

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

The general view and detail show the Arch of Constantine.

What was the intended meaning of the monument? Analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. (10 minutes)

Background

This question asks students to analyze both the intended meaning of an artwork and how that meaning is created. Specifically, the question asks students to analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art (*spolia*) is used to assert a particular political agenda by associating Constantine with “good” emperors from Rome’s past. This is not only a question about appropriation, but more significantly, how appropriation can be used to assert power and authority. The intent of the question is to prompt students to draw upon their knowledge of the Arch of Constantine’s form, function, content, and context in order to address how it references Rome’s imperial past to assert the legitimacy of Constantine’s rule.

The Arch of Constantine in Rome was dedicated in 315 C.E. to commemorate Constantine’s victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312 C.E. and his subsequent accession to the imperial throne. The monument was commissioned by the Roman Senate to honor the new emperor. Its dedicatory inscription reads:

“To the Emperor Constantine from the Senate and the People of Rome. Since through divine inspiration and great wisdom he has delivered the state from the tyrant and his party by his army and noble arms, [we] dedicate this arch, decorated with triumphal insignia.”

Placed between the Colosseum and Forum, the arch was situated in a highly visible and public location, thereby ensuring that its message would be readily accessible, prominently proclaiming Constantine’s rule at the heart of Rome. The very form of the triumphal arch, moreover, was an established indicator of imperial triumph. In addition to serving as permanent triumphal monuments, arches were incorporated into the spectacle of imperial processions which would pass through archways as part of the performance of victory and imperial ascendancy, as seen in the reliefs on the Arch of Titus. This physical ritualized function of the triumphal arch served to connect the body of the emperor to the actual city—and empire—of which he was in control. The Arch of Constantine therefore refers to earlier models as a formal means of associating the emperor with Rome’s illustrious imperial past.

To reinforce this meaning, sculptural elements were taken from earlier Roman monuments and incorporated into the Arch of Constantine. This reuse of materials is known as spoliation, in which *spolia* (the elements taken from earlier monuments) are appropriated and placed within a new context to fashion new meanings. In the case of the Arch of Constantine, this was done with the express purpose of associating Constantine with emperors of the *Pax Romana*, thereby asserting that Constantine’s rule continues (or revives) Rome’s glorious imperial legacy. These spoliated elements are included among the “triumphal insignia” noted in the arch’s inscription. Eight roundels or medallions—two of which are shown in the detail image—come from the time of Hadrian. The rectangular reliefs in the attic were originally part of an arch dedicated to Marcus Aurelius. The eight figural sculptures likely come from the Forum of Trajan. The reuse and incorporation of these elements in the monument therefore associated Constantine with the glorious imperial tradition of the *Pax Romana* while simultaneously visually and spatially reifying his authority in the Roman capital. Additionally, some of the heads on the older reliefs were refashioned to fit Constantine’s appearance, literally making him appear as a “new Hadrian” (along with the other

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3 (continued)

emperors). Furthermore, new inscriptions were added to the older reliefs so as to emphasize Constantine's achievements as liberator of Rome (*Liberator Urbis*) and restorer of peace (*Fundator Quietus*). The reuse of these elements visually associated Constantine with notions of virtue, beneficent rule, and imperial strength, as manifest in the legacy of the illustrious earlier emperors.

Moreover, while the question does not explicitly seek this information, it might be useful to know that juxtaposed with these spoliated reliefs were new reliefs (circa 315 C.E.) showing Constantine as a beneficent ruler: distributing goods, addressing the people of Rome while flanked by statues of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, and vanquishing his enemies (visible at the bottom of the detail). Conceptually, these reliefs align with the overall meaning of the monument in their clear elucidation of the benefits of Constantine's rule; namely, a newly restored peace and order that further linked Constantine to the *Pax Romana*. Given the turbulent circumstances of Constantine's accession to the throne, such allusions to the *Pax Romana* suggested that Constantine had ushered in a new era of peace and was therefore a legitimate and laudable emperor. Stylistically, the Constantinian reliefs differ from the classicism of the spoliated elements of the Roman art of the High Empire in that they eschew absolute naturalism in favor of a clear articulation of the concept: to proclaim the emperor's legitimate rule. Together, the juxtaposition of old and new reliefs contextualizes Constantine's rule within the larger tradition of the beneficent empire. Constantine is aligned with the rulers of the past, but he is presented as initiating a new rule that returns Rome to its glory days. Ultimately, all of these elements serve to legitimize and proclaim Constantine as a new emperor in the glorious Roman imperial tradition.

Two Tasks for Students

1. Identify the intended meaning of the monument.
2. Analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument.

Points to Remember

This is a contextual question that addresses power and authority. Since students are given the title and patron of the work, they should be able to focus their responses on analyzing how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the Arch of Constantine to legitimize Constantine's rule.

To do this, students must first identify the monument's intended meaning as imperial propaganda. If students do not address the intended meaning of the Arch of Constantine, it will be difficult to analyze the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art in a manner relevant to the question.

Students do not have to discuss the specific detail shown; however, they must discuss the monument's reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art in order to answer the question.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3 (continued)

Scoring Criteria

4 points

Response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response clearly and correctly identifies the intended meaning of the monument. The response clearly and correctly analyzes how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. The response may include minor errors that do not have a meaningful effect on the analysis.

3 points

Response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly identifies the intended meaning of the monument. The response correctly analyzes how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. However, the response may be somewhat unbalanced—with a stronger discussion of either the monument’s intended meaning or how the reuse of sculptural fragments reinforces the intended meaning, although both are represented—and/or may include minor errors that have some effect on the analysis.

2 points

Response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response correctly identifies the intended meaning of the monument, although the identification may be implied rather than stated directly. The response attempts to address how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument, but the discussion of that evidence is less analytical than descriptive. It may be overly general, simplistic, or unbalanced. For example, the discussion of the intended meaning may be mostly accurate, whereas the discussion of the reuse of sculptural fragments includes errors that affect the response.

1 point

Response demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the question.

The response demonstrates some general familiarity with the issues raised by the question. However, the response is weak, overly descriptive, and/or contains significant errors. If the response correctly identifies the intended meaning of the monument, then there is no other discussion of merit.

OR

The response does not identify the intended meaning of the monument even in a general way, but the response does include some relevant discussion of the monument’s reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art.

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 Arch of Constantine. The score of 0 points includes crossed-out words, personal notes, and drawings.

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ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B

3A,

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. The general view and detail show the Arch of Constantine.

What was the intended meaning of the monument? Analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. (10 minutes)

The intended meaning of the Arch of Constantine was to announce Constantine's power as emperor and to glorify Constantine. All triumphal arches were created to glorify a ruler, this is done through their size and the reliefs presented on them. With regards to size, the Arch of Constantine was the largest triumphal arch to date and this suggests that Constantine will be a great emperor. The Arch of Constantine also commemorates Constantine's defeat of Maxentius, which he attributed to the Christian god. Constantine emerged the victor from a long civil war ^{during} which there hadn't been much stability in Rome thus, ~~through~~ the massive size of the Arch of Constantine conveys permanence and assures the Roman people that under Constantine's rule, Rome will not descend into chaos again. This effect is also achieved through the reuse of sculptural fragments from ~~the~~ monuments to Hadrian, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius. By presenting himself as these emperors from the past and alongside these emperors from the past, Constantine.

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3A2
Associates himself with good emperors under whose rule Rome
was strong. ^{Through} use of sculptural fragments ^{from} monuments of
High Empire rulers, Constantine assures his people that Rome will
return to glory and strength under his rule.

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ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B

Time—1 hour

6 Questions

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3. The general view and detail show the Arch of Constantine.

What was the intended meaning of the monument? Analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. (10 minutes)

The intended purpose of the monument was to elevate the status of the emperor Constantine. The reuse of other Roman works of art helps to achieve this purpose. By using pieces of sculptures from different emperors and time periods, Constantine was comparing himself to them. The fragments are from sculptures of the "Five Good Emperors." By using these pieces, Constantine is elevated to the status that they were. The arch has many references to the past which emphasize Constantine's power and likeness to Emperors like Titus ~~Archie~~ who had a similar arch built for him.

ART HISTORY
SECTION II—Part B

30

Time—1 hour

6 Questions

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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. The general view and detail show the Arch of Constantine.

What was the intended meaning of the monument? Analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces the intended meaning of the monument. (10 minutes)

The Arch of Constantine was placed in the middle of Rome to monument the triumphs of Constantine and promote military achievements of the Romans. Throughout the arch are reliefs that depict certain moments of the military conquests. The deep reliefs accentuate the figures being depicted and cause them to pop out at people who are viewing them from a distance. Because this was placed amongst the general public, the government's promotion of war is evident; the Arch of Constantine itself is propaganda created by the government. By reusing different sculptural fragments from other Roman works, a sense of Roman pride is created, further emphasizing Rome's focus on ~~the~~ political and militant ambitions; various elements of Roman culture are put together to stress this overall promotion on their political triumphs.

AP[®] ART HISTORY

2013 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Overview

This 10-minute question asked students to discuss the intended meaning of the Arch of Constantine and then to discuss how that meaning was created. Specifically, students were asked how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art (*spolia*) was used to assert a particular political agenda by associating Constantine with “good” emperors from Rome’s illustrious imperial past. The intent of this question was to prompt students to draw upon their knowledge of the Arch of Constantine’s form, function, content, and context in order to address how the arch references Rome’s imperial past to assert the legitimacy of Constantine’s imperial rule.

Sample: 3A

Score: 4

This response uses specific evidence to identify the intended meaning of the monument and to analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces this intended meaning. The response correctly identifies the monument’s meaning “to announce Constantine’s power as emperor and to glorify Constantine.” The response discusses the specific historical context in which this message was made, addressing how the arch “commemorates Constantine’s defeat of Maxentius.” The response further elaborates that “Constantine [had] emerged the victor from a long civil war during which there hadn’t been much stability in Rome.” It notes that the monument was “the largest triumphal arch to date” and this “suggests that Constantine will be a great emperor.” Therefore, “the massive size of the Arch of Constantine conveys permanence and assures the Roman people that under Constantine’s rule, Rome will not descend into chaos again.” The response thus addresses the specific propagandistic intent of the monument. The response also correctly analyzes how this intent is conveyed “through the reuse of sculptural fragments from monuments to Hadrian, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius,” whereby Constantine “associates himself with good emperors under whose rule Rome was strong.” The response astutely observes that through this use of *spolia*, Constantine is both “presenting himself as” and “alongside these emperors from the past.” The response addresses the way in which the monument conveys the concept of a return to an acknowledged golden age: through the “reuse of sculptural fragments from monuments of High Empire rulers, Constantine assures his people that Rome will return to glory and strength under his rule.” In this way, the response demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the question.

Sample: 3B

Score: 3

This response uses evidence to identify the intended meaning of the monument and to analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces this intended meaning. The response correctly identifies the intended meaning of the monument “to elevate the status of the emperor Constantine.” The response correctly analyzes how the reuse of sculpture associated with the “Five Good Emperors” was a means by which “Constantine was comparing himself to them” so that “Constantine is elevated to the status that they were.” The response notes that “the arch has many references to the past which emphasize Constantine’s power and likeness to Emperors like Titus who had a similar arch built for him.” While the direct comparison with Titus is not correct in terms of the reuse of sculptural elements, it does not constitute a significant error. The response is also slightly unbalanced because it primarily addresses the use of *spolia* while offering a more cursory discussion of the overall intent of the monument. In this way, the response demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the question.

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2013 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

This response identifies the intended meaning of the monument and attempts to analyze how the reuse of sculptural fragments from other Roman works of art reinforces this intended meaning. The response notes the intent of the monument as “propaganda” to assert the “triumphs of Constantine.” However, this discussion is somewhat general, addressing the monument more in broad terms of Roman military triumph than specifically imperial propaganda for Constantine. The response notes that the monument is “placed in the middle of Rome” and “amongst the general public,” but relates its location to “the government’s promotion of war” and not to assertions of Constantine’s power and authority in particular. Because the monument is specifically intended as a proclamation of Constantine’s triumph and power, this constitutes an error that affects the response. The response attempts to analyze the use of *spolia* as part of the monument’s propagandistic intent, but does so only in terms of a general “sense of Roman pride” and not specifically as imperial propaganda for Constantine. The response also does not address the intentional reuse of sculptural fragments associated with specifically good emperors in an effort to associate Constantine with traditions of good Roman governance. In this way, the response demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the question.