



Summary :

The most important style of black-figure pottery in Northern Ionia is the Clazomenian. The centre for the production of this style was Clazomenae. Clazomenian workshops activated between 550 and 520 BC.

Date

550-520 BC

Geographical Location

Clazomenae

1. Characteristics of the Style

The Clazomenian style is the most important school of the **black-figure style** in Eastern Greece in the second half of the 6th century BC. This style must have been created by a group of pottery painters of the northern-Ionic Late [Wild Goat Style](#), who, around 560 BC, abandoned the former technique and adopted the black figure technique superimposing white colour for animal images, which to a great extent have been replaced by human figures.¹ This technique was developed in [Clazomenae](#) and became a unique artistic style.

The clay is brownish, quite fair and varies in purity. There is no coat, with the exception of earlier vessels. The paint is black with a reddish tone here and there because of bad firing. The painters engrave the vessels and produce various aesthetic results: most times the figures are hastily and carelessly rendered, although some works in this style are well above the average. Many colours tend to be recurrently used and mainly the violet and the white colour are superimposed to render human skin (of both males and females), animal coat, sartorial details and floral adornments. The white colour is often applied directly on the clay and not on the black paint, as it happens in the black-figure vessels of mainland Greece. Anatomical details are rendered by engraving the black surfaces and by painting the white surfaces black.

2. Stylistic and Historical Development

There are three main groups of Clazomenian ceramics, possibly corresponding to different workshops or groups of painters, which present successive and overlapping styles: the Group of Tübingen, the Group of Petrie and the Group of Urla. It is a general impression among scholars that quality deteriorates, while the Attic influence becomes increasingly stronger, although always balancing the Ionic features.

The earliest group is that of Tübingen, including mainly large vessels (pyxides with stopper, amphoras with handles on the shoulder and plastic ends in the form of female heads and hydrias) depicting women. The group must date from the first decade of the second half of the 6th century or shortly later.

The group of Petrie includes mainly amphoras with neck, relatively tall body and extremely delicate analogies, between 35 and 55 cm tall (usually about 45 cm), most of which are decorated by the same painter, conventionally called the Painter of Petrie after the well-known British Egyptologist. Almost all vessels of the group come from Egypt. The daring use of Attic motifs is typical of this group. It dates from between 540 (or a little earlier) and 530 BC, as indicated by the painter's association with the Attic black-figure pottery of that period.

The group of Urla is the last group and is partly inspired by both the works of the Painter of Petrie and the earlier group of Tübingen, although there are obvious signs that the painters' imaginativeness tended to be exhausted. The vessels attributed to this group are mainly amphoras with middle-size neck and heavy, oval body, as well as hydrias of similar contour. The neck of the amphoras is usually adorned with an **anthemion**. Iconography gives emphasis on motifs ranging between mythology and anecdotes (e.g. a bearded



man with a Sphinx: probably Oedipus).² The chronology of the group results from the connection with the previous groups: production starts circa 540 BC so that the group could be stylistically influenced by the group of Tübingen, and ends circa 525 or 520 BC, without an obvious successor, though. Various other vessels belonging to the style and not associated with the three above groups are rather earlier and certainly originate at the end of the style, when the group of Urla stopped its production.

In general, there were few popular shapes: the necked amphora with the extremely delicate analogies, the amphora with handles on the shoulder, the hydria with the flat shoulder, the almost flat and short pyxis, the krater, the askos and the dinos.³ Some of them originated in earlier pottery styles from Eastern Greece (e.g. the amphora with handles on the shoulder is reminiscent of the Aeolian ceramics of Pitane, although the plastic ends originated in Chios and the pyxis in the [Aeolian ash-grey pottery](#)), while others are modernistic examples of painted pottery (such as the deep askos). In oval amphoras of the Urla group the Attic influence is clear.

3. Decoration – Iconographical Motifs

The decorated zones generally follow the Attic black-figure pottery. The main frieze or metope depicts human figures, while animals and birds hold a secondary position. Floral adornments are not popular and are rendered relatively inartistically.

A typical floral decorative motif is an *anthemeion* with closed petals on the neck of the amphoras of the Urla group. Flakes and half moons, probably borrowed from the repertoire of the [Fikellura style](#), are relatively popular in earlier amphoras. The source of inspiration for iconography and shaping is mainly the Chian pottery, while the influence from the Attic black-figure pottery of the time, which floods the markets of the then world, is obvious.

Images of animals are relatively rare, while the world of birds and birdlike monsters are particularly popular, mainly depicting cocks, ducks, water birds with long neck and the Sphinx.⁴ Among the motifs depicting human figures are scenes of battles, hunting scenes, *komastai* and recurrent but nerveless groups of women dancing while they are holding their wrists, as well as processions of women wrapped up in their himatia.⁵

Mythological motifs are relatively frequent on mainly large Clazomenian vessels, such as hydrias, amphoras and kraters. According to recent research, the painters of this style were inspired by Attic pottery less than it was thought earlier.⁶ The mythological motifs selected reveal craftsmen with deep knowledge of Homeric poetry: the most popular scene depicts the ambush and pursuit of [Troilus](#) by Achilles, while motifs like the wedding of [Hector](#) and Andromache, Achilles dragging Hector's body, Odysseus and Circe, Odysseus and the Sirens and the return of Hephaestus to Mount Olympus are also depicted. The traditional motifs from the mythological repertoire of antiquity are less widespread (Athena, Prometheus Bound, Pegasus and Herakles with the Nemean lion or Herakles fighting centaurs). Mythological creatures like centaurs and Tritons are less popular than the followers of Dionysus, that is, the [satyrs](#) (depicted hooved, according to eastern traditions) and the nymphs or maenads.⁷

4. Chronology

According to former opinions about the findings from Daphne, the position was abandoned circa 565 BC, which inevitably led to the early chronology of Clazomenian pottery and elevated the city of Clazomenae to the leading centre of painting in the Greek world thanks to its pottery painting and the painted [sarcophagi](#). Recent research, coupled with modern excavations at Clazomenae and deeper understanding of stylistic development, concluded that Clazomenian pottery started circa 550 BC and lasted for about one generation, until 520 BC, while its various versions lived until about the late 6th century.⁸

5. Findings and Spread

A large part of the vessels attributed to the workshops of the Clazomenian style come from positions in Egypt, mainly from the stronghold of Daphne (Tell Defenneh) in the Nile Delta, which must have been guarded by Ionian mercenaries of Egypt, and [Naukratis](#).⁹ Findings from Clazomenae and the surrounding area were known already from the late 19th century thanks to the



acquisition of the Misthos collection from Smyrna by the National Archaeological Museum of Athens.¹⁰ The colonies of Miletus in the Black Sea have their share of the exported Clazomenian vessels, mainly Panticapaeum, Olbia and Berezan.¹¹ Neighbouring [Smyrna](#) is also an important position where items of Clazomenian pottery have been found.¹² Findings from other places, such as Rhodes and Mytilene, are extremely rare.¹³ Most scholars believe that the largest part of Clazomenian pottery was produced by potters and pottery painters from Clazomenae, while the special use of Egyptian symbols and motifs on some vessels of this style probably indicates the existence of workshops in the Nile Delta.¹⁴ However, laboratory research verified the Clazomenian origin, which had already been confirmed by the comparison between the findings from Daphne and shells from Clazomenae.¹⁵

6. Similar Vessels from Northern Ionia

It is not certain whether some vessels found in [Aeolis](#), the [colonies of Miletus in the Black Sea](#), Rhodes, Delos and Etruria belong to this style.¹⁵ They form the so-called Enmann and Knipovitch categories. Large images of animals and humans are depicted on amphoras, askoi, oinochoai and hydrias of the first category. The second category uses the heavy oval amphora depicting large animals and monsters on metopes, while a group of askoi from Olbia and, secondarily, other positions in the Black Sea, has been associated with vessels produced in Etruria, the so-called Northampton vessels. Whereas the Enmann group may have originated in Clazomenae, the Knipovitch group possibly originated in [Phocaea](#) or in its colony [Lampsacus](#) in the [Troad](#), according to current opinions. As regards the group of askoi and some similar vessels forming the Chanenko group, they are considered to have been made by some pottery painters who emigrated from their Asia Minor centre to the North, before they arrived in Etruria.¹⁶

Several sporadic black-figure vessels from Northern [Ionia](#) are related to the Clazomenian style. It is worth mentioning an early krater from Smyrna, where the earliest representation of a camel in Greek art can be seen. The vessel gave its name to the group of Camel, possibly originating in Smyrna, without excluding Clazomenae, though.¹⁷

1. Cook, R.M., Dupont, P., *East Greek Pottery* (London 1998), p. 96, pic. 12.1 a and b.
2. London British Museum 88.2-8.110. Cook, R.M., Dupont, P., *East Greek Pottery* (London 1998), p. 102, pic. 12.4b.
3. For the frequency of the shapes, see Ricco, G., "Elenco per tipi di Vasi di Stile 'Clazomenio' noti da pubblicazione o da sola menzione in ordine delle raccolte e numerico (progressivo) d'inventario delle raccolte stesse", *Antichità* 2 (1950), pp. 2-20.
4. Boardman, J., *Early Greek Vase Painting* (London 1998), pic. 342 (ducks and sphinxes), 344 and 345 (cocks and sphinxes). Cook, R.M., Dupont, P., *East Greek Pottery* (London 1998), p. 97, pic. 12.2 (Cocks and Sphinxes).
5. Boardman, J., *Early Greek Vase Painting* (London 1998), pic. 340 (chorus of women), 341 (procession of women) and 343 (komastai). Cook, R.M., Dupont, P., *East Greek Pottery* (London 1998), p. 97, pic. 12.2 (chorus of women).
6. See Tempesta, A., *Le Raffigurazioni mitologiche sulla ceramica greco-orientale arcaica* (RdA Supplemento 19, Roma 1998), pp. 131-136.
7. Tempesta, A., *Le Raffigurazioni mitologiche sulla ceramica greco-orientale arcaica* (RdA Supplemento 19, Roma 1998), pp. 165-168.
8. Zahn, R., 'Vasenscherben aus Klazomenai', *AM* 23 (1898), pp. 38-79. Correct chronology: Rumpf, A., 'Zu den klazomenischer Denkmälern', *JDI* 48 (1933), pp. 55-83. Cook, R.M., 'A List of Clazomenian Pottery', *BSA* 47 (1952), pp. 123-152..
9. Stronghold of Daphne: Petrie, F., *Tanis, II* (London 1888), pp. 47-96. Naukratis: Prinz, H., *Funde aus Naukratis* (Klio Beiheft VII, Berlin 1907), pp. 42-57. See Cook, R.M., 'A List of Clazomenian Pottery', *BSA* 47 (1952), pp. 148-149. Möller, A., *Naukratis. Trade in Ancient Greece* (Oxford 2000), p. 140.
10. Zahn, R., 'Vasenscherben aus Klazomenai', *AM* 23 (1898), pp. 38-79.



11. Black Sea: Alexandrescu, P., 'La céramique de Grèce de l'Est dans les Cités pontiques', in *Les céramiques de la Grèce de l'Est et leur Diffusion à l'Occident. Colloque international. Centre Jean Bérard, Institut Français de Naples, 6-9 juillet 1976* (Paris-Naples 1978), pp. 52-61. Bouzek, J., *Studies of Greek Pottery in the Black Sea Area* (Prague 1990), p. 35. Kopejkina, L.V., *Soobszenija Gos. Ermitaza* (Leningrad 1979), pp. 7-25.
12. Cook, J.M., 'Old-Smyrna. Ionic Black Figure and Other 6th c. Figured Wares', *BSA* 60, 1965, 119-122 and 128-132, tab. 34-36.
13. Rhodes: Amphora of Rhodes, no. 13339. Jacopi, G., 'Esplorazione archeologica di Camiro I. Scavi nelle necropoli Camiresi 1929-1930', *Clara Rhodos* 4 (1931), from p. 143 onwards, pic. 138-139 and tab. II. Mytilene: Cook, R.M., *CVA London, British Museum* 8 (London 1954), tab. 590.12. Schauss, G.P., 'Archaic Imported Fine Wares from the Acropolis, Mytilene', *Hesperia* 61 (1992), p. 365, tab. 81, nos 33-34.
14. Boardman, J., 'A Greek Vase from Egypt', *JHS* 78 (1958), pp. 4-12, tab. 1-2. Hoffmann, F., Steinhart, M., 'Arpies und die ostgriechische Vasenmalerei', *JÖAI* 67 (1997), pp. 49-61.
15. About the groups Enmann and Knipovitch and their spread, see R.M., 'A List of Clazomenian Pottery', *BSA* 47 (1952), pp. 134-138. Martelli, M., 'Un askos del Museo di Tarquinia e il problema delle presenze nord-ioniche in Etruria', *Prospettiva* 27 (1981), pp. 2-14. Kopejkina, L.V., *Soobszenija Gos. Ermitaza* (Leningrad 1979), pp. 7-25.
16. Waldhauer, O., 'Ein askos aus der Sammlung Chanenko in Kiev und die altsamische Kunst', *AA* 1929, columns 235-266. Martelli, M., 'Un askos del Museo di Tarquinia e il problema delle presenze nord-ioniche in Etruria', *Prospettiva* 27 (1981), pp. 2-14.
17. Museum Izmir OS 45: Boardman, J., *Early Greek Vase Painting* (London 1998), pic. 350.

Bibliography :

	Boardman J. , "A Greek Vase from Egypt", <i>JHS</i> , 78, 1958, 4-12
	Boardman J. , <i>Early Greek Vase Painting</i> , London 1998
	Cook R.M. , "A List of Clazomenian Pottery", <i>BSA</i> , 47, 1952, 123-152
	Cook R.M., Dupont P. , <i>East Greek Pottery</i> , London 1998
	Martelli M. , "Un askos nel Museo di Tarquinia e il problema delle presenze nord-ioniche in Etruria", <i>Prospettiva</i> , 27, 1981, 2-14
	<i>Les céramiques de la Grèce de l'Est et leur Diffusion à l'Occident. Colloque international. Centre Jean Bérard, Institut Français de Naples, 6-9 juillet 1976</i> , Paris, Naples 1978
	Ricco G. , "Elenco per tipi di Vasi di Stile "Clazomenio" noti da pubblicazione o da sola menzione in ordine delle raccolte e numerico (progressivo) d'inventario delle raccolte stesse", <i>Antichità</i> , 2, 1950, 2-20
	Rumpf A. , "Zu den klazomenischer Denkmälern", <i>JDI</i> , 48, 1933, 55-83
	Tempesta A. , <i>Le Raffigurazioni mitologiche sulla ceramica greco-orientale arcaica</i> , Roma 1998, RdA Supplemento 19
	Walter-Karydi E. , <i>Samische Gefässe des 6. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.</i> , Bonn 1973, Samos VI.1.
	Zahn R. , "Vasenscherben aus Klazomenai", <i>AM</i> , 23, 1898, 38-79



Price E.R., *East Greek Pottery*, Paris 1928

Webliography :

Klazomenian Pottery and Sarcophagi

http://www2.ocn.ne.jp/~greekart/vase/h_clazom_e.html

Glossary :

anthemion (Palmette)

A floral decorative motif in the form of a palmette, very widespread in the Greek art and architecture.

black figure technique

Decorative technique of vase painting. It involves painting figures in black silhouette on the pale clay, while the anatomic details are given in incised lines.

Komastes, the

The person participating in the "Komos", the orgiastic dance in honour of Dionysus. For the archaeologists, the komastai are the dancers related to the symposium and the wine-drinking.

Naukratis

Important city of Egypt, built by Greek colonists from Eastern Greece (Miletus, Rhodes, Samos) and Aegina. It was founded in late 7th century and flourished especially during the 6th century when under the authorisation of Egyptian Pharaohs, became a trade centre between Asia Minor, Greece and Egypt.