

Discussion:

While the Romans absorbed a great deal of knowledge from those they conquered they were responsible for a number of advancements in technology. Discuss two of those advancements. Is this technology still used today? How and why?

The Romans took many of the resources and inventions of others and used them in cunning ways.

1. Roads- This makes sense that the Romans would need well constructed pathways to transport items and people from one city to another. After all, their whole ideal goal was to conquer as much land mass as possible; therefore, they would need to access supplies in cities further and further away from their central area of living. This is why their roadway structure and means of transportation is so necessary. According to Ireland, the roads were unparalleled: "paths were carved along mountains, and bridges spanned valleys and rivers. The center of the road was raised so water would run off...". ¹ Their bridges as well, since they were made of repeated arches, were able to run the length of the area needing to be crossed. History.com notes that these roads were also incredibly efficient. Thinking of the need to transport people and supplies, they made sure that the roads were a path well designed. " Land surveyors, or "gromatici," began the building process by using sighting poles to painstakingly chart the most direct route from one destination to another. The resulting roads often shot straight up steep hills, and small bridges and tunnels were built to ensure the path could traverse rivers or pass right through mountains." Today, obviously roads and bridges are a huge core to our life. Even with the advances in technology in airplanes, we are not to the place of flying cars yet.

2. Heated Buildings- The current need for heat and cooling seems like we could not live without it. The Romans came up with the idea to leave a gap between their flooring and the actual ground, raising up the floor they walked on- this allowed for the space for a charcoal brazier to burn and give them heated flooring! Obviously less convenient than electricity due to the need of keeping the brazier burning. This would heat all the areas above the brazier, so the flooring would be warmest right above it, though it was a similar concept to central heating. (Just hope you didn't have the room on farthest from the brazier!) Later they came up with a solution of having an open flue in the wall as well, for the warm air to escape up and out. Similar to a chimney flue now, it actually heated up the walls and spaces that the flue went through, thus giving more even heating. Today, we use central heating, which is necessary especially in colder climates than Houston! But also, it seems that the chimney flue, radiator, and heated floors would be derived from this idea.

¹ *History of Interior Design*, by Jeannie Ireland, 2nd ed., Fairchild Books, An Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 2018, p. 79.

² Andrews, Evan, "8 Ways Roads Helped Rome Rule the Ancient World", *History.com*, <https://www.history.com/news/8-ways-roads-helped-rome-rule-the-ancient-world>, (Links to an external site.) Accessed 17 September 2020.

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