

**HPAH4005 - Cauldron of Democracy and Tragedy: Classical Greek History and Literature**

**Timeline Addition for 350-340 B.C - Choephoroi Painter.**

This anonymous painter's pseudonym, the Choephoroi Painter, stems from a link between the artist's work and a play by Aeschylus (or perhaps of Euripides), 'The Libation Bearers' (Choephoroi)<sup>1</sup>. The ceramics that have been attributed to this artist, and the focus of this work, are dated between 350-340 B.C.<sup>2</sup>.

Through the study of an artist's subject, and a particular artist's style, art historians are able to use these factors to collect works such as pottery together, and attribute them to certain artists<sup>3</sup>. In the case of the Choephoroi Painter one of the stylistic components unique to the Choephoroi Painter, and other artists, is their anatomical characterisations of the figures and their facial expressions depicted in their work. The Choephoroi Painter's characters have been noted for their 'bulging eyes' and 'thick lips', also, the positions and positioning of characters, and their gesticulations, are something which is repeated over and again<sup>4</sup>. These types of repetitions are not just idiosyncratic, but would also have helped speed up the process of production. Other which are used to determine a certain artists work are the actual pot itself, from the differences in type and thickness of clay, to slight differences in the shape of the classic styles and also the glaze<sup>5</sup>.

The red figure technique used by the Choephoroi Painter originated c. 530 B.C.<sup>6</sup>. the glaze or 'slip' was a mixture of clay and pigments watered down so as to make application easy with a brush. This, added to the 3 stage firing technique; 1- Oxidisation, 2- adding green wood to reduce oxygen turning the pot black and 3- allowing air (oxygen) back into the kiln, would leave the area painted with the 'slip' black, and the unpainted area the colour of the clay (red)<sup>7</sup>.

The subject may have been a favourite subject of the artist, but, remembering that this is a money-making enterprise suggests the particular subject of 'The Libation Bearers' was also a firm favourite of the painter's customers. This together with what has been explored above all add in small part to the understanding of the life and habits of an ancient society<sup>8</sup>.

**Word count 412**

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<sup>1</sup> Theoi. com; British Museum online; Webster, 1959, pp. 100-102

<sup>2</sup> Theoi. com

<sup>3</sup> Theoi. T40.2 The Purification of Orestes; Theoi. K6.7 The Death of Actaeon; Theoi. M29.1 Phrixus, Helle and The Golden Ram.

<sup>4</sup> Ananich, 2005, p.28; Theoi T40.2 The Purification of Orestes

<sup>5</sup> Ananich, 2005, p.28

<sup>6</sup> Metropolitan Museum, 2002, online

<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Museum, 2002, online

<sup>8</sup> Sparkes, 1996, p.1

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