

TEMPLES AND WORSHIP

Ancient Greek temples were not built for people to worship in, like churches, synagogues and mosques. The Greeks thought of them as somewhere for the gods and goddesses to live comfortably when they visited Earth. So each temple was dedicated to a particular god or goddess.



This shows a woman being carried off by the god Zeus, disguised as an eagle, on one of his visits to Earth.

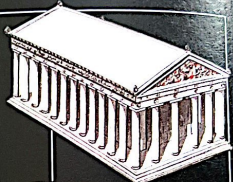
TEMPLE DESIGN

The design of a Greek temple was based on the royal halls in the palaces of Mycenae. The early ones were just a simple room, called a cella, with a statue of the god or goddess. Later, temples became much more sophisticated. The largest and most ornate ones were built in the Classical Period.

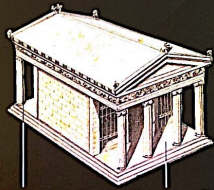


This is a Greek pottery model of a Dark Age temple. Temples at this time were made of wood or mud brick, and consisted of a single room, called a cella.

This stone temple is from the Archaic Period. It had a porch at the front and at the back.

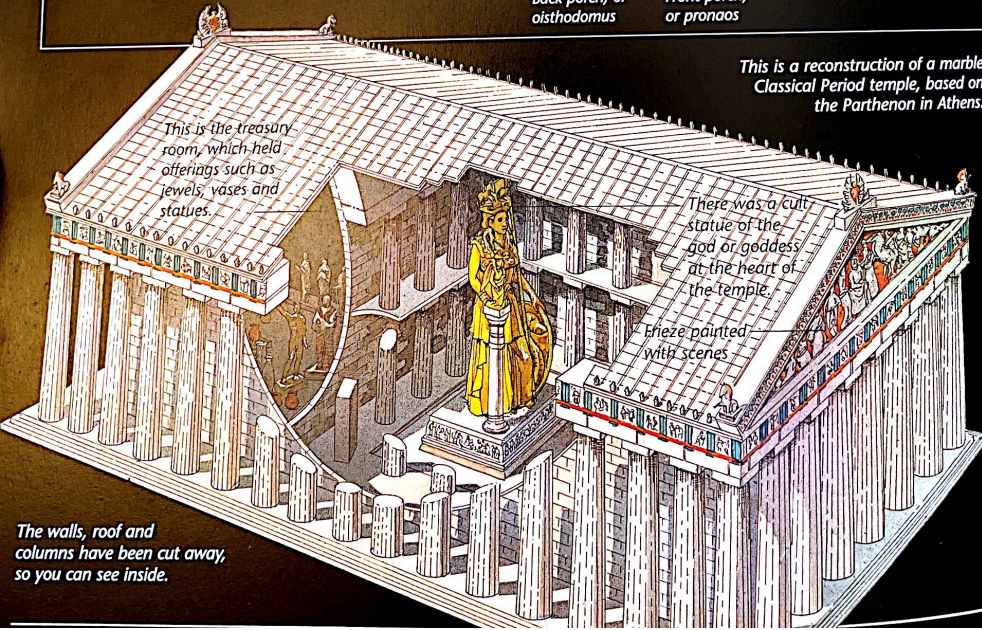


This is a more sophisticated, Late Archaic Period temple. It had several steps up to the entrance, and a covered row of columns, called a peristyle, around the outside.



Back porch, or oisthodomus

Front porch, or pronaos



This is the treasury room, which held offerings such as jewels, vases and statues.

There was a cult statue of the god or goddess at the heart of the temple.

Frieze painted with scenes

The walls, roof and columns have been cut away, so you can see inside.

This is a reconstruction of a marble Classical Period temple, based on the Parthenon in Athens.