



AP[®] Art History 2004 Sample Student Responses

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5. The work on the left is from the beginning of the Roman portrait tradition, and the work on the right is from the end of that tradition.

Identify the portrait on the right. Discuss ways in which the function and time period of each work account for the differences in their appearances. (10 minutes)

The portrait on the left is of Constantine, while the one on the right is of a Roman Patrician. Both are political figures in the Roman tradition, yet the left was produced much earlier than the portrait on Constantine. It is a realistic depiction of an older man, concentrating his lines and wrinkles, for they were a sign of wisdom. It focuses on the realism of the figure rather than youthful idealistic beauty. At the end of the Roman tradition, idealism in art was the norm, and is shown in the portrait of Constantine. The size of the piece is also characteristic of the time - showing his power by the grand scale of the piece. Both busts employ facial expressions that reflect the political atmosphere of the time: the left showing concern for the people he represents, while Constantine has a wide-eyed stare of worry for his own personal safety. The purpose of these pieces also add to their differences in appearance: the left being used as a funerary mask - allowing

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for great realism, while the portrait of Constantine is a propaganda piece - using size and idealistic features to display power and strength. While both busts are of Roman political figures, the time period in which each were created dictated their appearance, giving them stark differences in style, function and size.

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5. The work on the left is from the beginning of the Roman portrait tradition, and the work on the right is from the end of that tradition.

Identify the portrait on the right. Discuss ways in which the function and time period of each work account for the differences in their appearances. (10 minutes)

Roman sculptors were generally pretty accurate in their portrayal of the human appearance, as the first work ("L") shows. The second work "R" appears less realistic and more idealized. The portrait "R" is most likely an emperor or person of great political importance such as Alexander the Great. It would appear that the first picture "L" of the older man was more realistic to show his humanity and express an emotion or personality within. This kind of work was probably for an upper class purchasing private group. The second was probably used for political propaganda as the idealization would show him to be the perfect man/leader and perhaps even show him to be god like. The perfect features and enlarged eyes seem to show inspiration or communion with the gods, making him very revered and important. The works appear to go backward in chronologic development, but that is most likely due to the idealization, artist, and local aesthetics or perhaps a move away from traditional styles. ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~

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