

The Greco-Roman City

Ancient Near East (ANE) cities:

Often built on a hill top or mound; growing in size with the accumulation of destruction layers, becoming a *tel*.

Walled. Gate at lowest point; palace and temple at highest, furthest from gate.

Open space for business, selling in the gateway, between outer and inner gates.

Greco-Roman cities:

Gk πόλις, L. *urbs*.

Layout: Hippodamus of Miletus (c. 480-408 BC) popularized the grid layout: Hippodamian plan.

Roman city: two primary streets: *Cardo maximus* (N-S), *Decimanus maximus* (W-E). L *cardo* hinge.

Both lined with colonnades, shops.

Agora

Gk ἀγορά, L. *forum*. The center of activity, at the center of the city. Much more than a marketplace.

A large open courtyard, surrounded by covered colonnade, generally paved with mosaics, backed by shops.

Stoa στοά L *porticus* (at Bethesda Pool (John 5:2), Solomon's Portico in Jerusalem temple (Jn 10:23; Ac 3:11; 5:12)).

A Roman forum included many monuments, statues, and often temples.

Agora in NT:

- Gospels: where children sit, calling out to one another (Mt 11:16; Lk 7:32), a master goes to hire workers for his vineyard (Mt 20:2), scribes and Pharisees love greetings (Mt 23:1; Mk 12:38; Lk 11:43; 20:46), people brought sick on their beds so they could touch the fringe of Jesus's garment (Mk 6:56).
- Acts: owners of slave girl dragged Paul and Barnabas into Philippi agora (16:19); Jews gathered some wicked men hanging out in the Thessalonica agora to attack Jason's house (17:5); Paul reasoned every day with people in the Athens agora (17:17); the courts in the Ephesus agora were in session, to which the rioters should bring their case against Paul (19:38).

Administration

Greek cities

- *ekklēsia* (ἐκκλησία): assembly of citizens in city-states.
- council βουλή (subset of citizens) ran daily affairs; met in βουλευτήριον Bouleterion.
- the executives (πρυτάνεις) of the βουλή met in the πρυτανεῖον.

Bema βῆμα L. *rostrum*. A raised covered platform (L. *podium*) in the agora on which proconsul sat to hear a case and administer justice (L. *tribunal*).

NT 12x:

- Jesus before Pilate in Jerusalem (Mt 27:19; Jn 19:13)
- Herod Agrippa I in Jerusalem (Acts 12:21)
- Paul before Gallio, proconsul (ἀνθύπατος) of Achaia, in Corinth (Acts 18:12,16,17).
- Paul before Festus in Caesarea (Acts 25:6,10,17)
- of God (Rom 14:10); of Christ (2Cor 5:10)

Basilica: Roman, 3-aisle building; raised centre, allowing upper windows (clerestory) to light interior. Side aisles. Semicircular apse at far end, with raised platform on which officials sat (magistrates).

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Temple

Three components:

1. Precinct: τέμενος L. *fanum*; sacred space; walled or otherwise demarcated.
2. Altar θυσιαστήριον L. *altare*; or βωμός L. *ara*. to offer sacrifices: θυσία, L. *sacrificium*; προσφορά L. *oblatio*.
3. Temple ιερόν on a pedestal/*podium*, at west end of precinct.
 - Greek: low stepped platform (*crepidoma*): *stereobate* topped by *stylobate* στυλοβάτης. steps all around. Colonnade around entire platform.
 - Roman: higher platform; steps at front. Columns only at front.

Entrance on east side: *pronaos* covered portico in front of *naos* ναός.

Cult statue on pedestal at back of inner chamber (ναός L. *cella*)

Ephesus νεωκόρος temple-warden of Artemis (Acts 19:35)

column capitals:

- Doric: thick columns, tapering to top.
- Ionic (egg and dart bt scroll)
- Corinthian: acanthus leaves

Baths

Roman: L. *thermae*.

Roman innovations: aqueduct on arches; hypocaust under-floor heating system.

- *apodyterium* (changing room)
- exercise in *palaestra* open courtyard surrounded by portico, cf. Gk *gymnasium* (γυμνάζω to exercise), teachers instructed in portico.
- bathing: *frigidarium* (cold room), *tepidarium* (warm), *caldarium* (hot). start in *tepidarium*, massage olive oil into skin, scrape off with *strigil*; plunge in *frigidarium*, then *caldarium*. Optional: steam room (*laconium*), sauna (*sudatorium*).

Spectacles

Roman entertainment venues (Borges, 110):

Venue	Shape	Main events	Location
Theater	C-shaped	drama, music	in all cities
Amphiteater	O-shaped	gladiators, animal hunts	mostly Latin W
Stadium	U-shaped, small	athletic games	mostly Gk E
Circus	Ushaped, large	horse races	only largest cities

Odeon

Small roofed theater for musical performances. Ωιδεῖον singing place (αἰδω I sing, ᾠδή song, αἰδός singer).

Theater

θέατρον L. *theatrum*. For drama: a seeing place (θεάομαι I see. θεατρίζω hpx to make a show of Heb 10:33).

Large open-air. Gk theater built into hillside, Roman theater free-standing. Both had great acoustics.

3 components:

- seating area: auditorium (listening place) L. *cavea*. Divided by horizontal walkways, vertical staircases. Entrance/exit through L. *vomitoria* (s. *vomitorium*). Elite sat at front, slaves and women at back. Stone benches; the most elite in the *prohedria* had throne chairs. Leather awnings for shade.

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- orchestra: Gk ὀρχήστρα (ὀρχέομαι to dance): place on which the χορός danced/sang.
- σκηνή backdrop. In front of this actor (ὑποκριτής), wearing a mask, engaged in playing a part on stage (ὑπόκρισις).

Roman theaters modified existing Gk theaters. Remade orchestra into arena for gladiator fights, animal hunts.

Removed first few rows of seats, added stone wall c. 1.5m high for protection.

Raised stage: platform (Gk λογεῖον “speaking-place”; L. *pulpitum*) c. 2m above orchestra pit. Tall back wall (L. *scaenae frons*), elaborately decorated w. columns, niches, statues. Wooden roof over stage.

NT: Ephesus theater (Acts 19:29,31)

Amphitheater

ἀμφί both. Round, center on an oval arena.

c. 230 around the Mediterranean: 200+ in Latin W, c. 25 in Gk E.

For violent spectacles (L. *spectaculum* “a show” from *spectare* “to view, watch” frequentative form of *specere* “to look at”).

- gladiator fights (L. *munus*)
- animal hunts (*venatio*)
- executions: *damnatio ad bestias* death by wild animal: Ignatius of Antioch (Rome c. 115), martyrs of Lyon (177), Perpetua (Carthage, 203).

Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum), Rome. Built by Jewish captives, financed by plunder from Jewish temple. Victory monument. Could be flooded for naval reenactments.

Stadium

στάδιον pl. στάδια; L. *stadium*, pl. *stadia*.. Orig. unit of distance, then a venue.

- Greek στάδιον 600 human feet.
- Roman *stadium* = 125 Roman *passus* (double paces) 607 ft, 185 m.

U-shaped: one open end open, other with curved seating.

Primarily in Greek East for athletic events: foot races, combat (wrestling, boxing).

Romans modified Gk stadiums, creating small oval arena at the rounded end for spectacles.

Circus

Largest venue. Roman.

Hippodrome: Gk ἵππόδρομος (ἵππος horse + δρόμος race; τρέχω, aor δραμ- run).

3 components:

- starting gates (*carceres*),
- central divider (*spina*) w. monuments e.g. obelisks. At the 2 turns (*metea*) statues with 7 eggs & 7 dolphins to count laps.
- seating area (cavea): Emperor and sponsors sat on private platform (*pulvinar*) opposite the finish line.

Circus Maximus, Rome, under Palatine Hill. Built by Julius Caesar, Augustus; capacity 150k. Destroyed by fire c. 90 CE. Domitian & Trajan rebuilt c. 620×140 m, capacity 300k.

Race: 12 chariots each pulled by 2 or 4 horses; 13 turns/7 laps, c. 5mi/8km. A day of games had 12 races.

In Rome there were 4 companies (*factiones*): red, white, green, blue. Major financial operation; much betting.

Juvenal (satirist, c. 100 AD): emperors placated the public with *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses).

Other Monuments

- Monumental Gate: double or triple gate.
- Triumphal Arch: to commemorate military victory.

Roman innovations which enabled monumental architecture: concrete, arch.