



AP[®] Art History 2004 Sample Student Responses

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B

Portinari Altarpiece

van der Goes

Early Northern
Renaissance

- there when it happened
- saints w/ them

Question 9

Philip IV Receiving Portrait of
Rubens Marie de Medici
Baroque
- she's hot stuff
- classical mythology
cherubs
putti
- elaborate

or not!

Napoleon @ Plague House @ Jaffa
- David
- tall, handsome
- cure-all
- comp.
powerful
PPP

9. The relationship between an artist or architect and a patron very often shapes the form and content of a work of art or architecture.

Identify two works, each from a different art historical period, and name the specific persons who commissioned them. Discuss how the specific interests and intentions of the particular patrons are revealed in each work.
(30 minutes)

The Portinari Altarpiece, commissioned by the Portinari family, was painted by Hugo van der Goes during the early northern Renaissance. On this triptych, the center panel portrays the birth of Christ. Along with the usual baby, Mary, angels and wise men, members of the Portinari family have been painted in, worshipping the Christ child, as if they were actually there at that time. Additionally, on the side panels, more Portinari family members appear, with various other saints and Biblical figures. At this time in history, patrons often commissioned works of art that put them right in the middle of significant Biblical events or with saints. The prevailing notion at this time was to "buy your way into Heaven" by giving money to the church, to the poor and to an artist so he would paint you as a devout Christian, so that

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everyone would know you were a believer and so you'd be able to get into Heaven. If the altarpiece was placed in the community church, it ~~was~~ served as a fantastic way to show off your wealth and social status because everyone knew that you had to have money to ~~be able to~~ hire an artist. Therefore, the Fortinaris probably hired Vander Goe to increase their chances of making it to Heaven and possibly to show off their wealth.

The painting ~~is~~ "Napoleon at the Plague House at Jaffa" by David was commissioned by Napoleon to use ~~as~~ ^{for his} public relations. A perfect example of "art as propaganda" it shows Napoleon visiting his sick soldiers who are suffering ~~from~~ in a temporary hospital that was once a mosque. Napoleon appears to be tall, handsome and powerful and the lighting of the painting ~~is~~ focuses on him, making him look like a "savior" of his men. Despite the terrible sickness, Napoleon's presence seems to say that now that he's arrived, everything will be fine and the men will be encouraged by his visit and regain their health and strength. Napoleon paid David to paint this scene so that his ~~people~~ citizens back at home in France would think he was a great ~~leader~~ leader, but in reality, hardly anything in the painting is true. Napoleon was short, unattractive and un-inspiring. Instead of motivating his soldiers to recover, he ordered shortly after his visit that poison be put in their food so that they would all die and the military wouldn't have to bother with them. In short, David was commissioned by

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PPP₃

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Napoleon to ~~show~~ disguise his shortcomings and mislead the French people in this painting from the Romanticism period

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Question 9

Veronese's
Supper at the House of
Levi rejected by
Pope.
LMA!

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Artists need to sell artwork to make money and continue creating art - it's a proven fact. Many artists realized this and received sponsorship from patrons requesting certain kinds of works. If the work was to be brought, it had to conform with the sponsor's ideas. Two very different responses were received with Veronese's ^{the illuminated manuscripts of the past and} Supper at the House of Levi. ~~2~~ Illuminated manuscripts were highly decorative books so beautiful and valuable that they were considered works of art. Commissioned of highly skilled monks and nuns by individual churches or wealthy patrons, these books, such as the Ebbo Gospels, often depicted whole portions of the Bible in its Latin form. This was desired by the literate clergy, as were the illustrations for an illiterate congregation. Jeweled and detailed, these creations had to be beautiful to warrant their cost - it was so great that only the wealthy could afford them and they had to

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be locked up when not in use. These books of the Middle Ages were sources of pride to the owners because, obviously, the creator had followed the requests and desires of the future owner. The Scriptures were included, ^{by request of the patron} to read to the people (who didn't understand Latin) and for private study ^{of the clergy or nobles,} while the pictures explained the stories in easy terms. The Jews were meant to show the power and influence of the Catholic Church over religion and the general poverty-stricken population. Churches ^{and} private owners commissioned these books a very long time ago - when writing, due to lack of printing press, was an art. ~~Several~~ ^{Several} such books existed and ~~as~~ in some instances only be tied to the purchasing Church. ^{however,} ~~the~~ ^{the} works served their purpose manfully.

Veronese's "Supper at the House of Levi," ^(as it was later named) though also a religious work, was received with a less than gracious response. Ignoring the desires of the Church-patrons, Veronese constructed a scandalous version of the last Supper, ^{of} which Church officials already held a certain belief. Stuffy dogs on the floor, a man picking his teeth, and the complete disorder caused by refusing to order the people in groups of three shocked the clergy. Veronese defended himself by saying the situation may have existed in that manner, and he had artistic license to 'fill in the gaps' however he saw fit. When brought to trial he instead slightly recanted his position declaring that it was a portrait not of the last Supper, but an earlier dinner with Levi. The painting was rejected, but Veronese refused to change the work, opting for an entirely new painting instead.

Desires for certain works of art by patrons often led the stylistic development in a certain direction. Illuminated manuscripts fulfilled

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their position of beauty, education, and a status of position and wealth. Veronese's work refused to acknowledge the clergy's desire for a traditional, respectful last supper scene to be used both for beauty and for teaching, and so was rejected. As can be seen, adherence to patron's desires was critical for the acceptance and purchase of works, and most artists, though not all, chose to obey their desires.

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