Typical Structures of a Roman City and how they affected the world

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Over time ancient Roman people have brought numerous different ideas to the world. One that impacted the world the most is the typical structures of Roman Cities. A few of the structures are Triumphal Arches, Bath Houses, Aqua Ducts, and Colosseums. The Romans built new structures that impacted the way people live in cities with triumphal arches, bathhouses, aqueducts, and colosseums.

Triumphal Arches made a huge impact for not only Romans but the entire world. An arch can be defined as a curved structure that is typically made of stone, brick, concrete or even steel. These arches were not invented by the Romans, the Egyptians and Greeks used the arch first (Britannica, 2019). Mainly it was just used for small structures to support a roof (Britannica, 2019). What the Romans improved was to create an arch that could support a large amount of weight. How they accomplished this was with the use of concrete, this was a mixture of lime and volcanic sand. The Romans started building their version of the arch during early BC (Britannica, 2019). For most of the Romans, these arches were architecturally isolated usually built near a street or road (Britannica, 2019). The structures had no connection with city gates or walls. The arches were formed with two piers connected by an arch. The base of these arches could be used with statues or inscriptions. The importance of these arches was to honor the monuments of important people (Britannica, 2019). Most of the ancient triumphal arches were built during the Roman Empire period from 27 BC to 476 BC.

Over time a lot of the ancient arches have deteriorated. A few of the ones still standing are, Arch of Titus built in AD 81, Arche of Septimius Severus built between 203-205 AD and Arche of Constantine built in 312 AD (Britannica, 2019). After the ancient Romans adopted their version of the arch many other counties did as well. For example, the Arbain culture architected it even further with adding pointed, scalloped and horseshoe arches, which they used for mosques (Britannica, 2019). A few other examples of arches around the globe are, Arc De Triomphe (Paris), Marble Arch (London), and Standford’s White Washington Square Arch (New York). The modification of the Roman arch meant that their architectural style would have a lasting impact on the way other cities structures would be. While Romans were making changes to the original arch they also found other architectural developments, like combing arches to form ceilings. (Britannica, 2019). Which is now called a dome-shaped roof. Now considering the immaculate churches and one of the seven wonders of the world the Taj Mahal in India, shows how without the update of the arch none of these buildings would have been possible. Even in everyday life people will encounter these architectural elements from the Romans. The spread of the Roman arch and other counterparts have had a lasting impact on architecture throughout the world.

An aqueduct is a man-made way of carrying water to another destination. In Latin aqueduct is two words, “aqua plus ducere” meaning “to lead water” (Britannica, 2018). The invention of this system was in 312 BC (Richter, Et al, 2016). No previous system of carrying water came close to this new invention of the aqueduct. The main use of this system was to bring water from outside sources into cities and towns to provide drinking water and bathing water (Richter, Et al, 2016). These structures were underground as well as above ground channels. The construction of the Specus or “ channel” in English was designed with a series of Putei or “shafts” in English (Richter, Et al, 2016). These channels were all waterproofed known as a layer of Opus Signinum, which is a mixture of crushed titles (Richter, Et al, 2016). The Opus Signinum was the main material of these aqueducts. While building these structures there were a series of scaffolding around the aqueducts to help the workers built. The aqueduct was not just a pipe that carried water to cities it also had arches to provide maximum strength and pillars as the base structure. The top of the channel was a Specus, water channel in this was the top level of the aqueduct and was covered with a roof.

In modern-day cities, aqueducts refer to a combination of pipes, ditches, canals, tunnels and supporting structures used to carry water from its source to the main area it's needed (Britannica, 2018). The system is now used to supply citizens in rural areas with water. Aqueducts have been important in rural communities because it brings direct access from freshwater sources (Britannica, 2018). The ancient Roman aqueducts have improved public health in cities for the reason that it keeps sewage out of the prime waterways (Britannica, 2018). The largest aqueduct in the world is in California. The California aqueduct brings water from the northern part of the state to the southern part of the state, over 440 miles carrying more than 650 million gallons of water a day (Britannica, 2018).

Starting in 33 BC small bathhouses were being built in ancient Rome. They vastly climbed and were being built all over small and large cities the following years. Bathhouses were used for bathing and relaxing in Roman cities (Fagan, 2002). The typical features of the bathhouse were, apodeyterium (changing rooms), palastrae (exercise room), notatio (swimming pool), laconica (sweating rooms), calidarium (hot room, heated and with a hot water pool), tepidarium (warm room), frigidarium (cool room), and rooms with massages and health treatments (Fagan, 2002). The bathhouses were typically near the forum, which is a city center. The bathhouses were accessible to wealthy and poor citizens. There was just a small fee for the entrance to the bathhouse.

Bathhouses are typically not around anymore, but a few that are still standing are, Lepcis Manga completed in 127 CE, Baths of Diocletian completed in 305 CE both in Rome (Fagan, 2002). Bathhouses had lofty ceilings and airy rooms which brought the development of the architectural dome (Cartwright, 2013). This feature became wildly used in public buildings especially basilias (churches). Both the Chicago Railroad station and the Pennsylvania station in New York have copied the structure of the dome (Cartwright, 2013). These bathhouses started the trend of how to relax with the use of hot baths, saunas, steam rooms, and hot springs. There are many countries that have similar structures to a bathhouse for example, Russia has banyas, Japan has onsens, Koreans have jimjilbangs and Native Americans have sweat lodges (Sood, 2012). Banyas are gender separated bathhouses with a cold plunge pool and a hot steam room (Sood, 2012). Onsens are natural hot springs in Japan from Volcanos. These heated baths are for healing and rejuvenation. Jimjilbangs are for families in South Korea, where everyone from younger children to the elderly use the saunas, swimming pools, fitness centers, and saunas (Sood, 2012). Lastly, sweat lodges were used in Native American culture. This is used as a ritual gathering for a spiritual experience. It can last many hours and pushes the body and mind to the ultimate test (Sood, 2012).

The Colosseum was built between 69 and 79 AD. Colosseum in Latin is Falvian Amphitheatre (Coarelli et. all, 2000). The Colosseum was built in an oval shape and had four stories so that way many people could come to the events there. The colosseums were built using three different types of rock, “Peperino was used for blocks in both the underground chambers and radial passageways on the first level between second and third annular corridors. Yellow tufa, which was also used for blocks in the underground chambers, was cut into pieces for the cement vaults and the original nuclei of walls from the Falvian period. The third kind fo tufa, gray and extremely compact, was used as a base of the brick radial wall of the first level between the third and fourth annular corridors” (Coarelli et. all, 2000). The main purpose of this structure was for the use of entertainment. For example, gladiatorial combats and wild animal fighting. The Colosseum could be shown as a symbol of power of Rome, displayed to all citizens.

The Colosseum helped shape modern-day stadiums. Today stadiums are typically oval or circular shaped with multiple levels used for sports entertainments such as baseball, football or soccer. One example is the Beijing National Stadium, “Called the bird's nest.” This stadium used 80,000, 46,297 tons of metal to build and is four stories high. This stadium holds nearly 80,000 people and was mainly used for the 2008 Olympics (Coarelli et. all, 2000). One change from the Colosseum compared to today is the different materials used for building. In ancient times Romans only used stone, bricks, and concrete, but now modern stadiums use all of those plus steal, iron, and metal (Coarelli et. all, 2000). The usage of the colosseums has also changed, now stadiums are used for sports games compared to ancient Roman times where they were used for fighting.

Ancient Roman structures have shown that they have made a lasting impact of architectural structures around the world. With the invention of triumphal arches, bathhouses, aqueducts, and colosseums Romans have given the world many marvelous structures to help better urban and rural cities. One way to think about the Romans is through their many small contributions to the world, “Omnium Rerum Principia Parva Sunt,” The beginnings of all things are small.

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