

Name:

Date:

Period:

Gardener's Notes

Unit 8 - Chapter 11: Art of Late Antiquity

Could a Greek or Roman temple be converted into a Christian church? Greek and Roman temples were designed to contain cult statues. In contrast, a Christian church was intended to be a place where believers could gather for worship. The needs of the Christian religion thus demanded a new style of sacred architecture.

Christianity's impact on art extended well beyond building new churches. Classical art portrayed gods, emperors, mythical heroes and victorious athletes. In contrast, Christian artists portrayed the life of Christ and the deeds of the saints.

Christianity's new, more spiritual focus required a different style of art. The first Christian artists blended Christian subjects and themes with Classical features. The term early Christian art refers to the preserved works with Christian subjects created during the first 5 centuries CE. Early Christian art is a fascinating and changing synthesis of Christian subject matter and Classical features.

Early Christian paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and buildings occupy a transitional phase between the Classical period and the art and architecture of the Middle Ages. Although early Christian art is not extensive, it has occupied an important place on past AP Art History exams. Most exams have contained between one and three multiple-choice questions. Each of the essay questions asked students to describe the Classical and early Christian characteristics of a specific work of art.

1. Life of Jesus in Art

- a. Primary sources for his life**
- b. Describe Jesus Christ's Passion**
- c. Describe the Book of Revelation**
- d. Describe Christian symbols**

2. Art of the Catacombs

- a. *What are the Catacombs?*
- b. *Describe the Catacomb of Priscilla.*
- c. *Describe Christ's physical form. Compare to early representations of the human form.*
- d. *Who was Jonah? Why is he important?*

3. Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus

- a. *Who was buried here and how is this different and similar to early sarcophagi?*

4. Old Saint Peter's Basilica

- a. *Why is this structure important?*
- b. *What was this structure based on? What early forms influenced this building?*

5. Centrally Planned Buildings

- a. Describe one centrally planned building using the architectural terms: nave, transept, ambulatory, clerestory, baldacchino**

6. Early Christian Mosaics

- a. Give one example of a mosaic: credit line, location of work**
b. Compare this mosaic with another earlier mosaic or painting. Pick one that uses a hierarchy of figures.

Vocabulary Terms: Find the definitions of each of the words below and add the word to the section above that will use it.

1. polytheism

2. monotheism

3. catacombs

4. prefigurations

5. *Good Shepherd*

6. *Original Sin*

7. *Peter & Paul*

8. *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*

9. *liturgy*

10. *mausoleums*

11. *nave, apse, atrium, narthex, vestibule, transept*

12. *relics, pilgrim*

13. *baldacchino, clerestory, central-plan, baptistery, ambulatory*

Additional Notes

Early Christian art marks an important transition between the Greco- Roman heritage and the emerging art of the Middle Ages. The AP Art History exam committee expects students to identify the catacombs, list characteristic features of Early Christian basilicas as much as Old Saint Peter's, and be able to discuss the Classical and Early Christian styles exhibited in a work of art.