The Flavian Dynasty Through The Rise of Constantine
Course: Greek & Roman Art

- The Flavian Amphitheater
- Triumph and Memory in the Roman Forum
- The Imperial Palace of Domitian

After the death of Nero there was a reaction against his reign b/c his fall from power cast a negative light on his immediate successors. This all happened occurred in A.D. 69, known as the “Year of the Four Emperors”.

Head of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), c. A.D. 75-79
- Portrait bust
- Age shown (experience, knowledge)
- Portrayed as the opposite of Nero, Vespasian wants to be seen as strong leader

Map of Rome during the Imperial period

Nero’s Golden House (Domus Aurea)
- Area now open for public construction
- Palace demolished
- At the center of this palace was a large artificial lake; was turned into an Amphitheater (Colosseum)

The Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum), Rome, c. A.D. 72-80
- Built next to the Colossus of Nero (from Nero’s Golden House)
- Colosseum (name) comes from the “Colossus” (though it was known as the “Flavian Amphitheater” at this time
- We see the skeleton of the building today
- Construction similar to that of the Theater of Pompey
  - Built entirely above ground, using concrete as the primary building material
  - Extensive use of vaulting to support the seats
- The exterior of the façade was done in travertine
- The exterior consists of a series of arches on 3 levels, and the 4th level has a few windows
- The arches down below served as entrances (a total of 80 entrances)
- Each arch is framed by a pair of engaged columns
  - Level 1: Tuscan columns
• Level 2: Ionic columns
  • Level 3: Corinthian columns
• Pilasters seen at top level (w/ Corinthian capitals)
• Variety of architectural orders in a single building
• Constructed in a series of shells (nested w/in one another) – like layers of an onion
• Could hold nearly 50,000 spectators
• Evidence of statues on the outside, b/w the arches (none of them survive today)
• Rhythmic appearance
• There was a velabrum (awning) to protect from heat and/or rain
• On the inside, we have the arena
• The original arena was leveled with the ground
• In the 2nd c. (50-60 years after the Amp was completed), a series of tunnels were constructed underneath the floor of the arena (used as store rooms and to house animals and gladiators during performances) and that there were elevators where animals could be raised up from underneath the ground (surprise, drama)
• Seating was segregated (women at the top, most important people down below), Emperor had his own box for him and his entourage
• When the Colosseum was first dedicated, Titus declared 100 days of games

Coin depicting the inauguration of the Colosseum (note Colossus of Nero)

Flavian Amphitheater, detail of elevation

View of Colosseum showing radial and concentric vaulting

Flavian Amphitheater, velabrum (awning)
• Could be extended or retracted (by a series of ropes)
• Similar to that used at Pompey’s Theater
• There was an entire detachment of the Roman Navy that was stationed in Rome purely for the purpose of operating this (b/c they had experience with ropes)

Jerusalem, and coin of the 1st Jewish Revolt (A.D. 68-70)

View from Forum Romanum towards Flavian Amphitheater

Arch of Titus, Rome, c. A.D. 81
• When Titus came back to Rome, he held a Triumph (grand ceremony)
• The army entered Rome, marched through the streets, passed the Colosseum, up to the Capitoline Hill (to thank god, Jupiter) – formal procession through the streets of Rome
• After Titus’ death, his brother Domitian began constructing a monument to commemorate this event (The Arch of Titus)
• A triumphal arch (preserve memory of the event; future armies will march under this arch)
• Barrel vault
• The top portion is called the attic (undecorated; w/ inscription) “Donated by the senate and people of Rome to the deified Vespasian and deified Titus”

**Triumph of Titus, from the Arch of Titus**

• Relief
• On right
• Titus leading his procession of soldiers into the city of Rome
• Goddess Roma guides the horses and the Emperor
• The Spirit of Victory shown crowning Titus
• Sense of space; upper portion is empty other than the spears of the soldiers (deep space); varied depth of carving (chariot and Roma are shown in high relief, the soldiers in the back and shown in lower relief, and Titus is shown in between
• Illusionistic art
• 3-dimensional

**Spoils of Jerusalem, from the Arch of Titus**

• Relief
• Left side
• Soldiers shown in varied relief (high to low)
• Centerpiece is the menorah (physical marker of victory)
• Table on the right shows artifacts and objects which were religious paraphernalia used in Jewish ceremonies
• The crowd is not present; the viewer is the spectator admiring the triumph and the power of the Roman people and the Roman army
• Some of the soldiers are carrying placards (which would have been painted originally); we know from literary sources that they would have labels on them indicating which city was conquered and where the booty came from, they would also hold pictures, illustrating the campaigns

**Arch of Titus, crown of the arch w/ Apotheosis of Titus**

• Titus is seated on an eagle (this is Titus’ spirit being born up to heaven)
• The eagle is the symbol of Jupiter and Rome
• The eagle is taking him up to join his father among the gods
• We call this an apotheosis
• This is one of the earliest examples of an apotheosis

• The Imperial Palace of Domitian