SESSION: Roman construction techniques  
INSTRUCTOR: Gionata Rizzi  
TIME: Monday, 15th April/ 9:30 – 11:00 (1.5 hours)

SESSION OUTLINE

ABSTRACT
The architecture of the Roman Empire was made possible by and is distinctive for Roman builders’ adeptness with structural innovation. This achievement is fundamental to appreciate the intrinsic architectural and structural values of the remains that are still visible in Rome and forms the basis for understanding subsequent Byzantine and Romanesque structures. This session provides an overview of Roman construction techniques both for large civic buildings and private residences in Rome as well as in the provinces.

OBJECTIVES
• To develop a basic understanding of the variety of materials and structural typologies in Roman construction (in Rome and abroad).
• To understand the structural performance of stone in Roman construction design.

CONTENT OUTLINE
• The materials of Roman architecture (dried and fired clay, wood, mortars, and stone)
• The different types of masonry; the opus caementicium; ashlar
• The nature of stone-block building construction
• Wooden floors and vaults
• Roofs, trusses, vaults and domes: The case of the Pantheon
• How did the Romans build their houses: The case of Herculaneum
• Stone finishes: crustae, opus sectile, mosaics
• Organization of the Roman building site

READINGS

¶ = Essential reading material  
🔗 = Available online


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