

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2012 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

These are details of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome. What was the political agenda of the work's patron, Augustus? Analyze how the sculpted figures depicted in both details convey Augustus' political agenda. (10 minutes)

Background

This question asks students to analyze how a particular work of art conveys the political agenda of its patron. Specifically, the question asks students to identify Augustus's political agenda and to analyze the ways in which this agenda is conveyed by the sculpted figures depicted in two details shown from the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (Altar of Augustan Peace). The intent of this question is to prompt students to analyze how both allegory and historic representation are used in the creation of political propaganda.

Begun in 13 B.C.E. and consecrated in 9 B.C.E., the *Ara Pacis Augustae* commemorates the benefits of the imperial rule established by Augustus. Its sculptural imagery presents a propagandistic statement of Rome's political and cultural supremacy, foregrounding the emperor's central role in maintaining the welfare of Rome. In both style and placement, the procession frieze recalls the frieze of the Parthenaion procession on the Parthenon in Athens. By asserting this association with a perceived Golden Age (in this case, the Golden Age of Pericles in Athens), the *Ara Pacis Augustae* suggests that Augustus is inaugurating a new golden age of Augustan Peace — ultimately the *Pax Romana*. Not only does this connection to Pericles aggrandize Augustus's imperial authority, it also suggests visually that Rome is the rightful inheritor of the legacy of Classical Antiquity. This suggestion of a natural progression situates Rome as the logical (and thus rightful) culmination of a perceived line of cultural succession, which validates Rome's imperial pretention. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* thus appropriates Greek forms and conscripts them into the service of glorifying the establishment of the Roman Empire.

Significantly, the procession frieze on the *Ara Pacis Augustae* winds around the walls, apparently echoing the ceremony of the consecration of the altar. In this way, the frieze is linked directly to Augustus's establishment of the *Pax Romana* while simultaneously visualizing the ritualized performance of imperial beneficence. Although not shown in these details, Augustus himself appears in the sculptural program of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* leading the procession in his role as *Pontifex Maximus* (supreme priest). In assuming this title, Augustus is fusing absolute religious authority with absolute political authority and situating this power in the person of the emperor. The ideas of rightful imperial rule are thereby couched within particular historical actions. On the opposite side of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, a procession of senators demonstrates Augustus's acknowledgment of the traditional noble power base of Rome while also suggesting its recognition of the new imperial authority invested in Augustus.

More specifically, in the detail on the left, the procession depicts the imperial family, including women and children. The novel and prominent placement of children adds a dynastic element, suggesting Augustus's desire not only to establish imperial rule but to secure its continuity through dynastic succession within his extended family. The presence of children accompanied by their mothers and fathers also recalls Augustus's passage of moral legislation in response to a recent decline in birthrate among the Roman nobility. These laws promoted an idealized vision of the family by encouraging marriage and child rearing while punishing marital infidelity and celibacy. The naturalistic portrayal and anecdotal aspects of the relief, typical of Roman art, cast this larger political message in a seemingly quotidian realm. The message of peace, prosperity, and benevolent rule is embedded within a portrayal of perceptible daily life. The fidgeting children in particular add a sense of plausibility, as the depiction thus echoes actual human behavior. In this manner, the processional frieze on the *Ara Pacis* epitomized and thereby promoted Augustus's political agenda in a readily accessible manner.

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Question 3 (continued)

Below the procession frieze, a supporting bas relief of scrolling acanthus tendrils with faunal inhabitants suggests the fecundity and prosperity enjoyed by the Roman Empire under Augustus's beneficent rule. This notion is most fully articulated in the seated figure, frequently identified as Tellus, shown in the detail on the right. Whether Tellus, Italia, or peace personified, the sculpted figure provides an allegorical assertion of the abundance and prosperity that are enjoyed under Augustus's rule. Holding two infants, she is flanked by personifications of the winds and surrounded by abundant vegetation and placid animals. The latter may allude to the animals sacrificed at the actual altar within the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, but the image presented is primarily one of harmony and bounty. Elements of earth, wind, and water are included, suggesting the blossoming fertility of the entire world under Imperial Roman rule, and specifically that of Augustus, who established this bountiful era. It is a peaceful world because order is maintained by Rome, guided by Augustus. The reliefs of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* thus utilize both specific anecdotal narrative and symbolic portrayals of the institution and benefits of the *Pax Romana*, which are linked directly to the person of Emperor Augustus and his benevolent rule.

Two Tasks for Students

1. Identify Augustus's political agenda correctly.
2. Analyze how the sculpted figures depicted in both details convey Augustus's political agenda.

Points to Remember

This is a contextual question that addresses political propaganda. Since students are given the title and patron of the work, they should be able to focus their responses on analyzing how the sculpted figures convey Augustus's political agenda.

Although students may address both stylistic and iconographic elements of the sculpted figures, they are not required to do so. Stylistic analysis can help provide a more thorough discussion of Augustus's political agenda, but it is not essential to answering the question. Iconography is. Without a discussion of iconographic content, it is impossible to analyze fully Augustus's political intent with this monument.

If students do not address Augustus's political agenda, it will be difficult for them to analyze the sculpted figures in a manner relevant to the question.

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Question 3 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

4 points

Response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response clearly and correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda. The response uses specific visual evidence to analyze the sculpted figures depicted in both details with regard to how they convey Augustus's political agenda. The response may include minor errors that do not have a meaningful impact on the analysis.

3 points

Response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda. The response uses visual evidence to analyze the sculpted figures depicted in both details with regard to how they convey Augustus's political agenda. However, the response may be somewhat unbalanced — focusing more on one detail than on the other, although both are represented — and/or may include minor errors that have some impact on the analysis.

2 points

Response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda, although the identification may be implied rather than stated directly. The response refers to visual evidence to discuss how the sculpted figures convey Augustus's political agenda, but the discussion of that evidence is less analytical than descriptive. It may be overly general, simplistic, or unbalanced. For example, the discussion of one of the details may be mostly accurate, whereas the discussion of the other includes errors that impact the response.

OR

The response correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda, but the specific visual evidence used in the analysis focuses entirely on one of the details.

NOTE: This is the highest score a response can earn if it discusses only one of the two details.

1 point

Response demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the question.

Although the response demonstrates some general familiarity with the issues raised by the question, the response is weak, overly descriptive, and/or contains significant errors. If the response correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda, then there is no other discussion of merit.

OR

The response does not identify Augustus's political agenda even in a general way, but the response does include some relevant discussion of at least one of the details shown.

0 points

Response demonstrates no discernible knowledge or understanding of the question.

The student attempts to respond, but the response makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements about the *Ara Pacis Augustae*. The score of 0 points includes crossed-out words, personal notes, and drawings.

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ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B

Time—1 hour

6 Questions

Directions: The questions in this part are based on color images and/or text. The corresponding images are shown in the orange booklet for Section II: Free Response, Part B, Images. You have one hour to answer the six questions in this part, and you are advised to spend 10 minutes on each question. The proctor will announce when each 10-minute interval has elapsed, but you may proceed freely from one question to the next. You must answer each question on the lined pages in the exam booklet.

Read the questions carefully and take time to think about what the questions ask. Formulate your answers before you begin to write. You can receive full credit only by directly answering the questions.

Note: For questions involving two images, 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).

3. These are details of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome. What was the political agenda of the work's patron, Augustus? Analyze how the sculpted figures depicted in both details convey Augustus' political agenda. (10 minutes)

The *Ara Pacis Augustae*, built during Augustus' rule, was a very political work of art, filled with messages that Augustus wished to show the Roman public. One feature ~~of~~ throughout this work is the return to Grecian style in the relief carvings. The figures are based on that traditional style, with flowing drapery & naturalistic appearances, ^{the key motif} showing Augustus' respect for tradition. The detail on the left is unique in its subject matter, as it shows children & adults. This was intentional, as ~~the~~ Augustus wished to promote family life & renew the Roman population. In this detail, the leading families in Rome are all interacting, presenting a peaceful scene & filled with content families. The detail on the right shows an idyllic scene, ripe with symbols of prosperity, peace, & fertility. The central figure is thought to be Mother Nature, and she is holding two babies, again emphasizing family. Symbols of growth surround her: fruits, crops, & livestock abound. In this detail, Augustus is expressing the fact that he brought peace to Rome, that his

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reign would lead to bountiful foods & growth for the empire. The figures on the sides are personifications of winds arriving with the new peace of Augustus' reign.

In the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, Augustus was able to convey three primary points of his political agenda: a ~~new~~ respect & return to Greek values, emphasis on family & fertility, and the arrival of an era of peace, stability, & prosperity. These values all appealed to the Roman people.

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ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B
Time—1 hour
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- 3. These are details of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome. What was the political agenda of the work's patron, Augustus? Analyze how the sculpted figures depicted in both details convey Augustus' political agenda. (10 minutes)

The Emperor ~~was~~ Augustus was the first Roman Emperor, famously known for the pax romani, a period of peace which occurred during his reign. Augustus was known for using propaganda in art (like statues of himself) and the Ara Pacis Augustae also served to push forth his political agenda. In the detail on the left (L), children are seen depicted ~~along with the adults, which was not usually done. Further more they are actually acting like children, seen pulling impatiently on their father's togas. This served to convey Augustus' political agenda~~

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of encouraging childbirth. The detail on the right (R) shows a loving mother doting on her babies. This too pushed Augustus' aim of boosting marriages and birth rates in order to increase the population which he wanted to do to add to future Roman power.

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ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B

Time—1 hour

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3. These are details of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* in Rome. What was the political agenda of the work's patron, Augustus? Analyze how the sculpted figures depicted in both details convey Augustus' political agenda. (10 minutes)

THE *ARA PACIS AUGUSTAE* IS MEANT TO SHOW THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF AUGUSTUS. AUGUSTUS BECAME THE FIRST ROMAN EMPEROR AFTER A LENGTHY CIVIL WAR THAT HAD ENDED THE ROMAN REPUBLIC. AS SUCH, AUGUSTUS KNEW HIS RULE WAS FRAGILE, AND THE UNITY HE HAD CREATED COULD SHATTER AT ANY MOMENT. HE HAD TO SHOW THE ROMAN PEOPLE THAT THEY WERE BETTER OFF UNDER HIS RULE THAN THEY HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY. THE PROCESSION ~~DEPICTED~~ IN THE L DETAIL DEPICTS ROMAN CITIZENS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE GATHERED TOGETHER—YOUNG, OLD; RICH, POOR; MAN, WOMAN. ~~THE PROCESSION~~ AUGUSTUS WANTED TO SHOW HE DID NOT RULE JUST FOR THE ELITE, AS OTHERS MIGHT, BUT FOR THE GOOD OF ALL PEOPLE. THE R DETAIL SHOWS THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE EMPIRE UNDER AUGUSTUS' REIGN. A GREAT BOUNTY OF FRUITS ~~AND~~ CROPS, AND LIVESTOCK ARE SHOWN TO SHOW THE PLENTY OF

ROME. IN THE CENTER, THE BOUNTY IS BLESSED BY A
GODDESS, WHOSE DIVINITY IS SHOWN THROUGH USE OF
HIERARCHICAL SCALE. NOT ONLY IS AUGUSTUS A RULER
WHO WILL BRING PLENTY, BUT HE HAS THE GODS ON HIS
SIDE.

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AP® ART HISTORY

2012 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Overview

This 10-minute question asked students to analyze a work of art that was identified for them: the *Ara Pacis Augustus*. Students were asked to discuss the political agenda of the work's patron, Augustus, and to analyze how that agenda is conveyed by the sculpted figures depicted in both details that were shown. The intent of the question was to prompt students to analyze how both allegorical and historical representations are used in the creation of political propaganda.

Sample: 3A

Score: 4

This response clearly and correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda by noting "three primary points," in particular "a respect & return to Greek values, emphasis on family & fertility, and the arrival of an era of peace, stability, & prosperity." The propagandistic intent of the work is noted: "Augustus wished to show the Roman public" the benefits of his rule. The response mentions a "return to Grecian style" but does not address this in terms of Augustus's political agenda. The response then uses specific visual evidence to analyze the sculpted figures depicted in both details with regard to how they convey Augustus's political agenda. In the procession detail, the children within a "peaceful scene filled with content families" are connected to Augustus's agenda to "promote family life & renew the Roman population." That this agenda was specifically directed at the Roman nobility is suggested by the observation that the procession includes "the leading families in Rome." The Tellus relief is characterized as "an idyllic scene, ripe with symbols of prosperity, peace, & fertility." The central figure — reasonably identified as "Mother Nature" — is linked to Augustus's agenda of repopulation in that she is "holding two babies, again emphasizing family." The presence of abundant flora and fauna as well as the personifications of the winds are connected to Augustus's assertion that "he brought peace to Rome, that his reign would lead to bountiful foods & growth for the empire." In this way the response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

Sample: 3B

Score: 3

This response correctly identifies Augustus's political agenda, noting his establishment of the *Pax Romana*, "a period of peace which occurred [*sic*] during his reign," as well as his regular use of propagandistic images. Though the images shown are not specifically discussed in terms of the *Pax Romana*, its inclusion in the background context and its connection with a consistent campaign of propaganda suggest that this aspect of Augustus's political agenda provides the larger context for the imagery that is discussed. The response then uses visual evidence to analyze the sculpted figures depicted in both details, but only with regard to Augustus's agenda of repopulation. The presence of children in the procession detail is observed as conveying "Augustus' political agenda of encouraging childbirth." The Tellus relief, interpreted as a "loving mother doting on her babies," is connected to "Augustus' aim of boosting marriages and birth rates in order to increase the population which he wanted to do to add the future Roman power." This association is a legitimate point; however, the identification of the figure as "a loving mother," rather than an allegorical representation, constitutes a minor error. The analysis is also less thorough in terms of addressing specific visual evidence within each relief as the focus is almost exclusively on Augustus's agenda of repopulation rather than on his broader political agenda of the *Pax Romana*. In this way the response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

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2012 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

This response correctly identifies Augustus’s political agenda “to show the Roman people that they were better off under his rule than they had been previously,” essentially asserting “the power and goodness of Augustus.” The response refers to visual evidence in both images to discuss how the sculpted figures convey Augustus’s political agenda, but the quality of the discussion is unbalanced, with a stronger discussion of the Tellus relief. Specifically, the Tellus relief is characterized as showing the “fruitfulness of the empire.” The response notes that a “great bounty of fruits, crops, and livestock are shown to show the plenty of Rome.” The concept of divine approbation of Augustus is also discussed via the plausible identification of the central figure as “a goddess.” The procession relief is addressed; however, the inclusion of people of different genders and ages is misinterpreted as portraying “all walks of life gathered together” in an attempt to assert that Augustus “did not rule just for the elite.” The presence of children is connected neither to Augustus’s moral legislation regarding families nor to his pretensions for dynastic succession. This error impacts the response in that it directs the discussion away from the procession’s emphasis on the imperial family and the Roman nobility. In this way the response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.