

Roman Architecture

The Etruscans 1000-509 BCE

Rome started with the Etruscans around 1000 to 509 BCE with architecture resembling Greece's

Because Rome was a society with collective ideals, as opposed to Greece's more individual "be the best you can be" approach to living life your

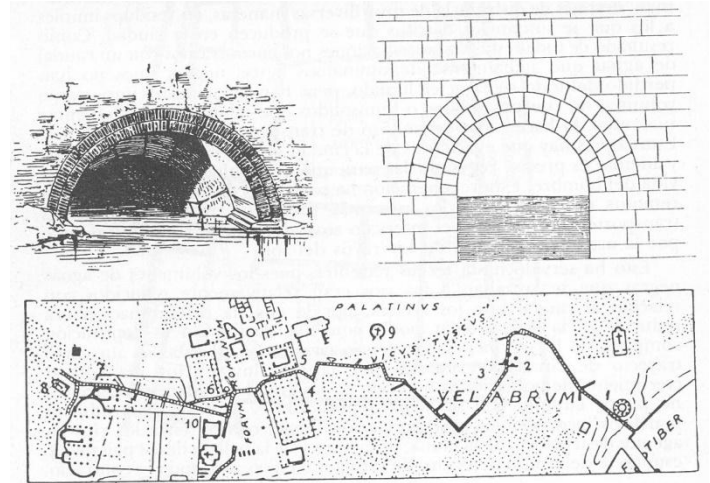


Figure 1: Cloaca Maxima

own way, Rome was quickly able to solve people's needs quickly by creating the first representative democracy and senate, which the United States of America's government is based off of today. Because of this new, well functioning system, problems such as disease were eliminated through the use of sewer systems that are still functional to this day such as the Cloaca Maxima (see figure 1) meaning "greatest sewer" in latin, which began construction in 600 BCE by the fifth king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus.

Architecture from this early period in Rome's history is classified as classical as a whole with Greece.

The Etruscans, about 700 BC, were the first people in northern and central Italy to build big buildings out of stone. They learned from the Greeks and the Phoenicians to build big stone temples for their gods. Not many Etruscan temples survive. This is probably because some of them were built out of wood and clay, and others were destroyed by the Romans when they

conquered the Etruscans. But there are ruins of a big Etruscan temple west of Rome at Veii, and on the Capitoline hill in Rome, overlooking the Roman Forum, there are the foundations of a really big Etruscan temple.

Etruscan temples were the same as Greek temples in some ways, but in other ways they were different. Like Greek temples, Etruscan temples had a stone room, the cella, on the inside, and they were on a platform that raised them above the ground. And, like Greek temples, they had peaked roofs and columns. But in Etruscan temples, the columns were only across the front, not all the way around. And the platforms of Etruscan temples were much higher, sometimes two meters high (about six feet) or even more, and they only had steps in the front, not all the way around like Greek temples. Etruscan temples were usually built out of the local tufa and travertine, instead of marble. Also, Etruscan temples often had clay statues on the roof.

The Republic 509-27 BCE

The Romans began building monuments and great government buildings built around a centralized forum during this time. Such monuments were usually freestanding arches made to commemorate a victory or to honor an achievement. An example of this is the Arch of Titus from AD 81 (see figure 2)

From its inauspicious beginnings as a small cluster of huts in the tenth century B.C., Rome developed into a city-state, first ruled by kings, then, from 509 B.C. onward, by a new form of government—the Republic. During the early Republic, power rested in the hands of the patricians, a privileged class of Roman citizens whose status was a birthright. The patricians had exclusive control over all religious offices and issued final assent (*patrum auctoritas*) to decisions

made by the Roman popular assemblies. However, debts and an unfair distribution of public land prompted the poorer Roman citizens, known as the plebians, to withdraw from the city-state and form their own assembly, elect their own officers, and set up their own cults. Their principal demands were debt relief and a more equitable distribution of newly conquered territory in allotments to Roman citizens. Eventually, in 287 B.C., with the so-called Conflict of the Orders, wealthier, land-rich plebians achieved political equality with the patricians. The main political result was the birth of a noble ruling class consisting of both patricians and plebians, a unique power-sharing partnership that continued into the late first century B.C.

During the last three centuries of the Republic, Rome became a metropolis and the capital city of a vast expanse of territory acquired piecemeal through conquest and diplomacy. Administered territories (*provinciae*) outside Italy included: Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, Africa, Macedonia, Achaea, Asia, Cilicia, Gaul, Cyrene, Bithynia, Crete, Pontus, Syria, and Cyprus. The strains of governing an ever-expanding empire involving a major military commitment, and the widening gulf between those citizens who profited from Rome's new wealth and those who were impoverished, generated social breakdown, political turmoil, and the eventual collapse of the Republic. Rome experienced a long and bloody series of civil wars, political crises, and civil disturbances that culminated with the dictatorship of Julius Caesar and his assassination on March 15, 44 B.C. After Caesar's death, the task of reforming the Roman state and restoring peace and stability fell to his grandnephew, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, only eighteen years old, who purged all opposition to his complete control of the Roman empire and was granted the honorific title of Augustus in 27 B.C.

The Empire AD 14-235

After the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth in 0 AD, the Christians decided that the history of Romans mistreating the christians was so horrid that they would start over their new rein by rewriting history.

Emperor Augustus ruled during this time.

Greek Methods	Roman Methods
Buildings built on mountains for defence, but mostly after the Trojan War	Buildings built around central squares called forums
Main building material was marble and terracotta	brick, plaster, and later concrete called <i>opus caementicium</i> [Latin] n. work concrete.
<u>Idealistic approach to architecture</u> Buildings were more works of art with great emphasis on decoration, detail, and style.	<u>Practical approach to architecture</u> More emphasis on civil engineering such as aqueducts, roads, plumbing, and government buildings in the later years of the republic from 509 to 27 BCE.

The Romans worshipped a main pantheon (in greek: pan meaning all and theion meaning holy) of 12 Gods called Dii Consentes: six gods and six goddesses: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Vesta,

Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercurius, Neptunus, Volcanus, and Apollo. They saw these gods as responsible for earthly events that occurred, sometimes being depicted as fooling around or causing the disasters that happened on earth out of anger. The Pantheon was built in

The Romans were the first to create a type of cement that set underwater by mixing volcanic ash as well.

Rome, in its earliest days, was governed by kings. However, Ancient Rome was to develop its own form of government that allowed the Romans to govern themselves.

In one sense, for a society that used its feared army to conquer other nations and reduced people to slavery, Rome was remarkably democratic when its own people were concerned. Citizens of Rome would gather at an assembly to elect their own officials. The chief officials of Rome were called consuls and there were two of them. The consuls governed for a year. If they did not live up to expectations, they could be voted out of office at the next election. Therefore, competence was rewarded and incompetence punished.

In addition to consuls, there were other elected officials – judges, magistrates and tax collectors being some of them. Ten “Tribunes of the People” were also elected to look after the poor of Rome.

The consuls could not be expected to know everything. They were advised by a Senate. This was made up of leading citizens of Rome and when they met, the Senate would discuss issues such as proposed new laws, financial issues affecting Rome etc. There were about 600 men in the

Senate. They were usually from rich noble families and what they thought went a long way to determining Roman law.

The Colosseum

Under the emperor Titus the Colosseum, which his father Vespasian had begun, was completed. It was indeed the most magnificent amphitheatre in the world. Often it is confused with the Circus Maximus (which was used for the chariot races). The Colosseum was the venue for gladiatorial and animal fights, rather than races. One thinks, the arena could even be flooded for purpose-built ships to enact naval battles.

Roads

Roman roads ran to every corner of the Roman empire. Well built, stone-covered roads laid on proper foundations. The Romans learnt early on that to control their territories they needed easy access to them. Also trade prospered (and brought in taxes) wherever there was reliable roads. Sooner or later all towns and cities of the empire were connected by an elaborate road system, which meant that from any place within the empire you could travel to Rome by road - leading to the famous phrase; 'All roads lead to Rome'

Aqueducts

When the Romans required more water for a large town or city, but couldn't find it where it was needed, they simply built a channel to carry water from elsewhere to where it was required. Emperor Claudius even had a tunnel built through the hills to carry water from a lake into Rome. Sometimes though a valley could lie in between the place from where the water came and where it needed to go. Here the Romans simply constructed bridges for the channel to cross the valley.

Mostly we refer to these as aqueducts. Though really, the whole channel, be it such a spectacular bridge or just a pipe in the ground, is an aqueduct.

Hagia Sophia

Under the emperor Justinian the greatest church of its day, the Santa Sophia, was built in Constantinople. It was by far the largest and most lavish church of its time. Huge domes form its roof, and intricate carvings adorn the walls. Wherever you look, there is sheer beauty. So fantastic was and is the Santa Sophia that when the Turks conquered Constantinople in AD 1453, they didn't destroy, nor damage it at all, - despite it being a temple of their Christian enemy. Far more, they converted it into a mosque for themselves. The church still stands today in Istanbul (Constantinople's modern day name) and it is called Aya Sophia by the Turks.

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