

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2011 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 7

Attribute the work to a specific art-historical period. Justify your attribution by discussing specific characteristics of the work that are commonly associated with that art-historical period. (10 minutes)

Background

This question asks students to attribute the work to a specific art-historical period. Students are asked to justify the attribution by connecting specific characteristics of the work (whether formal, iconographic or contextual) to broader tendencies of the art-historical period.

The work shown is the carved portal (known as the Porte Miégevillè) from the south transept of the church of Saint Sernin, Toulouse (circa 1115). The art-historical period of the portal is Romanesque. Romanesque portals function as entrances to church interiors. The doorway, often divided by a pillar known as a trumeau, is flanked by jambs at either side. Above the door are a lintel and a broad, rounded arch. Within this sits the semicircular space called a tympanum. The tympanum, the lintel, the jambs, the capitals and the trumeau, as well as the archivolt and voussoirs of the arch, are usually covered with relief sculptures.

Such portals, comparatively rare in western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire, flourished during the Romanesque period, becoming well established by the early 12th century C.E. With ample surface for adornment, portals offered ready sites for instructive and decorative imagery. Frequent subjects for tympanum reliefs included the Ascension of Christ, the Last Judgment and the *Maestas Domini* (God in Majesty). Often Christ occupied the center of the tympanum, asserting the metaphorical association between the doorway of the church and Christ as the door to salvation. Hierarchic scale ensured that he appeared much larger than other figures.

Romanesque portal sculpture frequently emphasized conceptual and iconographic clarity over naturalistic representation. The style often seems to parallel the flat, calligraphic lines of manuscript illumination, and thereby emphasizes a planar sensibility that diminishes the portrayal of space. Relief carvings on tympana were often vividly painted, heightening the visual effect and intensifying the spiritual charge.

Embellished with figurative sculpture conveying a Christian message in clear and palpable terms, Romanesque portals served as vehicles of instruction and inspiration. The proliferation of such monumental carved church portals during the Romanesque period is associated with the concurrent increase in pilgrimage and the establishment of pilgrimage routes, which helped to spread both iconographic and formal elements of sculpture. The visual and conceptual impact of Romanesque portals shaped and was shaped by the movement of pilgrims along the pilgrimage routes and through the church itself.

Portals such as the Porte Miégevillè marked thresholds as liminal spaces wherein earth and heaven meet and offered invitation to see salvation as a journey. This portal contains an image of the Ascension of Christ in the tympanum, a subject that emphasizes the portal's role as a transition between the terrestrial and celestial realms. The lintel below depicts the 12 apostles flanked by 2 prophets. Historiated capitals are visible below, containing foliate motifs and biblical scenes referring to Christian concepts of the Fall and Salvation.

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Question 7 (continued)

Specific characteristics of this particular portal that are commonly associated with the Romanesque period are the rounded arch; the various component parts (arch, tympanum, lintel, carved capitals); the use of large-scale relief sculpture in an architectural context, as well as smaller sculptures on appropriate parts of the portal; the function of the portal as an entry into sacred space; the Christian subject matter and iconography; the vivid, flattened calligraphic, antinaturalistic style of the sculpted figures and their draperies; the use of hierarchical scaling to indicate relative importance of figures; and an emphasis on conceptual clarity over naturalistic representation.

Two Tasks for Students

1. Attribute the work to a specific art-historical period.
2. Justify the attribution by discussing specific characteristics of the work that are commonly associated with that art-historical period.

Points to Remember

This question requires attribution to a specific art-historical period. The correct answer is Romanesque, although students who cite the Medieval period may earn as many as 3 points, depending on the accuracy and specificity of the discussion. The highest score a response can earn if it does not attribute the portal to the Romanesque or the Medieval periods is 2.

Students are not required to identify the work.

Scoring Criteria

4 points

Response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly attributes the work to the Romanesque period. The response justifies the attribution by citing specific characteristics of the work that are associated with the Romanesque period. The discussion may include minor errors that do not have a meaningful impact on the response.

3 points

Response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly attributes the work to the Romanesque period. The response justifies the attribution by citing characteristics of the work that are associated with the Romanesque period; however, the response may be somewhat general, include minor errors that have some impact on the response, or both.

OR

The response attributes the work to the Medieval period, but its justification has enough accuracy and specificity that it would otherwise have earned a higher score.

2 points

Response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response attributes the work to either the Romanesque or the Medieval periods. The response justifies the attribution by citing characteristics of the work that are associated with the Romanesque period; however, the discussion may be vague, be overly general or simplistic, or contain significant errors.

OR

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Question 7 (continued)

The response incorrectly attributes the work, but the evidence cited as justification can reasonably be applied to this image.

Note: This is the highest score a response can earn if it does not attribute the work to the Romanesque or the Medieval periods.

1 point

Response demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response attributes the work to the Romanesque or the Medieval periods, but there is no other discussion of merit.

OR

The response incorrectly attributes the work. The response includes an attempt at justification that has some merit, but the discussion is weak, contains significant errors, or both.

0 points

Response demonstrates no discernible knowledge or understanding of the question.

Although the student attempts to respond, the response incorrectly attributes the work and makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.

— This is a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words or personal notes.

7. Attribute the work to a specific art-historical period. Justify your attribution by discussing specific characteristics of the work that are commonly associated with that art-historical period. (10 minutes)

This work should be attributed to the Romanesque period. This tympanum is located on a larger building that seems to be a church. The tympanum's subject is religious, concerning the power of Christ and Christianity. The rounded arch (as opposed to a pointed arch, which would be gothic), further characterizes it as Romanesque. It is not only these things, however, that make it Romanesque. The single minded focus on subject matter as opposed to the accuracy of the human form show the creator of this tympanum's objective to teach the viewers about Christianity, rather than have them admire it for form. This is apparent through the use of hierarchy of scale, the lack of emphasis on form (the draping covers the body, not accentuating it) and the lack of emphasis on individuality shows the lack of emphasis on realism or technical skill. Yet the body poses and hierarchy of scale show the worshipping of Christ that is the subject. The culmination of the two, emphasis on subject and didactic nature, not form, is a hallmark of the Romanesque period, as are the rounded arches and the basic exterior decoration apart from the elaborate tympanums.

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7. Attribute the work to a specific art-historical period. Justify your attribution by discussing specific characteristics of the work that are commonly associated with that art-historical period. (10 minutes)

This work can be attributed to the Romanesque period in Europe.
 This tympanum ^{contains} ~~is a~~ religious ^{figure} ~~figure~~, illustrating the worship
 of a central figure, most likely Christ. The figures are not very naturalistic
 or individualized, both characteristics of the Romanesque period. The
 linear folds of the drapery, stylized angel wings, and ~~flatness~~ ^{flatness} of the
~~figures~~ ^{people} also attest to Romanesque traditions.

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7. Attribute the work to a specific art-historical period. Justify your attribution by discussing specific characteristics of the work that are commonly associated with that art-historical period. (10 minutes)

The work shown is from the Romanesque period. ~~It is known~~ This is known because of the tympanum above the entryway. The vouissors and jambs included in the portal also attribute to the period. The relief sculpture of the tympanum has Byzantine and Early Christian influence. These periods precede Romanesque.

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2011 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 7

Overview

This 10-minute essay question asked students to attribute the work shown to a specific art-historical period, Romanesque. Students were asked to justify their attribution by connecting specific characteristics of the work (formal, iconographic, contextual) to broader tendencies of that art-historical period.

Sample: 7A

Score: 4

The student correctly identifies the art-historical period as Romanesque. The student justifies the attribution by accurately citing and discussing specific characteristics of the portal that are associated with the Romanesque period. The response observes that the portal contains a tympanum and a round arch, in contrast with the pointed arch used during the Gothic period. The Romanesque concentration of architectural ornament at portals is addressed with regard to “the basic exterior decoration apart from the elaborate typaneums [*sic*].” Furthermore the response states that the subject of the work is “religious, concerning the power of Christ and Christianity.” The student addresses the emphasis on iconographic clarity over naturalism, noting “the single minded focus on subject matter as opposed to the accuracy of the human form.” The response cites specific characteristics of the work that support this observation, including the way in which “the drapery covers the body, not accentuating it,” “the lack of emphasis on individuality,” and “the lack of emphasis on realism.” The student explains how “the use of hierarchy of scale” emphasizes “the worshipping of Christ that is the subject.” This “emphasis on subject and a didactic nature,” which is intended “to teach the viewers about Christianity,” is “a hallmark of the Romanesque period.”

Sample: 7B

Score: 3

The student correctly identifies the art-historical period as Romanesque. The student justifies the attribution by citing characteristics of the portal that are associated with the Romanesque period, such as the presence of a tympanum. The religious nature of the subject is also discussed, though with some uncertainty regarding the identity of the “central figure, most likely Christ.” The student observes that “[t]he figures are not very naturalistic or individualized,” noting the “linear folds of the drapery, stylized angel wings, and flatness of the people.” Although this information is accurate, the response as a whole is somewhat brief, general and undeveloped.

Sample: 7C

Score: 2

The student correctly identifies the art-historical period as Romanesque. The student points out the presence of “the tympanum above the entryway” and additionally lists “vouissors [*sic*] and jambs.” The response makes reference to “Byzantine and Early Christian influence” but provides no rationale or discussion regarding such influence. No additional characteristics of the work are addressed, making the response overly general and vague.