Christian religion was not legal for many years throughout the Roman Empire. As such, early Christian art was produced largely (and literally) underground.

The Good Sheppard. Catacomb Painting, Rome, early 4th century

Early Christians dug catacombs, or underground passageways outside of the city to bury their dead and hold occasional religious services. In time, these catacombs grew to be massive underground networks of tunnels, which were lighted and ventilated by air shafts.

Early Christian art in these catacombs differed from the art of Rome in many ways. Early Christian artists showed little interest in the grace and power of the human body, which was so important to Greek and Roman artists. Christian Art was intended to illustrate the glory and power of Christ.

Use of Line, Value, Proportion & Detail: