

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 01:

Explain the architecture of the Basilicas of Classical Rome with examples.

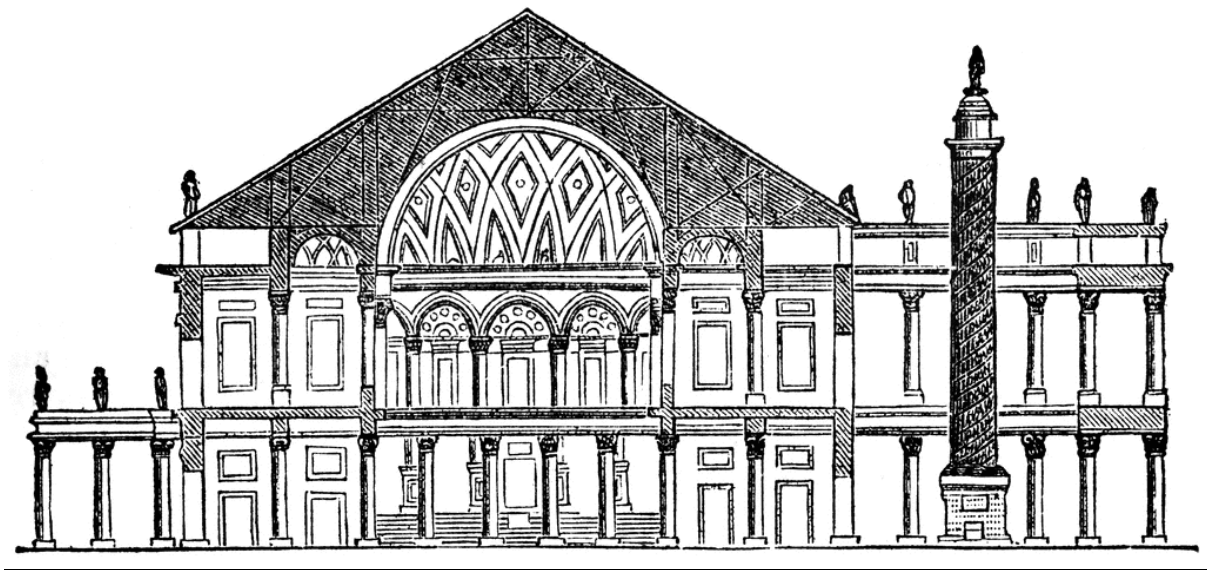
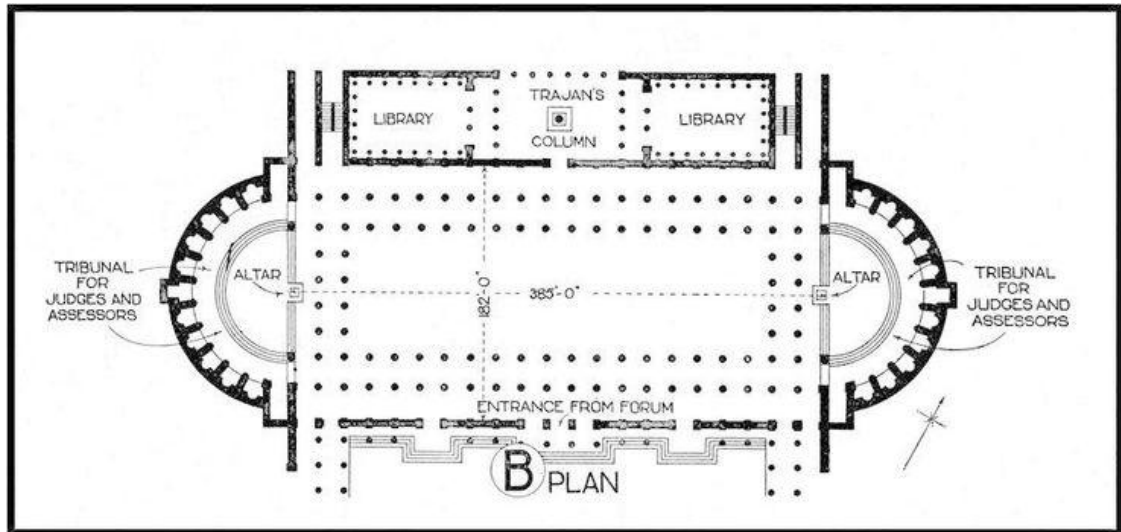
Answer:

- These, erected as halls of justice and as exchanges for merchants, comprise some of the finest buildings erected by the Romans, and bear witness to the importance of law and justice in their eyes.
- These buildings are also interesting as a link between Classic and Christian architecture.
- The usual plan was a rectangle, whose length was two or three times the width. Two or four rows of columns' ran through the entire length, resulting in three or five aisles, and galleries were usually placed over these.
- The entrance was at the side or at one end, and the tribunal at the other on a raised dais, generally placed in a semicircular apse, which was sometimes partly cut off from the main body of the building by columns.
- Ranged round the apse were seats for the assessors, that in the centre, which was elevated above the rest, being occupied by the Praetor or Questor.
- In front of the apse was the altar, where sacrifice was performed before commencing any important business.
- The building was generally covered with a wooden roof, and the exterior seems to have been of small pretensions, in comparison with the interior.

Trajan's Basilica

- Also known as the Ulpian Basilica, Rome
- A.D. 98
- Apollodorus of Damascus was the architect
- A fine example of the wooden roofed type.
- Entered from Trajan's Forum, it had a central nave 87 feet wide with double aisles, each 23 feet 9 inches wide, and an internal length excluding the apses of 385 feet.
- The total internal height was about 120 feet. The columns on the ground story separating the nave and aisles were of red granite from Syene, with white marble Corinthian capitals.

- At each end were semicircular apses, reached by flights of steps, having sacrificial altars in front of them.
- Galleries were formed over the side aisles, reached by steps as shown on the plan.
- Adjoining the Basilica were the Greek and Latin libraries, and Trajan's famous Column stood in an open court between them.



Question 02:

What are Thermae? Explain with example.

Answer:

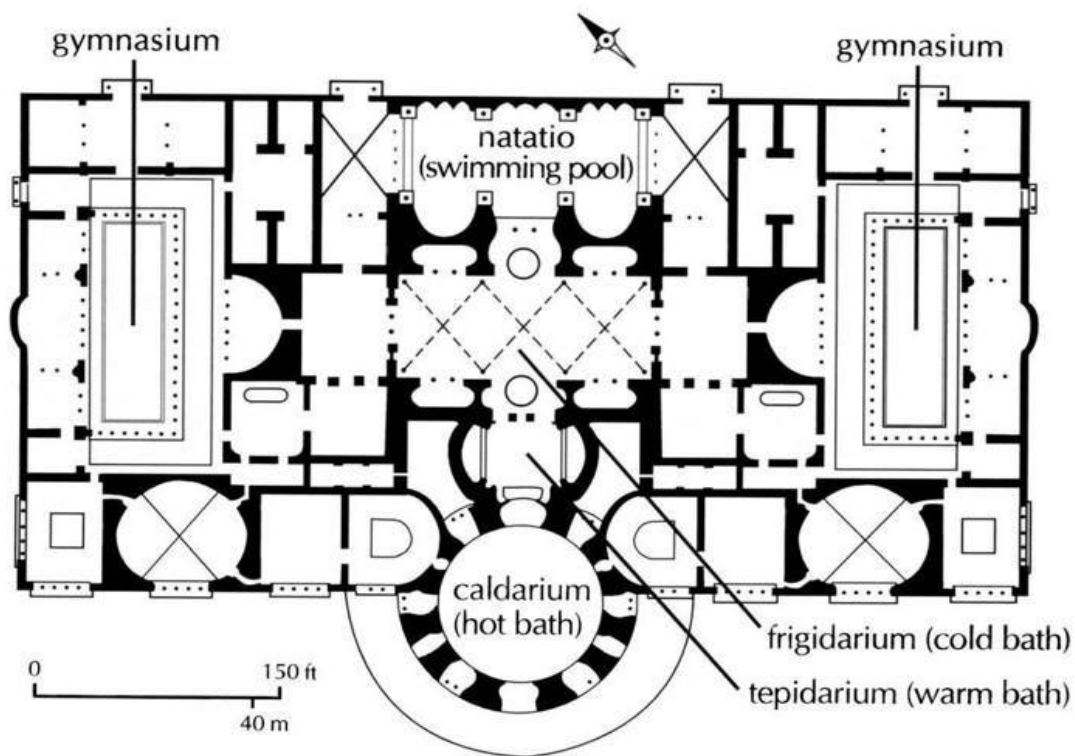
- The Thermae or great public baths are quite as characteristic of Roman civilization as the amphitheatres, being probably derived from the Greek gymnasia.

- The principal existing remains are found at Rome and Pompeii in a ruined state.
- The Thermae supplied the place of the modern daily papers for the dissemination of news and gossip, and also answered in a measure the purposes of a modern club as a rendezvous of social life.
- A small charge of a quadrans was sometimes made, but in later days they were opened free as a bribe to the populace by Emperors in search of popularity.
- general arrangement they usually consisted of three main parts :
 - (a.) *A great central block :*
 - This was planned for the baths proper, the processes of bathing resembling the modern Turkish bath. The Tepidarium (warm room for bathers to rest in), Calidarium (hot room, usually containing a warm water bath), Laconium or Sudatorium (the hottest room, usually a circular domed apartment), and a Frigidarium (cool room, usually containing a cold swimming bath "piscina") were the most important apartments ; added to which there were the Apodyteria (rooms for undressing), Unctuarium (rooms for oils). The Sphaeristerium (place for the games of ball), libraries, and small theatre occasionally formed part of the central structure.
 - (b.) *A large open space :*
 - This surrounded the central block and was frequently laid out as a stadium, with raised seats for spectators. It was also used for various athletic exercises (such as wrestling, races, boxing), or for lounging, and portions were planted with trees and ornamented with statues.
 - (c.) *An outer ring of apartments:*
 - These consisted of lecture rooms for the hearing of discourses, open colonnades, exedrae or recesses for the philosophers, poets and statesmen, and other necessary apartments.

The Thermae of Caracalla, Rome:

- A.D. 212-235
- Accommodating 1,600 bathers, are the most important of all the remains, and give a splendid idea of their size and magnificence.
- The entire site including gardens was raised on an artificial platform 20 feet high, measuring 1,150 feet each way, not including the segmental projection on three of the sides.
- Under this platform were communicating corridors leading to various parts of the establishment, vaulted chambers used as stores, the hypocaust, and furnaces for heating the water and hot air ducts.
- Along the road front was a colonnade having behind it a row of small chambers in two stories, the lower at the street level, probably used as shops, and the upper on the platform level, for private "slipper" baths.
- The entrance to the establishment was in the centre of the north-eastern facade, and led to the large open enclosure laid out for wrestling and other games, around which, in the segmental projections and elsewhere, were grouped the various halls for dramatic representations and lectures.

- The central building, used entirely for bathing, measured 750 feet by 380 feet, and therefore covered an area of 285,000 square feet.
- Only four doorways were formed on the north-east side, which was exposed to cold winds, but large columned openings, giving access to the gardens, were a feature of the south-western front.
- Internally the Tepidarium, forming the principal hall, around which the subsidiary apartments were grouped, constituted the controlling feature of the plan to which the other apartments were subordinated.
- It was 170 feet by 82 feet, roofed with an immense semicircular intersecting concrete vault, 108 feet above the floor, formed in three compartments, and supported on eight portions of entablature resting on granite columns, 38 feet high and 5 feet 4 inches in diameter, placed in front of the massive piers.



Question 03:

Explain the architecture of Roman theatre with an example.

Answer:

- The design of Greek theatres was adapted to suit Roman requirements.
- The auditorium was a semicircle, and consisted of tiers of seats one above the other, with wide passages and staircases communicating with the external porticos on each story.

- At the ground level, separating the auditorium of sloping seats from the stage, was a semicircular area which was occupied by the Senators.
- The stage thus becoming all important, was raised considerably and treated with great richness, and became connected more completely with the auditorium. Theatres were constructed on the slope of a hill. Tier upon tier of connecting corridors, in which the people might retreat in case of sudden showers.

The Theatre at Orange, South France

- Held 7,000 spectators, and is an example where the auditorium is constructed and not hollowed out of the side of a hill.
- In diameter it is 340 feet between the inclosing walls. Staircases for access to the various levels were placed on either side of the stage, which is 203 feet wide by 45 feet deep, and inclosed by return walls at right angles to the back wall.
- The great wall at the back of this stage, 314 feet long by 116 feet high, is ornamented by blind arcading, and has at the summit two tiers of corbel stones, pierced with holes, through which the velarium poles were placed. It originally had a portico attached to it.

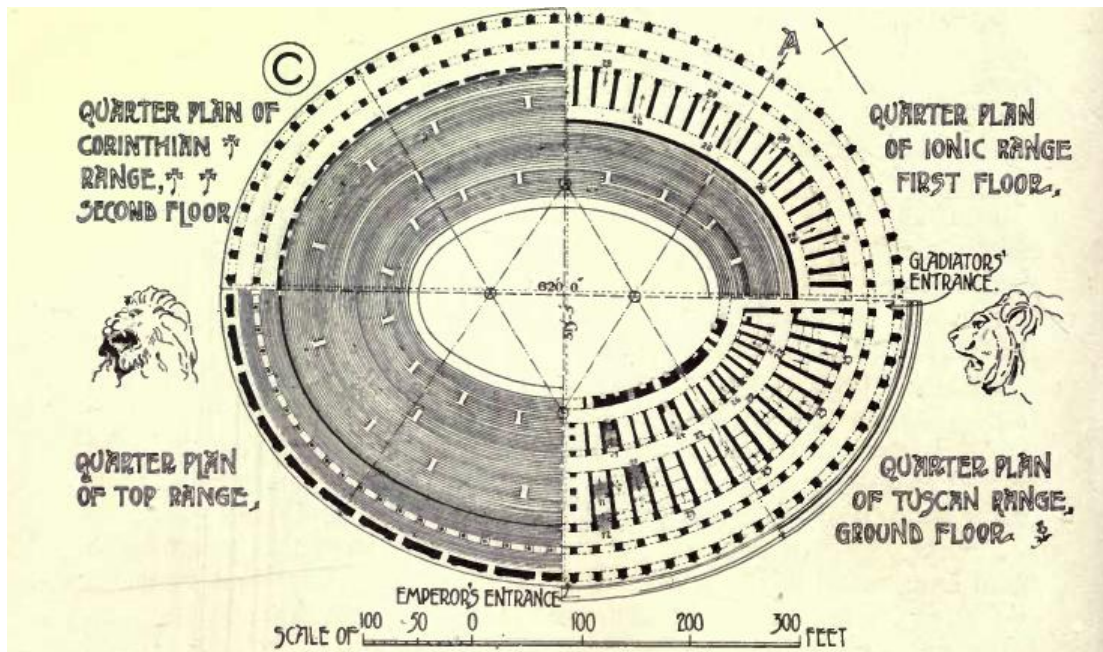
Question 04:

Elaborate the Architecture of the Flavian Amphitheatre, Rome.

Answer:

- Commenced by Vespasian in A.D. 70, and completed (with the exception of the upper story) by Domitian in A.D. 82.
- The model in the Crystal Palace gives a good idea of the general distribution of its parts. In plan it is a type of all the examples, consisting of a vast ellipse 620 feet by 513 feet, having externally eighty openings on each story, those on the ground floor forming entrances, by means of which the various tiers of seats are reached.
- The arena proper is an oval 287 feet by 180 feet, surrounded by a wall 15 feet high. The seats, in solid stone, rise up from the arena, having underneath them corridors and staircases
- The dens for the wild beasts were immediately under the lowest tiers of seats, and consequently opened on to the arena, as at Verona.
- The auditorium has four ranges of seats, the two lower forming the grand tiers, the third separated from the second by a wall, and the top range under the peristyle forming the later addition.
- Access to the various seats is from the eighty entrances by means of staircases placed between the radiating walls and by corridors, placed at intervals.

- The radiating walls were cleverly constructed, concrete being used where least weight, tufa stone where more weight, and travertine stone where the heaviest pressures had to be supported.
- The masonry was laid without mortar, and the construction is strong and solid, Joeing of an engineering character. The system is one of concrete vaults resting on walls of the same material, 2 feet 3 inches thick, faced with travertine stone, 4 feet thick, and having an internal lining of 9 inches of brickwork, making 7 jfeet in total thickness.
- The supports have been calculated at one-sixth of the whole area of the building.
- The external facade is divided into four stories. The three lower ones have their walls pierced with arches, and are ornamented with half columns of the Tuscan, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, the two latter being on pedestals.
- The upper story has Corinthian pilasters, and the height to the top of this order is 157 feet. Between the pilasters are the corbels used to support the masts of the velarium.



THE FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE - "COLOSSEUM" -

