

THE GREEK TEMPLE
THE HOUSE FOR THE GODS

curated by Anna Mattedi

THE PARTHENON



ARCHITECTURE

- Many of the earliest Greek temples didn't survive because they were made of WOOD and MUD (fango) and BRICK;
- Later Greek temples were built of more permanent materials: LIMESTONE (pietra calcarea), MARBLE;



STRUCTURE

- The ALTAR lay outside the temple, at the east end facing the rising sun, and the Greeks gathered (radunare) outside, not inside, the building to worship (culto);
- The temple housed the cult statue of the deity;
- The Greek temple was the house of the god or goddess;



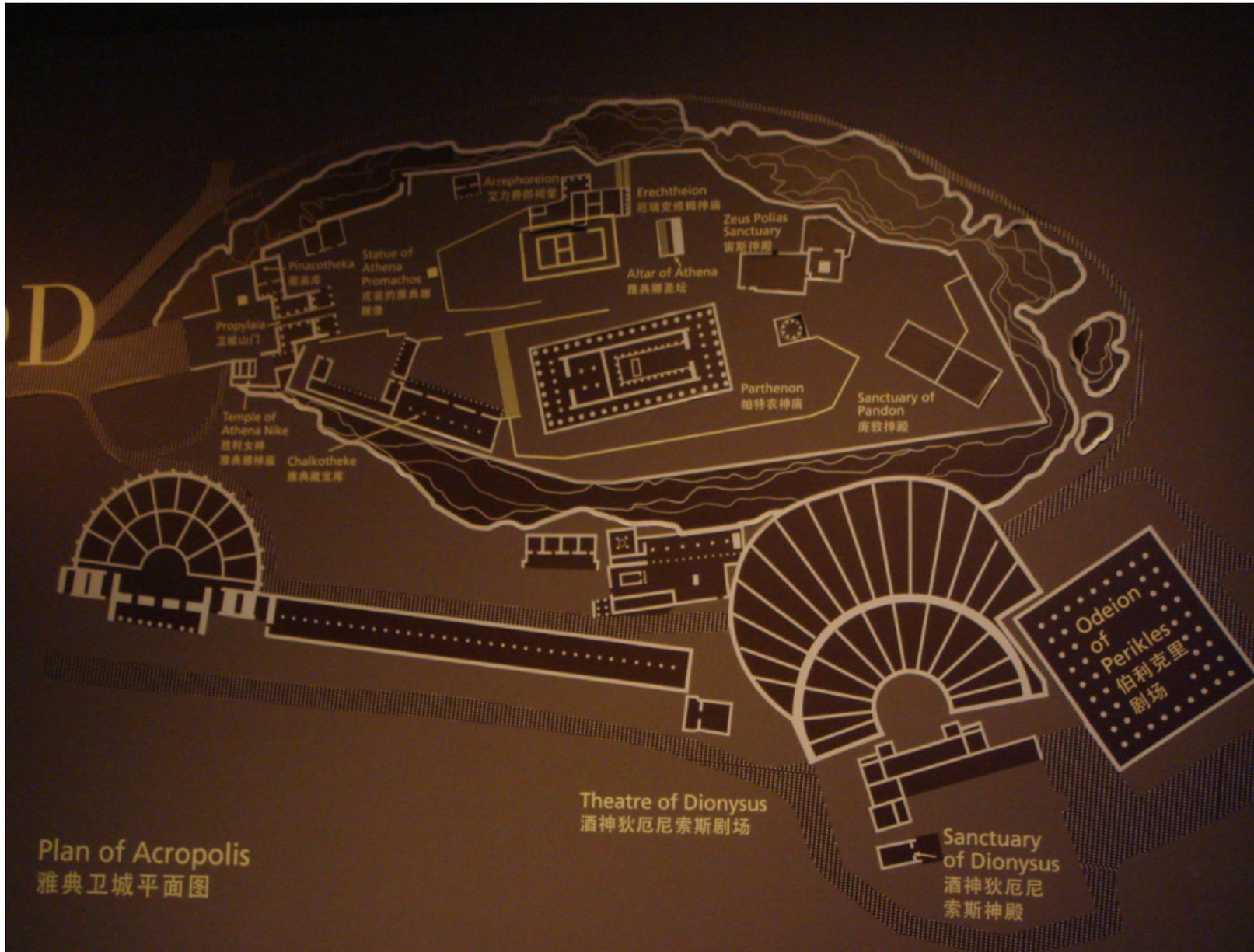
- Figural sculpture played a major role in the exterior program of the Greek temple, partly to embellish the god's shrine, partly to tell something about the deity symbolized within;
- The importance of the sculpted temple, its function in public life, was emphasized in its elevated site, often on a hill above the city (*ACROPOLIS* means "HIGH CITY");



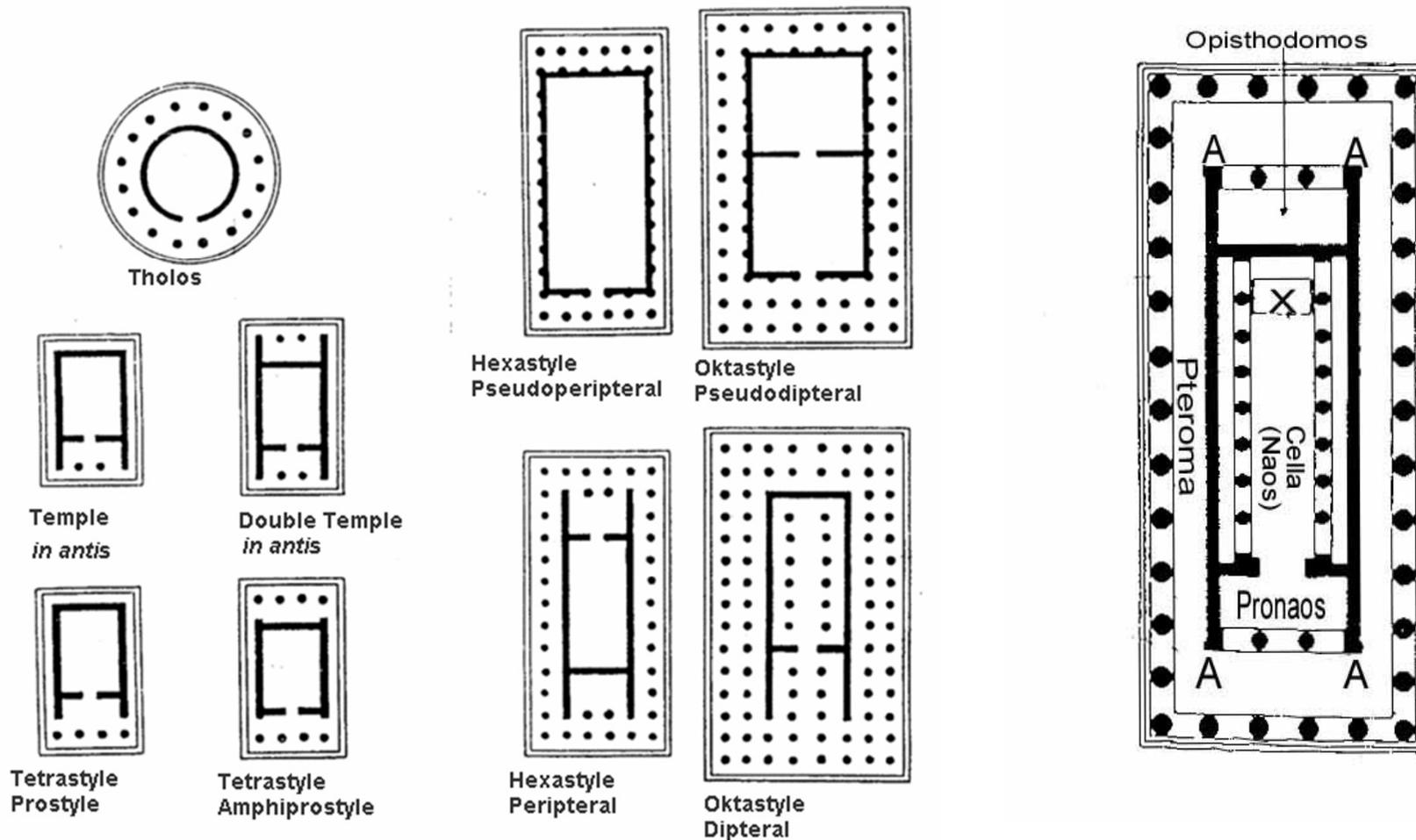
THE ACROPOLIS IN ATHENS

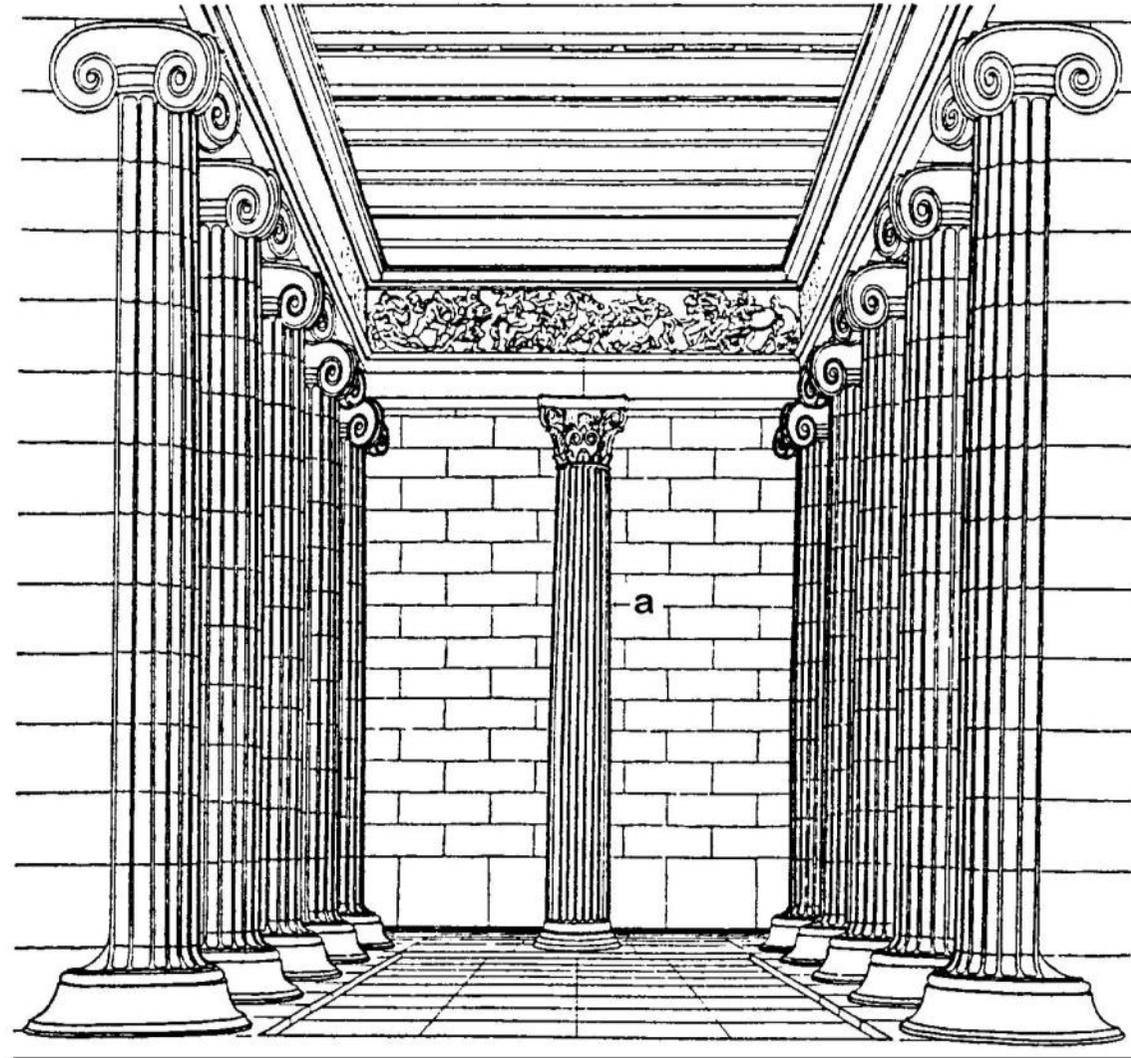
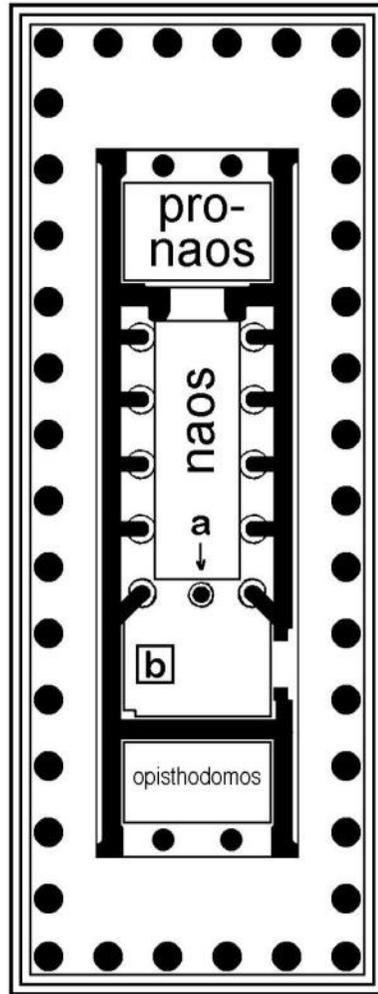


PLAN OF THE ACROPOLIS

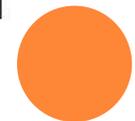


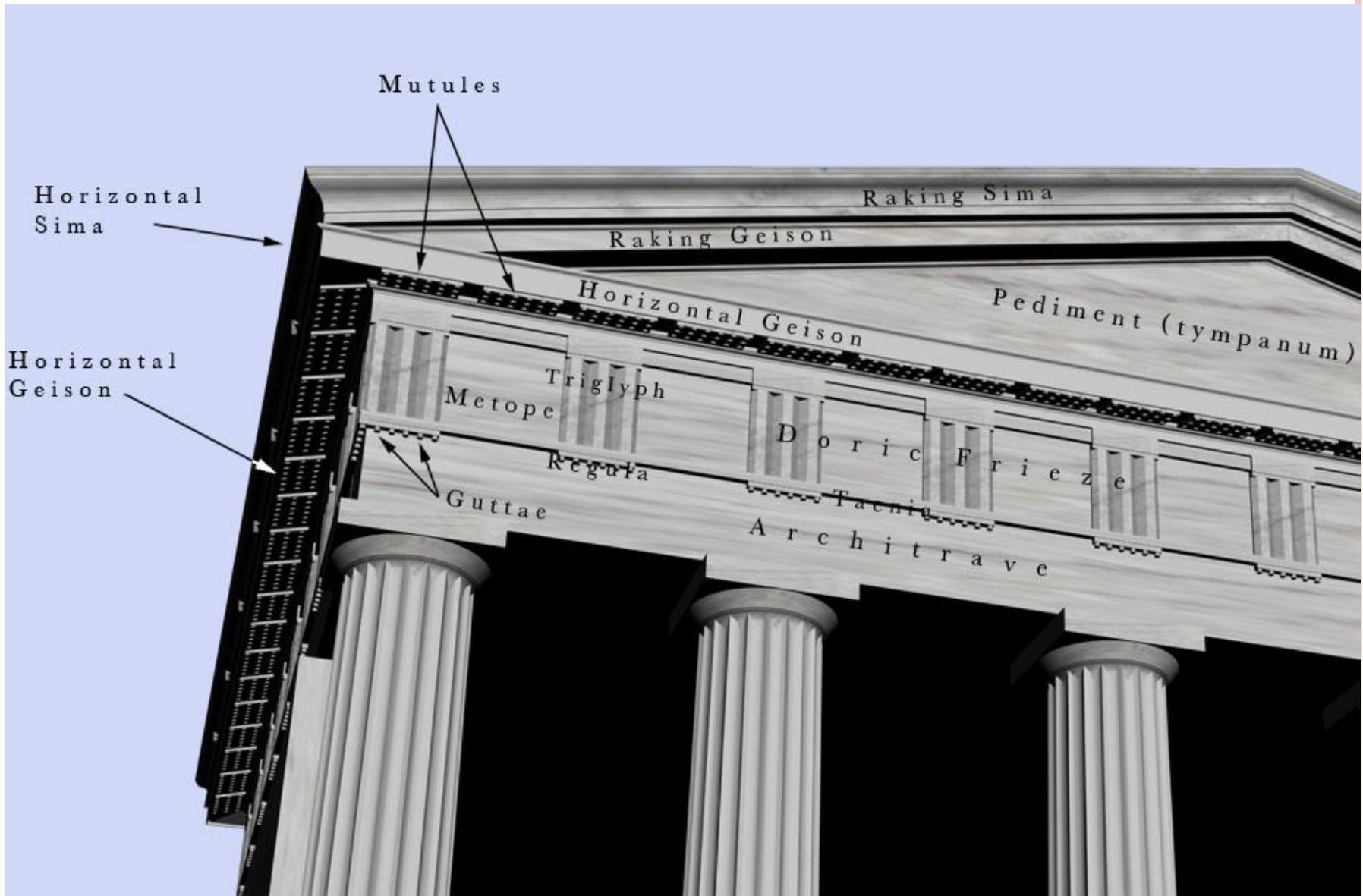
PLAN OF THE GREEK TEMPLES





THE GREEK TEMPLE





Mutules

Horizontal Sima

Raking Sima

Raking Geison

Horizontal Geison

Horizontal Geison

Pediment (tympanum)

Triglyph
Metope

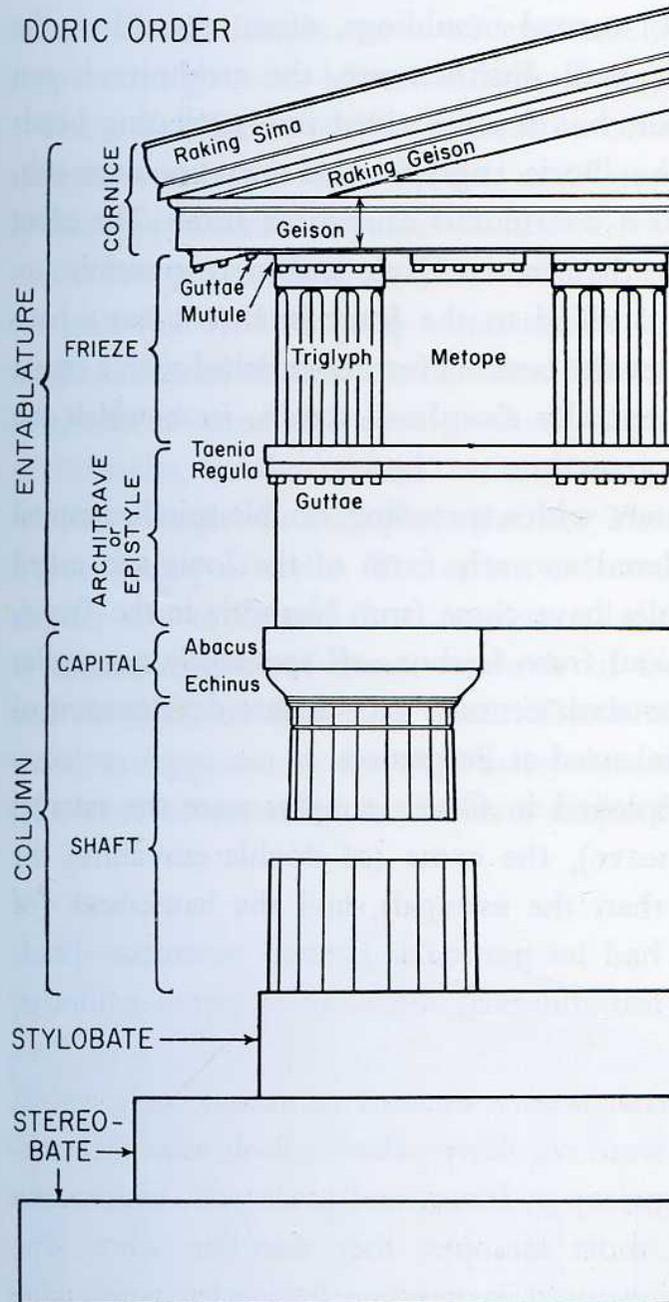
Doric Frieze

Regula

Guttae

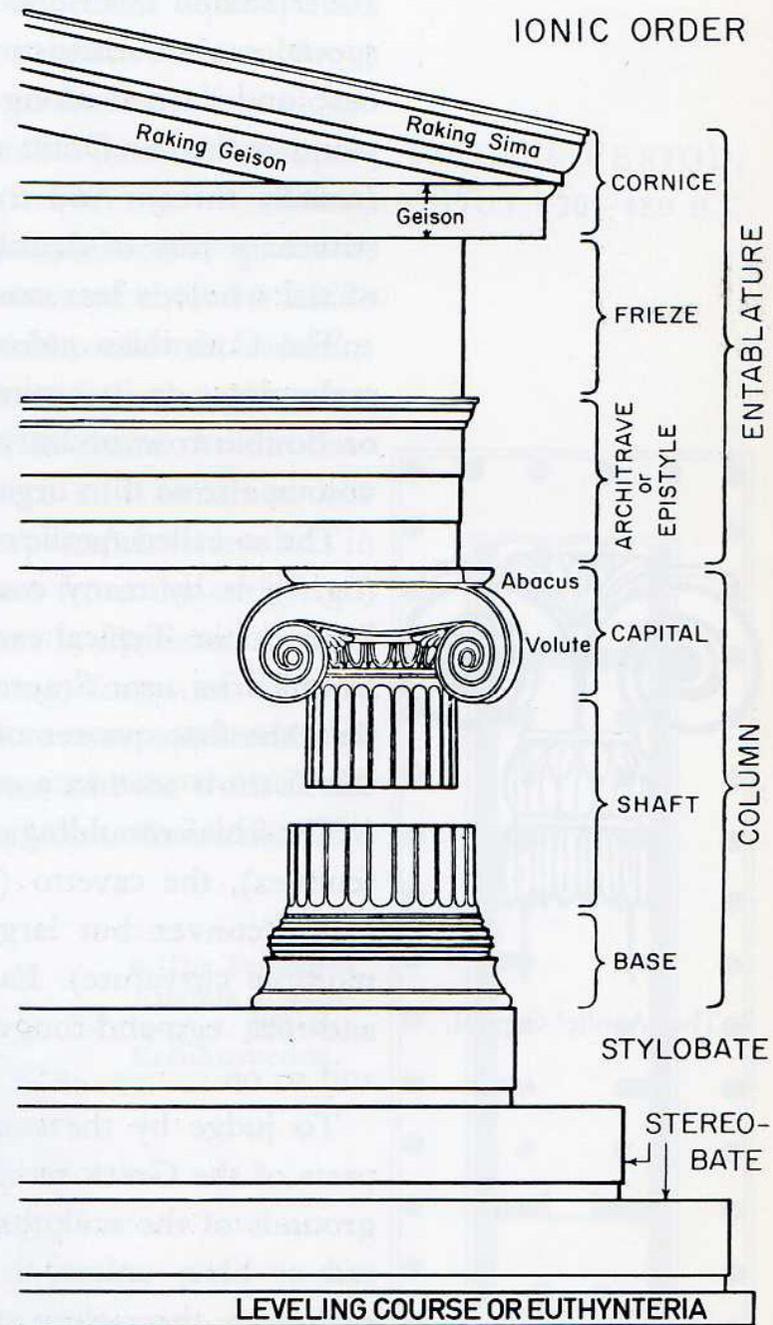
Taenia
Architrave

DORIC ORDER



5. The Doric Column.

IONIC ORDER



6. The Ionic Column.



PLAN

- NAOS: called also “cella” is the temple core, a room with no windows that housed the cult statue of the deity. It was preceded by a PRONAOS, or porch, often with two columns between the ANTAE, or extended walls (columns *in antis*);
- A smaller second room behind the cella = OPISTHODOMOS;
- A colonnade could be placed across the front of the temple (PROSTYLE), across both front and back (AMPHIPROSTYLE) or all around the cella and its porch(es) to form a PERISTYLE.



- Single (PERIPTERAL) colonnades were the norm, but double (DIPTERAL) colonnades were features of especially elaborate temples.



PERICLES' ACROPOLIS

- The centerpiece of Pericles' great building program on the Acropolis was the Parthenon or the Temple of Athena Parthenos;
- Gateway to the Acropolis: PROPYLAIA;
- THE ERECHTEION;
- THE TEMPLE OF ATHENA NIKE built after Pericles' death;



- The greatest Athenian architects and sculptors of the Classical period focused their attention on the construction and decoration of these four buildings;



THE ACROPOLIS TODAY

- That these buildings exist at all today is something of a miracle: in the Middle Ages the Parthenon was converted into a Byzantine and later a Roman Catholic church and then, after the Ottoman conquest of Greece, into a mosque;
- Each time the building was remodeled for a different religion, it was modified structurally;
- The Christians removed the colossal statue of Athena: the churches had a great curved APSE at the east end, housing the altar, while the mosque had a MINARET (tower used to call Muslims to prayer).



- In 1687 the Venetians besieged the Acropolis, which at that time was in Turkish hands. The Turkish had put some ammunitions inside and the resultant explosion blew out the building's center;
- The corrosive emissions of factories and cars are decomposing the ancient marbles. A great campaign had been under way to protect the columns and the walls from deterioration. What little original sculpture remain in situ was transferred to the Acropolis Museum's climate-controlled rooms.



THE MUSEUM OF THE ACROPOLIS



- ARCHITECTS: KALLIKRATES and IKTINOS;
- SCULPTOR: PHIDIAS;
- Just as the Doryphoros by Polykleitos may be seen as the culmination of two centuries of searching for the ideal proportions of the human body so, too, the Parthenon may be viewed as the ideal solution to the Greek architect's quest for perfect proportions in Doric temple design;
- SYMMETRIA, PROPORIONS resulted from strict adherence to harmonious numerical ratios, HARMONIOUS DESIGN.



MIXING DORIC AND IONIC

- One of the ironies of this most famous of all Doric temples is that it is contaminated by Ionic elements;
- Although the cella had a doric colonnade, the back room (which housed the tribute collected from the Delian League) had four tall and slender ionic columns;
- Whereas the temple's exterior had a canonical doric frieze, the inner frieze that ran around the top of the cella wall was ionic;



- MEANING OF THE FUSION OF STYLES:
Pericles and Iktinos way of suggesting that Athens was the leader of all the Greeks.



LORD ELGIN'S MARBLES

- Most of the Parthenon relieves and statues are today exhibited in a special gallery in the British Museum in London, where they are known as the Elgin Marbles;
- Between 1801 and 1803, while Greece was under the Turkish rule, Lord Elgin, the British ambassador to the Ottoman court at Istanbul, was permitted to dismantle many of the Parthenon sculptures and to ship the bestpreserved ones to England;



LORD ELGIN' S MARBLES

- Although he often has been accused of stealing Greece ' s cultural heritage (the Greek government has long sought the return of the Elgin marbles to Athens), Lord Elgin must be credited with saving the sculptures from almost certain ruin if they had been left at the site.





ATHENA BY PHIDIAS

- One statue that even Lord Elgin could not recover (recuperare) was the Athena Parthenos, destroyed during the 19th century;
- Art historians know a great deal about it from the descriptions by Greek and Latin authors and from Roman copies;
- It was a **CHRYSELEPHANTINE** statue = made of gold and ivory



- It was 38 feet tall (12m): to accommodate its huge size, the cella had to be wider than usual. This, also, dictated the width of the facade (8 columns when 6 columns were the norm);
- Athena was armed with shield and the helmet. She held the Nike (the winged female personification of Victory) = victory against the Persians, the “Barbarians”;
- On the thick soles of Athena’s sandals was a representation of a centauromachy;



- The exterior of her shield was decorated with high reliefs depicting the battle of the Greeks and Amazons (AMAZONOMACHY), in which Theseus drove the Amazons out of Athens;
- Each of these mythological contests was a metaphor for the triumph of ORDER over CAOS, of civilization over barbarism, and of Athens over Persia.



THE PROPYLAEA: ACROPOLIS GATEWAY

- Monumental entrance to the Acropolis;
- Architect: MNESIKLES;
- The site: on a steep slope, but the architect succeeded in designing the change in ground level by splitting the building into eastern and western sections;
- Doric temple facade, central ramp for the Panathenaic Festival procession;



THE PROPYLAEA: ACROPOLIS GATEWAY

- Doric order was used for the exterior and the Ionic for the interior;
- Side wings of special importance: in Roman times they housed a picture gallery.



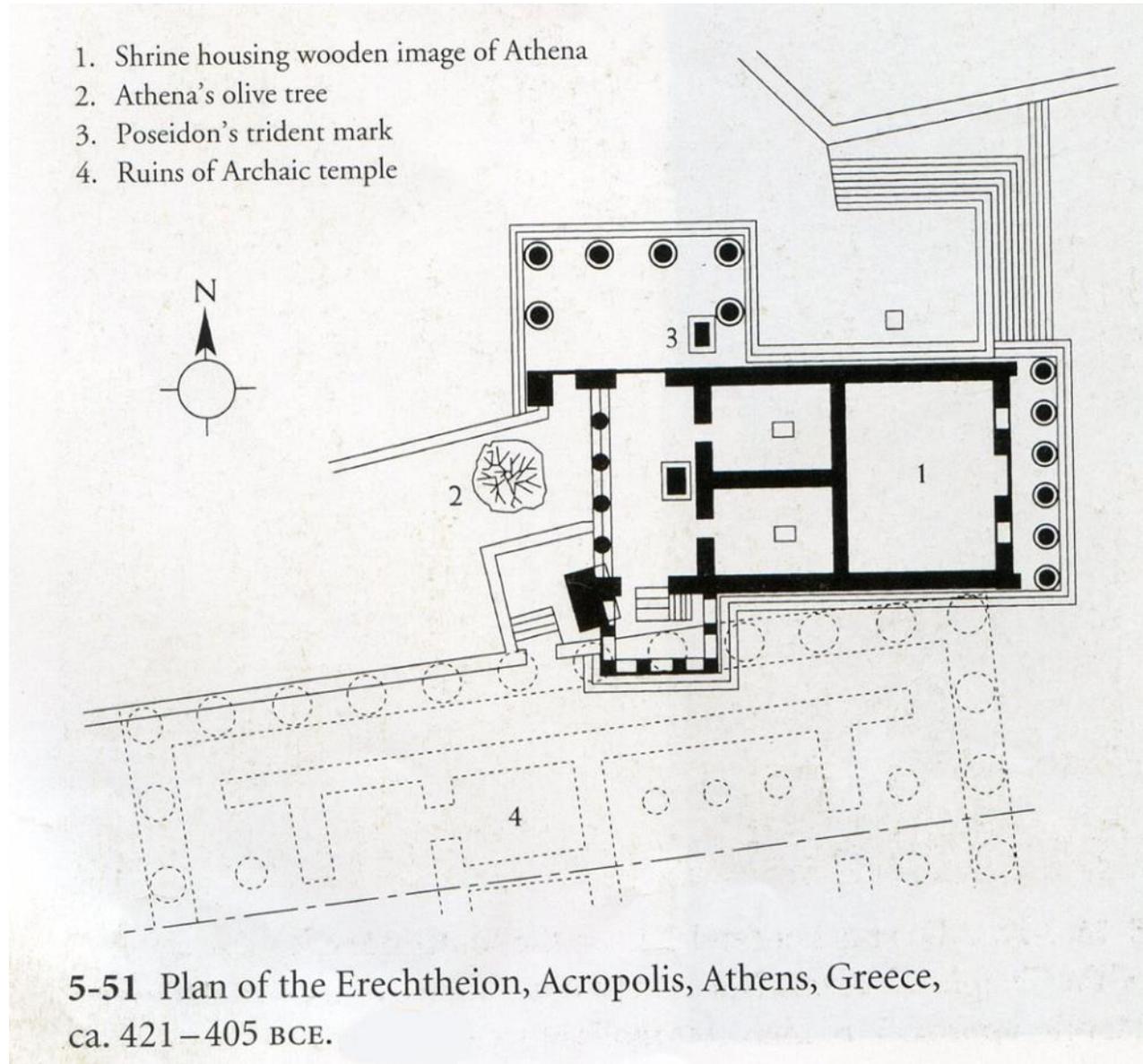
ERECHEITEION: MULTIPLE SHRINE

- It housed the ancient wooden image of the goddess Athena that was the goal of the Panathenaic Festival procession;
- It also incorporated the shrines of other gods: Erechtheus, an early king of Athens, during whose reign the ancient wooden idol of Athena was said to have fallen from the heavens and Kekrops, another king of Athens, the judge of the contest between Athena and Poseidon;



PLAN OF THE ERECHTEION

1. Shrine housing wooden image of Athena
2. Athena's olive tree
3. Poseidon's trident mark
4. Ruins of Archaic temple



5-51 Plan of the Erechtheion, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 421–405 BCE.



THE LEGEND

- Poseidon had staked his claim (rivendicare diritto) to Athens by striking the Acropolis rock with his trident and producing a salt-water spring. Athena has miraculously caused an olive tree to grow. This tree still stood as a reminder of her victory over Poseidon;
- PLAN: the asymmetrical plan of the Ionic temple is unique;
- Irregular form: it reflected the need to incorporate the tomb of Kekrops, the trident mark and the olive tree into a single complex.



ERECHEITEION: MULTIPLE SHRINE

- The unknown architect built the temple with four sides of very different character; each side rests on a different ground level;
- To compensate for the awkward (sgraziato) character of the building as a whole, the architect took great care with the decorative details;



- The temple's most striking feature is the SOUTH PORCH, where CARYATIDS replaced ionic columns;
- Role of the caryatids: architectural support for the unusual flat roof;
- They resemble ARCHAIC KORAI: the figure have enough rigidity to suggest the structural column and just the degree of flexibility needed to suggest the living body.



THE LITTLE TEMPLE OF ATHENA NIKE

- Ionic temple designed by Kallikrates;
- Plan: amphiprostyle;
- It stands near the Propylaea and greets all the visitors entering the Athena's great sanctuary;
- References to the victory over the Persians: part of his frieze was devoted to a representation of the battle at Marathon that turned the tide (eventi) against the Persians;



- Other relieves: the image of the Nike repeated dozens of time, in different attitudes (erecting trophies, bringing sacrificial bulls to Athena);
- The most beautiful of the relieves shows Nike, elegant and graceful, adjusting her sandals;
- The sculptor is anonymous;
- The drapery folds form intricate linear pattern unrelated to the body's anatomical structure.



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