

History of Architecture

History of Architecture – Study Notes

1. Overview

Period	Approx. Dates	Key Characteristics	Representative Works
Prehistoric	?–?c. 3000? BCE	Shelter, megaliths, use of stone & timber	Göbekli?Tepe (Turkey), Newgrange (Ireland)
Ancient Civilizations	c. 3000?BCE ?–?500?CE	Monumental temples, formal city plans, development of orders	Pyramids of Giza, Parthenon, Roman Colosseum
Medieval	c. 500?–? 1500	Fortified castles, cathedrals, Gothic verticality, rib vaults	Notre?Dame de Paris, Chartres Cathedral
Renaissance	c. 1400?–? 1600	Revival of classical orders, symmetry, proportion, humanism	Florence Cathedral dome, St.?Peter's Basilica
Baroque & Rococo	c. 1600?–? 1800	Dynamic movement, dramatic light, ornate decoration	St.?Paul's Cathedral (London), Palace of Versailles
Neoclassicism	c. 1750?–? 1850	Return to Greco?Roman purity, rationalism	Panthéon (Paris), US Capitol
19th?Century Eclecticism	c. 1800?–? 1900	Historicist revivals, industrial materials	Eiffel Tower, Crystal Palace
Modernism	c. 1900?–? 1970	Functionalism, minimal ornament, new technologies (steel, concrete, glass)	Villa Savoye, Bauhaus, Fallingwater
Post?Modern & Contemporary	c. 1970?–? present	Contextualism, pluralism, sustainability, digital design	Guggenheim Bilbao, The Shard, 30?St?Mary Axe

2. Chronological Highlights

2.1 Prehistoric & Early Architecture

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- **Megalithic structures:** Built for ritual or astronomical purposes; large stones moved without metal tools.
- **Materials:** Stone, timber, earth (e.g., pit houses, wattle and daub).
- **Spatial concepts:** Simple enclosures, communal spaces.

2.2 Ancient Civilizations

Civilization	Innovations	Notable Buildings
Egypt	Post and lintel, massive stone blocks, axial symmetry	Pyramids of Giza, Temple of Karnak
Mesopotamia	Ziggurats, mud brick construction, early arches	Ziggurat of Ur
Indus Valley	Grid planning, sophisticated drainage	Mohenjo Daro, Harappa
Greek	Classical orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), proportional systems, peristyle temples	Parthenon, Temple of Hephaestus
Roman	Concrete, vaults, domes, extensive road & aqueduct networks	Pantheon, Colosseum, Baths of Caracalla

2.3 Medieval Architecture

- **Romanesque (c. 1000-1150):** Thick walls, round arches, barrel vaults, small windows.
- **Gothic (c. 1150-1500):** Pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, stained glass clerestories; emphasis on height and light.
- **Secular:** Castles (defensive geometry), town walls, vernacular timber frame houses.

2.4 Renaissance

- **Humanist philosophy:** Architecture