

**AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY**  
**2006 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 2**

Left: *Good Shepherd*, 425–450. Mosaic. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, Italy.  
Right: Blank

2. The work shown is Early Christian.

Discuss characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. (5 minutes)

Background:

When Theodosius I split the Roman Empire in 395, his son Honorius became ruler in the West and moved the capital to Ravenna. Galla Placidia, Honorius's half sister, took over as regent in 425 and oversaw the construction of the small cruciform, barrel-vaulted building traditionally (and, according to the most recent scholarship, erroneously) identified as the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Although its exterior is plain, its interior is filled with a well-preserved mosaic program illuminated by light filtered through translucent alabaster windows. The program includes images of apostles, saints, and animals in a cohesive narrative of mortality, faith, and redemption. This mosaic, *The Good Shepherd*, is located in the lunette over the west entrance, suggesting a passageway for a mortal soul entering into eternal life.

Students have two tasks:

- (1) They must identify characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources.
- (2) They must discuss those characteristics.

Good responses will understand that the key issue in this question is the reuse of characteristics from the Greco–Roman world as a means to promote Christianity. Christianity became an official religion of the Roman Empire a century earlier, and this particular representation of Christ reflects a turning point in Christian iconography. Christ is no longer the humble shepherd from the catacombs but an imposing figure with features akin to those of the ancient gods, situated within a convincing and naturalistic landscape setting.

Characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources include:

- Christ is beardless and youthful, like ancient representations of the god Apollo.
- Christ is seated like an ancient philosopher or Orpheus.
- His clothing resembles ancient togas.
- His clothing is imperial purple and gold, which shows the assimilation of imperial or royal status in representations of Christ.
- His cross is an adaptation of an imperial staff.
- The illusionistic devices used to create a convincing sense of space in this mosaic are similar to Pompeian wall paintings. These include atmospheric perspective, convincing modeling and/or foreshortening, and the representation of shadows.
- Mosaic as a medium was common in the ancient world.
- Symmetry, harmony, and balance characterize the overall composition.

Points to remember:

- Students must look backward, not forward, in the history of art in order to answer this question.
- This is a five-minute question.

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**Question 2 (continued)**

**Scoring Criteria**

**Score Scale 0–4**

- 4** Discusses with specificity the characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. The discussion is well developed and free of significant errors.
- 3** Discusses with specificity the characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. The discussion is less well developed and may have minor errors.
- 2** Discusses characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources but with little specificity. The discussion is general and/or contains significant errors.
- 1** The discussion is weak or contains significant errors.
- 0** Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it restates the question or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.
- Indicates a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

**Directions for Questions 2-8:** The following seven short essay questions are based on slides and/or text. Each question is separately timed and each slide or set of slides will be shown only for the length of time indicated after the question. You are to answer each question in the space provided.

Read the question and take a moment to think about what the question asks. Formulate your answer before you begin to write. You can receive full credit only by answering the question asked.

**Note:** For questions involving two slides, when you are not asked specifically to name the artists and/or titles of the works, you may refer to the work on the left as (L) and the work on the right as (R).

2. The work shown is Early Christian.

Discuss characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. (5 minutes)

In slide L, the mosaic demonstrates both classical and Christian influences. At this time, Christianity was not allowed for a long period of time. Early Christians drew from classical influences to depict Jesus. He is portrayed as the Good Shepherd, a youthful and idealized figure - a classical influence. Although he is dressed in regal and rich purple robes he still exudes classical strength and idealization.

The artist makes an attempt at the balanced composition of the classical period - distributing the animals evenly to give a more balanced feel.

Jesus is portrayed as a beardless youth although his halo hints at his divinity. This is evidence of a transition within the period from depictions

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of Jesus as a shepherd to depictions of Jesus as a godlike figure after the Edict of Milan, which legitimized Christianity.

Classical calm, balance, and idealization are all major influences for this mosaic.

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2. The work shown is Early Christian.

Discuss characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. (5 minutes)

The Early Christian mosaic of Christ as the good shepherd has several characteristics that reveal its Classical sources. One is the subtle shading on the ~~lamb's body~~ lambs. Whereas other works are strictly 2-D, this mosaic, with the shading, allows a more 3-D feel to it. Also the more intricate background is another characteristic that reveals its Classical sources. Whereas other works use a strictly solid gold background, this work has a sense of depth from overlapping of figures, & a sense of naturalism from the depictions of the plants in the background. It has more of a depth & naturalistic feel.

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2. The work shown is Early Christian.

Discuss characteristics of the work that reveal its Classical sources. (5 minutes)

the work on the L is Byzantine  
and is frontal but the figures appear  
to be floating the strict linear style  
is very usual for this time it is ~~not~~ this style  
which the classical aspects were inspiration for. The  
subject matter is christian but the  
way the body is portrayed with mass  
and the way the body is shifting  
showing motion comes from classical  
study. The way that the body is  
twisted up naturally not awkwardly  
is a very classical invention.

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# AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY

## 2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 2

#### Overview

This question asked students to analyze some of the art historical characteristics of a Medieval mosaic by looking back in time and analyzing the Classical sources in it. There was no identification component to this question, so students did not have to locate the work in a specific time or place. On the other hand, they were asked to look carefully at, and think carefully about, a work of art that most knew to be Medieval and to seek out PAST vestiges of Classical sources—visual, thematic, symbolic, religious, and/or cultural. Many students are very familiar with the Classical world, but fewer are familiar with Medieval art. They were expected to bring knowledge to the question and use it actively. By asking students to look back to Classical art, this question also invited them to think about art history as a continuum, rather than as an artificial construct of “artistic progress.”

#### Sample: 2A

##### Score: 4

This discussion illustrates a number of good comparisons between *The Good Shepherd* and Classical art. The student understands that the iconography harkens back to Antiquity and acknowledges that Classical influences exist in the color and the form of the drapery. The statement that the figure “exudes Classical strength and idealization” may be excessive, but it shows an understanding of Classical forms. Furthermore, there is a grasp of the basic elements of Classical symmetry and balance as reflected in this work. The essay finishes by placing the work in the context of the Edict of Milan and explaining the change in the pictorial interpretation of Christ from the rustic shepherd of the catacombs to the more “godlike figure” in Galla Placidia.

#### Sample: 2B

##### Score: 3

This essay understands that some Early Christian art has a two-dimensional quality, whereas other works, such as our example, have “a more 3-D feel.” It notes how some Early Christian art had a “strictly solid gold background,” while this work has a Classical sense of depth revealed in the shading and the overlapping of figures. The essay expresses how naturalism, particularly in the plant life in the foreground, is an element of Classical art. However, this essay is less well developed than one earning a score of 4.

#### Sample: 2C

##### Score: 2

This essay incorrectly identifies the work as Byzantine, even though the question itself states that it is Early Christian. A number of stylistic devices normally associated with Byzantine art are listed: frontality, floating figures, and a “strict linear style,” all of which have nothing to do with *The Good Shepherd*. However, the essay then changes course by revealing that this same “floating” figure has mass and possesses a body that shifts, showing motion. Although this response is general and contains significant errors, it does make a few valid points about the work in question and therefore earned 2 points.