

Knowledge Map: Myth and Religion: Religion in the City: Acropolis of Athens

In this topic, you are required to study the design, function and importance of temples in Greece and Rome. You will also have to examine the various religious officials that existed in the Greek and Roman world and their roles and responsibilities. Finally, we will examine the importance of animal sacrifices to those who conducted them. We will be looking at four case studies: the Parthenon and Temple of Zeus in Greece, and the Pantheon and Temple of Portunus in Rome.

Greece

Rome

The Temple of Zeus (472BC-456BC)

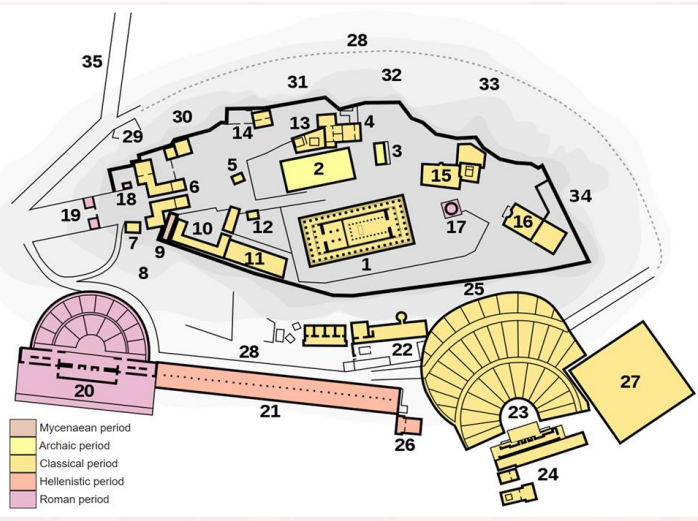
The Parthenon (447BC-432BC)

The Temple of Portunus (120BC-80BC)

The Pantheon (125AD)



Plan of the Acropolis of Athens



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| Main Buildings: | Selected Others: |
| 1. The Parthenon and Statue of Athena Parthenos | 2. Temple of Athena Polias |
| 4. The Erechtheion | 23. Theatre of Dionysus |
| 5. Statue of Athene Promachos | 27. Odeon of Pericles |
| 6. Propylaea | 35. Panathenaic Way |
| 7. Temple of Athena Nike | |

Acropolis of Athens

1	Propylaea	This was the grand entrance into the Acropolis and the sanctuary. It was a monumental gateway into the site. Construction of it was completed between 437 and 432BC and it had five main parts: a central hall which was the gateway, and four wings, two on each side. It was made entirely of marble, with a dark blue ceiling studded with golden stars.
2	Statue of Athena Promachos	Gods were usually given epithets (an adjective which describes a particular role or characteristic of a god). The main statue on the Acropolis was to Athena and was called Athena Promachos. This translates as Athena who fights in the front line, and showed the goddess as a military defender of the state of Athens.
3	Parthenon	The biggest building on the Acropolis and the largest temple in Ancient Greece. It dominated the Acropolis but, interestingly, it is suggested it was not the main temple to Athena on the Acropolis, but would be the focal point for major festivals.
4	Statue of Athena Parthenos	Inside the Parthenon stood a colossal statue dedicated to Athena Parthenos, Athena the Maiden. The statue was originally carved out of wood and then covered in gold leaf.
5	Erechtheion	The Erechtheion marks the most sacred spot on the Acropolis. It was here that Athena and Poseidon allegedly competed for patronage of the city. The temple's architecture is unlike any other on the Acropolis with areas inside for different gods, as well as Athena. It was the focal point of festivals such as the Great Panathenaia.
6	Temple of Athena Nike	This temple is dedicated to Athena Nike - Athena of Victory. It is a relatively small temple and simple in design. Its friezes depict a mixture of different gods and goddesses and battle scenes.
7	Other Key Sites	The building programme was extended beyond the Acropolis and did include some significant buildings. It included the Theatre of Dionysus, and Odeon to Pericles. The latter is a concert hall named after the leader of Athens who undertook the building of the Acropolis.

Roman Temples

8	Construction	The building of the Parthenon was started in 447BC, under the direction of two architects, Callicrates and Ictinus. It was designed to show off the statue of Athena Parthenos and to be more remarkable in size than any other temple. The main architect during this period would be Phidias, who saw its completion in 432BC.
9	Plan	The temple is grand in scale. It measures 69.5 metres in length and 30.9 metres wide. Unusually it had an arrangement of 8 x 17 columns, usually large temples were 6 x 13.
10	Design	It is predominately a Doric temple but an inner row of columns contains an Ionic frieze. It is not the only unusual design feature to make it more impressive than it might otherwise be. These include careful placing of the columns and a slight curvature of the base and columns.
11	East Pediment	The East Pediment is above the entrance to the Parthenon and depicts Athena's unusual birth; she materialises out of Zeus' head.
12	West Pediment	The West Pediment depicts the competition between Athena and Poseidon as to who would be the patron god of Athens. Much of the pediment's sculpture has been lost or damaged, but a drawing in 1674AD has preserved many details now absent. At the centre of the scene, Athena and Poseidon are moving away from each other but turning to look back.
13	Friezes	The Parthenon has a number of friezes depicting many myths. The Ionic frieze depicts the Panathenaic procession and shows mortals worshipping their Gods, as well as proud Athenian things such as democracy and its strength. The Doric friezes show a series of mythical battles through metopes: Gigantomachy, Centauromachy, Amazonomachy, and the Trojan War.
14	Uses	The Parthenon, whilst a temple to Athena, was also where the city's wealth was kept. Large amounts of gold and silver were kept in the opisthodomos. This highlights the religious and civic connection that runs through Greek religion.

Case Studies: Pantheon and Temple of Portunus

15	Pericles	Pericles was leader of Athens during its Golden Age or the 'Age of Pericles' as it was known. He would rebuild the Acropolis after defeat in a war with Persia, and create Athens as the cultural centre of the Ancient Greek world.
16	Pericles' Building Programme	After Athens was sacked (looted) by the Persians in 480BC, the Athenians, under the leadership of Pericles, chose to build a new, greater Acropolis. His ambitious building programme would see many temples constructed on the Acropolis as well as many other buildings across Athens. Most, if not all, were built out of solid marble which would have been incredibly costly.
17	Delian League	Athens headed a group of Greek allies called the Delian League. Each of the members of the Delian League would pay into the Delian League treasury a membership fee annually. In return for this, Athens would protect them against enemies. The Delian League would effectively become the Athenian Empire.
18	Treasury of Delian League moved	Pericles moved the treasury of the Delian League from the neutral island of Delos to Athens in a statement of power. He would use this money to fund his building programme.
19	Phidias	Phidias came to be the main architect of the Parthenon. He would also be the man who designed the statue of Athena Parthenos.
20	Other Architects	There were other architects involved in the construction of the Parthenon. At its inception it was Callicrates and Ictinus.
21	Controversy over the Building Programme	The controversy lies in how it was funded using the Delian League money to fund an extensive and remarkable building programme. Pericles argued it was necessary and so long as Athens could protect its allies, it was entitled to the money.