

History of Architecture

History of Architecture – Study Notes

1. Overview

- Architecture is the art and science of designing and constructing built environments.
 - Its history reflects technological advances, cultural values, religious beliefs, and socio-political structures.
 - Major periods are often defined by dominant building materials, construction techniques, and stylistic vocabularies.
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2. Prehistoric & Ancient Architecture

Period	Timeframe	Key Characteristics	Representative Examples
Prehistoric	up to ~3000? BCE	• Simple shelter (caves, huts) • Use of timber, stone, earth • Megalithic monuments (dolmens, stone circles)	Göbekli Tepe (Turkey), Newgrange (Ireland)
Neolithic	10?000?3000? BCE	• Permanent settlements • Mud?brick, timber?frame, thatch • Early urban planning (streets, courtyards)	Çatalhöyük (Turkey), Jericho (Palestine)
Bronze Age	3000?1200? BCE	• Development of stone masonry • Palatial complexes, fortified citadels • Early use of columns	Palace of Knossos (Crete), Ziggurats of Ur (Iraq)

History of Architecture

Period	Timeframe	Key Characteristics	Representative Examples
Iron Age & Classical Antiquity	1200?500? BCE (Greek) 500?476?CE (Roman)	• Orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian) • Emphasis on proportion, symmetry, geometry • Concrete (Romans) enables vaults, domes, large spans	Parthenon (Athens), Pantheon (Rome), Temple of Artemis (Ephesus)

3. Medieval Architecture

Sub?Period	Approx. Dates	Defining Features	Notable Works
Early Christian / Byzantine	4th?9th?C	• Centralized plans (Greek cross) • Domes on pendentives • Rich mosaics	Hagia Sophia (Istanbul)
Romanesque	10th?12th ?C	• Massive walls, round arches, barrel vaults • Thick piers, small windows • Emphasis on solidity	Saint?Sernin (Toulouse), Durham Cathedral (UK)
Gothic	12th?16th ?C	• Pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses • Height, light, stained glass • Vertical emphasis	Chartres Cathedral (France), Cologne Cathedral (Germany)
Islamic (Early? Medieval)	7th?15th? C	• Horseshoe arches, muqarnas, intricate geometric/arabesque decoration • Courtyard?centered plans, domed prayer halls	Great Mosque of Córdoba, Alhambra (Granada)

4. Renaissance (14th?17th?C)

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- **Core ideas:** Revival of classical orders, humanism, mathematical proportion (Vitruvian principles), perspective.
- **Materials/Techniques:** Stone masonry refined, use of domes on drums, symmetrical façades.
- **Key Architects:** Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Andrea Palladio.
- **Landmark Buildings:**
 - *Florence Cathedral* (Brunelleschi's dome)
 - *St. Peter's Basilica* (Michelangelo)