

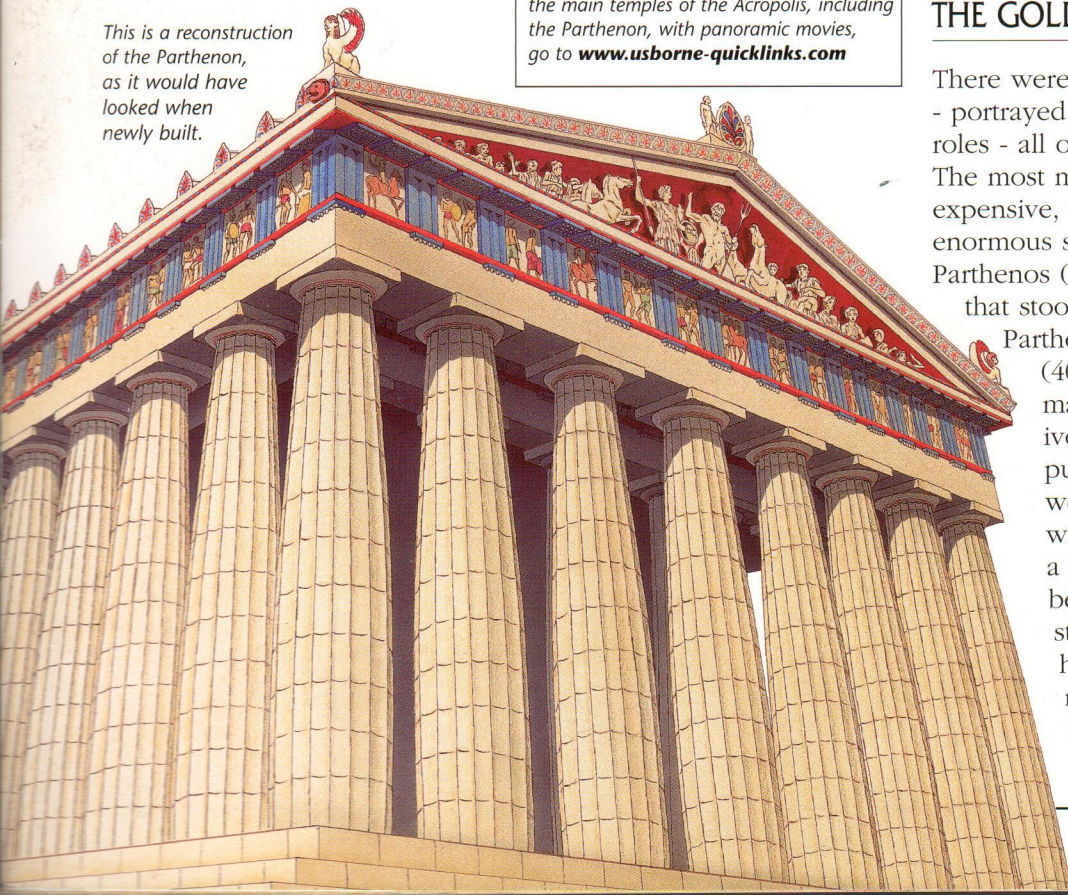
THE ACROPOLIS

Towering over the ancient city of Athens was the Acropolis, or 'high city', the site of all the main temples to the gods. In 449BC, Pericles, the political leader of Athens, began a massive rebuilding of the Acropolis, to repair the damage done by the Persians.

THE PARTHENON

The main temple on the Acropolis, the Parthenon, was dedicated to Athene, patron goddess of Athens. It was designed by an architect named Ictinus and constructed of white marble, brightly painted. Although it is now in ruins, with few sculptures and no paint left in place, it is still one of the most famous buildings in the world.

This is a reconstruction of the Parthenon, as it would have looked when newly built.



TRICKS OF THE EYE

Looking at the columns of a temple can play funny tricks on the eye. From below, a column with absolutely straight sides can look thinner in the middle - even though it's not. So Greek architects designed their columns to bulge slightly in the middle.



INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can explore the main temples of the Acropolis, including the Parthenon, with panoramic movies, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com



This Roman copy of the statue of Athene from the Parthenon is made of unpainted marble. The original was made of wood and ivory, covered with gold.

THE GOLDEN STATUE

There were statues of Athene - portrayed in her different roles - all over the Acropolis. The most magnificent, and expensive, was probably the enormous statue of Athene Parthenos (Athene the Virgin), that stood just inside the Parthenon. About 12m (40ft) high, it was made of wood and ivory, with robes of pure gold, which were removed whenever there was a risk of the city being attacked. The statue is said to have cost more to make than the Parthenon itself.