

Hum 110: Geometric & Proto-Corinthian Art (8th Century)

Critics have argued that poetic style is related to both the poems content and the poet's cultural agenda. The purpose of this handout is to get you to think about how the style of attic art and literature reflect the same anxieties or concerns.

A Breakdown of Early Greek Culture (see outline in Murray p. 310-311):

1. Geometric Age
 - 875-750 Geometric Pottery
 - 700+ Homer
2. Orientalizing Period
 - 725-700 Early Proto-Corinthian Pottery
 - 700+ Hesiod
3. Archaic Age
 - 610-525 Attic Black Figure Pottery
 - 530 Attic Red Figure Pottery Begins
 - Lyric Poets

Review from Lecture & Readings:

What is Hesiod's political theory (according to the lecturers and Murray)?

How does his style support or relate to his political theory?

What was the influence of the near east on the style and content of Hesiod's *Theogony*?

A Summary of Attic Geometric Style from Murray (chapter 6):

Murray asserts that just as near east culture influenced the structure and content of Hesiod's *Theogony*, so did it influence the style of archaic art. First, how does Geometric Art style related to the style and values of Homer and Hesiod's day? Second, presumably, if a culture (e.g. Early Greece) adopts the cultural ways of another culture (e.g. the Phoenicians) and they are not coerced into doing so (e.g. due to colonization), they are doing it because something about the other culture appeals to them. Can you make sense of why the following aspects of near eastern style might have appealed to the Greeks and been adopted into Greek pottery?

Geometric Style	Stylistic Parallels in the <i>Iliad</i> , <i>Theogony</i> , and <i>Works and Days</i>	Proto Corinthian Style (Oriental Influence)
regular geometric patterns		freedom of line
chequer boards, swastikas, zigzags, meanders		curved patterns, spirals, curls, volutes, rosettes, palmettes, lotus flowers
stylized animals (usually repeated into a pattern)		exotic animals, emphasis on naturalism
ritualized scenes		emphasis on mythology and epic stories