



Summary :

The Geometric style in Asia Minor begins in the second half of the 9th century BC, with Smyrna, Caria and Miletus as its main centres, and lasts until 700 BC or sometime later. It is a conservative style which is initially influenced by the Attic Geometric style, whereas later it is inspired more by Rhodes or the Dodecanese.

Date

9th - early 7th century BC

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

1. The Geometric style in Asia Minor

The development of the Geometric style in Asia Minor is directly connected to the developments of the style in Greece. Scarce finds and their fragmentary condition do not allow the formulation of a coherent picture concerning the evolution and the distinctive characteristics of the local workshops. Scholars consider the pottery production of Asia Minor of this period as part of a wider school of eastern Greece, which comprises the islands of the north Aegean and the Dodecanese. The excavated archaeological material from these areas, mainly coming from cemeteries, is richer, but also the artistic trends are more interesting and orientated towards metropolitan Greece.

2. Early Geometric style

The Early Geometric style of Asia Minor is a natural continuation of the [Protogeometric style](#). Chronologically speaking, vases of Protogeometric inspiration, mainly imitations of Attic prototypes, are produced during the early 9th century BC, when in mainland Greece the main schools of pottery have already entered into the Early Geometric phase. The early phase of the Geometric style in Asia Minor is scarcely documented by finds. Important sites are [Miletus](#) and [Iasos](#) in [Caria](#).

In general, it is a period of stagnation in the development of vase painting, which places Asia Minor and eastern Greece in the periphery of the artistic developments of the Greek world.

The pottery from Miletus bears strong similarities with examples from the rich cemeteries of [Kos](#) and [Rhodes](#). Shapes are similar to the ones of the Protogeometric style. It seems, nevertheless, that the potters of Asia Minor had some, although vague, knowledge of the developments in the rest of the Greek world. The shapes documented are the [pyxis](#), the neck-handled [amphora](#), the [oinochoe](#) and the [hydria](#). The neck-handled amphora now acquires more slender proportions compared to the Protogeometric examples, with a clear resemblance to the Attic Early Geometric amphora, whereas the vessel's neck is also taller. The decoration preserves elements of the late Protogeometric period, in a decayed style. Concerning closed shapes, the decoration consists of mainly horizontal bands around the neck of the vase, narrower than their earlier counterparts. Less frequently, as in an amphora and an oinochoe from Iasos in Caria, there is a second decorative zone, which follows the prototypes from Attica. Common decorative patterns are the concentric circles and semicircles and less frequently the straight-lined motifs. Their rendering is, however, often careless: instead of semicircles one might find shapes corresponding to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a circle. Concentric circles are less in number than in the Protogeometric period, whereas the cross-like motif in their centre is less accurate.¹

3. Middle Geometric style

The Middle Geometric style, although a natural evolution of the earlier phase concerning shapes, it is marked by a strong effort to introduce decorative types from Attica. Around the middle of the 9th century BC the first attempts to adopt the Middle Geometric style takes place, which, under the guidance of the Athenian potters, is elevated to an "international style". This is a period of a true



development of the pottery of Asia Minor, which begins to differentiate greatly from the workshops of the Dodecanese, the former remaining relatively independent from Attic influence. Important finds come again from Miletus and Caria, whereas some noteworthy examples of this style have been also found in [Smyrna](#).

Shapes present an obvious evolution from the previous period. The amphora is now rare and, when found, seems to have preserved its old-fashioned shape with the handles on the belly of the vase.² The **crater**, with the high conical foot, a clearly Attic shape and diffused especially in Rhodes, is also found in Miletus, [Samos](#) and Smyrna, towards the end of the Middle Geometric period.³ The single-handled **kylix**, a deep cup, with an incision under the handle and a low conical foot is known from Miletus, but it should have originated from the Dodecanese.⁴ The **skyphos** imitates Attic prototypes. It features a shallow body, straight walls and an out turned rim, whereas it is already found in great numbers in Miletus, Smyrna and Pygela in Caria. A similar diffusion is observed for the round **kolyle**, decorated with Middle Geometric motifs, though this shape is mainly found during the next period. Examples of locally made skyphoi, with a deep body and a short conical or ring base are also known from Kos, where the shape seems to be predominant, as well as from Miletus, whereas from Asarlik of Caria examples with a very deep body and one handle are known.⁵ The **lekythos**, very popular in the Dodecanese, is less frequent in Asia Minor, with most of the examples coming from Miletus.

The decoration follows Attic prototypes: skyphoi with panels and quadruple zig-zags are sometimes considered Milesian and imports, which can be dated to the first phase of the Middle Geometric period. From the second phase of the period onwards, imitations of Attic skyphoi are also documented, especially from Miletus. The same picture can be also observed in the Samian workshop, which follows an evolution similar to that of the Asia Minor workshop.

Towards the end of the Geometric period, Attic predominance starts to waver, to be substituted by hybrid decorative patterns, combining the Protogeometric tradition (triangles on the shoulder of cups combined with perpendicular rows of dots) with pure Attic motifs (a **rosette** with a dot at its centre)⁶ or Rhodian ones (square hooks). The simple meander is gradually replaced by more complex motifs, the pseudo-meander (a combination of two facing hooks) and the composite rampart-like meander. In Miletus again, survivals of the Protogeometric successive circles filled with dots or small circles are documented.

In the later phase of this period, the motifs of Attic provenance are combined in a totally different way, without the convention of the attachment to a central panel. Spirals, meanders filled with lines and hatched triangles or diamonds are combined to create a stylized tree, which will be the main decorative motif of vase painting during the next period.⁷

4. Late Geometric style

An important development during this period is the appearance of the Geometric style in more areas and the beginning of a pictorial tradition. Differences between the local centres of production can now be observed more accurately than in previous periods, although the comprehension of the evolution of every local workshop is still impossible. Miletus is the most important centre of production of Late Geometric pottery in Southern [Ionia](#).⁸ Finds from [Didyma](#) surely belong to Milesian workshops and date to the last phase of the period.⁹ Next to the products of a clearly local character, one might see abundant imitations of Rhodian kotyles, the prototypes of which are also imported in great numbers. The system of decoration in panels is not followed systematically, in contrast to the trend followed in the workshops of the Dodecanese. Popular motifs are the small groups of dots, rosettes and ramparts, in a loose connection between them. An important innovation during this period is the introduction of figure scenes that included dancers executed in the silhouette technique as well as birds and animals. These motifs replaced the geometric patterns, and slowly lead into the [Orientalizing](#) period.¹⁰

A Carian local style seems to have been inspired by the workshops of Rhodes and Cos; the skyphos, kotyle, and amphoriskos with thick body are the predominant shapes, while less frequent is the appearance of a globular oinochoe and the crater. The decoration is simple with straight-lined shapes, triangles, diamonds, lozenges, zig-zag or perpendicular hatched lines and small groups of concentric circles, organized in **metopes**.



Towards the end of the period the borrowed tree from Rhodes as well as birds make their appearance.¹¹ In [Ephesus](#) the Geometric pottery is in general inspired by Rhodes, whereas in [Aeolis](#) most of the finds are either imports or imitations, mostly of Rhodian and Chian vases.¹²

Smyrna is the only noteworthy representative of North Ionia. The Late Geometric style in this area combines Attic and Corinthian influences in shapes and decoration, although influence from island workshops, mainly of [Chios](#), is stronger. A very important vessel is a crater decorated with four-leaved motifs, swastikas, "butterflies" and ramparts, resembling Attic motifs but arranged in the Chian tradition, in narrow horizontal zones defined by perpendicular columns.¹³ During the end of this period, around 700 BC, Rhodian influence is more direct, as indicated by the imitation of the kolyle with birds. Corinthian influence is defined by examples of kotyles decorated with lozenges. The crater is replaced by the [dinós](#), with a very interesting example of a sherd where a seven-chord [lyre](#) is for the first time depicted.¹⁴ Lydia and [Troas](#) do not present specimens of local production other than imitations of Rhodian workshops, before 700 BC, during the so-called Subgeometric phase.

5. Total evaluation

The Geometric style of Asia Minor seems to be imitative and conservative. The nearby islands of the northern Aegean and the Dodecanese gave the tone, when the direct influence of Attic and later Corinthian prototypes had not been adopted. Culturally, the decorated pottery does not appear to have the same important role in the artistic evolution of this region, a role well documented in mainland Greece. Monumental vessels are rare. Pictorial tradition, which, according to art historians marks the beginning of the so-called Greek Renaissance of the 8th century BC, does not seem to have rooted in Asia Minor. The general decorative trend of the Geometric pottery without great artistic qualities will survive the Subgeometric style that will be developed to an important part of the pottery of the next period, the 7th century BC. This phenomenon is also evident to other forms of art in the region under discussion. For instance, metallurgical activity is much more inferior to similar attempts in the Peloponnese and Attica.

The world of Asia Minor, during the 9th and the 8th century BC, if regarded from the art history viewpoint, is characterized by isolation, provincialism and lack of any disposal for experiments and ambition.

-
1. Miletus: See Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", *IstMitt* 7 (1957), p. 102-132, tab. 36.3.
 2. For example, an amphora from Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", *IstMitt* 9-10 (1959-1960), p. 1-96, table 39.1.
 3. Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", *IstMitt* 7 (1957), p. 102-132, especially p. 123, fig. 8.1 and 2, tab.37b.
 4. Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", *IstMitt* 7 (1957), p. 102-132, tab. 39.2 and "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", *IstMitt* 9-10 (1959-1960), p. 1-96, tab. 57.4.
 5. Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", *IstMitt* 9-10 (1959-1960), p. 1-96, tab. 57.1-3. Asarlık: Coldstream, N., *Greek Geometric Pottery. A Survey of Ten Regional Styles* (Oxford 1968), p. 270.
 6. For example, the fragmentary kylix in Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", *IstMitt* 7 (1957), p. 102-132, tab.39.2 c, e.
 7. Crater from Smyrna: Coldstream, N., *Greek Geometric Pottery. A Survey of Ten Regional Styles* (Oxford 1968), tab. 60f. A kylix from Miletus: Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", *IstMitt* 9-10 (1959-1960), p. 1-96, tab. 57.4.
 8. See Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", *IstMitt* 7 (1957), p. 102-132, tab. 38-39; Weickert, C., "Die Ausgrabung beim



Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", *IstMitt* 9-10 (1959-1960), p. 1-96, tab. 54-59, 79, 85; Mallwitz, A. – Schiering, W., "Der Alte Athena-Tempel von Milet", *IstMitt* 18 (1968), p. 87-160, tab. 34-35.

9. Tuchelt, K., "Didyma. Bericht über die Arbeiten 1969/1970", *IstMitt* 21 (1971), p. 45-87, tab. 1.

10. Dancers: Izmir Museum, a fragmentary vase from Miletus. Coldstream, N., *Geometric Greece* (London 1977), p. 259, fig. 259d.

11. Özgünel, C., *Carian Geometric Pottery* (Ankara 1979); Prag, A.J.N.W., "Greek Geometry Overseas: A New Carian Krater in Manchester", in Tsetschladze, G.R. – Prag, A.J.N.W. – Snodgrass, A.M. (επιμ.), *Periplous. Papers on classical art and archeology presented to Sir John Boardman* (London 2000), p. 228-234.

12. Ephesus: Brein, F., "Geometrisch dekorierte Keramik aus Ephesos", in Akurgal, E. (ed.), *Proceedings of the Xth International Congress of Classical Archaeology, Ankara-Izmir* (Ankara 1978), p. 721-728.

13. Cook, R.M. – Dupont, P., *East Greek Pottery* (London 1998), p. 24, fig. 5.9.

14. Boardman, J., *Early Greek Vase Painting* (London 1998), p. 77, fig. 145.

Bibliography :

	Cook R.M., Dupont P. , <i>East Greek Pottery</i> , London 1998
	Weickert C. , "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1957", <i>IstMitt</i> , 9-10, 1959/1960, 1-96
	Coldstream J.N. , <i>Geometric Greece</i> , 2, London 2002
	Coldstream N. , <i>Greek Geometric Pottery A Survey of Ten Regional Styles</i> , Oxford 1968
	Özgünel C. , <i>Carian Geometric Pottery</i> , Ankara 1979
	Cook R.M. , "Ionia and Greece in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.", <i>JHS</i> , 66, 1946, 67-98
	Brein F. , "Geometrisch dekorierte Keramik aus Ephesos", Akurgal, E. (επιμ.), <i>Proceedings of the Xth International Congress of Classical Archaeology, Ankara-Izmir</i> , Ankara 1978, 721-728
	Weickert C. , "Die Ausgrabung beim Athena-Tempel in Milet 1955", <i>IstMitt</i> , 7, 1957, 102-132
	Coldstream J. , "The Meaning of the Regional Styles in the Eighth Century B.C.", Hägg, R. (ed.), <i>The Greek Renaissance of the 8th century B.C. Tradition and Innovation</i> , Swedish School of Athens, Stockholm 1983, 17-25

Glossary :

	amphora, the from the greek words "αμφί" (on both sides) and "φέρω" (carry): vessel with long ovoid body and a considerably narrower neck made in various sizes from the smaller perfume oil container to the large storage receivers of liquids and solids. It stands on a small foot and it bears two invariable vertical handles on either side. Some of the distinguished types of the amphorae are these whose lower part is tapering to the point (narrow bottomed), the neck type, the Nicosthenian, the Nola, the Panathenaic, the Tyrrhenian, the SOS type.
	crater, the



from the greek verb "κεράννυμι" (to mix). Big, open vessel for mixing wine with water. The wine was then poured into oinochoae. There are various craters' forms depending on body and handle shape: column-, volute-, calyx-, and bell crater. They were usually placed in the middle of the room where symposia were held-

dinos, lebes, the

Another name for lebes. Big, open, semispherical vessel without handles and very low neck. It bears no foot and it was used for mixing wine with water and as a prize. When it was standing on a high stand and had two tall vertical handles disposed on a tall neck and a mouth covered with a lid, it was called "lebes gamikos" and was used for marriage rituals.

hydria

From the greek word "hydor" (water). It bears three handles, two for carrying and one placed vertical to the wide shoulder of the vessel for pouring. Water was usually carried, but hydria was also often used as ballot box and cinerary urn. The type of the hydria whose neck is not clearly separated from the body is called "calpis".

kotyle, the

Drinking vessel that bears two horizontal handles. It is found in great quantities in Corinth. It is similar to skyphos, but it features more side-line walls.

kylix, the

The most essential ancient drinking cup. It bears a wide and shallow body raised on a stem from a foot. It always has horizontal handles disposed symmetrically, often swinging upwards . The interior, flat, round bottom of the vessel was used as surface for painted decoration. There are many different types of kylikes such as the Komast type, the Siana type, types A, B, C, the Droop and the Cassel cups.

lekythos, the

A perfumed oil container with a narrow mouth and one vertical handle. There are lots of variants of this shape. They are predominant during the 5th c. BC. A common find is also the aryballoid lekythos with a globular and squat body. White lekythoi were used solely as votive offerings in burials.

metope (1. architecture, 2. painting)

1. Rectangular element separating the triglyphs on a Doric frieze. Metopes often have figurative relief representations.
2. rectangular area, usually at the height of the vessel's handles, depicting figural or non figural ornamental representations.

oinochoe

From the greek words "οἶνος" (wine) and "χέω" (pour). Ovoid, single-handled wine jug usually taller than it is wide. There have been distinguished 10 types based on variations of profile, mouth type and handle form.

pyxis, the

Small vessel with a lid. Women kept inside cosmetics or jewels. It bears no handles except for the skyphoid pyxis of Sicily.

rosette, the

An ornament with a generally circular combination of parts resembling a flower or plant.

skyphos

A deep vessel with an open rim and an almost hemispherical shape.