5th Century Architecture

and Architectural Sculpture

c. 400-499 BCE
Figure 5-25  Plan (left) and restored cutaway view (right) of the Temple of Aphaia, Aegina, Greece, ca. 500–490 BCE.
5th Century
High Classical Period

• High Classical Period: Golden Age of Athens
  • Corresponds roughly to conflict between Athens and Sparta
  • Time of Pericles (he dies in 429)
  • From, 449 - 432 Iktinos and Kallikrates design and build the Parthenon
  • Concludes with defeat of Athens by Sparta
Athenian Agora

- The Agora was the heart of ancient Athens, the focus of political, commercial, administrative and social activity, the religious and cultural centre, and the seat of justice.
- The site was occupied without interruption in all periods of the city's history.
- It was used as a residential and burial area as early as the Late Neolithic period (3000 BCE).
- Early in the 6th century BCE, in the time of Solon, the Agora became a public area.
- After a series of repairs and remodeling, it reached its final rectangular form in the 2nd century BCE.
- Extensive building activity occurred after the serious damage by the Persians in 480/79 BCE, by the Romans in 89 CE and, after the Slavic invasion in 580 CE, it was gradually abandoned.
- From the Byzantine period until after 1834, when Athens became the capital of the independent Greek state, the Agora was again developed as a residential area.
Above the Athenian Agora sits the Acropolis, the high city
The Acropolis

- The Acropolis, so called the "Sacred Rock" of Athens, is the most important site of the city.
- During the Golden Age, ancient Greek civilization was represented in an ideal way on this hill and some of the architectural masterpieces of the period were erected on its ground.
- The first habitation remains on the Acropolis date from the Neolithic period. Over the centuries, the rocky hill was continuously used either as a cult place or as a residential area or both.
- The inscriptions on the numerous and precious offerings to the sanctuary of Athena indicate that the cult of the city's patron goddess was established as early as the Archaic period (650-480 BCE).
- During the Classical period (450-330 BCE) three important temples were erected on the ruins of earlier ones: the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, and the Temple of Athena Nike.
The most important monuments on the Acropolis are:

- The Parthenon
- The Erechtheium
- The Temple of Athena Nike
• The **Parthenon** was a temple of Athena, built in the 5th century BCE on the Acropolis.
• It is the best-known remaining building of Ancient Greece, and has been praised as the finest achievement of Greek architecture.
• Its decorative sculptures made of white marble are considered one of the high points of Greek art.
• The Parthenon is an enduring symbol of Ancient Greece and of Athenian democracy, and it is regarded as one of the world's greatest cultural monuments.
• Its classic design has been an inspiration for generations of architects.
Reproduction of the statue of Athena Parthenos

• The name of the Parthenon likely derives from the monumental cult statue of Athena Parthenos housed in the eastern room of the Parthenon.

• The original statue was sculpted in ivory and gold by the famous sculptor Phidias.

• Athena's epithet *parthenos*, ("virgin") refers to Athena’s unmarried and virginal status.

• This modern *Athena Parthenos* replica stands in the replicated Parthenon in Centennial Park in Nashville.
Plan of the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece

diagram of sculptural program 447–432 BCE.
Cross section of The Parthenon Porch

- Double row of Doric columns
- Pediment
- Frieze
- Metopes
Mature Doric The Parthenon
Compare Temple of Hera, archaic period with Parthenon, classical period
The Parthenon retained its religious character in the following centuries and was converted into a Byzantine church, a Latin church and a Muslim mosque. The Turks used the Parthenon as a powder magazine when the Venetians, siezed the Acropolis in 1687. One of the Venetian bombs fell on the Parthenon and caused a tremendous explosion that destroyed a great part of the monument, which had been preserved in good condition until then.
Engraving showing Parthenon, with Mosque during Ottoman period
Second Bank of the United States
Philadelphia, built c. 1812

The porch is an exact copy of the Parthenon porch, but three fifths its actual size.
This bank was the first of many Greek revival style buildings built in the US.
• The Supreme Court building, located in Washington D.C., across the street from the U.S. Capitol, was designed by architect Cass Gilbert. The cornerstone was laid on October 13, 1932 and construction completed in 1935,
Architectural Sculpture at the Parthenon

East and West Pediment
Frieze and Metopes
• Diagram: Pediment Fireze Metope
• Sculpture had long been integrated into the architecture of Greek temple.
• But the Parthenon is exceptional in the amount of sculptural decoration and the clear coordination of the different elements into a coherent sculptural program.
• As a demonstration of the extensiveness of the sculptural program all 92 metopes in the Doric frieze course have sculptured reliefs.
Modern Reconstruction of the Ionic Frieze along the east end of the Parthenon.
The frieze in the east pediment of the Parthenon has sustained much damage and theft over time.

However artists have tried to recreate the frieze based on remaining pieces and drawings from earlier times.

The frieze in the East pediment represents the birth of the goddess Athena.

According to Greek mythology, Zeus gave birth to Athena after a terrible headache prompted him to summon Hephaestus, (the god of fire and the forge) for help.

To alleviate the pain Zeus ordered Hephaestus to hit him over the head with his hammer, and when he did, Zeus’ head split open and out popped the full grown goddess Athena in full armor.
The sculptural arrangement depicts the moment of Athena’s birth. Unfortunately, the center pieces of the pediment were destroyed before Jacques Carrey created his drawings in 1674, so all reconstructions are subject to conjecture and speculation. The main Olympian gods must have stood around Zeus and Athena watching the wondrous event with Hephaestus and Hera probably near them. The Carrey drawings are instrumental in reconstructing the sculptural arrangement beyond the center figures to the north and south.
The birth of Athena took place at dawn, and is depicted by the heads of the horses that appear at the south corner of the pediment.

The horses of Helios (sun) are depicted as if they are about to rise above the horizon pulling behind them the life giving sun.

The horse’s faces are full of energy, in contrast to the group of horses at the other end that appear tired with bulging eyes, open mouths, and tense muscles.

The horses of Selene (moon) are tired they are at the end of the journey across the night sky.

The figures at the center exhibit some movement, while the ones at the corners are reclined to accommodate the limited space, and to accurately depict the activity level during the early hours of the morning when most gods and mortals wait for the sun to rise.
Reproduction in the east pediment of the awakening horse
The Elgin Marbles

• In the early nineteenth century, Thomas Bruce, the British Earl of Elgin, acquired much of the surviving sculpture from the Parthenon.
• He shipped them to England to decorate his mansion.
• However a few years late, his wife left him and the treasures from the Parthenon were at the center of a financial dispute.
• Eventually he sold them at a very low price
• The pieces, now in the British Museum, are referred to as the Elgin Marbles.
• In recent years, the Greek government has tried unsuccessfully to have them returned to Greece.
More Elgin marbles from the east pediment
And more …..The Three Graces
East Pediment of the Parthenon
• Horsemen, Procession from the Ionic frieze, north side of the Parthenon, c. 435 BCE, marble
• British Museum (Elgin marbles)
• Lapith fighting a centaur, metope high relief from the south side of the Parthenon, c. 440 BCE, marble
• British Museum, (Elgin marbles)
Marshals and Young Women from the "Panathenaic Procession" East Frieze, Parthenon Marble, 43" high Louvre, Paris, c. 447-438 B.C.E.
• The relief sculptures from the Parthenon are a striking demonstration of the Athenian artists' mastery of the representation of the human figure.
• No two figures in the work are identical with the artists capturing a rich variety of human movement.
• Figures are shown turning in space and from a variety of points of view.
• An interesting comparison can be made by juxtaposing a detail from the Panathenaic Procession from the nearly contemporary procession decorating the Persian citadel in Persepolis (c. 521-465 BCE).
Erechitheum
second largest ancient temple on the north side of the Acropolis in Athens
Figure 5-51 Plan of the Erechtheion, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 421–405 BCE.

1. Shrine housing wooden image of Athena
2. Athena’s olive tree
3. Poseidon’s trident mark
4. Ruins of Archaic temple
• The entire temple is on a slope, so the west and north sides are about (9 ft) lower than the south and east sides.

• The legendary battle for control of Athens between Poseidon and Athena took place in the general area of the temple.

• It is notable for a design that is both elegant and unusual.

• It had elaborately carved doorways and windows, and its columns were ornately decorated; they were painted, gilded and highlighted with gilt bronze and multi-colored inset glass beads.

• The temple as seen today was built between 421 and 407 BCE.
The Erectheum was associated with some of the most ancient and holy relics of the Athenians.

- The Palladion, which was a wooden effigy fallen from heaven - not man-made of Athena
  - In classical mythology, the "palladion" was a statue of Athena whose presence was thought to guarantee the safety of Troy; only after Odysseus and Diomedes stole the image were the Greeks able to capture Troy
  - The marks of Poseidon's trident and the salt water well that resulted from a strike from Poseidon’s trident
  - The sacred olive tree planted by Athena in her successful rivalry with Poseidon for the city,

- Within the foundations lived the sacred snake of the temple, symbol of the legendary, Kekrops, half man half serpent, founder of Athens, whose well-being was thought essential for the safety of the city.
  - The snake was fed honey-cakes by the priestesses of Athena
  - The snake's occasional refusal to eat the cakes was thought a disastrous omen.
• On the north side, there is a large porch with columns, and on the south side, the famous "porch of the maidens", with six draped female figures (Caryatids) as supporting columns.
The intact Erechtheum was extensively described by the Roman geographer Pausanias, writing a century after it had been restored in the 1st century CE. The internal layout has since been obscured by the temple's later use as a church and possibly as a Turkish harem.
Erechtheum
The Porch of the Maidens
• One of the Caryatids was removed by Lord Elgin in order to decorate his Scottish mansion, and was later sold to the British Museum (along with the pediment and frieze sculpture taken from the Parthenon).

• Athenian legend has it that at night the remaining five Caryatids could be heard wailing for their lost sister.

• Today the five original Caryatids are displayed in helium-filled glass cases in the Acropolis Museum and are replaced in situ by exact replicas.

• The porch was built to conceal the giant 15-ft beam needed to support the southwest corner over the Kekropion after the building was drastically reduced in size and budget following the onset of the Peloponnesian war.
Porch of the Maidens
Caryatids

- Figures used as columns to support a roof.
- This is an original caryatid from the Porch of the Maidens.
- Now in the British Museum.
Temple of Athena Nike

Athena as the goddess of victory in war
Temple of Athena Nike

• The diminutive Temple of Athena Nike (goddess of Victory), from about 420 BCE, is the earliest Ionic building on the Acropolis.

• Only about 11 feet high from the stylobate to the apex of the pediment.

• It has four columns at the projecting porches at each end (tetrastyle amphiprostyle).

• Its elongated shape and small scale befit its position on a high narrow substructure.
Temple of Athena Nike

- Ionic capitals
- Smaller, lighter feel than Doric style
- Built after Pericles's death between 427 and 424 B.C.
- Destroyed by the Turks in 1687
- Restored in 1835
Nike Adjusting Her Sandal

• At one time the temple was surrounded by a parapet, or low wall, with sculpted marble panels depicting Athena presiding over her winged attendants called, Victories.
• The parapet no longer exists, but some of the panels have survived.
• This one in the Acropolis Museum is one of the most famous.
• This Athena leans forward to adjust her sandal and her heavy chiton gracefully slips off one shoulder.
• Notice the amazing sheer quality of the draped fabric.
• Praxitelles
Evolution Of Drapery
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