

Chapter 11 Early Christian, Jewish Art 200-550 CE

- Not artwork from the first Christians, but the earliest examples of Christian themed art
- Romans hated Christians because of their foreign beliefs (monotheism- belief in only one God), their refusal to honor or worship the Roman gods (which included the god-like emperors) “Caesar is Lord” with coin annually or penalty of death, and their growth in popularity threatened the Roman Imperial control. Nero set fires to sections of Rome in order to rebuild and then blamed the innocent Christians.
- Christianity “underground” religion for 300 years/ literally living underground.
- The Emperor Constantine, convinced that the Christian God had led him to victory, legalized Christianity in Rome and became the first great patron of Christian art and architecture.

Art Concepts

- Jesus seen as “youthful” (no beard), and modest “good shepherd.”
- Did not depict or emphasize Christ suffering and dying on the cross, instead emphasized his Deity and life as miracle worker/teacher
- Images inspired by classical past and Constantinian artwork (Late Empire)
- Christian buildings used both axially planned Roman Basilicas and centrally planned Roman Temple Forums
- Narrative work rare (religion rules)

Reading

- Pg. 305 “Jewish Subjects in Christian Art” –old stories predicting role of Jesus
- Pg. 308-309 “The Life of Jesus in Art” –key moments in Jesus life that are depicted often in art

Vocab

Catacombs- pg. 303

Loculi (poor)- pg. 304

Cubicula (rich)- pg.304

Centrally planned-

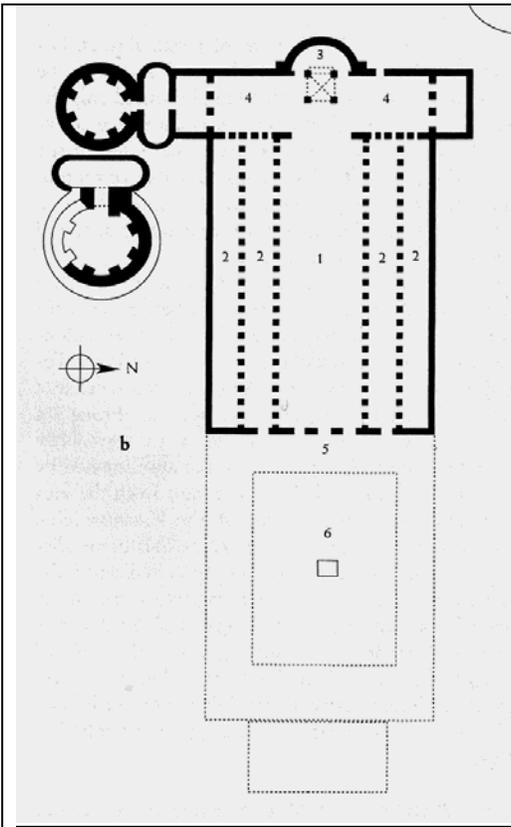
Axially planned-

Clerestory-

Basilicas-

Transfiguration-

Dora Europas-

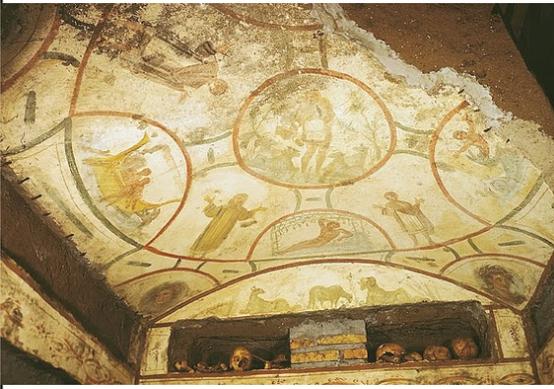


1.-Nave 3.-Apse 4.-Transept 5.-Narthex 6.-Atrium

Chapter 11

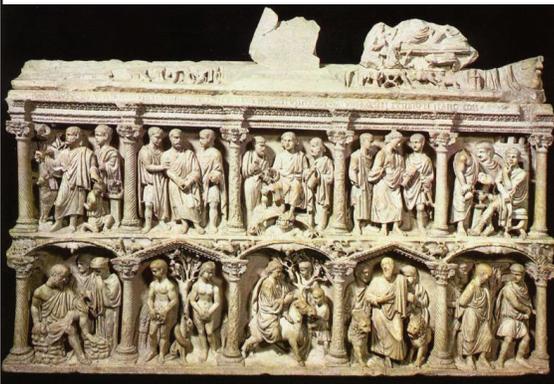
N = name D = date (century) P/S = Period/Style A = artist or architect
Pa = Patron L = original location C = context N = notes of importance

11-3



N: Good Shepherd, the Story of Jonah **D:** 300 BCE **P/S:** Early Christian Art
A: Early Christian Painters **Pa:** wealthy Early Christian **L:** Catacombs, Rome
C: -created _____ tunnels that ran for _____ miles,
-artwork in the tombs depicted Old Testament stories that predict or point to the _____ of Christ
-this one depicted Christ in the center with the cross connecting the pictures of the story of _____ who is captured in the belly of a “whale,” or original Greek is “ketos” which means “sea creature”, for _____ days, and then let out. Similar to Jesus dead for three days then resurrected.
-the people in between the story pictures are _____ figures, raising arms in prayer
-Christ (_____) in the center, is seen as good shepherd, rescuing lost _____, symbolic of Christ rescuing his flock/followers. Jesus even said about himself- “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.” -predicting his death

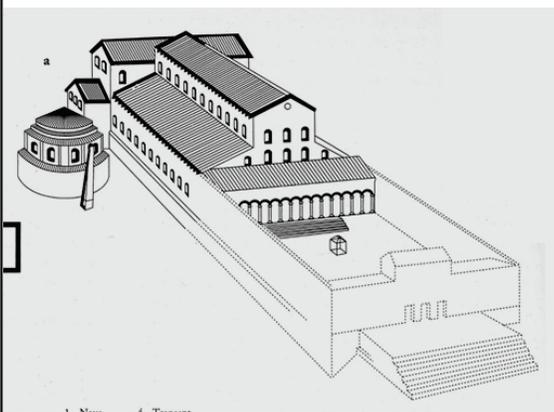
11-5



N: Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus **D:** 359 CE **P/S:** Early Christian
A: Unknown **Pa:** Junius Bassus **L:** Catacombs, Rome
C: -Early _____ wanted proper burial, no cremation, so created coffins for the dead (sarcophagus)
-elaborate _____ and _____ Testament stories that point to Jesus’s role as Savior (stories like Adam and Eve, Jonah, Daniel and the lion’s den)
- _____ Columns separate the scenes
-Christ depicted in both _____ registers, scenes taken from Pagan Rome, top as elevated teacher sitting above the sky god, indicating ruler of universe, bottom Christ enters city like Roman emperors on horseback, only he rides on _____, Jewish kings did this-implies his earthly kingship

N: marble

11-7



N: Old Saint Peter’s Basilica **D:** 320 CE **P/S:** Early Christian
A: Unknown **Pa:** Constantine **L:** Rome, Italy
C: -built over what was believed to be the _____ of Peter, Christ’s close follower and first Pope (leader) of the Christian church in Rome.
-Basilica built for congregation _____ vs. Greek-Roman _____
-had a _____ like a Roman forum, but called an Atrium
-plain brick walls from outside, lavish frescos and mosaics inside
-Constantine donated gold and silver ornamentations for interior
-Corinthian Columns _____
-Clerestory windows (Egyptian) light up the _____ and the artwork

N:

11-15



N: Christ as the Good Shepherd **D:** 425 CE **P/S:** Early Christian
A: Unknown **Pa:** Unknown **L:** Ravenna, Italy
C: -Mosaics became popular decoration technique for _____ of religious buildings,
-the _____ stones reflected the light, and added color and depth
-the _____ of the pictures aided in teaching others about Christianity
-much more _____ appearance of Jesus=halo, gold and purple robes
-the sheep and Jesus show a _____ perspective, and there is the illusion of space and distance=all of these are classical characteristics

N: