Chapter 11
LATE ANTIQUITY

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. In the Dura painting, *Samuel Anointing David*, David is depicted with an Imperial attribute indicating his royalty. Which of the following is that attribute?
   a. purple toga
   b. laurel-leaf crown
   c. cuirass of Augustus
   d. armor of Hadrian
   Answer: a

2. Why is the Christian community house in Dura-Europas only a small house?
   a. No churches were constructed in Dura-Europas
   b. No large dwellings were constructed in Dura-Europas
   c. Christians did not enjoy the patronage of the Roman state
   d. No shrines or holy structures were allowed in Dura-Europas
   Answer: c

3. The Roman State persecuted the Christians. Which of the following would account for this persecution?
   a. Christians refused to pay homage to the State’s gods
   b. Christians fomented revolt against the Roman state
   c. Romans knew the Christians would be their downfall
   d. Romans didn’t approve of anything originating in Judea
   Answer: a

4. What is the earliest datable period for Christian art?
   a. 5th century CE
   b. 1st century CE
   c. 3rd century CE
   d. 6th century CE
   Answer: c

5. After Christianity received acceptance within the Roman Empire, churches were constructed above the catacombs. Which of the following provides the most explanation for such churches to be constructed at these sites?
   a. The pious worshiped openly at the graves of the earliest Christian martyrs
   b. These were the only sites available for church construction
   c. All churches had to be constructed outside the city’s walls
   d. The catacombs were the holiest sites
   Answer: a
6. A man, a woman, and at least one child can be seen in the praying position found in the lunette of the Catacomb of Sts. Peter and Marcellinus. Which of the following presents the best explanation for the placement of these people in the lunette?
   a. They represent the Christian family seeking their heavenly reward.
   b. They represent the ideal Christian family.
   c. They represent the Christian family who own that section of the catacomb.
   d. They represent nothing specific, just figures to fill the space.

Answer: a

7. How did one recognize a Christian sarcophagus?
   a. The name of the owner was always carved on the center panel
   b. Only Christians were buried in sarcophagi
   c. It was decorated with significant Christian subject matter
   d. The Crucifixion was always included as part of the subject matter

Answer: c

8. In the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, a pagan who converted to Christianity, the sculptors illustrated scenes from the life of Christ. Which of the following represents the allusion to the Crucifixion?
   a. Entry into Jerusalem
   b. Christ before Pilate
   c. Christ between Sts. Peter and Paul
   d. Christ enthroned

Answer: b

9. The Diptych of the Nicomachi and the Symmachi is significant to the art tradition of fourth century Rome. Which of the following supports that statement?
   a. It adapted classical tradition for a Christian wedding gift
   b. It initiated the tradition of ivory carving
   c. The diptych becomes a document acknowledging the marriage of the daughter to Junius Bassus
   d. It deliberately continued the classical tradition

Answer: d

10. The Christ as Good Shepherd from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna is said to be deeply rooted in the classical tradition. Which of the following would support that belief?
   a. It is a mosaic rather than a fresco
   b. It is full of Greco-Roman illusionistic devices
   c. It is a fresco rather than a mosaic
   d. It has a landscape included in the depiction

Answer: b

11. The illustrated book had a long history in the ancient world. When did the tradition of placing pictures in manuscripts first begin?
   a. Republican Rome
   b. Etruscan period
   c. Classical Greece
   d. Pharaonic Egypt
12. Which of the following attributes was used to depict Christ after Christianity was officially recognized by Roman authorities?
   a. laurel leaf crown
   b. Imperial purple
   c. chariot
   d. Imperial armor

   Answer: b

13. Which of the following is represented on the sarcophagus of Santa Maria Antiqua?
   a. Daniel
   b. Jonah
   c. Matthew
   d. Twelve Apostles

   Answer: b

14. What was the entrance porch of Old St. Peter’s in Rome called?
   a. atrium
   b. narthex
   c. nave
   d. bema

   Answer: b

15. Which of the following would be considered the predecessor for the Mausoleum of Costanza?
   a. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia
   b. Tomb of the Julii
   c. S. Apollinare Nuovo
   d. Pantheon

   Answer: d

16. *Christ as the Good Shepherd* appears in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and uses many iconographic devices. Which of the following is one of those devices?
   a. goats representing sinners
   b. sheep representing the Faithful
   c. a basin of water
   d. a chalice

   Answer: b

17. Which of the following is a basilica?
   a. Santa Costanza
   b. Old St. Peter’s
   c. Sts. Peter and Marcellinus
   d. St. Callixtus

   Answer: b
18. Which of the following themes represents the interior decorative program of Santa Costanza?

a. the lives of the saints
b. the Passion
c. grape harvest and wine production
d. history of Rome

Answer: c

19. Which of the following is an architectural element found in Santa Sabina?

a. domed interior
b. timbered ceiling
c. groin vault
d. double apse interior

Answer: b

20. The Rossano Gospels is the earliest illuminated manuscript that contains illustrations of which of the following?

a. lives of the martyrs
b. coronation of Peter as Pope
c. New Testament
d. martyrdom of Paul

Answer: c

21. The representation of Nahor seen in the scene of Rebecca and Eliezer at the well from the Vienna Genesis uses which of the following conventions?

a. Early Christian pictorial convention
b. Roman pictorial convention
c. Egyptian pictorial convention
d. Hebrew pictorial convention

Answer: b

22. The representation of a bearded Christ from the Rossano Gospels clearly indicates this work was made in which of the following centuries?

a. 6th century CE
b. 3rd century CE
c. 2nd century CE
d. 1st century CE

Answer: a

SHORT ANSWER

23. How does the painting from Dura Europos reflect Late Antique art?

Answer: The important figures are presented as larger than the other characters. For example the episode of Samuel anointing David, our attention is focused on Samuel who is larger than the other figures. The purple toga distinguishes David. It represented the imperial color and a motif favored by the Romans.

24. How does the Christian community house located in Dura-Europas reflect the state of Christianity within the Roman Empire?
Answer: This house is small and secondhand in contrast to the grand temples the Empire supported. Without
the approval of the Roman state these communities remained small and attracted the most impoverished. The
Christian appeal centered on the equality of judgment in the afterlife. The consequence of birth was
immaterial. This was especially important to the converts.

25. What is the significance of Old St. Peter’s?

Answer: Constantine was both Roman emperor and defender of the Christian faith. In order to keep the peace
between his Christian and pagan constituencies he order the construction of churches on the city’s outskirts.
Old St. Peter’s was the most magnificent of these Early Christian churches. It was constructed on the spot of
Peter’s grave, or so it was believed. This was a decision made by both Constantine and Pope Sylvester. This
church became the visible sign of the acceptance of Christianity by the Empire.


Answer: It is one of the most hallowed sites in Christendom; second only to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher
in Jerusalem the site of the Resurrection. The building itself fulfills the words, “thou art Peter and upon this
rock I will build my church”, Peter was the first bishop of Rome and subsequent generations of popes are also
the bishop of Rome.

27. How does Sta. Costanza mirror Imperial Roman architecture?

Answer: It is a central-plan building favored by the Romans especially for the construction of imperial
mausolea. The traditional identification for this structure is the tomb or mausoleum of Constantine’s daughter,
Constantina.

28. What is the significance of Dura Europos?

Answer: The city was evacuated in the third century CE, leaving its various early cult buildings and shrines
virtually intact. This allowed archaeological excavations and has formulated the basis of our understanding of
the role the various religions played within the Empire.

29. Why are catacombs significant?

Answer: Most Early Christian art dates from the third and fourth centuries and was found in the catacombs,
the Christian burial sites. It is the catacombs which provided the examples of Early Christian art from this
period.

30. Why did the Romans so fear and hate the Christians?

Answer: Their fear and hatred was predicated on the belief system of Christianity. This belief was foreign and
alien to the Romans. They could not accept the belief of a god becoming man. They also hated the Christians
for their refusal to pay homage to the official gods of the Imperial state and included in that pantheon of gods
were the Caesars or emperors. Romans also could not accept a belief structure that would hold anything in
higher regard than the State. This led to persecution and martyrdom for the Christians.

31. How does the theme of the “Good Shepherd” reflect the heritage of the pre-Christian world?

Answer: The first representation of this theme can be found in Greek Archaic sculpture, the Calf-Bearer. Here
the shepherd is bringing the calf as a sacrifice to the goddess, Athena. In Christian iconography, that theme has
been transformed into Christ as the sacrifice and the sheep become the faithful, symbolizing their salvation
and redemption through the sacrifice of Christ.

32. Why is the diptych of the Nicomachi and Symmachii significant?

Answer: It indicated that powerful Roman families of the senatorial class did not embrace Christianity even
after the edict issued by Theodosius, which banned pagan worship. The diptych might be commemorating a
marriage between the families or memorializing the deaths of two important family members. Nevertheless, the diptych does illustrate the longevity of pagan themes and certainly a classical art style. The diptych compares to the elegance and stateliness of the processional friezes from the Parthenon and the Ara Pacis.

33. How does the statue of Christ seated reflect both Imperial and Christian iconography?

Answer: This small marble statue presents a youthful, beardless Christ, dressed as philosopher and carrying an unopened scroll. The iconography combines both Christian and Imperial attributes in this one figure: a youthful Apollo-like god and at the same time a wise and elderly philosopher.

34. Why are there very few depictions of the crucifixion in Early Christian art?

Answer: This depiction was unknown prior to the 5th century. Artists emphasized the divinity of Christ through his life as a teacher and miracle worker and not his suffering and death at the hands of the Romans. Allusions were made in a number of works about his death, the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus has a segment in which Christ appears before Pilate, the Roman judge and this refers to his coming crucifixion and death.

35. How did the Early Christian style change art?

Answer: The Early Christian style was a rejection of the classical style in sculpture and painting. It sought to replace the classical style with a non-naturalistic, hieratic aesthetic that featured wafer-thin, frontal figures on gold backgrounds. This focused the viewer on the spiritual world, the world of salvation, which was the reward for Christians.

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

36. Explain the roles played by the Classical style of Greece and Rome in the development of Early Christian art. Use examples to support your essay.

Answers are found throughout the chapter.

37. Examine the contributions of Constantine. How did he impact the art of fourth century in the Early Christian world?

Answer: pages 289; 291, 293-301.

38. What features did Early Christian architects take from Roman builders, and what new techniques did they develop? Discuss specific features from at least three buildings.

Answer: pages 289; 291; 294-301; and 301-303.

39. Explain the development of sculpture as a disseminator of Christianity. Use examples to support your essay.

Answer: pages 289; 293-295.

40. Compare the mosaics of Santa Costanza with the mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. How are they similar, how are they different, and how do they reflect their respective periods?

Answer: pages 300-302.

41. Explain the effect the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus had as a visual document representing Christianity. How did the Roman Imperial motifs merge with Christian themes? Cite examples to support your argument.

Answer: pages 293-295 and 296-297.

42. Compare and contrast the representation of Septimius Severus in his Chariot from his arch and Christ Enthroned (small statue), how do the figures compare as representations of an ideal? What are the differences?
43. Compare and contrast the images of *Christ as the Good Shepherd* from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and *Miracle of Loaves and Fishes* from Sant’Apollinare Nuovo. How does each reflect the synthesis of Classical values?

Answer: pages 302-304.

**SLIDE IDENTIFICATION**

44. (Figure 11–13)
   a. S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna
   b. St. Peter’s, Rome
   c. Santa Costanza, Rome
   d. Santa Sabina

Answer: c

45. (Figure 11–8)
   a. Christ seated
   b. the Crucifixion
   c. Good Shepherd
   d. Sol Invictus

Answer: a

46. (Figure 11–4)
   a. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna
   b. Santa Sabina, Rome
   c. Community House, Dura Europos
   d. Synagogue, Dura Europos

Answer: c

47. (Figure 11–10)
   a. timbered ceiling
   b. domed ceiling
   c. squinch
   d. vault

Answer: a

48. (Figure 11–9)
   a. Old St. Peter’s
   b. Santa Sabina
   c. Santa Costanza
   d. Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo

Answer: a

49. (Figure 11–7)
   a. Santa Maria Antiqua sarcophagus
   b. Ludovisi sarcophagus
   c. Orestes sarcophagus
   d. Junius Bassus sarcophagus
SLIDE QUESTIONS

55. Contrast these images. What features reflect the influence of the classical style?

Answer: Priestess celebrating the rites of Bacchus (Figure 11–23) and The Suicide of Judas and the Crucifixion, ivory plaque (Figure 11-22). The classical beauty of the priestess, as well as the modeling of the drapery and the corporeality of the body, show the continuing influence of the classical tradition. This particular panel does not exhibit any motifs that can relate it to the Christian tradition, thus confirming the continuing tradition of pagan influences. In the Suicide of Judas and the Crucifixion the artist has presented a powerful drama. The figure of Christ crucified is presented as a beardless, youthful figure, almost naked. The artist has chosen to depict the divine man, notable by the absence of the depiction of pain. The artist uses a classical format, yet the work maintains the Early Christian meaning. The figure of Christ has not yet been transformed into the mature, philosopher-teacher that would become the standard in subsequent generations.

56. Describe the features of these mosaics that make them examples of the Early Christian style.

Answer: a
Answer: Christ as the Good Shepherd from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (Figure 11–16) and Parting of Lot and Abraham, Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome (Figure 11–14). The rich surfaces and real space are typical of Roman illusionism, but the relaxed arrangement is characteristic of the Early Christian style. The ground line establishes the space as a real context, and the imperialization of the youthful and haloed Christ connects this image to the Early Christian tradition. In the Parting of Lot and Abraham, a story from Genesis, the first book of the Bible, the artist has shown the departing Lot and Abraham clearly and decisively. The artist has included the gestures and opposed movements of the figures from the Late Antique narrative program. The classical tradition is still apparent in the dialogue between Lot and Abraham.

57. Compare the treatment of space and form in these two sculptures and discuss the factors that may account for the differences in style.

Answer: Santa Maria Antiqua sarcophagus (Figure 11–6) and Junius Bassus sarcophagus (Figure 11–7). The figures from the Antiqua sarcophagus are set within a single plane of space. The figures form a narrative detailing the popular themes of Christianity at this time. The Bassus sarcophagus, on the other hand, creates segmented units distinctly separate and unique by the use of columns. This framing device can be found in High Empire sarcophagi (Asiatic sarcophagus) as well as imperial Roman structures and Christian churches. The differences shown can be attributed to the now firmly established place of Christianity within society at this time.

58. What does this image say about changing views of Christ? Note the iconographic features of the image and describe the stylistic features that add to the emotional effect.

Answer: Christ as the Good Shepherd from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna (Figure 11–16) and Christ before Pilate, Rossano Gospels (Figure 11-21). The image from Ravenna shows the young, beardless Christ seated in an Arcadian landscape surrounded by sheep. He is presented as shepherd of his flock. The halo and the purple robe, both symbols of power taken over from Roman Imperial decorative programs, stress his power. Christ before Pilate is presenting the image in continuous narrative. The artist has not repeated the protagonists; the figure of Christ is presented in the mature form of the philosopher-teacher, which would soon become the norm. He is presented calmly and serenely, accepting his fate. This creates a powerful statement.

59. Compare these two images. How have their interior spaces changed in function?

Answer: Christian Community House, Dura-Europas reconstruction (Figure 11-2) and Interior, Santa Sabina, Rome (Figure 11-10). The reconstruction shows a small, secondhand room used by the Christians in the early years of Christianity. They did not enjoy the patronage of the Roman Empire; moreover they had to be discreet in their worship. On the other hand, the interior of Santa Sabina illustrates the acceptance Christianity gained under Constantine. The interior shows a basilican church with the focus on the apse that contains the altar. The reconstruction was a private community worship center and Santa Sabina was the public worship center.

60. How does this ivory plaque reflect Early Christian themes?

Answer: Suicide of Judas and Crucifixion (Figure 11–22). The sequence of this plaque reads left to right, starting with the suicide of Judas. The artist has identified Judas not only by his hanging but also with the depiction of the bag of money at his feet. The next image shows the Virgin and John the Apostle attending the Crucifixion and possibly Longinus (pierces side of Christ with lance). This plaque illustrates the Christian themes of Crucifixion and Salvation. Christ is represented as impervious to pain. He is already divine and salvation is assured.