

ARTH401 Writing Assessment 1

Comparing and Contrasting Early Christian and Roman Art

Assessment Overview

Write a 3-5 page essay comparing and contrasting Ancient Roman and Early Christian art. Please choose one of the following pairs to discuss in your essay:

- 1) Aula Palatina and Old Saint Peter's Basilica
- 2) Ara Pacis Augustae and Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus
- 3) The Distribution of Largesse from the Arch of Constantine and Christ from the Catacomb of Domitilla

When you have chosen a pair to discuss in your essay, start by closely examining both images. You should consider style, subject matter (if applicable), function, medium, and any other questions that might shed light on these works of art. Then carefully consider the similarities and differences between these two works of art and what those similarities and differences might signify. Your mastery of Early Christian art will be revealed by how well you can show the similarities between these two cultures, but also how well you can discuss the subtle (though significant) ways in which Early Christian art diverged from the closely related arts of antiquity. To do this you will need to do more than just describe the works of art. You will need to use your observations to construct a thoughtful discussion that reveals something about Early Christian art and culture.

Before getting started on your essay, please view each of the webpages listed beneath the "General Readings" section below, which will serve as guidance for writing a comparison essay. Once you have viewed each of these pages, take a look at the specific readings that apply to the pair you have selected before moving on to write your essay.

General Readings:

- University of Arkansas at Little Rock: Art History Department's "[Guidelines for Analysis of Art](#)" (HTML)
- Skidmore College: Art History Department's "[Visual Analysis Tips](#)" (HTML)
- University of Minnesota, Morris: Julia K. Dabbs' "[Comparison Essay Example—Principles of Art](#)" (HTML)

Specific Readings

Readings for Pair #1:

Instructions: If you choose to write your essay on pair number one, please look over each of these webpages for a review of these works of art and for good images to make your observations. On Columbia University's webpage, be sure to look at the



following pages on the pull-down menu: “Old St. Peter’s Basilica: Description,” “Old St. Peter’s: Symbolism,” and “Old St. Peter’s: Function & Liturgy.”

- Sacred Destinations: “[Aula Palatina \(Basilica of Constantine\), Trier](#)” (HTML)
- Columbia University: The Medieval Architecture Online Teaching Project: “[Related Images: Germany, Trier, Aula Palatina](#)” (HTML)
- Columbia University: The Medieval Architecture Online Teaching Project: Professor Dale Kinney’s “[St. Peter’s Basilica](#)” (HTML)

Readings for Pair #2:

Instructions: If you choose to write your essay on pair number two, please look over each of these webpages for a review of these works of art and for good images to make your observations.

- Bluffton University: Mary Ann Sullivan’s “[Images of the Ara Pacis](#)” (HTML)
- Smarthistory: Dr. Allen Farber’s “[Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus](#)” (HTML)

Readings for Pair #3:

Instructions: If you choose to write your essay on pair number three, please look over each of these webpages for a review of these two works of art and for good images to make your observations.

- Smarthistory’s “[Early Christian Art Before Constantine](#)” (HTML)
- Bluffton University: Mary Ann Sullivan’s “[Images of Arch of Constantine, Rome](#)” (HTML)
- Wikipedia’s “[FriezeNorth5](#)”

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