miletus have affinities with Chian fine ware pottery. Both are colourfully decorated – one, a cup or chalice rim from the seventh century BC has Middle Wild Goat ornament; the other, a phiale, is Athenian in Six's technique, from the late sixth or early fifth century BC. The former would benefit from clay analysis, while comparanda found in the Cyclades for the latter may also be candidates for analysis.*

It was my distinct pleasure to travel by car with Pierre Dupont in the mid-1980s from Bucharest to Histria to visit Petre Alexandrescu's excavations. At the time, I was working on a study of Fikellura pottery, and was impressed with results from Dupont's analysis of clays used in producing various types of Archaic East Greek pottery, particularly his conclusion that Fikellura pottery was made largely from the clay of Miletus. Previously, this fabric had been considered Rhodian, with perhaps some production at Samos and Miletus simply based on find spots. It is difficult to overestimate the impact that Dupont's pioneering work has had on the study of Archaic East Greek wares found so commonly in the Pontic and Mediterranean regions.

Chian fine ware pottery is one of the most easily recognized and attributed of all East Greek Archaic fabrics. Its fine hard clay, thick white slip over interior and exterior surfaces, overpainted black interiors decorated with added red and white paints, and delicate shapes, including chalices, phialai and cups, makes it easy to pick out when sifting through boxes of mixed sherds, even when badly preserved. The main production center with two or three separate workshops was likely in Chios town although kilns or wasters have yet to confirm this, to my knowledge¹. Occasionally, other production centers for at least some Chian

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pottery have been proposed, including nearby Erythrai where an undistinguished local production seems confirmed by clay analysis², more distant Naucratis in Egypt, where only the possibility of using imported clay from Chios may be argued³ and Thasos where a Chian painter established a workshop but produced a distinguishable imitation⁴.

The present short contribution focuses on two vases discovered in the Aphrodite sanctuary at Miletus, both of which have affinities with Chian pottery. One, a chalice or cup rim, is a puzzle as to its home, while the other, a phiale, is almost certainly Athenian, but both vases would benefit from clay analysis to answer lingering questions about their origins⁵.

East Greek light-on-dark, chalice or cup

Regarding the first of these two vases, five non-joining fragments from a small open vessel (**Fig. 1a-c**) are made of very fine, orange-brown clay having tiny white inclusions, but not the typical „gold mica” of local Milesian pottery. The wall is „eggshell” thin. The paint is shiny black or grey-black, but it has flaked off in large areas, especially on the interior. Added red (violet) and white paints are both matt and of high quality, applied carefully with a fine brush, especially the white.

The fragments are decorated with added white and red over black paint, and include florals of Middle Wild Goat style: outlined lotuses, buds and rosettes, as well as a band of squares separated by double vertical lines, and a row of saltires⁶. Examples of white on dark decoration on vases from Miletus are quite common, going back into the eighth century, but becoming more common about the mid seventh century, although not with such fine patterns in both added white and red⁷. Similar colorful decoration is found normally on the interior only of Chian

¹ LEMOS 1991, p. 79-80, 117-118; WILLIAMS 2006, p. 129-131. For the study of Chian pottery, besides LEMOS 1991 and WILLIAMS 2006, see also BOARDMAN 1967; COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 46-51, including Chian transport amphoras, p. 146-151; and BERGERON 2014.

² BAYBURTLUOĞLU 1978, p. 30; DUPONT 1983, p. 25, 41; SCHLOTZHAUER & VILLING 2006, p. 59.

³ BOARDMAN 1956; 1986, p. 252-253; 1998, p. 144-145; 1999, p. 123 and n. 43; WILLIAMS 1983, p. 181-182; 2006, p. 131. Summary by Kerschner and Mommsen in PAUTASSO 2009, p. 131-132.

⁴ COULIÉ 2002, p. 19-57 (le groupe chiotisant), 207-215; KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI & MARAGKOU 2012, p. 331-333; see also LEMOS 1991, p. 209-222; LEMOS 1992, who thought it may be located at Maroneia on the north Aegean coast.

⁵ A description and photographs of the phiale were sent to N. Kunisch for inclusion in his study of the Athenian imported pottery at Miletus (KUNISCH 2016), but he did not accept that the vase is Athenian (pers. comm.). Those who carry out archaeometric clay analysis are often cautious in their conclusions and more aware of the limitations of their analyses than those unfamiliar with the techniques. For a cautionary approach, see AYTAÇLAR 2007.

⁶ For the outlined lotuses and buds from the Middle Wild Goat style, see COOK 1997, p. 113, fig. 19A.

⁷ For dark ground kraters decorated in added white at Miletus, see PANTELEON 2011, p. 212-235. A large „Kesselständer”, classified as MileA1c (ca. 640-615/610 BC), is particularly ornate with bands and panels of light-on-dark decoration, including lotus and

chalices and phialai of the sixth century⁸, but not as here on both exterior and interior. Added white and red is treated both by Lemos⁹ and Cook¹⁰ as having begun on Chian chalices and phialai after ca. 600 B.C., but Lemos recognized that a simple form of light on dark decoration had appeared much earlier in Chian fine ware and that it was revived in the sixth century, although no evidence for continuity of its use is demonstrated¹¹. A Chian chalice in Oxford from Naucratis has white riders on a black ground on its exterior,¹² and two unusual vases from Tocra with very thin walls, one a cup and the other a kotyle, have added white, figured decoration on a black background. If not Attic or Boiotian, they have been compared with Chian work¹³. These are sixth century in date.

East Greek cups with very thin walls, approaching egg-shell ware thinness, have similar red lines on the interior, and have been dated to the last third of the seventh century¹⁴. A chalice from Emporio (Chios) belonging in Harbour Sanctuary Period IV, ca. 630-600, is decorated with a canonical Wild Goat main zone and secondary ornament that includes a band of outlined lotuses and buds, a row of squares separated by double vertical lines, and a band of diagonal crosses (saltires) all in black paint, but of types similar to those in white and red paint on the Miletus fragments¹⁵.

At Emporio, white on black decoration was found on both kantharoi and tall cups from the Harbour Sanctuary Period I/II dated to the first half of the seventh century or earlier¹⁶. These have black paint directly over the vessel's clay surface on the interior followed by a coat of slip, whereas the exteriors are slipped first, then painted black. Fragments of two skyphoi of an egg-shell ware from Emporio also had added white decoration near the handles but otherwise had motifs in black paint that included rows of hour glasses and diagonal strokes, cable and zig-zag lines¹⁷. These likewise came from Period I/II at the site.

At Tocra, a kotyle was found having eggshell thin walls of red clay with

bud, meander and guilloche, but with no added red (PANTELEON 2011, p. 230-231 no. 729 pl. 161). For the new classification system used at Miletus, see KERSCHNER & SCHLOTZHAUER 2005, but the beginning of the MileAIC phase, when added red first appears, is dated a little earlier by Panteleon (ca. 640 rather than 630 BC) due to pottery of this phase from Bothros A in the Aphrodite sanctuary. See PANTELEON 2011, p. 15. Two examples of light-on-dark decoration at Samos are thought to be Milesian, WALTER 1968, p. 111 no. 357 pl.60 and p. 117 no. 445 pl. 81; and for sixth-century examples from Miletus, see WALTER-KARYDI 1973, p. 137, nos. 671, 673 pl. 79.

⁸ For light-on-dark decoration on Chian, see LEMOS 1991, p. 118-124.

⁹ LEMOS 1991, p. 119.

¹⁰ COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 49.

¹¹ LEMOS 1991, p. 119 n. 139.

¹² LEMOS 1991, p. 118-119, no. 810 (Oxford AN 1896-1908-G.134), pl. 113.

¹³ BOARDMAN & HAYES 1966, p. 65, 67, 69, nos. 820, 827, figs. 34-35, pls. 47-48; BOARDMAN & HAYES 1973, p. 30, no. 820, fig. 11, and for the Boiotian suggestion, BOARDMAN & HAYES 1973, p. 52 no. 2202.

¹⁴ See BOARDMAN & HAYES 1966, p. 111-112, Type III and compare Type V.

¹⁵ BOARDMAN 1967, p. 120-121, no. 272, pl. 35.

¹⁶ BOARDMAN 1967, p. 101, 119, nos. 199-204, pl. 32, and p. 123, 125, nos. 298-302, pl. 37.

¹⁷ BOARDMAN 1967, p. 118-119, nos. 197-198, pl. 31.

decoration in added white over black glaze on the interior depicting Triton and fish. It was thought to go with a group of fine black-figure cups that Boardman and Hayes believed may have an Attic connection, though perhaps made elsewhere, for example, in Chios¹⁸. The fragments from Miletus described here may be from a tall cup with straight walls rather than the lip of a chalice though not enough is preserved to be certain. If they are Chian, then they represent a later development from the kantharoi, skyphoi and tall cups found at Emporio.

It seems then that all the individual elements of the Miletus vase can be found in Chian pottery, without having a parallel from Chios that combines all of them together. In any case, the fragments from the Aphrodite sanctuary at Miletus are special¹⁹.

What is particularly significant, if they are indeed Chian, is that the fragments came from Bothros A in the Aphrodite sanctuary, which to this point has produced material no later than ca. 630 BC, based on the Corinthian pottery found there.²⁰ This means that they are to be dated somewhat earlier than otherwise expected, perhaps by twenty years or more.

1. Five rim/body fragments, including a small part of a plain lip, very slightly out-turned from a small thin-walled open vessel (like the typical Chian chalice). **Fig. 1a-c**.

Z 09.73.1 (Z 09.73.176), Z 09.64.11, Z 09.73.63, Z 09.76.18, Z 09.77.5, Bothros A
Matt added red and matt added white paint.

Diameter rim ca. 14.0, Preserved height 2.5, thickness 0.2, a) Maximum preserved dimension a) 4.4, b) 3.4 c) 2.9, d) 2.3, e) 1.6

Exterior: black, band of white dots framed by double white lines, lotus and bud chain with the florals in white frames and red fill for the petals, band of diagonal crosses (saltires) alternating with red dots in frames of double white lines, then a row of rosettes again with white frames and red filling.

Interior: black, thin red line at the lip, two thin red lines below. There is no sign of slip first over the surface, either on the interior or the exterior.

640-630BC

Attic, imitating Chian

A fragmentary phiale from Miletus is painted black and decorated with added red and white floral motifs on the interior, but with the addition of a peach-coloured paint as well (**Fig. 2**). This style of decoration is called Six's

¹⁸ BOARDMAN & HAYES 1966, p. 64-65, 69, no. 827, fig. 34, pl. 48.

¹⁹ For other colourful East Greek light-on-dark vases, especially from Samos, see WALTER-KARYDI 1973, p. 125, nos. 277-288, pl. 36, p. 137, nos. 671-673, pl. 79 „Schwartzbunte Gefäße“, and note also the „Vroulia“ vases, e.g. WALTER-KARYDI 1973, p. 134, nos. 588-595, pl. 76. It is now apparent that these vases decorated with added red and white over a black ground were produced more widely than just Rhodes, with clay analysis suggesting a North Ionian, perhaps Clazomenian origin for some, see SCHLOTZHauer 2012, p. 88-89, no. Nau29, pl. 7 c-d.

²⁰ For a comment on the dating of this bothros to ca. 690-630 BC based on the Corinthian pottery finds (over 1200 fragments), see NEEFT 2012, p. 190. For Bothros A, see GRAEVE 2013, p. 7-8.

Technique.²¹ Boardman argued for Chian influence on these Attic phialai for the added white and red colour and the floral patterns.²² This phiale from Miletus cannot be mistaken for Chian however since Chian phialai do not have an offset lip as here, nor do they have the added „peach” or yellow colour. They do, however, have an overcoat of white slip usually on both interior and exterior. Although Chian painters had a larger colour palette for the Grand Style, including a light to medium brown as the flesh tone for male figures, this „peach” colour is not one that is found on Chian. It is, however, found commonly on Attic polychrome phialai in Six’s technique²³. The short slightly offset rim on the exterior is also unheard of for Chian phialai, but can be seen on some of the Attic phialai²⁴. The decoration, except for the completely black exterior, is also much closer to other Attic polychrome phialai than to Chian ones. For example, both the row of long thin tongues in „yellow” around the omphalos and the „yellow” balls between the ends of buds or leaves can be found on phialai from the Athenian Acropolis²⁵. It is also common on the Athenian phialai to have a row of white outlined buds with red interiors encircling the omphalos and even to have smaller buds in the spaces between. The decoration does have some similarities to earlier Chian phialai, especially in the red and white buds against the black background, but other features clearly point to Athenian phialai.

Attic polychrome phialai are described as having a wide black band or bands on the exterior, sometimes with additional white or yellow, but one group of the Acropolis phialai is completely black on the exterior²⁶. Boardman briefly mentions a Chian version of the „Six technique” (also as „Six’s technique”) with regard to a couple fragments from Emporio²⁷. This unusual decorative style is found more commonly on Attic lekythoi than phialai.²⁸

Tsingarida studied the distribution of phialai in Six’s polychrome technique, differentiating the various types, and noting that ones with more elaborate narrative scenes were found on the Athenian Acropolis or exported to Etruria,

²¹ For recent overviews of the Six’s technique on Attic vases with bibliography, see COHEN 2006; BRIJDER 2008; SMITH 2009, p. 356-357; BENTZ, GEOMINY & MÜLLER 2010, p. 51-57. For a list of known Athenian vases in Six’s technique, see GROSSMAN 1991, p. 20-24. Most are lekythoi, but she adds 11 more examples to the phialai in this technique known to Six, GROSSMAN 1991, p. 22 no. 7, p. 24 nos. 83-92.

²² BOARDMAN 1968, p. 13-15.

²³ See SIX 1888, p. 283. This added colour is described as yellow-red or orange on one of the phialai from the Athenian Acropolis, GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, p. 102 no. 1111.

²⁴ E.g. GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, no. 1114 pl. 85. For the profile of the Miletus phiale, compare TSINGARIDA 2008b, fig. 1 no. 4.

²⁵ GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, p. 102 nos. 1111 and 1114 pl. 85, p. 106 no. 1175 pl. 86; GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, nos. 1111, 1118 pl. 85.

²⁶ SIX 1888, p. 281; GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, p. 102 e.g. 1111-1112, 1119. For all black exterior ones, see, GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, p. 105 nos. 1156-1158, 1160-1161. For Six technique phialai in general, see SIX 1888, p. 283-286 pl. 28 D-E; GRAEF & LANGLOTZ 1933, nos. 1111-1248 pls. 85-89; TSINGARIDA 2008a, p. 187-193; 2008b; SMITH 2009, p. 356-357 with references to a suggested date range ca. 520-480 B.C. For some examples of brightly decorated Chian phialai, see LEMOS 1991, nos. 1074-1081 pls. 148-151.

²⁷ BOARDMAN 1978, p. 85; 1967, p. 169-170 nos. 848-849 fig. 117 pl. 64.

²⁸ BOARDMAN 1974, p. 178; for related bibliography, see CVA USA [36], p. 27.

while ones with simpler ornamental designs (mostly florals) were especially common in Athens (Acropolis), but also occurred on Delos and Rhodes²⁹. They are found in graves on Rhodes, but in sanctuaries elsewhere (e.g. Delos, Perachora). The Miletus example expands on the known distribution of these vases.

An example from Despotiko (AK 3790) on Paros was kindly shown to me by R. Sutton and thought by him to be Parian³⁰. It seemed to have all the features of carefully done Six's technique Athenian phialai including the peach-coloured paint and pendent floral ornaments, but its wall was quite thick. This may be a good candidate for clay analysis to confirm whether it is a local imitation or indeed Athenian.

2. Rim and body fragment (nineteen joining pieces), about one-half preserved, with a slightly offset rim which is concave on the exterior. Missing the omphalos (**Fig. 2**).

Z 92.73.22 Quadrant: Q 92_22

No evidence of slip. Dull added colours in white, red and a thick pinkish-cream colour („peach“).

Diameter rim (estimated) 22.0, thickness 0.3 – 0.4, Preserved height 3.9, Height rim 1.4

Exterior: black, at least one added white line at the join of rim and body.

Interior: black, row of added white dots on the rim, band of tall outlined buds in added white with added red stripe in the middle, and similar but smaller buds between the tops of the taller buds with an added “peach”-coloured ball between the tops of each tall and smaller bud, row of thin tongues in added „peach” colour around the missing omphalos.

Ca. 520-480 B.C.

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²⁹ TSINGARIDA 2008a, p. 187-193 figs. 1-4. See also TSINGARIDA 2008b, for an update on their distribution and comments on the East Greek source of inspiration by Nikosthenes and his workshop.

³⁰ KOURAYOS 2012, p. 42 no. AK3790.

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Fig. 1 a.



Fig. 1 b.

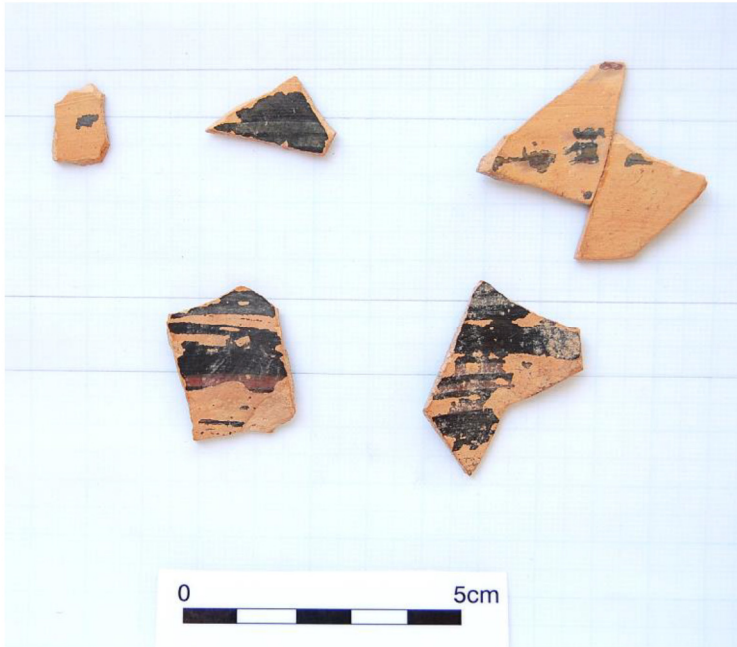


Fig. 1 c.



Fig. 2.