



# Greek Religion

Guide for A Level OCR Classical Civilisation:  
Component Group 3: Beliefs and Ideas

L Harrow

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# Introduction for Teachers

The aim of this guide is to develop the knowledge and skills required to answer questions for OCR's Classical Civilisation A Level examination: Component Group 3 Beliefs and Ideas: **Greek Religion** H408/31.

The guide has three sections:

1. **Section A:** where relevant key knowledge is introduced, and which includes discussion of prescribed visual material, and a list of OCR prescribed gods.
2. **Section B:** where extracts of literature are suggested to support answers to longer essays. There are no prescribed texts, but some authors are specified.
3. **Section C:** where examination advice and some broad themes are drawn together.

Learners are advised to use the guide as follows:

1. Read Section A
2. Read Section B

OR

1. Read Section A and support study of topics with relevant literature from Section B (the literature in section B is arranged so that teachers can use this option).

## Prescribed Visual Material

Black figure Panathenaic amphora	333–332 BC, in the British Museum (1856,1001.1)
Red-figure plaque depicting the cult of Eleusis	c. 400–300 BC, in the National Museum in Athens (vase number 231)
Red-figure amphora depicting sacrifice	Nausicaa Painter, c. 450 BC, in the British Museum (1846,0128.1)
Marble relief / anatomical votive	From the shrine of Asclepius, now in the British Museum (1867,0508.117)
Attic red-figure kylix depicting a consultation of the Pythia	Kodros Painter, c. 440–430 BC, in the Antikensammlung Berlin (Ident. Nr. F 2538)
Athenian Acropolis	Including the Parthenon and the Erechtheion
Delphi	Temple of Apollo, the Theatre, the Sacred Way, the stadium
Olympia	Temple of Zeus and Pheidias' statue, the ash altar of Olympian Zeus, the treasuries, the Echo Stoa and the stadium

A **PDF** of the resource is included so that students can view the sources in colour (either digitally or printed).

Other details of the specification can be found at: **zzed.uk/11776-OCR**

This guide follows the specification largely in the order in which it is set out.

## Section B Literary Texts

Although there are no prescribed texts for Greek Religion, specific authors are referenced in the specification: Hesiod, Homer, Xenophanes and Socrates. Extracts from relevant literature has therefore been selected to support the study of religion and philosophy. This guide uses extracts of texts from the website: **www.perseus.tufts.edu** These texts are free from copyright restrictions but often use antiquated language. Much of the language has, therefore, been updated for this guide without losing the often solemn nature of the contents.

*L Harrow, October 2022*



A web page containing all the links listed in this resource is conveniently provided on ZigZag Education's website at **zzed.uk/11776**

You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing in each URL.

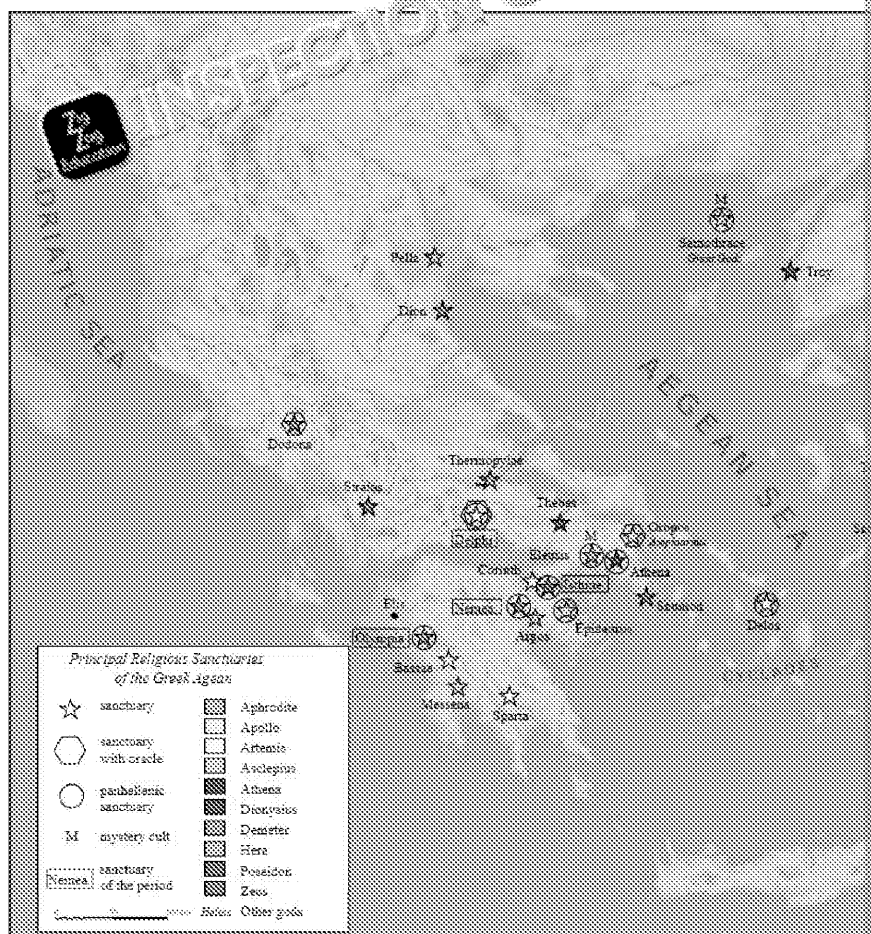
## Section A: Context

### Greek religion: Helping to unify the Greek states

Greece, as a country, had several cities which functioned independently with their own (different!) money. They are referred to as *city states* and in Greek the word *polis* is regarded by scholars as the most important and most successful city state.

#### Activity

This YouTube presentation (10 minutes) explains different types of *poleis* in Greece and that different *poleis* had different cultural attitudes. [zzed.uk/11776-power-polis](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzed.uk/11776-power-polis) Try to answer the six questions at the end.



#### Activity

Find the following city states and religious sanctuaries which will be discussed in this guide: Dodona, Eleusis, Epidaurus, Olympia, and Sparta.

Ancient Greece was deeply religious, but they did not have a word for religion which referred to 'holy matters'. However, to the Greeks our modern ideas of religion and philosophy were all under the same idea of Greek religion. The home, politics and culture were all influenced by the Greeks' attitude towards religion.

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## The nature of the Olympian gods

### The rise of the Olympian gods

The Greeks believed that there were many gods, each controlling various aspects of life. This belief is called *polytheism*. Greek society is, therefore, referred to as being *polytheistic*. The gods controlled everything: nature, weather, health, wealth, crops, cattle and war. It was then necessary for city states to keep a balance of cooperation of gods and men in their lives.

#### In the beginning...

Many religions both ancient and modern offer an explanation of the beginning of the world. The Greeks believed that there was Chaos which was followed by Earth, called Gaia, and the Sky/heavens. Gaia gave birth to 12 Titans, also referred to as the Titans.

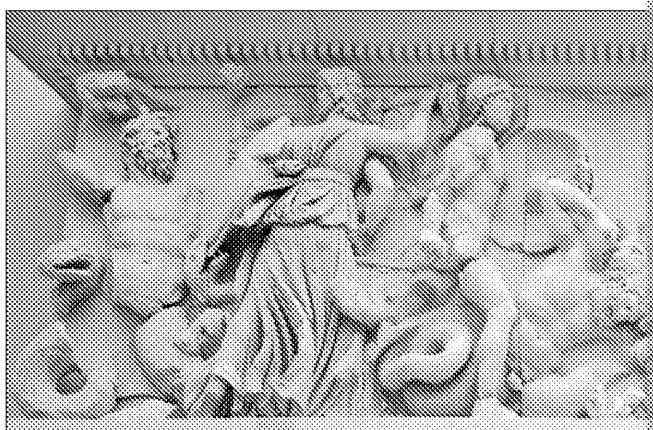
The Titan Cronos married his sister Rhea. Together they had the following children: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Hestia, Demeter and Hades.

#### Activity

Cronos was afraid of being overthrown, so was determined to destroy all his children. Watch this YouTube presentation and write down an explanation of how Rhea saved Zeus. [zzed.uk/11776-Theogony](http://zzed.uk/11776-Theogony)

#### Zeus battled with the Titans (Additional source)

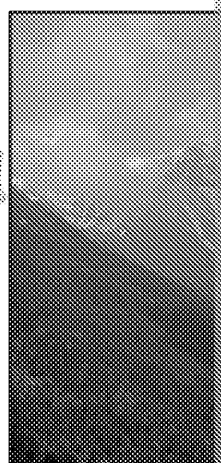
Having overthrown their father and the other Titans from power, the brothers Zeus, Hades and Poseidon drew lots to split the world between them. Poseidon became ruler of the sea. Hades became god of the underworld. Zeus became the leader of the gods.



The Olympian gods were so called as the Greeks believed that they lived on Mount Olympus in north-eastern Greece. It was, and still is, often covered by clouds.

The god Zeus married his sister, Hera. Zeus was not faithful to his wife and many of his children came from his liaisons with other gods and mortal women. The following are children of Zeus:

Ares and Hephaestus (with Hera), Artemis, Apollo, Hermes, Athena, Dionysus, Aphrodite (not all versions of the birth of Aphrodite agree, saying she was born from Ouranos, the Titan).



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#### Activity

Find and copy a 'family tree' of the gods from Ouranos and Gaia to the Olympians. Note the three 'generations' of gods, each more sophisticated than the last. Here you can find one (be found online):



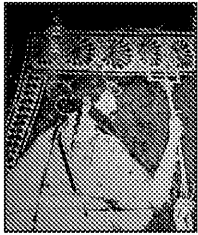


[zzed.uk/11776-family-tree](http://zzed.uk/11776-family-tree)

[zzed.uk/11776-family-tree2](http://zzed.uk/11776-family-tree2)



Go to [zzed.uk/11776](http://zzed.uk/11776)

## OCR Prescribed Gods

<p><b>God:</b> Zeus</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Leader of the gods, justice, fate</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Demeter</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Sister</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Agriculture</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Hera</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Sister and wife</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Marriage</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Hermes</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Son</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Messenger, tradesman</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Poseidon</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Brother</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Sea</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Hephaestus</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Son with Hera</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Blacksmiths</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Athena</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Daughter</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Wisdom, craft and skills</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Ares</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Son with Hera</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> War</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Artemis</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Daughter (twin)</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Hunting, archery, unmarried women</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Hestia</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Sister</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Hearth (fire at home)</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Apollo</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Son (twin)</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Sun, music, prophecy</p> 	<p><b>God:</b> Dionysus</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Son</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Wine</p>
<p><b>God:</b> Aphrodite</p> <p><b>Relationship to Zeus:</b> Daughter / Daughter of Ouranos</p> <p><b>Area of responsibility:</b> Love</p> 	<p><b>Examination advice:</b> The 12 Olympian gods are the 12 gods! However, as the underworld so, as Olympus, he is not included in response. Some myths have place for Dionysus should be included.</p>

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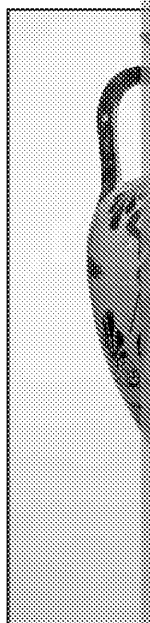


## Anthropomorphism and the scope of the gods' power



The Greeks believed that their gods looked and to some extent behaved like themselves. They were, therefore, depicted as looking human and having emotions such as anger and jealousy. Attributing human characteristics to non-human forms is known as *anthropomorphism*. The vase to the left (additional source) Artemis is shown as a woman, wearing the typical clothes of a woman around 400 BC. The vase was painted. She looks very human. However, the details in her hand tell the viewer that this is Artemis, responsible for the hunt. The bow in her hand is a common feature in depicting Artemis. These visual clues are referred to as *attributes*.

In the image to the right (additional source) is Hermes, shown as a man, with long hair and a beard. He is messenger of the gods and wears winged sandals. He carries a distinctive wand called a *caduceus*.

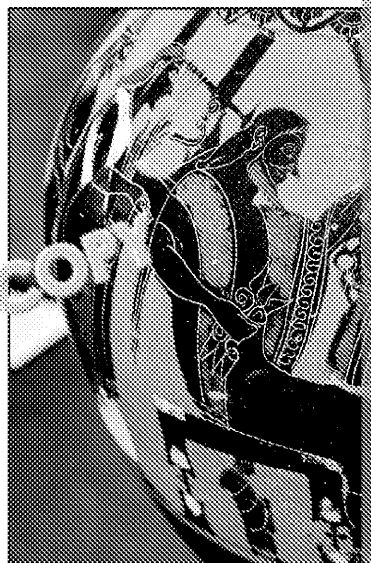


### Activity

Identify Hermes in the image (right). Who is standing in front of Hermes?



The Greeks believed, however, that despite looking human, their gods had superpowers. Hermes is depicted above with winged sandals to help him fly to different destinations with messages. The image on the vase below (additional source) shows Zeus as an older man. He is sitting and holding his attribute, a thunderbolt, in his right hand. The scene shows the birth of Athena. She was born out of Zeus's head and was born as a fully formed goddess. She is shown standing on the chest of Zeus. She is also shown holding a shield and an *aegis*. The aegis in the image is represented by the rings around her upper body. The Greeks did not know exactly what an aegis was, and it is shown sometimes as a breastplate, part of a set of armour, but often looks like a big bobbly cardigan! Her aegis supposedly had snakes on it, which painters interpreted as real curling snakes.



Behind Zeus is another god, with a musical instrument, a lyre. He is Apollo, the god of the sun. We shall see later in more detail from Greek literature (Section B) what the gods feel passion, jealousy, anger and despair.

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## The relationship between the Greeks and their gods

The relationship between the Greeks and their gods can be described as *reciprocal* – the Greeks honoured them and in return helped them. The idea was that the offering of sacrifice created an obligation to respond. *Reciprocity* made binding relationships. This was an *animus* applied to Greeks in their human society. There were reciprocal arrangements in

The Greeks believed the gods could be honoured in the following ways and that in return:

- **Sacrifice:** A blood offering by the killing of an animal
- **Libation:** Wine offering poured on altars or the soil
- **Prayers:** Directly addressing a particular god
- **Votive offering:** A deal made with the gods: 'If you do this... I'll give you X'. In return, the individual had to fulfil their side of the bargain by giving the offering, which was often a statue.

Greek religion had fear built into it. The Greeks were careful not to commit *acts of impiety*: acts of impiety were offences against the gods, community and family. Committing or being charged with impiety in Athens resulted in going to trial. Failure to honour the gods properly resulted in punishment. Being left out of prayers showed the gods felt jealous and vengeful. When Artemis was not given the correct worship after a harvest, she sent a boar to destroy the next crops (additional source, right).

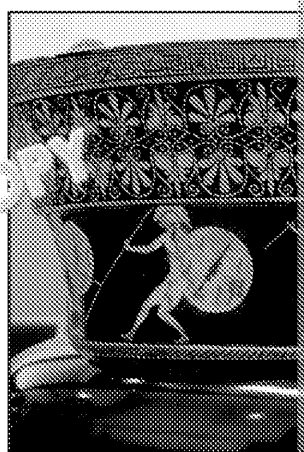


## Mortality and immortality

Although the gods had a definite moment of birth, however bizarre, they did not look upon mortals at death. The vase to the right (additional source) is by the Berlin Painter and depicts the famous duel in the Trojan War between the Greek Achilles and the Trojan Hector. Hector is being pushed backwards – 'on the back foot' – and is losing. Achilles is about to kill him so the gods intervene. Hector, turns away and leaves him to his fate.

In Euripides' play *Hippolytus* the young man Hippolytus, a keen hunter, has ignored Aphrodite and only given worship to Artemis. She is his supporter, but Aphrodite is more powerful, and Hippolytus is fatally wounded. Artemis promises to get back at Aphrodite as a reward for his loyalty:

*Let be! For though you are in this world under the earth, even so will you have vengeance for the wrath that has fallen upon you by Aphrodite's design, and this shall be the reward of your piety and goodness. (1420)*

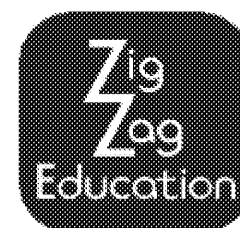


Ultimately, though, Artemis can do nothing:

*Farewell: it is not lawful for me to look upon the dead or to defile my sight with blood. And I see that you are already near that misfortune. (1437–8)*

A longer extract from *Hippolytus* is included in Section B.

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## Hesiod and Homer: Influence on Greek Ideas about the gods

So how did the Greeks come to have these beliefs? There is a period in Greek history and this is referred to as the *Dark Ages*. This is not because there was darkness but about what happened. It seems the ideas about the gods developed during this time. By the 600s BC they were eventually written down. Two major writers of that time were Hesiod and Homer. Their writings influenced what the Greeks thought about religion in the following centuries.

<b>Hesiod</b>	<b>700 BC</b> – He describes, in poetry, the origins of the gods in his <i>Works and Days</i> . Hesiod's accounts of the myths explain the origins of festivals and cults. This is known as <i>aetiology</i> .
<b>Homer</b>	<b>700s–600s BC</b> – He is believed to have written the epic poem about the warrior Achilles, and the <i>Odyssey</i> , describing Odysseus's journey home.
<b>Homeric Hymns (around 33)</b>	<b>600s BC</b> – Poems from the time of Homer but not now believed to have been written by him.

### Examining the Evidence

Knowledge of mythology can always be put to use when writing about the nature of the gods. It can be used to provide examples of the power or emotions of the gods, for example.

What we learn about the gods from these authors:

Hesiod	Homer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Origins of the gods</li> <li>Man needs the gods to <b>lead a good and right life (morality)</b></li> <li>How to <b>worship</b> the gods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gods <b>play a part</b> in the affairs of men</li> <li>Gods are <b>powerful</b></li> <li>Gods have <b>emotions</b></li> <li>Gods can <b>deceive</b></li> <li>Gods <b>have favourites</b>, be they individuals or nations</li> <li>Gods have <b>personal enemies</b></li> </ul>

## Different roles of the gods

As seen on page 4, the gods had different areas of responsibility. However, there were some areas of society not covered by these general responsibilities. In these cases, the gods were given specific roles. In Greek this was shown with a matching specific adjective for the role. This term is also used in Greek literature to reflect a quality or characteristic of a god.

### The epithets of Zeus (prescribed knowledge)

Epithet attached to Zeus	Area of responsibility
Zeus Agoraios	Zeus in his role as looking after buying and selling in the marketplace (agora). This included seeing that the scales were fair.
Zeus Phratrios	Zeus in his role as patron of the Athenian brotherhood (phratry). This was a group of men to which all Athenian <b>men</b> belonged.
Zeus Philios	Zeus in his role as god of the household. He oversaw the family.
Zeus Herkeios	Zeus in his role as protector of families, especially the hearth.
Zeus Horkios	Zeus in his role as protector of oaths. This was important when athletes swore they would not cheat.
Zeus Panhellenios	Zeus in his role as protector of all Greece.

### Activity

Learn the table above. This knowledge may be tested in the 1-mark/2-mark questions.

In total Zeus managed to collect over 50 epithets, ranging from Zeus in his role as protector of olive groves, the law and childbirth.

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## Epithets of Athena (additional knowledge)

In Athens, on the Acropolis, a sanctuary (holy area) was built to the patron of the people in various roles, and this was reflected in shrines, temples and statues the

Epithet	Area of responsibility	
Athena Parthenos	Athena in her role as a maiden ( <i>parthenos</i> ), never marrying.	Par
Athena Nike	Athena in her role as bringer of victory ( <i>Nike</i> ) in war.	Tem
Athena Polias	Athena patron of the city ( <i>polis</i> ).	Old Ere
Athena Promachos	Athena fighting in the front line.	Bro

### Activity

See if you can spot the epithets listed in the table above in the brief virtual tour which is it?

zzed.uk/...virtual-reality

Go to [zzed.uk/11776](https://zzed.uk/11776)

However, the roles of the gods could overlap. Did a general in Athens pray to Athena? An Athenian general, had just this problem. He went to the famous sanctuary of Apollo consulting the priestess, who was believed to give advice from the god:

*So, Xenophon went and asked Apollo to what one of the gods he should sacrifice most successfully to perform the journey which he had in mind and, after meeting home in safety; and Apollo in his response told him to what gods he must sacrifice*

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## Cult heroes: Heracles and Theseus

Over the years many gods were added to the Olympians. Also, as gods mixed with deities such as nymphs (deities of woodland and water), and also demigods, who Famous demigods include Achilles, whose mother, Thetis, was a sea goddess, and Peleus. Then there was Heracles, whose father was Zeus and whose mother was a legendary king of Athens, was supposed to have Poseidon as his father. Important Theseus were born, and they died, so they were not gods. Heroes were thought Neither Achilles nor Heracles nor Theseus was perfect, and they all made humans made them into heroes, and they were worshipped as such. This is known as *hero*



### Heracles

Heracles was known for his Twelve Labours. Hera was angry and jealous of Zeus' mother, Alcmena. Heracles had three children. Hera approached Alcmena and persuaded her to trick Heracles. One day he sacrificed three lambs to Zeus. His children Heracles said: 'Come here little lambs' they were killed by him. Megara screamed and he exiled himself to the area of Argos and his cousin. The king set Heracles 12 dangerous tasks, which became the Twelve Labours of Heracles.

The first task was to kill the Lion of Nemea.

### Activity

This presentation describes the Twelve Labours of Heracles, adding details. [zzed.uk/11778](http://zzed.uk/11778)

### Examination advice

Heracles is often called *Hercules*, which is the Latin version of his name. This is used in the examination. As the examination is based on Greek society, the name Heracles should be used. *Hercules* is acceptable if it is used consistently and not interchanged with Heracles.

### Activity

The activity above can be extended by adding images of each labour from Greek mythology.

There was a Homeric Hymn to Heracles as early as 700 BC.

### Homeric hymn To Heracles the Lion Slayer (additional source)

[1] I will sing of Heracles, the son of Zeus and much the mightiest of men on earth, who saved the city of Thebes when the dark-clouded Son of Cronos had lain with his unmeasured hands on the land and sea [5] at the bidding of King Eurystheus, and in his violence endured many; but now he lives happily in the glorious home of his wife, the ankled Hebe for his wife. Hail, lord, son of Zeus. Give me success and prosperity.

### Activity

What factual information do we learn from this hymn? What important information do we learn about Heracles?

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As Ariadne had betrayed her father, she could not stay, so Theseus took her with him to the island of Naxos on the way home. Before Theseus had left Athens, his father, King Aegeus, gave him two sails. One white meant success while the other, a black one, meant he was dead. Theseus changed his sail to white, and when the king saw the boat, he threw himself into the sea, which

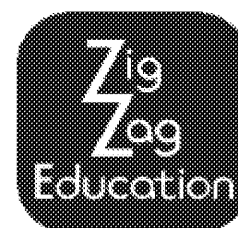
Theseus went on to redeem himself in the eyes of Athenians. The supposed achi-  
legendary King of Athens was credited: united all the small towns around Athens  
their council; enabled them to vote or decide things just for themselves;  
citizens were born; began the Panathenaic Games – these were for Athenians or  
Theseus also performed heroic labours.

Try to identify some of the labours as depicted on the Theseus Kylix (drinking cup). Minotaur; clockwise from top, Cercyon; Procrustes's bed; the bandit Sciron; a bull out about two of the labours to use as examples.



There were also local cult heroes. For example, Academus, Plutarch, who wrote that Theseus stole Helen (later to be the cause of the Trojan War) before she married his twin brothers Castor and Pollux in Lacedaemonia, the land around Athens, and when Academus told them that Helen was hidden, at Aphidna. Helen's mortal father, the king, and he became a hero to later Spartans. The place was special to the Athenians, and the olive oil put in the vases which were prizes at the Panathenaea.

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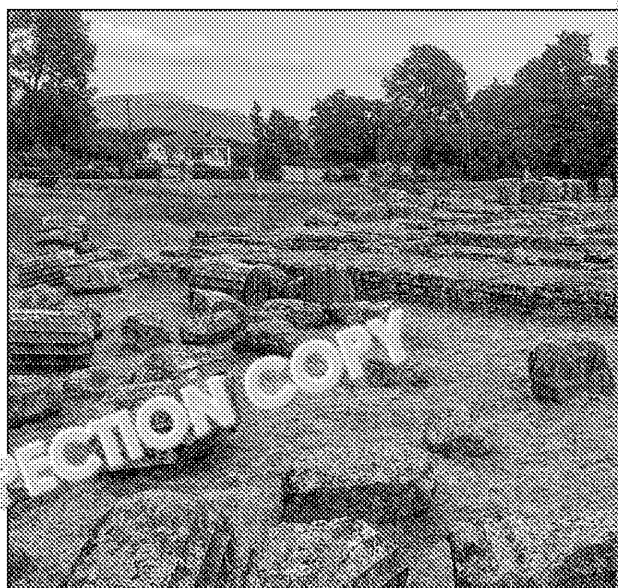




## Worship of the gods at different levels

### Panhellenic level

Athens is regarded by most scholars as the most important and most successful city state, but others, such as Sparta and Corinth, were equally successful and worshipped the gods in their own way. That said, some religious sites were places for all Greeks to worship. These sites are referred to as *Panhellenic*, meaning 'all Greece'. For example, everyone could visit the site of Zeus at Olympia, and Apollo at



Delphi. Sites were also dedicated to particular city states, the most well-known being dedicated to Athena. However, being a major deity, Athena had temples in many places. In Sparta. In Tegea, in Arcadia, southern Greece, there was a large temple dedicated to Athena associated with an ancient goddess Alea. Athena was, therefore, given this local role as Alea. Where the Olympian gods and local gods they were often merged.

### Local polis level

In Athens there were many local shrines. The ancient travel writer Pausanias says:

*In the Athenian marketplace among the objects not generally known is an altar most useful in the life of mortals and in the changes of fortune, but honoured by the Greeks. And they are conspicuous not only for their humanity but also for they have an altar to The Feeling of Shame, one to Rumour and one to Effort. It is clear that in piety are correspondingly rewarded by good fortune. (Pausanias 1.17.1.)*

and later on, he says:

*I have already stated that the Athenians are far more devoted to religion than most people use the epithet Athena Ergane (The Worker). (1.23)*

This attitude seems to have lasted into the Christian era. The Christian Paul has a

<sup>16</sup> While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that they were idolaters. [...] Then they took him and brought him to the meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, 'We know what this new teaching is, but we would like to know what you are presenting?' <sup>20</sup> You are bringing so many new ideas, and we would like to know what they mean.' <sup>21</sup> (All the Athenians and the foreigners living there were spending their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

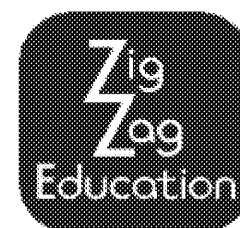
<sup>22</sup> Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'People of Athens, I noticed that you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I found one altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing I am going to proclaim to you'. (Acts 17 16–24 with omissions NIV)

### Activity

Study the extracts above from Pausanias and the Bible. What do these tell us about the Athenians' attitudes towards their gods? Conclude by considering whether the Athenians were people

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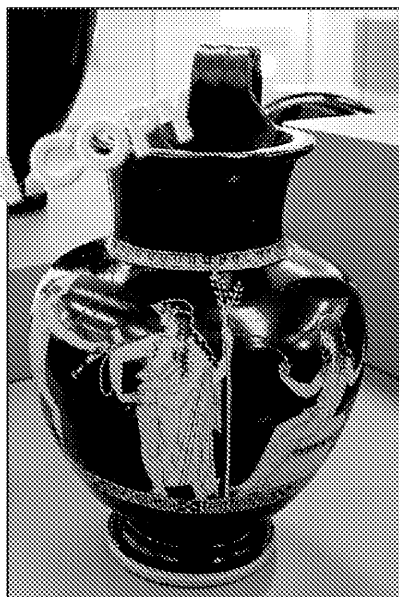
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## Personal worship in the home, *oikos*

Even in the home the gods were never far away. For a Greek family their main concern was the prosperity of the house and its occupants. Key moments in family life were marked by rituals. The image below (left – additional source) a young man is leaving for war and offering a sacrifice.

The altar, which mainly stood in the courtyard of the house, was regarded as a place of divine presence. The image below (middle – additional source) a young man has been pursuing a woman. She has fled to the altar for protection. She is guaranteed protection from the gods and the young man backs off.



### Hermes

A herm (above right) was a squared column of stone with a head and an erect phallus. It was used in the earliest worship of divinities as pieces of wood (as in Athena Polias statue) or stone. Herms were placed in key places such as the Greek marketplace (agora), as above was found, libraries and gyms. Herms were also placed at crossroads and in houses. They were believed to keep off evil spirits. The term for magic, superstition, or witchcraft referred to as *apotropaic*. In addition, herms were believed to bring prosperity to the household.

### Alcibiades and vandalism

In 415 BC, on a night during the Athenian war with Sparta (Peloponnesian War) many herms were vandalised. This of course was regarded as an act of impiety. The Athenians came to believe that the herms had been carried out by Spartan sympathisers.

Political enemies of Alcibiades, a statesman and general, blamed him and wanted him to stand trial, although he offered to stand trial, he had to sail to take part in the war. While away from Athens he was found guilty of impiety and sentenced to death.

### Personal experience of the divine

For many, however, Greek religion was formal and distant, just something to be observed. Personal participation was rare. Even in the home the family had to watch as the head of the household performed rituals and offerings. This was known as *mystery cults*.

### Eleusinian Mysteries (prescribed knowledge)

Mystery cults offered a very personal experience and, in many cases, offered comfort in the face of death. Participants were offered an initiation when the secret was revealed to them. This was known as *epopteia*. Initiation gave a sense of belonging and community and offered a personal experience. Athenian religious ceremonies were usually dominated by male citizens, but membership of the Eleusinian Mysteries was open to anyone including women, slaves, and non-Greeks (but who had to pay an initiation fee). After that, what happened had to be kept secret. The fact that the Eleusinian Mysteries shows how people respected the secrecy – although to the point of death! So yet again fear was a factor rather than comfort.

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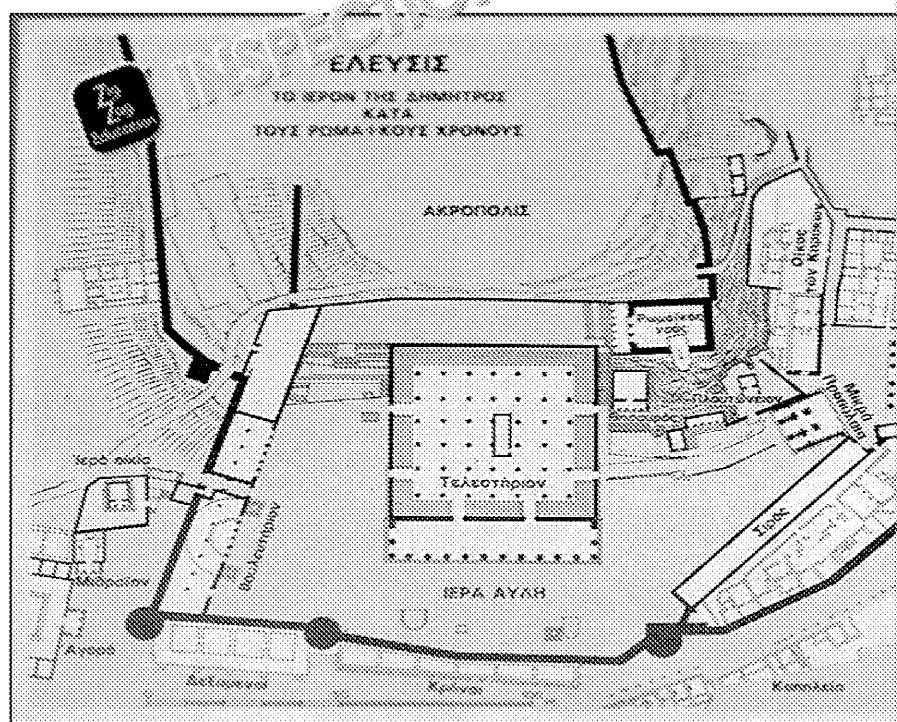
## Activity

This short presentation on YouTube is in modern Greek with English subtitles. It has support its account. [zzed.uk/11776-Eleusinian](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzZedUK11776-Eleusinian)

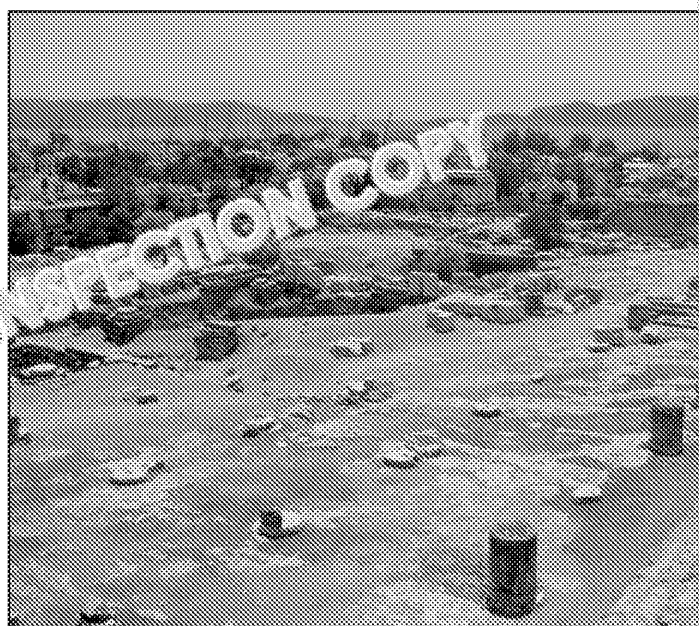
Make notes on the story behind the cult at Eleusis (modern Eleusina) about the tale of what we think happened.

Note: The term **cult** in ancient times was a term for a religious practice which was mainstream religion.

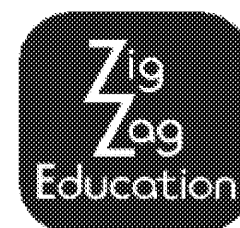
Below is a plan of the sanctuary at Eleusis. In the centre is the Telesterion, which is approximately 50 m × 50 m. The grey lines around the Telesterion are the 'stands' for the participants, surrounded by a precinct, an open area, and then the sanctuary walls.



The Telesterion, showing the large open area and stands at the side.



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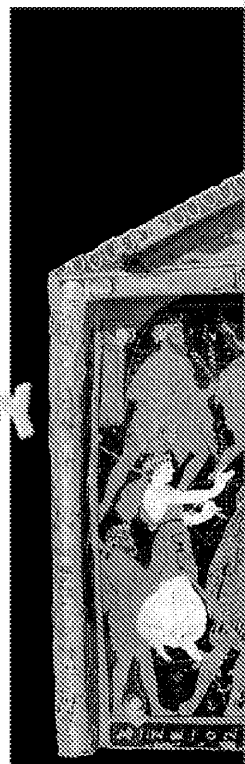
## Great Eleusinia (prescribed knowledge)

Two of the festivals held at Eleusis were the Lesser Mysteries, which took place in the spring, and the Greater Mysteries or Great Eleusinia, which took place in the early autumn, September/October. The festival lasted nine days (10 if the bringing of the sacred objects is included):

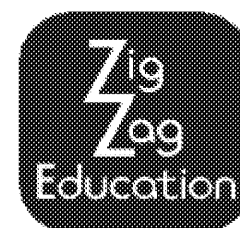
Day	Events	
Pre-assembly	Sacred objects brought from Eleusis and put in the Eleusinion	<i>Eleusinia</i> the Acropolis
1	Assembly in the Athenian marketplace (agora). Instructions issued by the archon basileus.	<i>Mystagoras</i> <i>Myst: P</i> <i>Archon</i> for religious
2	Purification: Bathing of participants and sacrificial animals in the sea	
3	Festivities: Asclepius and Hygeia with a pannychis	<i>Asclepius</i> <i>Hygeia</i> <i>Pannychis</i>
4	Procession to Eleusis (15 miles) along the Sacred Way including priests (men and women). Dancing, singing, libations, and sacrifices to gods on the way. Ceremony at arrival led by hierophant and pannychis including drinking kykeon.	<i>Aphrodite</i> <i>Iacchus</i> <i>Hierophant</i> <i>Kykeon</i>
5–7	Initiates enter the Telesterion ending with sacrifices, dancing and feasting	<i>Telesterion</i>
8	Pouring libations from special containers	<i>Libation</i>
9	Mysteries ended	

## The Ninnion Tablet: 400–300 BC, most probably 370 (prescribed material)

This red clay plaque was discovered in the sanctuary at Eleusis and was dedicated, as a votive, to someone called Ninnion. It is important as it provides some details of what happened at the Eleusinian mysteries. The figures are arranged on two levels. Demeter is sitting on what is supposed to be the secret box in the top right-hand corner. Her skin is darker than that of the other women as she is a goddess of crops and was supposed to spend time in the sun. If she were to stand up she would be very tall as goddesses were supposed to be taller than humans. Persephone, also known as Kore, is one of the figures shown in white robes holding a torch and there is a procession of initiates, both men and women. The central dome is called an *omphalos*, the central hub with two ceremonial branches, carried by the initiates, crossed in front. These are known as *phoroi*. To the left of the *omphalos* is the *proedria*, who approaches with a torch. Some scholars interpret the torches as a metaphor for 'enlightenment', the revelation of the mysteries, *epopteia*. On the other hand, the need for torches suggests night or the underworld. All the participants in the procession are wearing crowns. They are taking part probably in a *pannychis*, an all-night festival, carrying branches and even a little bottle of oil for offerings. Their feet indicate that they may be dancing.



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Notice also the band across the main part of the plaque. It shows the different periods of the oldest representation in Western art.

The Ninnion Tablet is very important as it is the only known original depiction of the



Go to

### Activity

This article, with lots of pictures of Eleusis, is by the scholar Patricia Duff: [zzed.uk](http://zzed.uk)

Add any information to your notes, or cut and paste the images to remind you of

### Activity

From what you have studied of the Great Eleusinian Mysteries, do you think the cult attracted

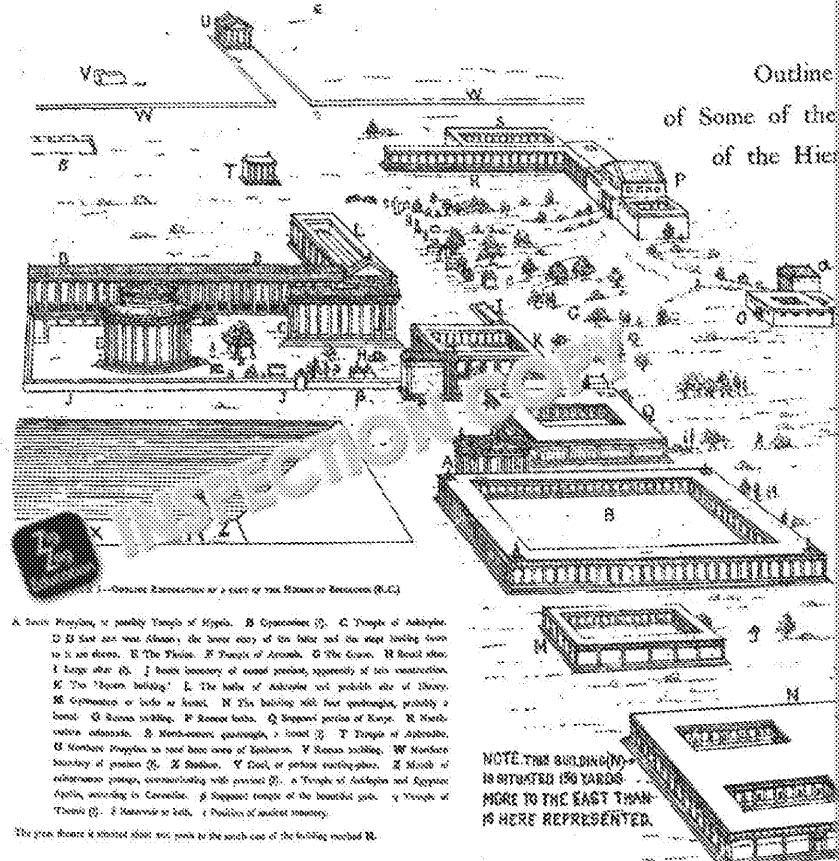
## The healing cult of Asclepius (needed knowledge)

According to Homer's *Iliad*, Asclepius was a hero who treated the Greeks' wounds, taught by a centaur (a human, half horse!) and was a brilliant pupil. Other versions say he was believed to be the son of Apollo. By having an overlap of hero and divine, you could expect a hero who understood human weaknesses and a god who had divine powers. Asclepius could expect a hero who understood human weaknesses and a god who had divine powers. Asclepius could expect a hero who understood human weaknesses and a god who had divine powers.

Other gods associated with him (and they are his daughters also), are:

- **Hygieia:** Goddess of keeping clean
- **Iaso:** Goddess of recovery from illness
- **Panacea:** Goddess of cure and remedy
- **Aceso:** Goddess of healing
- **Aegle:** Goddess of health

A sanctuary (also referred to as a holy site, *hieron*) to Asclepius is referred to as an *Asclepeion*. There were many around the Greek mainland and islands but the main one was at Epidauros in southern Greece. Asclepius was believed to have been born there. His centres became extra popular particularly during the Peloponnesian War, as people naturally sought his healing powers.



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This was a huge sanctuary and showed how important the gods were in the belief that they could heal their illnesses. The belief went back a long way, with the site being associated with *Apollo Maleatas*. The scholar Jeremy McInerney thinks the epithet is used to link Apollo with Asclepius. Malos was an ancestor of Asclepius.

### Activity

Try to find the letters on the plan and match them to the key below.

Here are some key features from the plan arranged in order of a typical visit.

L	Baths of Asclepius (and probable library)	Visitors were encouraged to wash away any 'pollution' before entering the temple.
C	Temple of Asclepius	Healing rituals were performed here.
D	Abaton	A place for sleeping while waiting for the god to appear in their dreams to show what to do to cure them with sleep. This was a sacred place.
F	Temple of Artemis	She was sister to Apollo and goddess of childbirth and diseases in women.
B	Gymnasium	Exercise was thought to be good for health.
X	Stadium	
M	Gymnasium or baths	

### Activity

How might the features in the Asclepion at Epidaurus help visitors to feel better? Consider the leisure and religious buildings.

Inside the temple of Asclepius (C) was the cult image of the god. Pausanias, an ancient Greek historian, wrote:

*The image of Asclepius is, in size, half as big as the Olympian Zeus at Athens, and is made of ivory and gold... The god is sitting on a seat grasping a staff, the other hand is holding above the head of a serpent; there is also the figure of a dog lying by his side. (Pausanias Guide to Greece 2.27.2 trans: W H S Jones 1918)*

The image to the right is a marble copy of the statue of a standing Asclepius. He is depicted as an older man with beard and partially draped. He looks capable and yet kindly as he has a relaxed pose. As a hero he might seem more approachable than if regarded as solely a god.

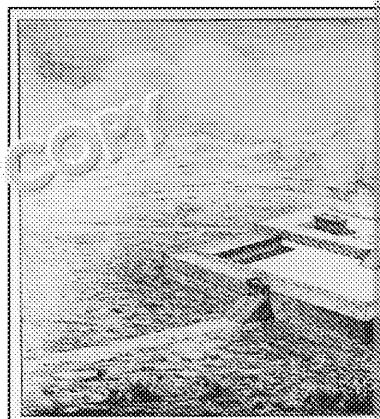
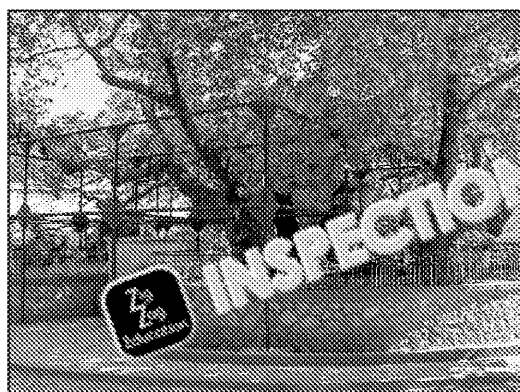
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### The Asclepion at Cos: a modern hospital? (additional knowledge)

Not all of Asclepius's medical advice would pass modern standards. Dogs roamed licking the sores and wounds of the patients. The saliva of dogs was supposed to cure. Snakes were also nearby to help cure illnesses of the mind. This shows the huge understanding of medicine and the beliefs of the Greeks. Nevertheless, there are the trust people put in a visit to the sanctuaries. One on the island of Cos is special. Hippocrates is regarded as the 'father of medicine' and was believed to be a grandson of Asclepius. Today is a tree under which Hippocrates is supposed to have taught his students.



As in other sanctuaries to Asclepius, the Asclepion at Cos had a temple to Apollo (next to his sister Artemis, goddess of hunting). This was at the top of a terraced slope. Below it was a temple to Asclepius where patients slept. Hippocrates had his medical school of theatres and consulting rooms around an open courtyard. He also believed in the use of vegetables.

### Miracles (prescribed knowledge)

Given the medical and lifestyle advice received at the sanctuaries of Asclepius, people have been healed. Thales, a Greek philosopher, did not accept that there were miracles. He felt that these were natural phenomena. Many though regarded their cures as miracles. There is record that a man was healed of paralysis of his fingers; a child who could not speak was healed of blindness. People gave offerings in return for the gods' favour as part of the arrangements expected by the gods.

#### Activity

Revise page 6 and note what a votive offering is.

A man called Pandaros had spots or boils on his forehead, which he covered with a bandage. He had a dream where Asclepius wrapped his wounds in a bandage and told him to go to the temple. In return, once he was healed, he was to offer a bandage as a votive offering. Pandaros woke up, he removed the bandage and found that the spots had disappeared. He took the bandage to the Temple, as commanded by the god Asclepius.

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**Marble relief representing part of a leg (p)**  
 Found in 1828, this marble votive offering came from the Greek island of Milos. Dating from the first century BC, it is dedicated to Tyche to Asclepius and Hygieia, probably for the cure of some problem with the leg. The leg is carved in relief, meaning the marble has been carved to be almost 3D. It is a good example of having a human figure of gods. This votive is also an example of one of the ways of the divine.

The Greek says:  
 To Asclepius  
 And  
 Hygieia

(gave this)  
 As a thank offering

We have no record of the attitude of individual

### Activity

What effect do you think these votives would have had on visitors to the sanctuary?

### Oracle at Dodona: Giving advice for private individuals (prescribed knowledge)

*Oracle:* an oracle covers three functions:

- The place where prophecies are given (Dodona)
- The priests who delivered the prophecies
- The prophecy

Dodona is in north-west Greece. It was the site of one of the oldest oracles in Greece. It was originally dedicated to Gaia or Rhea. It is even mentioned in Homer as being the site of the oracle of Zeus.

*But Odysseus, he said, had gone to Dodona to hear the will of Zeus from the high place, how he might return to the rich land of Ithaca after so long an absence, whether he should or not (Homer, The Odyssey 14 328–9)*

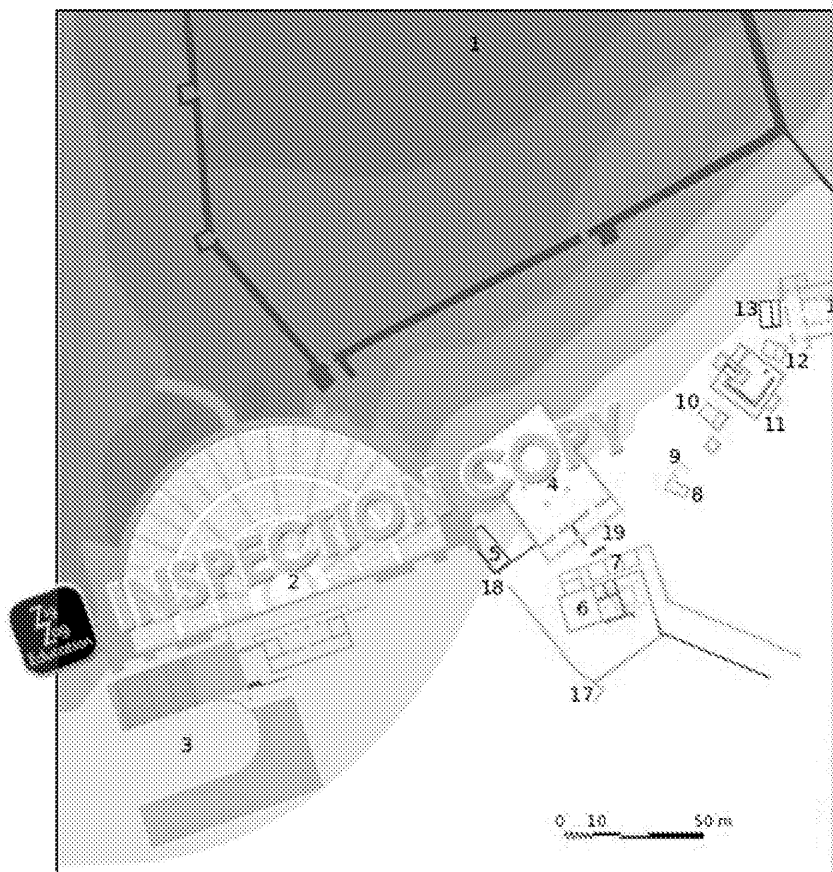
The sanctuary, holy area, had an oak or a beech tree, and the rustling of the leaves was taken as the voice of Zeus sending a message. The message was interpreted by the priests. There were many priests, and the wind blowing around them gave an eerie sound, also interpreted as messages.

*Their feet unwashed, their slumbers on the ground, you could hear, from rustling of the fates, low-whispered in the breeze, the ever-mad (Homer, The Odyssey 16 125)*

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The plan above was not built but developed as the different had a theatre to Themis (10) responsibility also a temple (14). These were the original site the Temple of

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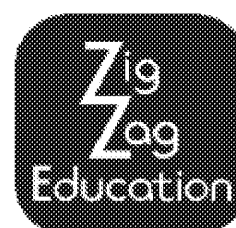
## Activity

View this  presentation and answer the following questions: [zzed.uk/117](https://www.zzed.uk/117)

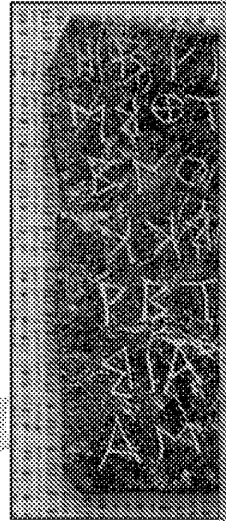
- According to Hesiod, Zeus loved the site so much he made the place his oracle
- What is the geography of the site?
- Why is it appealing?
- Before the temple was built what might have been seen?
- When was the temple built?



Go to



At this site private people wanted answers. To the right is an example of the many lead plates used to ask questions. The subjects are about travel, moving home, family problems, marriage advice and even a prayer asking for how to get the 'right offspring' (a boy)!



### Why are there theatres at sanctuaries?

Going to the theatre was part of a religious festival. At Dodona and Epidauros, theatres were built as part of efforts to encourage festivals at the sanctuaries. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, says the aim of tragedy in particular was to bring about a *catharsis* of the spectators, meaning to make them have feelings of pity, fear and sympathy, and to some extent pride, and to experience these so that they leave the theatre cleansed and uplifted and with a better understanding of gods and men. *Catharsis* was brought about by watching a play or moving character to the chief character. The effect of the plays on the enormous audience years after Euripides wrote his tragedies, Aristophanes was the audience found amusing. They obviously knew the details of the originals.

#### Activity

Think about a play or film which, at the end, has made you cry, feel uplifted, and in a group, this could form a discussion. Is this near to *catharsis*? Can you explain why this feeling was a religious experience?

#### Activity

Imagine that you are a private Greek citizen. Which holy site would you visit, and why? Dodona? You could consider any needs you might have or personal reasons as you consider each place in your answer.

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## Religion and society

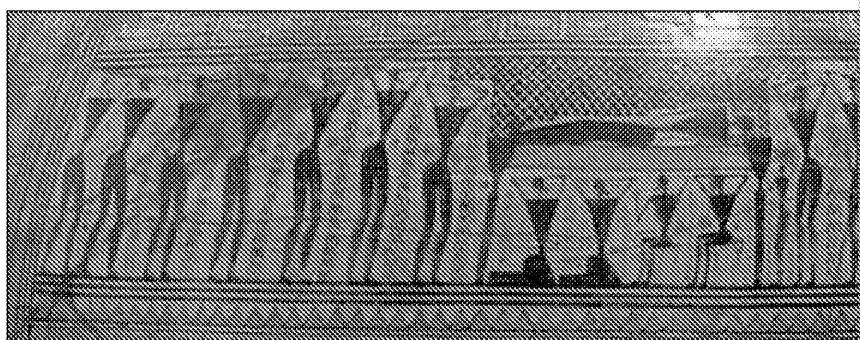
### Levels of religious participation (prescribed knowledge)

#### The household

The head of a Greek household carried out the role of a priest, performing rituals that kept safe the prosperity and security of their home. Every day, prayers and small

Zeus Ktesios (domestic Zeus)	Set up in store cupboards, as a giver of wealth
Zeus Herkeios (protector of the wall surrounding the house)	When the newly elected officials were interviewed whether they owned an Apollo Patroos (Apollo of the families) and a Zeus Herkeios
Apollo Agyieos (of the streets)	As an image placed in the house's street entrance
Hestia (of the hearth)	The hearth was the place where the household of a city lived. At mealtimes small food offerings and libations were poured on the floor.

Different members of a household could take part in family rituals. These rituals were a ceremony for a new-born child, a new wife, or a new slave. The home was where war, so there were rituals to prepare the dead that took place inside the home. The source) is from the Dipylon vase, showing mourners attending a body in the house which the body was laid out was called the *prothesis* and all members of the family



#### Activity

Study the following images (additional sources) of rituals in an ancient Greek household. What is happening in each image and consider who is included.

A bride arrives from her father's house to her husband's house. Look carefully: is there a torch? What does this tell us about the role of women in religious ceremonies?



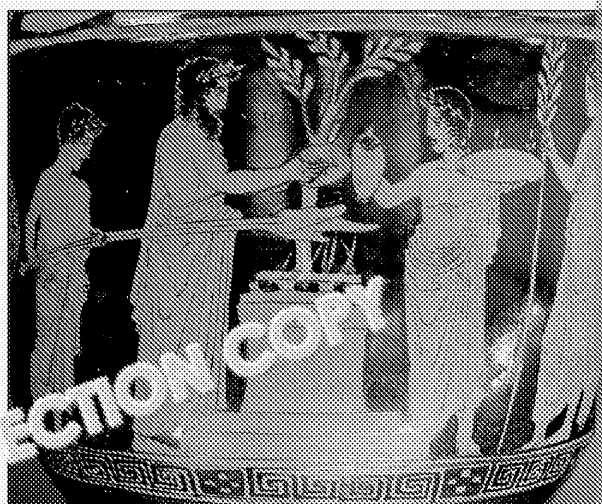
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## Activity

A sacrifice within the home



Who participates in this family sacrifice?



What is happening in the upper image?

What do these images tell us about the role of women, men and boys in religious

## Demes (prescribed knowledge)

*Demes* were settlements in the area around a city. The area around Athens was called *Attica*. For example, Thorikos was a deme in Attica. Every deme had its own local gods and its own priests. Demes also had festivals in common with others. Many demes had their own theatres and repeats of plays were performed, which had been put on in the city (such as the *Rural Dionysia*, a country festival in honour of Dionysus, god of fertility). The *Thesmophoria* was celebrated across Greece. It was held annually at the time of seed-sowing and her daughter Persephone, and only adult women could take part.

## Activity

Research the festival of Thesmophoria. Use this as supplementary information for Greek religion.

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Thorikos was linked with Athens through the legendary hero Theseus who had united Attica. The theatre at Thorikos was probably built to celebrate the rural Dionysia and is much smaller than the one in Athens, holding only about 3,000; but for a deme, the size of a village, this was big. The theatre was a key building for uniting the members of the deme through a religious experience.



*Theatre of Thorikos, a coastal deme*

### Activity

Watch this drone view of the theatre: [zzed.uk/11776-Thorikos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzed.uk/11776-Thorikos)



Go

Try to identify:

- Seating set into the side of the hill
- The round area for the chorus (orchestra)
- Where the stage building might have been

### The Polis (prescribed knowledge)

The YouTube presentation on page 2 shows that the city states could be very different but all shared a common belief in the Olympian gods. What was written in Homer and Hesiod of Greece and so every city state shared a common understanding of the sacred, the *pious*.

### Religious authority, politics, and religion (prescribed knowledge)

In many ways there was no Greek religious authority. In many modern religions there is a concept called *dogma*. There was none in Greek religion. There were no specific religious laws that could be brought before a religious court. There were civic laws, however, linked to religious officials like bishops, cardinals and rabbis. There was no Bible or Quran. The system was based on a reliance on tradition passed down. Priests were not looked to for authority. In fact, they had no special training. They had no pastoral duties as modern priests might have today and only wore any robes when undertaking activities such as a sacrifice. Their main duty was the correct observance of the traditional rituals.

### Activity

Make a table using the notes above to show some of the differences between modern and ancient Greek religion.

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The scholar R S J Garland believes that religious authority did not belong to one person but to the community as a whole. We shall look at the role of priests and priestesses later, but civic officials in cities. In Athens key officials were:

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Archon Basileus	Religious official	All religious matters Religious legal matters Cults
Eponymous Archon	In charge of festivals	Oversight of all festivals City Dionysia theatrical competitions
Epimeletai	Specific festivals	Individual appointments for festivals
Polymarch	Military	Victory related festivals Peace-time sacrifices

Remember these were not priests, but magistrates with religious responsibilities. The scholar Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood (1945–2007). One of her most famous works was the 'Polis-religion' model, which showed how the ancient Greek polis actually worked.

### Impiety and miasma (prescribed knowledge)

Tradition and respect were of importance. *Impiety*, or in Greek, *asebeia*, was a lack of respect for something considered sacred. It was believed that impious actions such as disrespecting the gods could bring down the wrath of the gods. The Greeks did everything to keep the gods happy. The most famous impiety trial was of Socrates, who was charged in 399 BC for not respecting the gods and for introducing new ideas. Section B includes some more detailed examples of impiety, also included *acts of sacrilege*, which could be stealing from or damaging a holy site.

Another fear was *pollution*, a plague or illness that could only be avoided with correct religious practices. The Greek word for this was *miasma*. Without keeping to strict religious ways, it could affect crops, family and state. Miasma was released into a city state or community in the form of a plague. Robert Parker believes that in the idea of pollution 'societies create order by stigmatising certain conditions and events and persons'. Examples of pollution were associated with bloodshed, war, and sacrilege; also some diseases, especially madness. In extremes, pollution could lead to killing a father. It was most lethal when released as a result of a deliberate murder. In *Oedipus the King*, the city of Thebes is suffering a plague as a result of their king, Oedipus, having realised who he was and by marrying his own mother, again without realising it. Oedipus had to leave the city to avoid pollution and the subsequent punishment. Washing avoided just by birth could not go to certain religious places until a set number of days had passed. The city had to try to honour their gods in their own specific way.

An extract from *Oedipus the King* can be found in Section B.

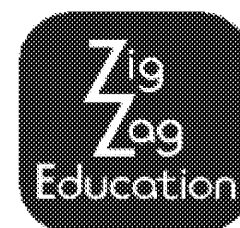
### Panathenaia (prescribed knowledge)

Athens had a good example of a festival dedicated to its own polis. The Athenians held a festival for Athena every year with a festival called the **Lesser Panathenaia**. Every four years with greater than usual splendour this was called the **Great or Greater Panathenaia**. It was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month of Skirophorion, roughly our July. The main day of the festival was the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month, which was thought to be Athena's birthday. During the festival various groups competed in athletic events. The festival is *pan-Athenaic*, meaning all-Athenian (as opposed to Pan-Hellenic, all-Greek). The festival included a procession and the sacrifice of 100 oxen. This was known as a *hecatomb*.

### Religious and civic significance of the Panathenaia for Athens (prescribed knowledge)

Although the chief purpose of the festival was to celebrate Athena's birthday, there was also a chance to show off several other things to any who watched: the greatness of the city; the skill; their religious piety and the building programme on the Acropolis.

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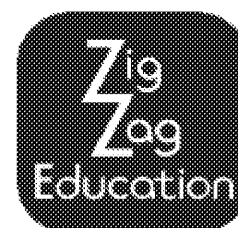
## Events of the Great Panathenaea (length of contest in days may differ among sources)

Day	Event	Details
Day 1	Competitions in music and reciting	Adult men and boys singing with accompaniment on the <i>kithara</i> (seven-stringed instrument) and <i>aulos</i> (flute). Reciting of <i>Iliad</i> and <i>Odyssey</i> .
Day 2	Athletics contests for youths and boys	
Day 3	Athletics contests for men	<p>Over 20 events, with three age classes, and team and individual competitions.</p> <p>Footraces: The footraces were held on the <i>diolkos</i> track of the Athenian Agora. Each race had 10 competitors and races were contested over various distances.</p> <p>The jump, discus, javelin, wrestling, boxing, pankration (brutal combination of wrestling, boxing).</p> <p>Hoplite race: a race in full armour.</p>
Day 4	Equestrian events	Chariot and racing events, including <i>Apobates</i> where chariots were ridden and the riders jumped off and on as they moved.
Day 5	Tribal events	Military dancing and male beauty contests.
Day 6	Torch race, procession and all-night party	<p>Torch race (had to keep torch alight).</p> <p>The procession went through the city to Athena's shrine on the Acropolis. Sacrifices were then followed by an all-night celebration, called the <i>pannychis</i>.</p>
Day 7	Apobates and boat races	Youth events and boat races.
Day 8	Prizes, feasting and celebration	<p>Prizes were awarded.</p> <p>There was a meat feast from the sacrifice at Athena's altar.</p>

The prizes for the event winners were jars of olive oil. The oil came from the olive trees which were thought to have come from cuttings from the first olive tree which grew on the Acropolis. Special jars were made to contain the oil with a picture of Athena on or showing the event in which the victor had triumphed; the first prize could consist of a whole ox.

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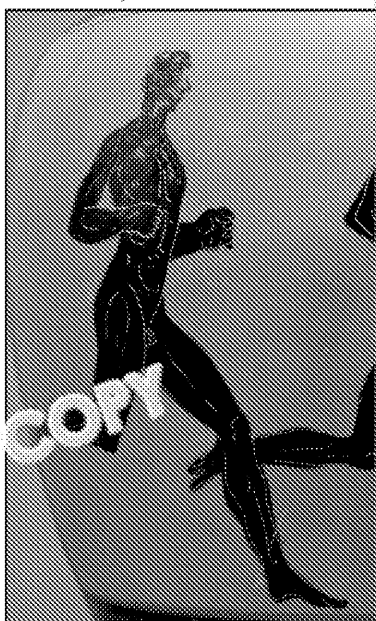
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### Black figure Panathenaic amphora (prescribed material)

The image on the right is from a vase given as a prize in the foot race at the Great Panathenaia. It is a *Panathenaic amphora* with a lid and held olive oil, about 35–39 litres.

These *amphorae* were kept well after the oil had been used up and many have survived. The amphorae had a red background, being the natural clay, and black figures were painted on. On each side of the vase was an image: all Panathenaic vases had an image of Athena on one side.



The image of Athena can be viewed on the British Museum website, where the vase is displayed: [zedd.uk/11776](http://zedd.uk/11776)



Go to [zedd.uk/11776](http://zedd.uk/11776)

Athena is standing, turning to her left between two columns, with her left foot stepping forward, a spear in her right hand, and a high-crested helmet which breaks into the narrow neck of the vase. She is shown in a long *chiton* tied at the waist, with a small *himation* (cloak) hanging from her arm. Her right arm is through a strap and the handle. She has long hair, and jewelry.

The other side (above) shows a foot race: three nude beardless athletes running on a level ground as they run. Their arms are bent and close to their sides. The men are shown with lines have been drawn to show their muscles.

#### Examination advice

Practise making simple drawings of any prescribed vases. You could make them at home and to support your arguments in essays. Drawings such as these are welcomed by examiners.

#### Activity

See [zedd.uk/11776-vase](http://zedd.uk/11776-vase)



Go to [zedd.uk](http://zedd.uk)

What does this vase tell us about the nature of the gods and the Greeks' relation to the gods? How does this vase reinforce the link between Athena and Athens?

The procession, *pompe*, was the key religious event at which the Athenians presented their city to the gods. The *peplos*, which had been woven over the previous nine months by special women, was taken to the Acropolis in a grand procession along a route called the *panathenaic way*. All parts of Athenian society took part. It was indicated by the route being at least 10 miles long. It started at the Dipylon gate, went through the *Kerameikos* area where the burial grounds were, and approached the Acropolis from the west. It went up a ramp through a gateway to accommodate the procession splitting into columns, streamed through and ended at the *Propylaea*. The *peplos* was given to an ancient wooden statue to Athena *Polias* (kept in the strangely shaped temple) and the sacrifice of many animals.

#### Activity

Look carefully at the events of the Great Panathenaia. Consider how far the civic and religious can be separated, if at all. Is the Great Panathenaia a sporting or religious event?

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## Places of worship

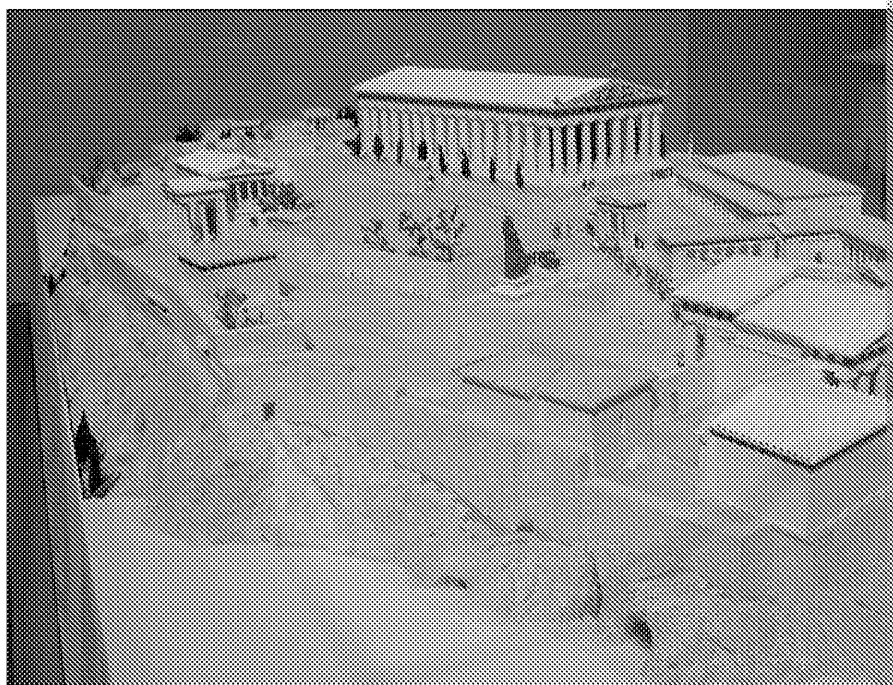
### Sanctuary

Temples and shrines to gods were found all over Greek city states and the countryside. Sanctuaries, such as the Asclepion at Epidaurus. The Greeks spent a lot of money on them. They were an indication of the wealth of a town, as we shall see for Athens. Likewise, the city state of Elis. For the citizens, Eleans, it was an asset but also a responsibility. Those whom tried to gain control of the sanctuary at Olympia, but the sanctuary certainly produced pottery. Normally fine pottery was restricted to the towns. The Eleans, who benefited from the vast souvenir trade.

### Greek temple building

It is important to understand that Greek temples were **not** places of worship like a church. A temple was a house for a god to live in on visiting earth. A temple was at the heart of a city. It received gifts in the form of sacrifices which took place at an altar *outside* the temple. The particular god whom worshipped would look out towards the east at the ceremonies.

### Sanctuary to Athena on the Acropolis (prescribed material)

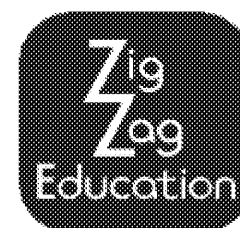


### The Acropolis: designed rather than developed

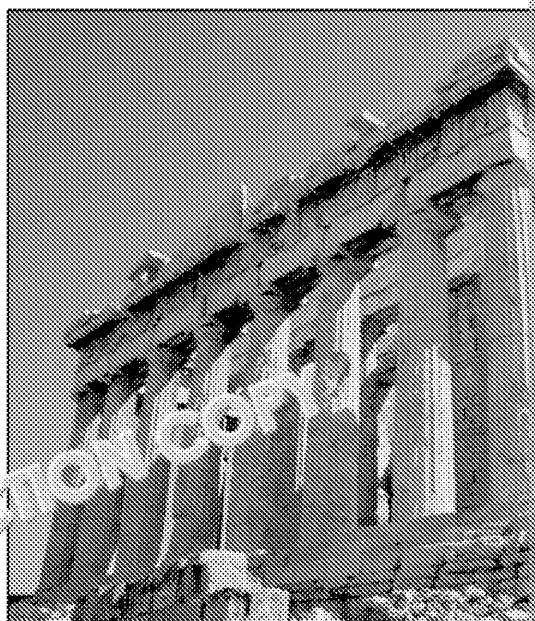
After the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, with the Greeks defeating the Persians, the major role in the defeat, started a building programme to show the greatness of Athens. They completed a treasury, and that was the Propylaea. They started building the gateway to the Acropolis and a temple. The temple was to stand near an old existing temple 'Marathon temple'. The buildings were never completed because the Persians attacked and destroyed the buildings on the Acropolis. But the Greeks won again. After the Persians swore an oath to leave the ruins of the Acropolis as a reminder, but it was felt inappropriate. A new building plan began which reflected Athens' new status as 'top city'. This was the Parthenon. Unlike other sanctuaries which developed over the years.

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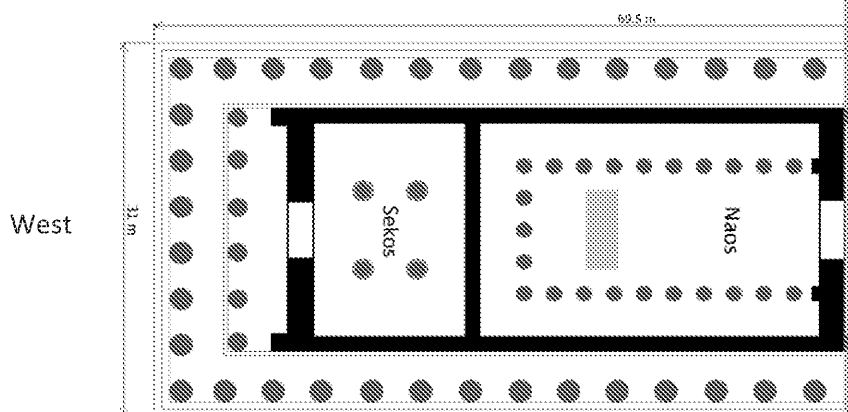
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The Parthenon was so-called as it was dedicated to Athena with her epithet added in her role as unmarried woman, *Athena Parthenos*. It was built between 447 and 432 bc. It was the third temple on the site and was surrounded by columns (8 × 17). The sharp grooves in the columns show that the temple is Doric in style.



West



The inner part of the temple could not be entered from the west (back) as there was kept. The columns in there were slender and known as Ionic columns. It was Ionic columns. Huge cedarwood doors opened inwards. Visitors entered through of Athena. She was made of gold and ivory, called *chryselephantine*, by a sculptor agree about his involvement with the decoration of the rest of the Parthenon. He all the decoration himself. The only possibility is that he was overseer (*episkopos*) ambitious undertaken. The triangular ends, called *pediments*, were filled with statues. Images, called *metopes*, were on the outside of the temple and a continuous frieze the inner wall (in black on the plan above).

On Google Images study various images of the statue made by Pheidias (also called Phidias) and write down your findings. <http://www.google.co.uk/images?hl=en&q=phidias+sculpture&btnG=Google+Search>

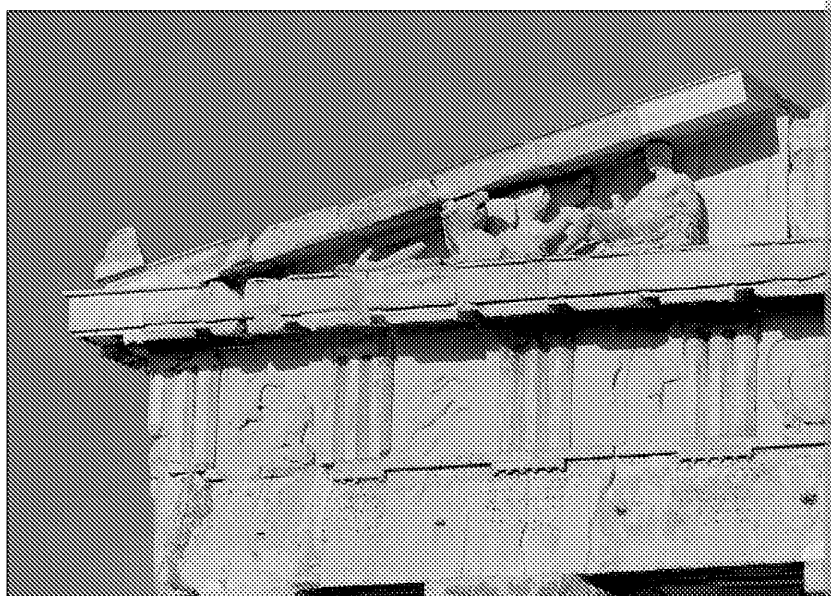
The Varvakeion Statue is regarded as important by scholars. Do you think it is pre-Why do we have to be careful when considering reproductions?

## Summary of decoration of Parthenon

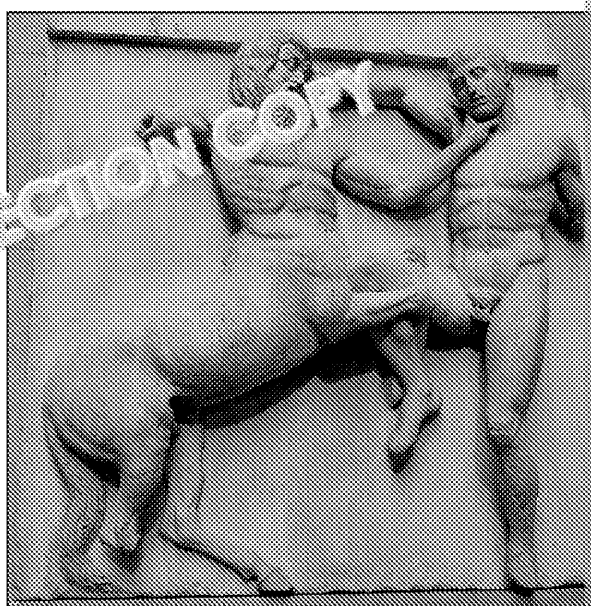
<b>West – Athenians</b> Pediment: Athena and Poseidon fight  Metopes – Athenians vs Amazons  Frieze – ordinary people prepare for festival	<b>North</b> Metopes – fall of Troy/Persia  Frieze – ordinary people – horsemen, chariots, musicians, victims  <b>South</b> Metopes – Lapiths and centaurs  Frieze – ordinary people – horsemen, chariots, victims
---	--

### The symbolism of the decoration of the Parthenon

The Parthenon was highly decorated and there are many presentations available. However, we need to keep in mind the Sanctuary of Athena and the religious significance of the Acropolis. The image below shows the east side of the Parthenon. The triangular pediment showed the birth of Athena, very appropriate for the temple. Below this is the Doric frieze decorated by *triglyphs* (III).



A metope from the south side of the Parthenon. It shows a centaur fighting a Lapith.



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The Lapiths were a tribe of men that lived in Thessaly towards the north-east of Greece. They invited Ixion to Olympus where Ixion fell for Hera and slept with her. When it next came to the centaurs, the centaurs were rough and uncivilised, living in caves; they even hunted humans. They knew nothing of 'proper' religion, being beasts.

The Greeks defeated the Persians after the Siege of Plataea in 479 BC. The Persians were seen as *barbarism*. To show this the Greeks used the fight between Centaurs and Lapiths as a symbol of civilisation wins. This was also especially true for the Athenians. In 480 BC, a year before the Persians entered Athens and razed the city to the ground, destroying the earlier Acropolis. When Pericles rebuilt the Parthenon, the inclusion of the centauromata had been a message to the world that Athens would always win against those it considered barbaric.

The Parthenon Frieze is also filled with meaning. It shows not gods or mythological figures, but people. It is important as it shows the participants in the Panathenaic procession. Most of the sculptures have been brought to the British Museum by Lord Elgin. The sculptures are known as the Elgin Marbles.

## Activity



Take this virtual tour of the Elain Marbles: [zzed.uk/11776-museum-tour](http://zzed.uk/11776-museum-tour)



Make notes on the east pediment sculptures, where the gods hear about the birth heard the message yet?

Which is the best carved metope of a centaur and Lapith? Which is the least successful?

Make a list of the participants on the frieze along the walls. Notice the young, the

There is a debate among scholars about whether the Parthenon is purely a work of art or a building important to the city of Athens. The scholar Nigel Spivey thinks that it is a work of art. Here are some

Yes – it is purely a work of art	No – it is
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks impressive: combines Doric and Ionic – ideal temple for ideal spectator</li> <li>• Pediments carved in 3D from behind as well as front – attention to detail</li> <li>• No altar outside the Parthenon so no sacrifices outside</li> <li>• Erechtheion was religious centre for the Panathenaia. Why the need for two temples?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frieze not seen as it is to admire.</li> <li>• Pediments well as from the work</li> </ul>

One strong argument against the religious nature of the Parthenon is using evidence from the Panathenaic procession itself. The procession did not finish in front of the Parthenon but before the Erechtheion, another temple of the Acropolis. It was here that there was a very old wooden cult statue, nothing like the marble one by Pheidias. This is a statue which received the peplos. Below is an image from the Parthenon frieze showing the peplos being carried and then unfolded ready to put on the statue – but the one on the Erechtheion! The peplos was dyed with saffron, making it yellowy orange. It was embroidered with scenes of Athena fighting the Giants.

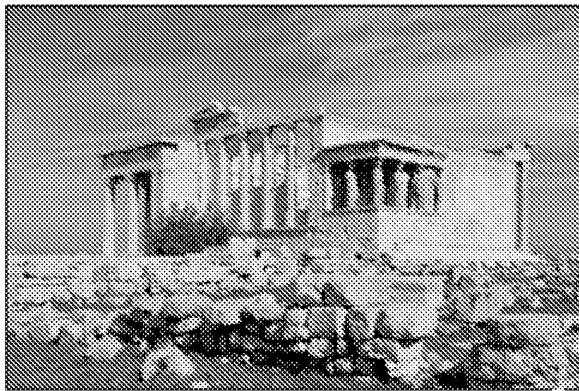


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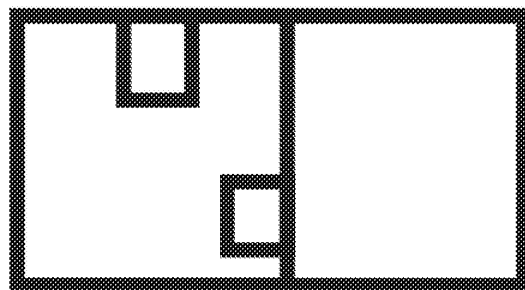
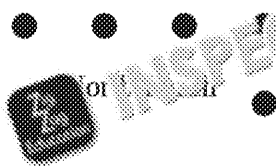
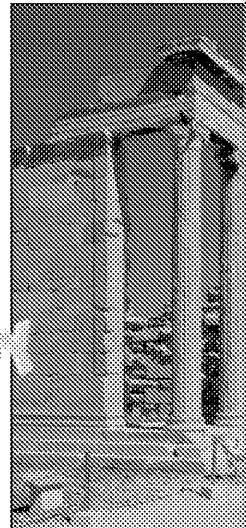


## Erechtheion (prescribed material)

West view



East view



East Porch



South Porch  
(Caryatids)

According to the scholar Robin Osborne 'The Erechtheion has a good claim to be one of the most beautiful buildings on the Athenian Acropolis.'

The Erechtheion was not a regular temple in that it was not a simple rectangular building with a regular arrangement of columns. Robin Osborne calls it 'a peculiar piece of temple architecture which breaks the normal rules of temple design'. This is because the temple had to cover, literally, many significant sites. It was built by the architect Mnesikles. The eastern half of the temple, with its tall columns, was dedicated to Athena Polias, where the old olive wood statue of Athena was placed on a rock where the Panathenaic procession took place. The western half, dedicated to Poseidon as he had struck the rock there in his bid to become water. The west side of the temple was at a lower level than the east as the ground was higher on the east. Poseidon is three metres higher than the east. Below the west end of the Erechtheion was the tomb of Cecrops, Athena's gift to the city.

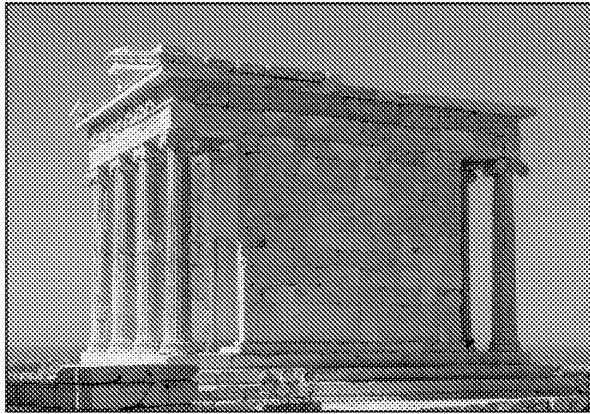
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### Activity

Athena was chosen as patron as her offering of an olive tree was thought more useful than the offering of olive oil?

To the south of the temple was added another porch, this time held up by columns in the shape of women, the *caryatids*. These women guarded the site of the tomb of Cecrops, a legendary king who was believed to have rested, just, on the ruined foundations of the old temple. So, there was a link between the temple and the tomb. For these reasons, the Erechtheion had great historical and religious significance for the Athenians.



Another important temple was located on the Acropolis. This is the temple of Athena (the goddess of wisdom and the victorious). It is the temple of the source).

#### Activity

'Too many games and not enough work' – agree with this statement about the Greeks?

#### Activity

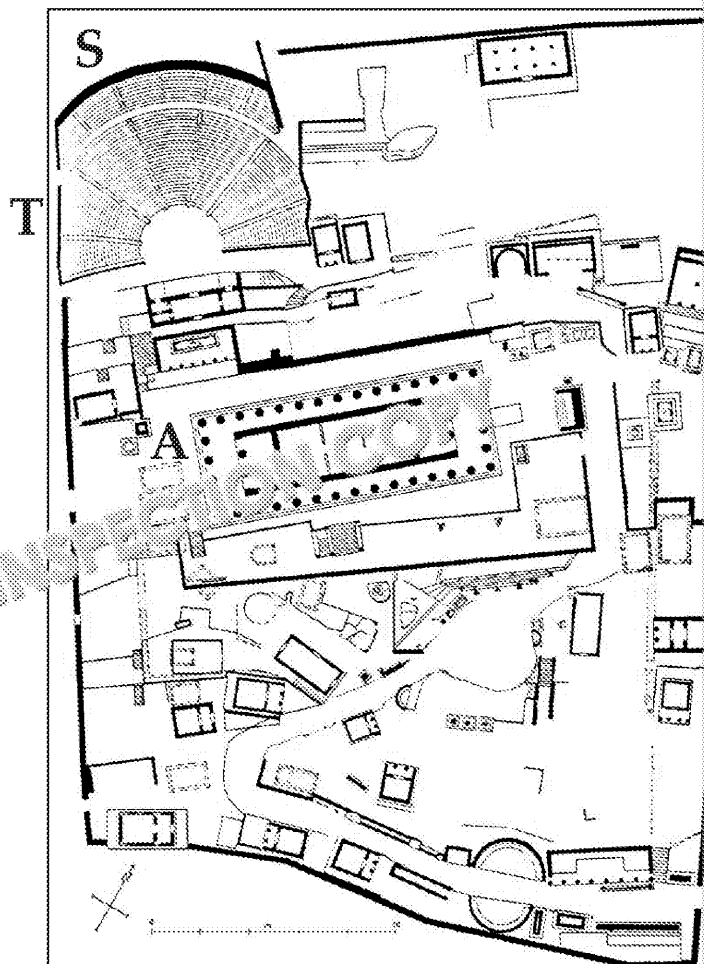
What do you think would have been the main buildings on the Acropolis?

### Delphi: where religion and politics met (prescribed material)

Around 2000 BC, known as the Mycenaean Age, the Earth Mother, Gaia, was worshipped at Delphi. She used to utter prophecies guarded by her son, Apollo. Zeus took over as ruler, he sent two eagles to fly in opposite directions and they were considered as the centre of the world. Then the site became associated with Apollo. He wrestled with Python, killed him and then left Delphi to purify himself. He returned over the giving of prophecies. In the winter he left and Dionysus took over.

People are often surprised at the accuracy of some of the prophecies. However, the site tells us how important the site was in inter-city relations, and as a Panhellenic site where influential Greek cities together called the Amphictyonic League. With so many important people coming to the site from so many nations, it is thought that the officials here knew what they were doing and could give sound advice.

### Sacred way (entrance marked X on plan – prescribed material)

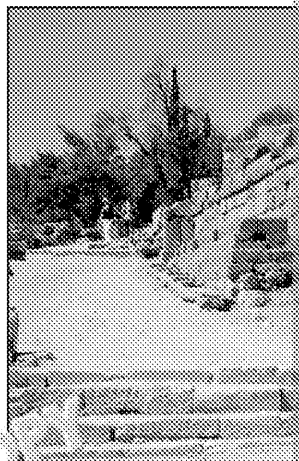


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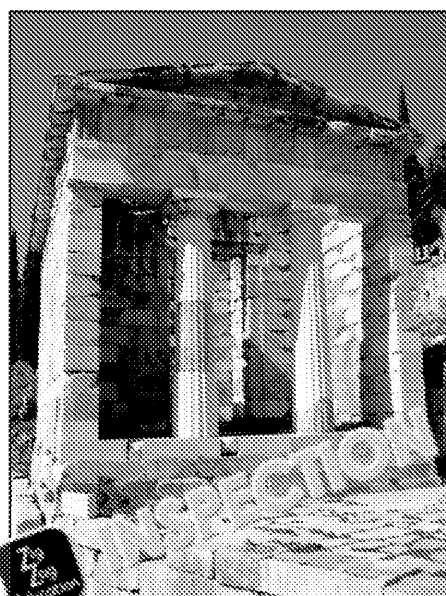
The Panhellenic sanctuary at Delphi was set on the side of the mountain. A path, called the Sacred Way, snaked its way up the slope. It was supposed to represent the snake, *Python*, which Apollo had killed to establish his oracle at Delphi. The entrance below is through a gap in a wall, *temenos*, marking the sanctuary itself.



As visitors made their way along the path, they could see monuments erected by different city states, all designed to make a political point or to showcase their polis. Also, important private individuals placed offerings for all to see, for example:

Victory monuments Votive offerings of individuals	Spartans and Athens were great rivals and they set up monuments to each other. In 370 BC Arcadia (area on the Peloponnese) won over the Spartans and 'rubbed their noses in it' right opposite the Spartan one.
Offerings	Bull of Corcyra (Corfu). Donated in thanks for a victory over the Spartans.
Votive offerings of both state and individuals	Offering of Polyzelos 'The Delphic Charioteer'.  Offering of the Tarentines, bronze statues of horses and chariots in victory over the Messapians.
Treasures	Column of the Naxians, 10 m high column with a capital. Treasury of the Siphnians; treasury of the Athenians.

Below is the Treasury of the Athenians. Like many other cities, Athens built this treasury as visitors walked up the Sacred Way to the Temple of Apollo. The treasury was donated to and devoted to Apollo by the city in return for the god's advice.



Above (right) is the famous statue of the Delphic charioteer. The statue was set up to celebrate the victory of the ruler of Gela (in Sicily) called Polyzelos and his chariot in the religious games, held at Delphi in 478 or 474 BC.

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### Activity

Research other monuments on the Sacred Way. What impression of both states and individuals do the monuments on the Sacred Way give to visitors to Delphi?

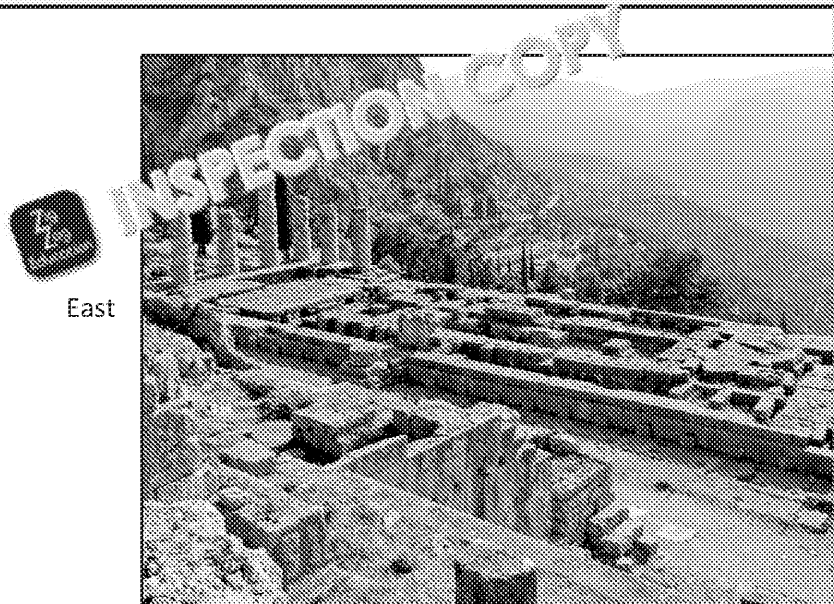
## Temple of Apollo (A on plan page 32; prescribed material)

The Sacred Way climbed the hill and came to the centre of the sanctuary in front of a massive altar was situated given by the people of Chios, a Greek island off the west coast. The people of Chios were allowed to consult the oracle first.

### Activity

A suggested reconstruction of the temple and its position in the site can be seen here [zzed.uk/11776-reconstruction](http://www.zzed.uk/11776-reconstruction)

And a plan of the temple with some reconstruction suggestions can be found here [zzed.uk/11776-apollo](http://www.zzed.uk/11776-apollo)



East

As with all Greek temples, the original on the site was a wooden temple (600s BC). The new temple was a donation from a high-profile Athenian family called the Alcmaeonids. Pindar praising their temple.

Given the restrictions of the site it was by necessity long and thin, 6 columns across the front and 13 down the sides. It had a specially constructed terrace wall to support the south side. The temple was destroyed by an earthquake in 373 BC but was rebuilt according to the original plans.

### Activity

Research the decoration of the temple and consider how it is linked to the site.

The columns can be seen to the east (left in the image above), and inside them the temple was approached by a ramp. In the porch were wise sayings such as *Know Thyself* and *Nothing in Excess*. From the porch, visitors passed into the *naos* where there was a large fire and the cult statue. Gifts and votive vases would also have been given here. To the west (right in the image above) was an inner temple. This was the chamber of the *Pythia*. Here people received prophecies from the woman who sat on a tripod over a chasm (which was possibly a source of the frequent earthquakes).

### Activity

This presentation gives some insight into the role of the Pythia. She had one of the most important roles and was provided, chosen from among married women, by the local town of Delphi. [zzed.uk/11776-Pythia](http://www.zzed.uk/11776-Pythia)

How important is it for the Pythia to have religious belief? Is tradition more important than reason?

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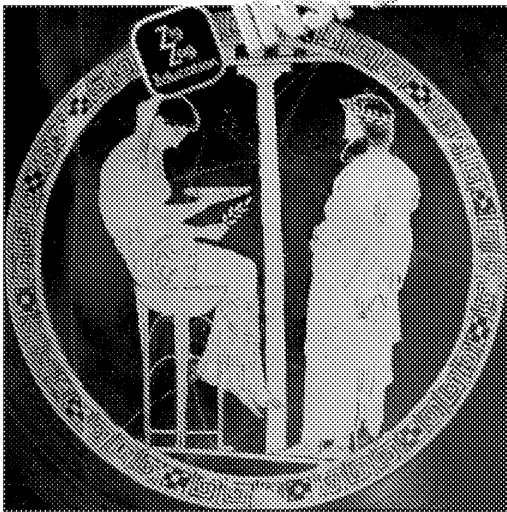




Consultations only happened once a month for the nine months that Apollo was consultations were not guaranteed. After the Pythia had washed to purify herself the head of a goat. If it shook itself this was a sign that the consultation could go the altar of the Chians.

### Kylix consulting the Pythia (prescribed material)

This is a red-figure kylix, shallow drinking cup, dated 440–430 BC, by the Kodros Painter showing (possibly) King Aegeus in front of the Pythia. Only men could have a consultation. Notice that the Pythia is literally sitting in a tripod holding a laurel branch and dish for pouring libations. The king is consulting her. As King of Athens, he wanted to have children but had not had any. She told him to go home and not sleep with anyone until he got home. However, he did not follow the instructions. The Pythia gave her answer in riddles, some scholars think this was a result of chewing laurel leaves.



When she told Aegeus not to sleep with anyone until he got home, he did not follow the instructions. She told him 'not to uncork his wine bottle'. This was a help to interpret the answer, but it was always advice as the argument was always interpreted the advice properly.

To consult the Pythia, it was necessary to offer a sacrificial cake called a *pelanos*. How generously to the sanctuary then the Croesus was one such privileged person.

### Activity

How did Croesus misinterpret the oracle given to him?

Moreover, Croesus has no grounds for complaint as regards the oracle. Loxias predicted that if he invaded Persia, he would destroy a great empire. Faced with this, if he had thought about it he would have sent men to enquire whether Loxias meant Cyrus' empire or his own. Because he misunderstood the statement and failed to follow it up with another enquiry, he should blame no one but himself for what happened.

Herodotus

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## Pythian Games

The Sanctuary at Delphi was not purely dominated by politics. The Pythian Games honour of Apollo at Delphi. They were held every four years, two years after the Apollo's victory over the Python and the establishment of his oracle. Important to competitions for the usual track events but also art and dance, and women were events. Victors received a wreath of laurel leaves sacred to Apollo.

Originally the arts contest consisted of a hymn to Apollo, as the god responsible for and playing the aulos were added. Poetry and prose contests were another feature. poetry competitions also included tragic plays. The last competitions to be introduced



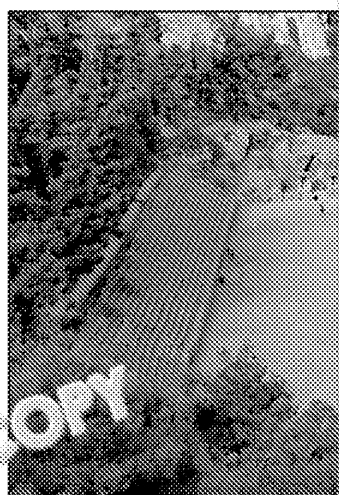
Theatre where the music and drama contests took place (T on page 32 – prescribed material)



Famous papyrus boat race

## Stadium (S on page 32 – prescribed material)

The stadium was, strictly speaking, outside the wall of the sanctuary. Religion and athletics were also closely linked. In Section B is an extract from Homer's *Iliad* depicting athletics and equestrian contests at the funeral games for Patroclus. The athletics competition at Delphi included four types of running race, including the type in full armour, also wrestling, boxing, pankration, and the pentathlon. These all took place in the stadium. Chariot racing took place on the last day of the games, but not at Delphi as there was no land flat enough. It was in the valley below and further along towards the coast.



## Pindar

The Pythian Games had an official poet, as did other games, the most famous being those who were victorious. He celebrated the towns that the victors came from and associated with each place. Extracts from his poems can be found in Section B.

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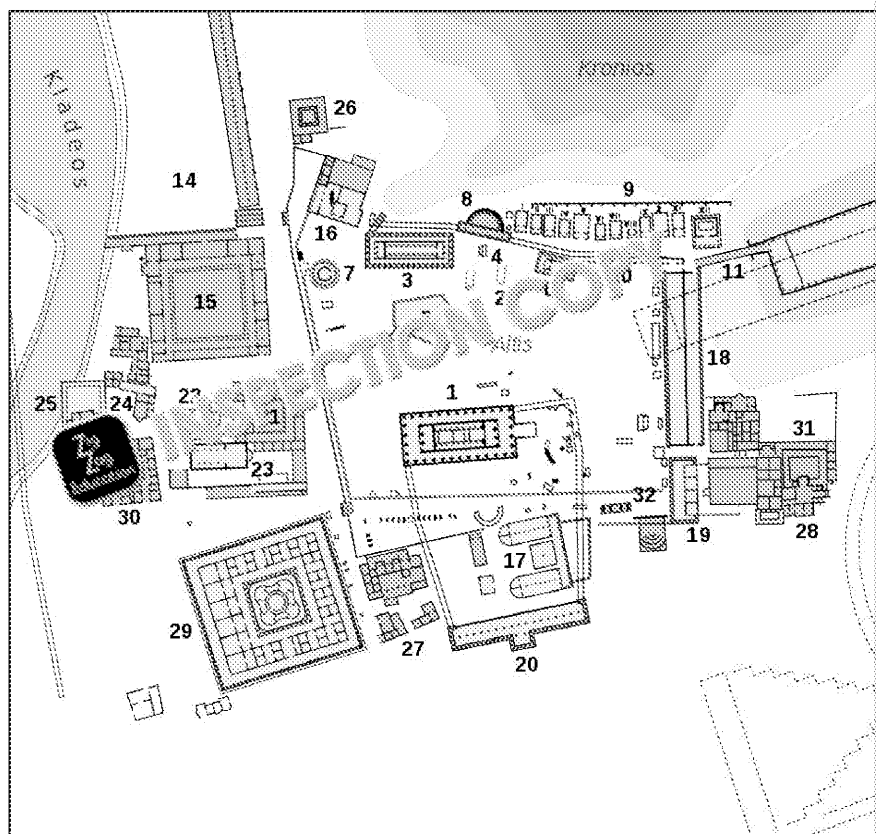


## Activity

How far do you agree that a visit to Delphi was a religious experience?

## Olympia (prescribed material)

At Olympia, the sanctuary to Zeus was called the *Altis*, a corrupt version of the Greek word *Alteia*. The sanctuary was rich in plane trees, wild olives, poplars, oaks and pines. The olive was sacred to Athena and there was probably a prehistoric tree cult. The Greeks believed that the olive was brought to Greece by Athena.



Key buildings discussed below

Number	Name
1	Temple of Zeus
2	Ash Altar
9	Treasuries
18	Echo Stoa
13	Stadium
5	Pelopeion
3	Temple of Hera

Olympia became a shrine to Zeus as early as 1000 BC. As Zeus lived on Mount Olympus, he was referred to as *Zeus Olympios*. The sanctuary became known as Olympia. It was one of the *Panhellenic* shrines. Zeus in many other roles was also worshipped here. There were other 'epithets', some quite bizarre to a modern audience, e.g. *Zeus Apomyios*: the one who takes you away from the sanctuary. The epithet of Zeus was specific to Olympia and was not used elsewhere in the Greek world! The Greek travel writer Pausanias says he found 43 statues to Zeus in the famous statue of the temple.

Towards the end of the Dark Ages each city state sent representatives to a religious festival that an athletics contest would be appropriate for this religious site. The contests were held in August. The Olympic Games were so important that the Greeks calculated their years from the Olympic Games. For 200 years Olympia had no buildings, only a sacred area to Zeus. It was important to remember that the Olympic Games was a religious festival.

The site was also associated with two hero cults: Pelops and Heracles. Buildings were built over the years. The Pelopeion was a shrine to Pelops (plan no: 5). There was a single column in the temple.

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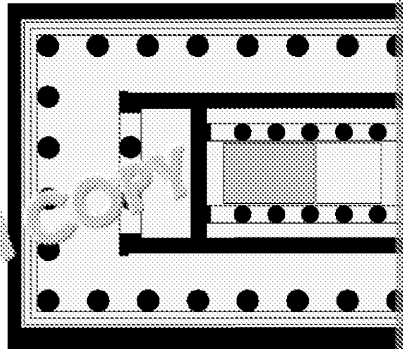


was from the palace of the legendary king Oinomaos (see the story below). On the walls were surrounded by a hedge and later a wall, people hung votives. Later, altars and offerings were placed on these.

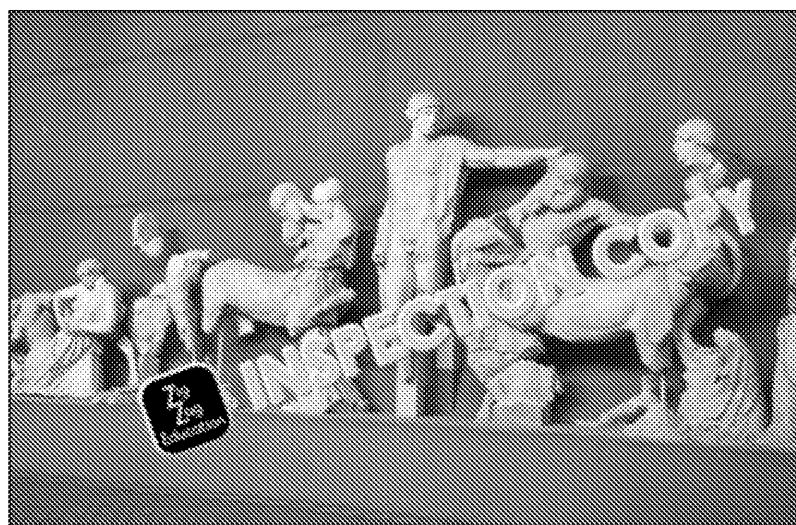
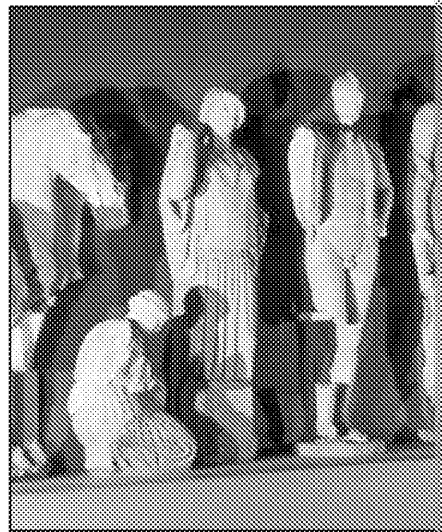
Heracles was linked to Olympia as he was supposed to have celebrated games in completing his labours.

### Temple of Zeus (prescribed material)

The Temple of Zeus was renowned for its sculptural decoration, which gave moral messages to those who viewed it. The east pediment showed a tense set of figures.



Oinomaos was a local king and anyone who wanted to marry his daughter Hippodamia had to beat him in a chariot race. Anyone who lost, died. It was said that to beat Oinomaos a chariot and horses were divine. Pelops was a challenger and, knowing he could not win fairly, bribed Oinomaos' chariot driver (kings did not drive themselves!). Pelops promised the chariot driver that he could sleep with his new wife. So, with the help of the chariot driver, Pelops replaced the chariot's axles with wax, which of course melted, and Pelops won. However, Pelops not only went back on his word but he murdered the chariot driver to keep the secret safe. The tall figure in the middle of the pediment (right) is Zeus, God of Oaths. As a result of breaking his oath, Pelops and his descendants were cursed. The message for the participants at Olympia was do not cheat, and keep your word.



The west pediment showed a fight.

The Lapiths of Thessaly, and Pirithous, King of their neighbours, made the Centaurs feast. Undisciplined they made the Centaurs grab the women. They grabbed particular Peloponnesian women. Centaurs are half man, half horse. Centaurs are uncivilised by the standards of the Parthenon.

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## Metopes

Inside the porches at each end of the Temple of Zeus was a set of six metopes. The Heracles, and it is here that the labours were set at twelve. They celebrated the hard work, strain and endurance of participants facing the events of the Olympics, sometimes fatal. The Temple of Zeus shows an image of Heracles cleaning the stables of Olympia, and so a 'local labour'.

### Activity

Which labours are shown in these metope panels below? How far would participants in these images?



### Pheidias's statue (prescribed material)

Inside the Temple of Zeus was the cult statue. Today only flat stones suggest where the base was. The statue was one of the original Seven Wonders of the World. It was made of *chryselephantine*, which is gold and ivory, by Pheidias in 435 BC. It was seated, and had it have been able to stand, it would have burst through the roof. Even seated, it was 12.4 m tall. People came to view the statue, as remember, worship did not take place inside the temple.

Pausanias describes the votive offerings in the temple, and many bronze horses have been discovered at the site. What could be given and where it was placed was strictly controlled by the Eleans (the temple was controlled by the site). People were not free to give and leave votives as they wished.



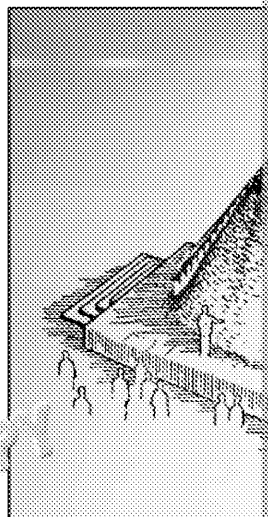
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Votives from Olympia (after the original source)



Ash altar (prescribed material)

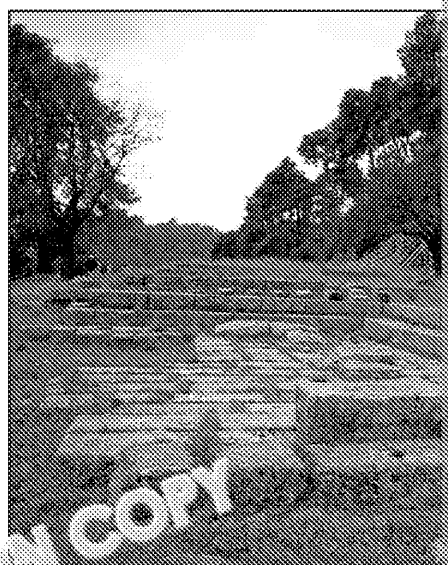
The altar made of the ashes of sacrifices was dedicated to Zeus Olympios. It did not belong to Zeus but outside the Temple of Hera, which was the original temple on the site, and was dedicated to Zeus and Hera.

The altar was built from ash; it was cone-shaped and stood at nearly 8 metres. One of the most sacred parts of Olympia. In fact, sacrifices to Zeus were made *every day*. The altar was not on. The ashes from sacrifices were made into a paste with water from the Alpheios added to the altar. Being organic, the altar has not survived. The sacrifices were made to Zeus and Heracles. There were other altars on the site which appeared as the site developed.

### Treasures (prescribed material)

Again, politics and religion mixed, most notably in the form of treasures (far right of image on the slope).

Like those at Delphi, the treasures were small temple-like buildings which displayed the votive offerings of city states and items won in war. The position of the treasures was important as people had to walk by them to get to the events at the stadium. The travel writer Pausanias saw some of the treasures:



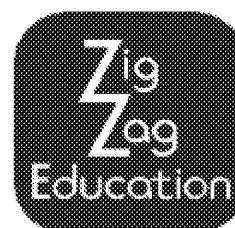
Pausanias in his Guide to Greece: 6. 19 describes the Sicyonian treasury.

*There is in the Altis to the right of the Heraeum (Temple to Hera) a terrace stretching to the Alpheios. On this terrace are the treasures, just as at Delphi made by the cities for Apollo. There is at Olympia a treasury called the treasury of Myron, who was tyrant of Sicyon.*

*[2] Myron built it to commemorate a victory in the chariot-race at the thirty-first Olympiad. He made two chambers, one Dorian and one in the Ionic style. I saw that the inscription on the wall of the Dorian chamber was in the Doric dialect, whether the bronze is Tartessian, as the Eleians declare, I do not know.*

*[4] On the smaller of the chambers at Olympia are inscriptions, which inform that the value of the bronze is five hundred talents, and that the dedicators were Myron and the chamber are kept three quoits (round discs), being used for the contest of the quoit.*

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bronze-plated shield, adorned with paintings on the inner side, and along the greaves. An inscription on the armour says that they were dedicated by the Myanians. Various conjectures have been made as to who these Myanians were. [...]

[6] There are placed here other offerings worthy to be recorded, the sword and the ivory horn of Amaltheia, an offering of Miltiades the son of Cimon, who was in the Thracian Chersonesus. On the horn is an inscription in old Attic characters dedicated by the men of Chersonesus, after they had taken the fortress of Miltiades.

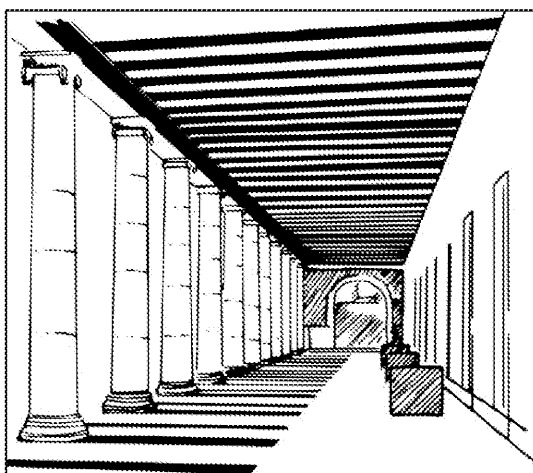
There stands also a box-wood image of Apollo with its head plated with gold, which was dedicated by the Locrians who live near the Western Cape, and that the son of Catillus.

### Activity

What is in the treasury of the Myanians? What impression do you think the people of Corinth) would have to see it?

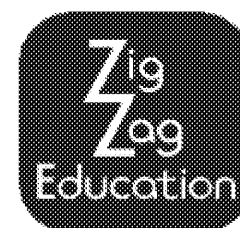
### Echo Stoa (prescribed material)

A stoa is a covered walkway used for a meeting people, selling, or religious or public meetings. The Echo Stoa was built in 350 BC, quite late on in the development of Olympia. It was about 97 m long, and thin, being around only 12 m wide. On the outside was a set of Doric columns, with an internal Ionic column which divided the inside into two corridors. It was especially useful for people to meet out of the sun as there was little shade over the whole site.

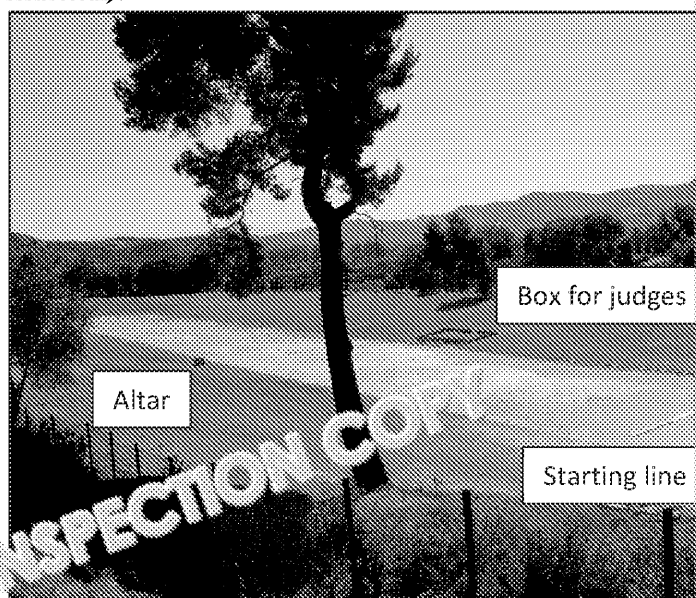


Until 350 BC the Temple of Zeus was visible from the stadium, and this may have meant that the events held in the stadium were becoming less religious in importance, or that the people perhaps made the sanctuary feel less religious. For whatever reason, the temple was being the east side of the Sanctuary of Zeus. And yes, there was an echo. Apparently the voices could echo up to seven times along the stoa.

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### Stadium (prescribed material):

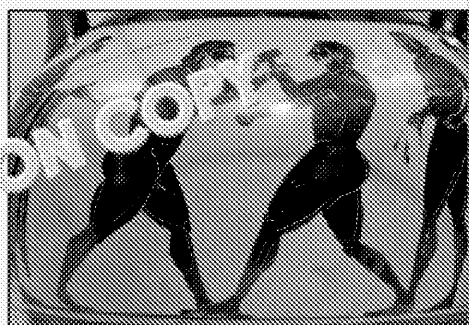


The stadium was originally part of the holy sanctuary but was later moved to outside the sanctuary. The following programme developed over the years.

Day	Athletics event	Religious event
1	Boys' running Speeches and poems, possibility of competitive	Swearing in before the Statue of Zeus bouleuterion (administration) Private prayers and sacrifices
2	Chariot races, horse races, Pentathlon (discus, javelin, jumping with weights, running and wrestling) Feasting	Ceremonies to honour Pelops Singing of victory hymns
3	Foot races	Procession of officials and competitors Sacrifice of 100 oxen
4	Wrestling, boxing, pankration, race in armour	
5	Feasting	Procession to the Temple of Zeus with olive wreaths

### Activity

Which events are shown in the vases below? (additional sources)



The scholar Paul Cartledge said: 'For the ancient Greeks, the sport of the Olympic Games was a religious exercise – a display of religious devotion and worship.'

### Activity

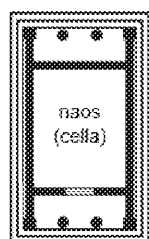
To what extent do you think a competitor had a religious experience at Olympia?

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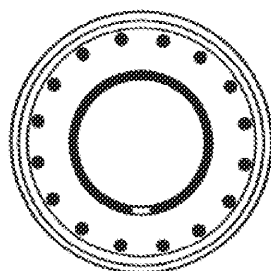


## Rituals and Priests

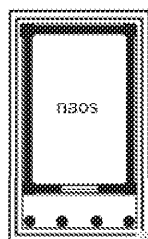
### Basic temple



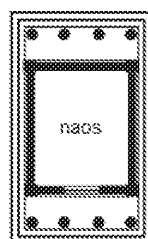
double  
anta



tholos



peripteral

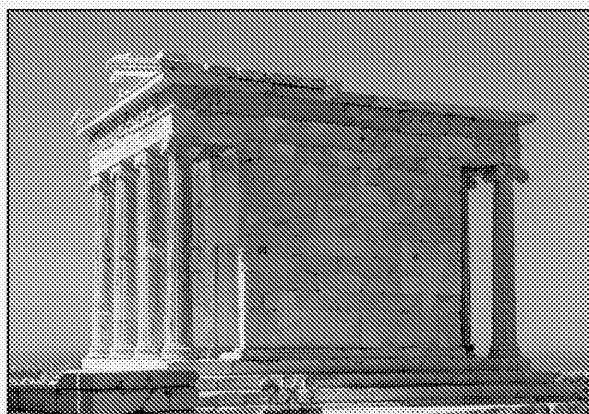


amphiprostyle

As we have seen, temples were not a place of worship but houses for gods to live in when visiting earth. Treasures were also like temples as gifts for gods were housed there. A temple had a main room called a *naos* where the cult statue was. People visit the statue and leave gifts. Some temples had columns inside walls, some only on the front, some both front and back, and, the most familiar, columns all the way around.

### Activity

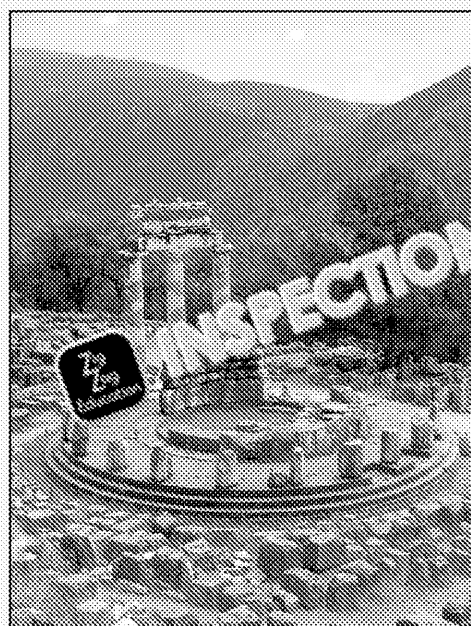
Study the different types of temple shown above, then identify them from the images.



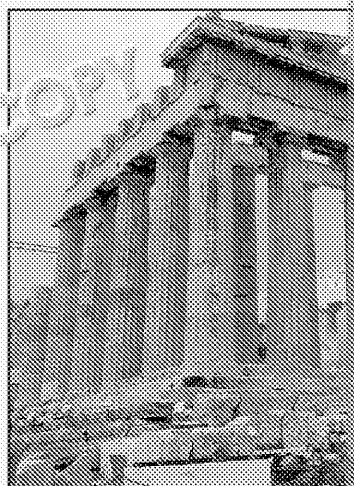
Temple of Athena Nike, Acropolis



Athenian treasury



Temple to Athena Pronaia, Delphi



Parthenon, Acropolis

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## Priests and priestesses (prescribed knowledge)

On page 6 we have seen the different ways that the gods could be honoured and avoided. There were very strict procedures in performing the rituals and so priests make sure everything was done properly and without errors. The Greek word for priestess *hiereia*. The word *hiereus* means 'one who sacrifices to a god'. However, priestesses were controlled by the city state and were not independent. They were carry out duties for the various festivals. A priest's main job was to look after the temple and to perform ceremonies and sacrifices.

### Difference between modern and Greek priests

Greek Priest	Modern Priest
Part-time	Vicar full-time
Temporary job	Permanent Job
No training	Training needed
Oversee correct procedure ceremony	Oversee many ceremonies

Priests were important people in the community. They were believed to have the power to communicate with the gods so were respected and trusted. There were several ways you could become a priest.

1. Your mother or father was a priest
2. You were made a priest by a dying priest
3. You were chosen by lot
4. You bought the priesthood

The oldest and most common method of becoming a priest was by inheritance. In some families controlled priesthoods, which were passed down from one generation to the next. They had descended from the gods or heroes or that they had a proven track record with the gods. For example, on the Acropolis at the Erechtheion, two important Athenian goddesses, Athena and Poseidon Erechtheus were held by two branches of the same family, the *Eteobiontes*. In 451 BC passed laws making it possible for more Athenian citizens to be eligible for priesthood. As a result of restriction as he introduced in the law that both mother and father had to be of Athenian descent. The scholar Stephen Lambert this resulted in 'a more exclusive model'.

## Role of women in Greek religion (prescribed knowledge)

In the home women had few religious roles, other than the ritual washing of brides and the dead. They did not conduct worship. However, they were not so restricted on public participation depended upon whether they were married or not.

### Roles for women in religion

	Role	Description
Unmarried	<i>Arrephoros</i>	Carried a basket of unknown objects from the Acropolis to Aphrodite outside the Acropolis and carried them back.
	<i>Grinder</i>	Carried the ground flour to make the cakes for the gods.
	<i>Bees and Bears</i>	Dressed up as bears! This was at the festival of Artemis where girls had to do this before they married.
	<i>Basket carrier</i>	Baskets carrying instruments for sacrifice
Married	Participant Thesmophoria	Held in honour of Demeter Thesmophoria was a festival of agriculture
	Eleusinian Mysteries	See pages 12–14
	Priesthoods	Most important Priestess was that of Athena Pythia who gave the oracles at Delphi

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The Parthenon Frieze is important as evidence for the participation of women in jugs to the actual presentation of the peplos.



### Activity

Research two of the roles for women listed on the previous page (page 44). How far do you agree that women could feel part of religious society?

### Blood sacrifices (prescribed knowledge)

On an everyday basis, small offerings were made of flowers and grain, sometimes it was believed the gods were most pleased and honoured with a sacrifice of animals. Animal sacrifice again has origins as far back as Homer and Hesiod, and most of our evidence comes from ancient Greek literature. Animals for slaughter were sheep, goats, and cows/oxen. At the Eleusinian Mysteries, a bull was sacrificed.

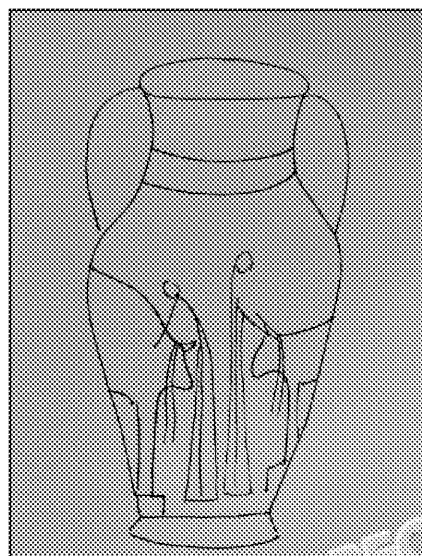
#### The events in a typical blood sacrifice

Animal	A suitable animal was chosen and prepared, often being dressed in a special garment
People	Wore their best outfits
Procession	Animal and people – whole town/family
Arrival	Outside the temple at the altar Hands were washed Basket holding straw hid the knife Music The animal had water and grain put on its head, forcing it to eat
Killing	Animal killed – larger animals were stunned with an axe first Women sang, the blood was caught in a bowl and poured A hecatomb was the sacrificing of 100 oxen
The Feast	Burned offal – liver, kidneys, plus the bones and some of the fat Meat distributed to those present

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Amphora depicting the preparation of a sacrifice (source). Nausicaa Painter.

### Activity

View this presentation about the amphora, outline image, left.  
[zzed.uk/11776-Sacrifice](http://zzed.uk/11776-Sacrifice) Go to zzed

Two women, back to back, are preparing two victims with *stemmata* or ribbons. The women wear beautiful *peplos* and their hair is held in a so-called *epibroschia*. The earring is shown on a tall tripod stand on a raised platform. The scene is set in a sanctuary of Dionysus. The two women are engaged in theatrical or musical competitions, performing a task typically given to young women.

### Activity

In the wooden panel, right, (additional source) a sacrifice procession is shown. There are almost no images of the actual killing.

Identify:

1. The animal
2. The musical instrument
3. Water jug to wash
4. Type of clothing of the women



### Advantages of blood sacrifices

Religious	Non-religious
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a good relationship between gods and men</li> <li>• Unite the community</li> <li>• Ask for favours</li> <li>• Thank gods for favours (i.e. victory)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community provision</li> <li>• Unite the community</li> <li>• Celebrate the great</li> </ul>



Artemis pouring a libation

### Libations (prescribed knowledge)

A libation was an offering of water, wine or milk; in Greek religion, offerings were poured from a wine jug into a libation bowl. Libations were a convenient way of making offerings to the gods for protection or giving thanks, when not at home, and at important occasions.

1. When travelling by road or sea
2. At important dinners to remember where food was eaten
3. At graves

### Votives (prescribed knowledge)

#### Activity

Revise page 6 and see pages 20, 33 and 40 again

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## Section B: Literature

In this section we look at extracts from Greek literature linked to religion and philosophy. Authors listed in the specification are:

- Hesiod
- Homer
- Xenophanes
- Plato (for Socrates)

The material in Section B has been chosen to support the topics linked to the above authors.

### Hesiod: *Theogony* 116–506 (with illustrations)

#### Examination advice

The translation used here is an old translation from 1914 and some language here also may confuse students if they think it will help your understanding. The *Theogony* contains lots of names of gods. It can be read in full at: [zedd.co.uk/11776-Theogony-full](http://zedd.co.uk/11776-Theogony-full)

Read the following passages about the origins of the gods and answer the questions.

#### 116–139

Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed [= protective and fertile] Earth, the deathless ones who inhabit the peaks of snowy Olympus, and dim Tartarus in the Earth, and Eros [desire/love], fairest among the deathless gods, who unnerves the minds and wise counsels of all gods and all men within them. From Chaos came Night, and from Night were born Aether and Day, whom Earth conceived and bore from under. Earth first gave birth to starry Heaven, equal to herself, to cover her on every side as an abiding-place for the blessed gods. And she brought forth long hills, graceful heights, who dwell amongst the glens of the hills. She bore also the fruitless deep with its islands, afterwards she lay with Heaven and bore deep-swirling Oceanus, Coeus and Cronos, Theia and Rhea, Themis and Mnemosyne and gold-crowned Phoebe and lovely Helios. Cronos the wily, youngest, and most terrible of her children, and he hated his father.

#### Activity

Show where Hesiod tells us that:

- The gods do not die
- Gods and men feel the emotion of love
- Gods can procreate / give birth alone

#### 139–148

And again, she bore the Cyclopes, one-eyed, pouring in spirit, [140] Brontes, and Steropes, and Arges, who gave Zeus the thunder and made the thunderbolt: in all else they were like other gods, but only was different the shape of their foreheads. And they were surnamed Cyclopes (one-eyed, for their eye was set in their forehead). Strength and might and craft were in their work.

#### Activity

How did Zeus get his thunderbolt as an attribute?

[149–172 Earth produces more monsters and Cronos who wants to kill his father]

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Cronos volunteers to overthrow his father and gives a speech:

So, Cronos said: and vast Earth rejoiced greatly in spirit, and set and hid him in an ambush, and put in his hands a jagged sickle. [Cronos castrates his father – so stopping him having any more offspring... he throws everything into the sea]

and a white foam spread around them and [...] there grew a maiden. First she drew near holy Cythera (an island) and from there, afterwards, she came to Cyprus, surrounded by the sea, and came forth an awful and lovely goddess, and grass grew up about her beneath her ripely feet. Gods and the foam-born goddess and rich-crowned Cytherea, because she grew amid the sea, she reached Cythera, and Cyprogenes because she was born in billowy Cyprus, sprang from the members. And with her went Eros, and comely Desire followed as she went into the assembly of the gods. This honour she has from the beginning: responsibility for all power amongst men and undying gods: the whisperings of deceits with which she gets delight and love and graciousness.

### Activity

- What are the epithets of Aphrodite?
- Who are her divine followers?
- What effect do Aphrodite and her followers have on men and gods?

But these sons whom he fathered great Heaven (Ouranos) used to call Titans (Said that they strained and did presumptuously a fearful deed, and that vengeance afterwards. And Night bore hateful Doom and black Fate and Death, and she bore Dreams. And again, the goddess murky Night, though she lay with none, gave birth to the Hesperides who guard the rich, golden apples and the trees bearing fruit. She gave birth to the Destinies and ruthless avenging Fates, Clotho and Lachesis, their birth both evil and good to have, and they pursue the transgressions of mortals. The goddesses never cease from their dread anger until they punish the sinner with

Also, deadly Night bore Nemesis to afflict mortal men, and after her, Deceit and hateful Age and hard-hearted Strife. But hated Strife gave birth to painful Toil, Famine and tearful Sorrows, Fighting also, Battles, Murders, Manslaughters, Quarrels, Lawlessness and Ruin, all of one nature, and Oath who most troubles men upon swearing a false oath.

### Activity

Using the passage above, explain how the gods ensure that mortals fear them.

[234–288 some gods are described and some monsters]

But Chrysaor was joined in love to Callirrhoe, the daughter of glorious Ocean, and Mighty Heracles slew him in Erythea, surrounded by the sea, by his shuffling oxen and the wide-browed oxen to holy Tiryns [...] And in a hollow cave she bore another child like either to mortal men or to the undying gods, the goddess fierce Echidna, glancing eyes and fair cheeks, and half again a huge snake [...] and she keeps guard over grim Echidna, a nymph who dies not nor grows old all her days.

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Men say that Typhaon the terrible, outrageous and lawless, was joined in love with the goddess Echidna, who had glancing eyes. So, she conceived and brought forth fierce offspring; first she bore a serpent, and then again she bore a second, a monster not to be overcome and that may devour his own kind. Next she bore who eats raw flesh, the brass-sounding hound of Hades, fifty-headed, relentless and cruel. Then she bore a third, the evil-minded Hydra of Lerna, whom the goddess, white-armed Athena, killed beyond measure with the mighty Heracles. And Heracles, the son of Zeus, of the many names, together with warlike Iolaus, destroyed her with the un pitying sword through the back.

### Activity

Monsters fought by Heracles are described above. Who gave birth to which monster?

[320–413: the birth of minor deities and monsters (activities)]

### Independent study

414–453 Hecate

- Who are Hecate's responsibilities?
- How can she be won over?

454–506 Hesiod describes how Zeus came to power

But Rhea was 'married' to Cronos and bore splendid children, Hestia, Demeter, and Poseidon, and Hades, pitiless in heart, who dwells under the earth, and the loud-crashing Earth-shaker Zeus, father of gods and men, by whose thunder the wide earth is shaken.

Cronos swallowed these as each came forth from the womb to his mother's knees, so that none of the proud sons of Heaven should hold the kingly office amongst the deathless gods. And starry Heaven that he was destined to be overcome by his own son, strong to plan the overthrow of his father, the planning of great Zeus.

Therefore, he kept no blind outlook, but watched and swallowed down his children. Rhea, when she was about to bear Zeus, the father of gods and men, then she hid in the Earth and starry Heaven, to devise some plan with her that the birth of her dear child might escape the notice of Cronos, that retribution might overtake great, crafty Cronos for his own father and also for his children whom he swallowed down.

And they readily heard and obeyed their dear daughter, and told her all that was in their hearts. Cronos the king and his stout-hearted son. So they sent her to Lyctus, to the rich land of Crete, ready to give birth to great Zeus, the youngest of her children. Earth received him and gave him nourish and to bring up. To that place came Earth carrying him, and he swiftly through the mountains took him in her arms and hid him in a remote cavern, in the secret places of the Mount Aegaeum; but to the mightily ruling Cronos of Heaven, the earlier king of the gods, the stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. Cronos took it in his hands and thrust it down into the sea. He knew not in his heart that the stone his son was left behind, unconquered. He was soon to be overthrown by force and might and drive him from his honours, his kingdom, the deathless gods.

### Activity

How far is Hesiod's account of the origin of the gods full of violence?

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## Hesiod: *Works and Days*

Hesiod gives us his understanding of the nature of the gods, the relationship between them and man, and the relationship between man and the earth for their worship.

44–58

For the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do  
you for a full year even without working; [45] soon you would put away your rudder  
up fishing] and the fields worked by ox and sturdy mule would run to waste. But  
hid it, because Prometheus the crafty deceived him; therefore, he planned sorrow  
[50] He hid fire; but that the noble son of Iapetus stole again for men from Zeus.  
gathers the clouds said to him in anger: 'Prometheus Son of Iapetus, surpassing  
glad that you have outwitted me and stolen fire – a fire a plague to you yourself

### Activity

- Why does Zeus not let man work for his food, 'means of life'?
- What does Prometheus do?
- What does this tell us about the nature of the gods?

110–121

### Activity

When Cronos ruled, life for man was idyllic.  
Underline words which suggest this as you read the passage below.

First of all [110] the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a golden race  
time of Cronos when he was reigning in heaven. And they lived like gods [115]  
remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with  
they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died, it  
overcome with sleep, and they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced  
and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many gods  
and loved by the blessed gods.

127–139

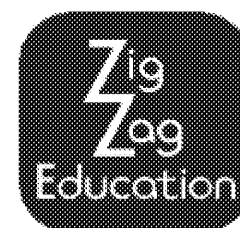
Then they who dwell on Olympus made a second generation which was of silver  
like the golden race neither in body nor in spirit. [130] [...]. But when they were  
the full measure of their prime, they lived only a little time and in sorrow because  
could not keep from sinning and [135] from wronging one another, nor would they  
sacrifice on the holy altars of the blessed ones as it is right for men to do where  
son of Cronos was angry and put them away, because they would not give honour  
on Olympus.

### Activity

What did the gods expect from mankind?

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More generations are made, each worse than the next. Hesiod believes he is among

### Activity

How does Hesiod present a depressing view of mankind?  
Underline the words which suggest this.

[174] Thereafter, I wish I were not among the men of the fifth generation, [175] been born afterwards. For now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from from perishing by night; and the gods shall lay dreadful trouble upon them. But good mingled with their evils. [180] And Zeus will destroy this race of mortal men have grey hair on the temples The father will not agree with his children, nor the guest with his host, nor comrade with comrade, nor will brother be dear to brother dishonour their parents as they grow old, and will nag at them, telling the hearted they, not knowing the will of the gods. They will not repay their aged nurture, for might is with their right: and one man will attack and destroy another no favour to a man who keeps his oath or for the just or for the good; but rather doer and honest dealing. Strength will be right, and respect will cease to be worthy man, speaking false words against him, and will swear an oath upon the delighting in evil, with scowling face, will go along with wretched men one and

### Activity

What will mortal men do that will lead to their destruction?  
Is there a moral lesson here? Do you consider the acts mentioned to be worthy of

239–245

But for those who practise violence and cruel deeds, far-seeing Zeus, the son of Cronos [240] Often even a whole city suffers for a bad man who sins and devises presuming Cronos lays great trouble upon the people, famine and plague together, so that the women do not bear children, and their houses become few, [245] through the cruel

### Activity

According to Hesiod, why are there famine and plague?

### Activity

Hesiod said: 'Be careful to avoid the anger of the deathless gods.' From your reading of *Works and Days*, was there a good reason for this?

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## Homeric Hymns (additional relevant literature)

The Homeric Hymns were written, scholars believe, at the same time as Homer lived by him. In the Homeric Hymns we are told of the personality, power and responsibilities of the gods.

### Homeric Hymns: to Athena<sup>1</sup>

**11:** Of Pallas Athena, guardian of the city, I begin to sing. Dread is she, and with the sack of cities and the shouting and the battle. It is she who saves the people come back.

Hail, goddess, and give us good fortune with happiness!

**28:** I begin to sing of Pallas Athena, the glorious goddess, bright-eyed, inventive virgin, saviour of cities, courageous. Triptolemos (scholars do not agree on the name) Zeus himself bore her from his wife's head, arrayed in warlike arms of flashing gold as they gazed. But she sprang quickly from the immortal head and stood with aegis, shattering spear: great Olympus began to reel horribly at the mighty earth round her. She cried fearfully, and the sea was moved and tossed with darkness suddenly: the bright Son of Hyperion stopped his swift-footed horses a long while. Athena had stripped the heavenly armour from her immortal shoulders. And with And so, hail to you, daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis! Now I will remember

#### Activity

What do we learn about the personality and power of Athena?

#### Activity

The link below is to two very short Homeric Hymns to Apollo. Note down the number of lines of singing and music, which was Apollo's area of responsibility. [zzed.uk/11776-Hom](https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0130%3Acard%3D104)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0130%3Acard%3D104>



## The Gods of Homer<sup>2</sup>

### Homer: Book 1

#### *Council of the gods:*

The gods meet and we start to get to know their personalities as Homer portrays them behave as ordinary mortals. Poseidon is away accepting sacrifices. Like many the festival. Zeus is depicted as Father of men and gods. He is very much like a Greek other gods are respectful. In her address Athena says: Father, Son of Cronos, King like and tries to be fair: let us put our heads together and see how we can help him be pacified.

Tell me, O Muse, of that many-sided hero who travelled far and wide after he left Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the people with whose customs in many things he suffered at sea while seeking to save his own life and to achieve his companions; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished recklessness in eating the cattle of the sun-god Helios; so the god prevented them. Tell me, as you have to tell those who came before me, about all these things, O Muse, whatsoever you wish to choose. [...]

Now Poseidon had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world's end, and looking West and the other East. He had gone there to accept a hecatomb (sacrifice of sheep and oxen) and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met. Zeus, and the father of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of the man killed by Agamemnon's son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

'He knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Hermes to warn him not to do so. Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to retaliate. I acted in all good will, but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full.'

Then Athena said, 'Father, son of Cronos, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Odysseus to think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all the world, covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep the sky aloft. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Odysseus and keeps trying to make him forget his home, so that he is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but the smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet when Odysseus does not win your favour with many a burnt sacrifice? Why then should you keep on thinking of him?'

And Zeus said, 'My child, what are you talking about? How can I forget Odysseus, a capable man on earth, nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods than most? However, that Poseidon is still furious with Odysseus for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus is son to Poseidon by the nymph Thetis, daughter to the sea-king. He will not kill Odysseus outright, he torments him by preventing him from his home. Let us put our heads together and see how we can help him to return; Poseidon will then be pacified and his mind he can hardly turn out against us.'

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<sup>2</sup> English (Samuel Butler, Based on public domain edition, revised by Timothy Power and Gregory Nagy., 1908)

## Homer *Odyssey* Book 5

'Father Zeus, and you other blessed gods that are forever, [...] no one remembers people whose lord he was; yet gentle was he as a father. He abides in an island in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who [15] keeps him there by force; and he cannot go home. He has at hand no ships with oars and no comrades to send him on his way over the sea. Now again the suitors are planning to slay his well-loved son on his homeward way. Give me news of his father [20] to sacred Pylos and to goodly Sparta'

Then Zeus, the cloud-gatherer, answered her, and said: [...] Did you not devise to take vengeance on these men at his return? [25] But concerning Telemachus, give me what you can, that completely unharmed he may reach his native land, and the suitors be thwarted in their purpose.'

The *Odyssey* with an English Translation by E. V. Rieu in two volumes. Cambridge University Press, London

*Hermes is sent to tell the nymph Calypso that Odysseus must go home.*

Round about the hollow cave grew a luxuriant wood, alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. Long of wing were wont to nest, owls and falcons and sea-crows with chattering tongue on the sea. And right there about the hollow cave ran trailing a garden vine, in profuse clusters. [70] And fountains four in a row were flowing with bright water hard by the cave-way, one that. And round about soft meadows of violets and parsley were blooming. Who chanced to come, might gaze and marvel, and delight his soul; [75] and there he might and marvelled. But when he had marvelled in his heart at all things, straightway he asked did Calypso, the beautiful goddess, fail to know him, when she saw him face to face. They are not unknown to one another, even though one dwells in a home far away. [...]

[85] And Calypso, the beautiful goddess, questioned Hermes, when she had made him sit in a chair: 'Why, pray, Hermes of the golden wand, have you come, an honourable messenger who usually come. Speak what is in your mind; my heart bids me fulfil it, [90] if fulfilment has fulfilment. But follow me further, that I may set before you entertainment' and she set before him a table laden with ambrosia, and mixed the amber nectar.

[95] But when he had dined and satisfied his soul with food, then he made answer: 'You, a goddess, did question me, a god, upon my arrival, and I will speak my word. I was Zeus who ordered me come against my will. [100] Who of his own will would I go to salt sea-water? Nor is there at hand any city of mortals who offer to the gods sacrifices of a hundred animals. But it is in no way possible for any other god to go against Zeus, who bears the aegis. [105] He says that there is here with you a man most like to me, who with his warriors who around the city of Priam fought for nine years, and in the tenth year departed homeward. But on the way they sinned against Athena, and she sent him on long waves. [110] There all the rest of his goodly comrades perished, but as for him, they bore him, brought him here. Zeus now orders you to send him on his way. It is his fate to perish here far from his friends, but it is still his fate to see his friends and his house and his native land.'

So, he spoke. And Calypso, the beautiful goddess, shuddered, and she spoke, and she said: 'You are cruel, O gods, and quick to envy above all other things, seeing that they should mate with mortal men [120] openly, if any takes a mortal as his mate. Even so again do you all now begrudge me, O gods, that a mortal man should go home, since it is in no wise possible for any other god to evade or make void the will of Zeus. Let him go his way, if Zeus thus orders and commands, [140] over the unresting sea.'

*(Calypso agrees to let Odysseus go. Odysseus builds a raft and sets sail)*

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But the glorious Earth-shaker, as he came back from the Ethiopians, beheld him from the Solymi: for Odysseus was seen by him sailing over the sea; and he grew all the while on his head, and he spoke [...] 'Surely the gods have changed their purpose regarding the Ethiopians. And behold, he is near to the land of the Phaeacians, where it is his chance to break the bonds of the woe which has come upon him. [290] Yes, but even yet, I think, I shall do it. So saying, he gathered the clouds, and seizing his trident in his hands troubled the manner of winds, and hid with clouds land and sea alike; and night rushed down upon him.'

### Activity

How do the gods demonstrate anthropomorphic qualities in the extract above?

### Activity

For Classical Civilisation A Level, The World of the Greeks is a compulsory unit. Compare the gods in the *Odyssey* and answer the questions using references from other parts of the books.

### Euripides' *Hippolytus* (additional relevant literature)

Failure to honour the gods properly resulted in punishment. Being left out of prayers was particularly vengeful. Another way to anger the gods was to show *hubris*, pride in one's own strength, without due acknowledgement that the gods had helped. Hubris in a person would lead to their downfall. The following extract is from the opening of the play (Prologue).

### Aphrodite

Mighty and of high renown, among mortals and in heaven alike, I am called the goddess of love who dwell between the Euxine Sea and the Pillars of Atlas and look on the light of day. I am the one who reverence my power, but I lay low all those who think proud thoughts against me. For one finds this trait: they enjoy receiving honour from mortals.

The truth of these words I shall shortly demonstrate. [10] Hippolytus, Theseus' son, the ward of holy Pittheus, alone among the citizens of this land of Troezen, says that he shuns the bed of love and will have nothing to do with marriage. [15] Instead, he worships Artemis, Zeus's daughter, thinking her the greatest of divinities. In the green woods he is the maiden goddess, he clears the land of wild beasts with his swift dogs and has greater strength than mortal. [20] To this pair I feel no grudging ill-will: why should I? Yet for his sake I shall punish Hippolytus this day. I have already come a long way with my plans and I need him to fulfil them when he came from Pittheus' house [25] to the land of Pandion to see and celebrate the festival of Demeter, his father's high-born wife Phaedra saw him, and her heart was seized by love. And before she came to this land of Troezen, [30] she built, hard by the temple of Aphrodite overlooking this land since she loved a foreign love. After ages shall I be called Aphrodite-Next-Hippolytus.

[...] I shall reveal the matter to Theseus and it will come to light, and the young man will be killed by his father with the curse of the sea-god [45] Poseidon granted as a gift to Theseus when he pray to the god and his prayer fulfilled. But Phaedra, noble though she is, has not set such store by her fortune as to let my enemies off from [50] such penalties.

But now I see Hippolytus coming, finished with the toil of the hunt, and so I shall let his throng of his servants tread close at his heels [55] and shouts, singing the praises of Artemis. Clearly, he does not know that the gates of the Underworld stand open for him and that last he shall ever look upon.

*Exit Aphrodite*

### Activity

Why is Aphrodite angry? Why might an audience watching this play feel fear?

**Enter Hippolytus, carrying a garland, with a chorus of servants**

**Hippolytus** (*sung*) Come follow me and sing of Zeus's heavenly daughter

**Hippolytus and chorus of Servants** (*sung*) Lady, lady most revered, daughter of Zeus, my greeting and of Zeus, of maidens the fairest by far, who dwelled in the court of your good father, the gilded house of Zeus. [75] Fairest of all who dwell in Olympus

**Hippolytus** For you, lady, I bring this plaited garland I have made for your golden hair from a worshipful hand. For my privilege: [85] I spend my days with you and speak with you, and never see your face. May I end my life just as I have begun

**Servant** Lord—one should address one's masters as gods—would you take advice from me?

**Hippolytus** [90] I must be equally. Else I should not seem wise.

**Servant** The rule observed by mortals—do you know it?

**Hippolytus** No. What is the law you question me about?

**Servant** To hate what's haughty and not friend to all.

**Hippolytus** And rightly. Who that's haughty gives no pain?

**Servant** [95] And is there charm in affability?

**Hippolytus** Yes, much, and profit too with little toil.

**Servant** Do you think the same is true among the gods?

**Hippolytus** Yes, if we humans follow heavenly usage.

**Servant** How then no word for a high and mighty goddess?

**Hippolytus** [100] Which? Careful lest your tongue commit some sin

**Servant** *pointing to the statue of Aphrodite*  
The goddess here, who stands beside your gate.

**Hippolytus** I greet her from afar, for I am pure.

**Servant** Yet she's revered and famous among mortals.

**Hippolytus** I do not like a god worshipped at night.

**Servant** [107] My son, to honour the gods is only just.

**Hippolytus** Men have their likes, in gods and men alike.

*(Ignoring Aphrodite, Hippolytus goes inside. The servant on the other hand does not for forgiveness: 'You should be forgiving: it is the path that makes someone's heart stiff with pride. For gods should be wiser than mortals'. [112])*



Hippolytus dies following a chariot accident

### Activity

Hippolytus thinks he is right. What has he got wrong? Is he really religious in the Greek sense? Can a servant be a philosopher? What is his master's role?

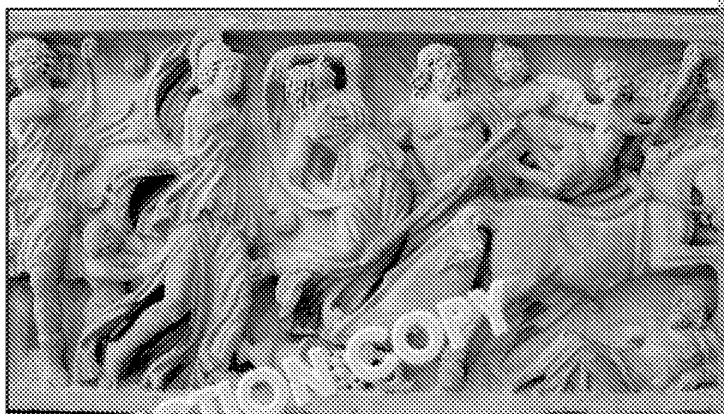
### Activity

A brief summary of the play can be found at [www.bbc.co.uk/1/1776-Hippolytus](http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/1776-Hippolytus)



## Homeric Hymn to Demeter (relevant to knowledge of the Eleusinian Mysteries)

The myth behind the Eleusinian Mysteries is told in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. The origin of events or practices is called an aetiology. Many of the Homeric Hymns are



*Persephone's daughter Persephone is abducted by Hades. Demeter is stricken. She mourns for nine days.*

[90] But grief more terrible and savage came into the heart of Demeter, and with the dark clouded Son of Cronos that she avoided the gathering of the gods and the towns and rich fields of men, disfiguring her form a long while. And no one of women knew her when they saw her, until she came to the house of wise Celeus at Eleusis. Angered in her dear heart, she sat near the wayside by the Maiden Well, where place were used to draw water, [100] in a shady place over which grew an olive tree. An ancient woman who is cut off from childbearing and the gifts of garland-loving Apollo and children who deal justice, or like the housekeepers in their echoing halls. [105] The son of Eleusis saw her, as they were coming for easy-drawn water, to carry it in pithoi to his father's house: four were they and like goddesses in the flower of their girlhood, lovely Demo [110] and Callithoe who was the eldest of them all.

*The girls offer help and Demeter offers her help in return.*

'Well could I nurse a new-born child, holding him in my arms, or keep house, or set a recess of the well-built chamber, or teach the women their work.'

*Callidice says her mother could use a nurse for the only son, her brother.*

'If you could bring him up until he reached the full measure of youth, any one of women would straightway envy you, such gifts would our mother give for his upbringing. *mother gives Demeter the job:* 'But now, since you are come here, you shall have me this child whom the gods gave me in my old age and beyond my hope, [220] I should bring him up until he reach the full measure of youth, any one of woman would straightway envy you, so great reward would I give for his upbringing.'

### Activity

Why would the actions of Celeus' family win the approval of the gods?

*Demeter loses her son Demophoon so well that she gradually turns him into an immortal. But his mother is afraid to 'burn' him by his mortal spirit'. She cannot complete the job as his mother is*

'Demophoon, my son, the strange woman buries you deep in fire and works grief [250] Thus she spoke, mourning. And the bright goddess, lovely-crowned Demeter came with her. So with her divine hands she snatched from the fire the dear son whom she found in the palace, and cast him from her to the ground; for she was terribly angry

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0138%3Ahymn%3D2>

*Demeter is angered at the attitude and loss of Demophoon:*

'Witless are you mortals and dull to foresee your lot, whether of good or evil, that your heedlessness, you have brought about a folly past healing; for —be witness— the relentless water of Styx — [260] I would have made your dear son deathless and have bestowed on him everlasting honour, but now he can in no way escape death. Unfailing honour always rest upon him, because he lay upon my knees and slept. Years move round and when he is in his prime, the sons of the Eleusinians shall eat with one another continually. Lo! I am that Demeter who has share of honour and of joy to the undying gods and mortal men. [270] But now, let all the people build a city below it and beneath the city and its sheer wall upon a rising hillock above Callichoron rites, that hereafter you may reverently perform them and so win the favour of me.

[275] When she had so said, the goddess changed her stature and her looks, through beauty spread round about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet divine body of the goddess a light upon the air, while golden tresses spread down on the strong house was filled with brightness as with lightning. And so she went out. All night long they sought to appease the glorious goddess, quaking with fear. But show, the powerful Celeus all things without fail, [295] as the lovely-crowned them. So Celeus called the countless people to an assembly and bade them make Demeter and an altar upon the rising hillock. And they obeyed him right speedily, doing as he commanded. As for the child, he grew like an immortal being.

Now when they had finished building and had drawn back from their toil, they were golden-haired Demeter sat there apart from all the blessed gods and stayed, was bosomed daughter. [305] Then she caused a most dreadful and cruel year for mankind on earth: the ground would not make the seed sprout, for rich-crowned Demeter kept drew many a curved plough in vain, and much white barley was cast upon the land would have destroyed the whole race of man with cruel famine and have robbed their glorious right of gifts and sacrifices, had not Zeus perceived and marked this.

### Activity

- What have mortals done to offend Demeter?
- What must they do to regain the favour of Demeter?
- How does she show that she still bears a grudge?

*Finally, Zeus has to intervene, and he orders Persephone to spend six months in Hades.*

And rich-crowned Demeter did not refuse but straightway made fruit to spring up from the rich lands, so that the whole wide earth was laden with leaves and flowers. Then she went, and to the kings who deal justice, Triptolemus and Diocles, the horse-driver, [475] and to doughty Erichonius and Celeus, leader of the people, she showed the conduct of husbandry and taught them all her mysteries, to Triptolemus and Erichonius and Diocles also, —awful mysteries which no one may in any way transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice. [500] Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries, but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them, never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom.

The image, right, shows a part reconstruction of the Great Eleusinian Relief with Demeter (left), Persephone (right) and Triptolemos (centre). This is a Roman copy based on a Greek original of about 450–425 BC found at Eleusis.

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## Oedipus the King (additional relevant literature)

*Before the palace of Oedipus in Thebes suppliants of all ages are seated on the steps in the robes of a king: for a moment he gazes silently on the groups at the altars, then*

### Oedipus

My children, latest-born wards of old Cadmus, why do you sit before me like this, suppliants, while the city reeks with incense, [5] rings with prayers for health and unbefitting, my children, to hear these things from the mouths of others, and have renowned by all. Tell me, then, venerable old man—since it is proper that you [10] in mood you sit here, one of fear or of desire? Be sure that I will gladly give you all my aid indeed if I did not pity such suppliants as these.

### Priest of Zeus

Oedipus, ruler of my land, you see the agony of those who sit [15] on your altars—some for flight, others, bowed with age, plead like me of Zeus, and some, these here, the folk sit [20] with wreathe of branches in the market-place, and before the shrine where Ismene gives her sister by fire. For the city, as you yourself see, is now sore on her head beneath the angry waves of death. [25] A blight has fallen on the flocks, the herds among the pastures, the barren pangs of women. And the flaming god, the fire upon us, and ravages the town: he lays waste to the house of Cadmus, but enriches our tears. It is not because we rank you with the gods that I and these children are suppliants, but because we deem you the first among men in life's common fortunes and in death.

### Activity

What would an Athenian learn from this?

### Activity

The Greek 'whodunnit'. Oedipus has to find the cause of the miasma.  
This presentation has valuable information on how *miasma* links to the play: [zzed](#)

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## Games in honour of the dead (additional relevant literature and sources)

Iliad 23 262–284: Games to honour Patroclus, close friend of Achilles.

Then he (*Achilles*) stood up, and spoke among the Argives, saying: 'Son of Atreus, Achaeans, these prizes lie waiting for the charioteers in the lists. If for some other now holding contests, [275] surely it would be I that should win the first prize and know how far my horses both surpass in excellence, seeing they are immortal, and them to my father Peleus, and he gave them to me. I truly will abide, I and my sing valiant and glorious a charioteer have they lost, and one so kind, who full often w soft soil when he had washed them in bright water. For him they stand and mour manes are trailing, and the two stand there, grieving at heart. [285] But you other



The vase above is called the Francois Vase and has various myths running around each band of decoration. One band depicts the funeral games for Patroclus.



### *The games included wrestling*

Then the two, when they had girded themselves, stepped into the middle of the p each of the other in close grip with their mighty hands, even as the gable-rafters of famous craftsman joins together, that he may have shelter from the might of the beneath the violent tugging of bold hands, [715] and the sweat flowed down in s with blood, sprang up along their ribs and shoulders; and ever they strove with a the hand-made tripod.

### *The games included a running race*

Then they took their places in a row, and Achilles showed them the goal, and a c from the turning-point. Then speedily the son of Oileus for to the front, and c Odysseus [...] and his feet trod in the footsteps of me o over the dust had settle head beat the breath of goodly Odysseus, a ra ever swiftly on; and all the A as he struggled for victory, and c me n as he strained to the utmost. But w last part of the course e e y, Odysseus made prayer in his heart to flashing goddess, a e me e e ly helper to my feet.' So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas his limbs i e e feet and his hands above. But when they were now about to d Aias slipped as he ran—for Athena hampered him— [775] where was strewn the bellowing bulls that swift-footed Achilles had slain in honour of Patroclus; and w mouth and nostrils filled.

### Activity

How does Athena show her support for Odysseus?  
Would the Greeks consider this as cheating?

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## Delphi (additional relevant literature)

Pindar was official poet of the games at Delphi and Olympia. There were also other Games and Isthmian Games, and he wrote poems for these too.

### Some of Pindar's beliefs

He supports the origins of man and gods	One is the race of men and Gods both derive the breath of life
He sticks to anthropomorphic ideas of the gods	We bear some likeness to the perchance, or in bodily nature course our master.
He believes in the power of the gods	The power of the Gods lightly exceeds both path and expectation
Gods originate good or evil	Zeus gives this and that; Zeus
The control of the universe and man belongs to certain beings: gods	Apollo: You that know the ap all the paths to it, all the leaves spring, and the number of gro by waves and roaring winds:
Gods tell the truth	Apollo: he has no part in lies

For Megacles of Athens Four-Horse Chariot Race 486 BC: *Pythian 7*

The great city of Athens is the most beautiful prelude of song, which the widely p Alcmaeonids can lay as a foundation of odes in honour of their horses. [5] What name that is more illustrious in Greece? For in all cities the story [10] of the citizen rounds, Apollo, how they made your dwelling in divine Pytho a marvel to see. Five song forward, and one outstanding triumph [15] at Zeus' Olympian games, and to and your ancestors'. I rejoice at this new success; but I grieve that fine deeds are what they say: the abiding bloom of good fortune brings with it both good and bad

### Activity

How does the poem above glorify Athens?  
What are the dangers of being successful in the eyes of the gods?

For Ergoteles of Himera Long Foot Race 466 BC

I entreat you, child of Zeus the Deliverer, saving Fortune, keep protecting Himera your favour swift ships are steered on the sea, and on dry land rushing battles [5] is given. But men's expectations are often tossed up and then back down, as they falsehood. Never yet has any man on earth found a reliable token of what will happen understanding of the future is blind. [10] And the before many things fall out for not bringing to some reversal of delight. The runners, having encountered grievous sorrow their troubles for high success. In no manner, truly, like a cock that fights at home swift feet would have left its leaves ingloriously beside your native hearth, if had you of you. I wish your fatherland. But as things are, Ergoteles, having been crowned twice from Cnossos and at the Isthmus, you exalt the hot baths of the Nymphs, which beside your own fields.

### Activity

How is the power of Zeus described?  
What is Pindar's attitude about discovering the future?  
(Exiled from Cnossos by political unrest, Ergoteles settled in Himera on the north coast to become a successful runner. This shows that trouble in life, according to Pindar, can

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## The rise of philosophical thinking and how this was viewed with

As seen in Section A, Greek religion covered many aspects of Greek culture. Philosophy as it involved thinking about and attitudes towards the gods. It may be argued that philosophical thinking was developing even in the Dark Ages, and began in western Greek-speaking colonies. Especially important was Miletus (see map page 2). This was the first of the philosophical movements. One famous philosopher from Miletus was

### Ideas

First there was water  
Did not deny the existence of the gods

### How this was viewed

No charges of impiety

### Xenophanes (prescribed author)

Most people have heard of Socrates, and we shall look at extracts about his beliefs. Philosophical thinkers before him are referred to as *Presocratic*. One Presocratic philosopher, Xenophanes came from Colophon, a town north of Ephesus in western Turkey (see map) around 570 BC to 475 BC, at least during the sixth century BC. He lived into old age, teaching in his later retirement age.

Seven and sixty years have now been wafting my meditations about the land of Colophon.  
*CURFRAG.tlg-0267.8: Diogenes Laertius Lives of*

### What Xenophanes believed and how this was viewed

Xenophanes wrote poems, but most of what he wrote has not survived and we only have fragments of his works made by other writers. It is clear that most people who quoted his poems were critical of him. What is important to know is that even as early as 500s BC people were challenging the gods. Xenophanes said: 'We all came from earth and water'. We could think that he was a materialist, but he did not. He was *sceptical* about the nature of the gods. Scepticism is a form of doubt.

But mortals seem to have begotten (created) Gods to have their own garb (clothing)

He goes on to argue:

Now if horses or oxen or lions had hands or power to paint and make the works of art, they would horses give their Gods horse-like forms in painting or sculpture, and oxen would give theirs of their own kind.

He criticised Homer and Hesiod:

Homer and Hesiod have ascribed unto the Gods all that is reproach and blame in men, adultery and deceit.

*CURFRAG.tlg-0267.10.57.11 Sextus Empiricus*

He challenges the emotions of the Greeks:

The Greeks give their Gods human passions as well as human shape; and even ascribe to them forms like their own.

He did not follow belief in polytheism or anthropomorphism saying:

There's one God greatest among Gods and men, who is like to mortals neither in shape nor in thought.  
*CURFRAG.tlg-0267.22 Cicero*

### Activity

Make a bullet-point list about what Xenophanes says about the gods.

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Xenophanes had strong views on nature. In fact he studied it so closely that he carried out an examination of fossils that water once must have covered all of the Earth's surface. Greek religion also covered science.

Xenophanes declares that everything comes of earth, for this is what he himself saw. For all things come of earth and in earth all things end.

CURFRAG.tlg-0267.26 Aetius in Theophrastus

Xenophanes in the poem 'On Nature':

The sea is the source of water and the source of wind; for without the great ocean flowing rivers nor the rainwater of the sky; [...] the great ocean is the father of clouds

CURFRAG.tlg-0267.29 Scholiast on Euripides

and the Sun that goes over and warms the earth

CURFRAG.tlg-0267.30

Xenophanes' views were different from those of Homer and Hesiod who believed in:

- Polytheism
- Anthropomorphism
- Natural phenomena being gods
- Feelings, emotions same as gods
- Morality set by gods

It is clear that Xenophanes's belief in one god, *monotheism*, did not bring about a challenge to the religious authorities of his time. This is because he wrote poetry and had in effect been understood his one god to be the all-powerful Zeus.

### Activity

How far does Xenophanes reject the ideas of Homer?

### Socrates: (prescribed knowledge and literature)

Socrates was an Athenian philosopher who lived 470–399 BC and whose words were not written work survives actually written by Socrates. We rely on Plato, the historian Xenophon. The problem here is the different views of Plato, Xenophon (a general and a historian) and Aristotle (a playwright). As a result, we cannot reconstruct accurately what he really thought.

### Socrates was not a sophist?

From about 450 BC Athens had become a democracy. Important decisions were made in the assembly and all citizens were eligible to vote and hold office. It followed that, in a democracy, it was important to learn the art of public speaking, known as *rhetoric*. There were different beliefs, as we have seen in Xenophanes. Science and mathematics challenged long-held beliefs. Ordinary schooling did not prepare students for philosophy, physics, astronomy, ethics and geometry. The gap was filled by the sophists. The name means 'wise man'. They were lecturers who, often non-Athenians, taught rhetoric and other new subjects. They charged a lot for teaching and to study. The main aim of the sophists was to produce statesmen. They taught the young men of Athens and it was thought of more importance to win an argument than to arrive at the truth. They studied to improve public speaking skills. Some sophists claimed to be able to teach anyone. Their ability to speak well made them sound impressive on subjects about which they knew little. The word *sophist* came to mean – and still does today – a person who is clever but dishonestly. It is important to know that Plato and Xenophon stated that Socrates was not a sophist. The comic playwright Aristophanes claimed he was.

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<sup>4</sup> Elegy and Iambus, with an English Translation by J M Edmonds. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. 1937.

### Aristophanes' clouds (additional relevant literature)

Socrates was already very unpopular in the winter of 424–423 BC. He was a good friend of Aristophanes. Although Athenians understood satire, the comments stuck in the audience's mind. Aristophanes maintains that *The Clouds* did not contribute to Socrates' death, especially as the drama competition.

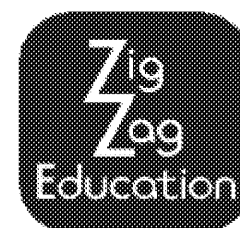
In the following scene, Socrates appears suspended in the air above the stage. A scientific theory probably from Diogenes of Apollonia, which connected thinking with the body. The air higher up above the earth was supposed to be purer and so Socrates went up. This was written by Aristophanes for amusement, and we have no indication of Socrates' thought, and indeed Socrates tells the jury in his trial that he is not as Aristophanes portrayed him.

Aristophanes needed a sophist. Most leading sophists were not Athenian and most were well known. Socrates was very public and very controversial, especially as he did not teach people's beliefs he was used as an example of the sophists though probably he was not. He was reputed to be ugly when compared to male beauty. He had everything Aristophanes needed in ethical issues. He asked lots of questions, but this does not mean he was interested in rhetoric, neither did he say most of the things he does in *The Clouds* – or at least the things that are in the play.

In the play, the character Strepsiades enrolls in the school of Socrates in the hope of escaping his creditors in court. Now on stage, Strepsiades is looking up and discovering Socrates in a basket. After some discussion on thought and air, Socrates lowers himself and gets down.

- Soc.** And for what did you come?
- Strep.** Wishing to learn to speak; for by reason of moneylending, and most of all, because my house is pillaged and plundered, and have my goods seized for debt.
- Soc.** How did you get in debt without noticing it?
- Strep.** A horse-disease [gambling] consumed me--terrible at eating. But there are two causes, that which pays nothing; and I will swear by the gods, I will reward you exact of me.
- Soc.** By what gods will you swear? For, in the first place, gods are not a cause of harm.
- Strep.** By what do you swear? By iron money, as in Byzantium?
- Soc.** Do you wish to know clearly celestial matters, what they rightly are?
- Strep.** Yes, by Jupiter, if it be possible!
- Soc.** And to hold converse with the Clouds, our divinities?
- Strep.** By all means.
- Soc.** (with great solemnity) Seat yourself, then, on the sacred couch.
- Strep.** Well, I am seated!
- Soc.** Take, then, this wreath.
- Strep.** For what purpose a wreath? Ah me! Socrates, see that you do not say anything that will bring me into disrepute.
- Strep.** We do all these to those who get initiated.
- Strep.** Then what shall I gain, pray?
- Soc.** You shall become in oratory a tricky knave (dishonest person), a thorn in the side of the law, never stops talking], a subtle speaker. But keep quiet.
- Strep.** By Jupiter! You will not deceive me; for if I am besprinkled, I shall be able to escape my creditors.

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- Soc.** It becomes the old man to speak words of good omen, and to hearken to the King, immeasurable Air, who keepest the earth suspended, and thronest the respected goddesses, the Clouds, sending thunder and lightning, arising mistresses, to your deep thinker!
- Strep.** Not yet, not yet, till I wrap this around me lest I be wet through. To go home without even a cap, unlucky man!
- Soc.** Come then, ye highly honoured Clouds, for a display to this man. Whether in the sacred snow-covered summits of Olympus, or in the gardens of Father Zeus with the Nymphs, or draw in golden pitchers the streams of the water from the Maeotic lake, or the snowy rock of Mimas, hearken to our prayer, and be propitious to the sacred rites.

### Activity

Is there any indication that Socrates does not believe in the gods?  
Is there any indication that Socrates does?  
What impression of Socrates is made in this scene? How reliable is this impression?

### Charges against Socrates

Unlike philosophers before him, Socrates was charged with impiety on several grounds.

#### Charge

Introduced new deities

Did not accept the recognised deities

Corruption of youth

We have seen that impiety was a legal offence, and this meant going to trial. After Socrates was found guilty and executed in 399 BC. Details of Socrates' defence are given in Plato's *Apology*. In this case apology means defence and not saying sorry – Socrates definitely did not do that! In fact another author, Xenophon, tells us that Socrates was very aloof.

### Plato's Apology

*Socrates starts out by saying how he is not used to speaking:*

17b For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed to be immediately proved wrong by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be a simpleton, unless indeed they call a person a skilful speaker who speaks the truth; for if this is so, I agree that I am an orator—but not in their class. Now they, as I say, have said little and hear from me nothing but the truth. *And so, his defence is an excellent example of the art of speaking.*

*Meletus is one of Socrates' accusers. It was also said that Aristophanes' comic play 'The Clouds' found Socrates guilty. Here Socrates says he does not like the man portrayed by Aristophanes.*

[19b] What did those who exaggerated the prejudice against me say to arouse it? They made a sworn statement as follows: 'Socrates is a criminal and a bad man, who brings bad things both on the earth and in the heavens and making the weaker argument stronger than the stronger things.' It is something like that, for you yourselves saw these things. There was a Socrates being carried about there, claiming that he was walking on air and other nonsense, about which I know nothing whatsoever. And I say this, not to his knowledge, if anyone is wise about such matters (may I never have to defend myself against a charge as that!),—but I, men of Athens have nothing to do with these things.

### Activity

Try to summarise in your own words what Socrates is saying. Sometimes Socrates follows as they involve playing with words and their meaning.

*On the charge of corrupting the youth:*

[26a] but either I do not corrupt them, or if I corrupt them then I do it unintentionally in both events. But if I corrupt them involuntarily, then for such involuntary errors, I bring people into court, but to take them and instruct and warn them in private. If I am not about it, I shall stop doing that which I do involuntarily. But you avoided associating with me and were unwilling to do so, but you drag me here, where it is the law to summon me for instruction.

*On his views of the gods:*

Then, Meletus, for the sake of [26c] these very gods about whom our speech now concerns me and to these gentlemen. For I am unable to understand whether you say that I believe in the gods, and myself then believe that there are some gods, or do I am not altogether agree with you in that way, that these, however, are not the gods whom the state believes in, but I accuse me for, that I believe in others? or do you say that I do not myself believe in gods but in unbelief to other people. That is what I say that you do not believe in gods at all. But do you say this?

**Activity**

What are Meletus's main accusations?

*His argument continues.*

[27b–c] Is there any human being who believes that there are things applicable to horses? Make Meletus answer, gentlemen of the jury, and don't let him make objections about anyone who does not believe in horses, but does believe in things applicable to horses. That flute-players exist, but that things to do with flute-players do? No there is no one who believes supernatural things exist, but does not believe in supernatural beings? Meletus replying reluctantly when forced by these gentlemen.

Then do you say that I believe in supernatural things, whether new or old, and that I believe in supernatural matters, according to your statement, and you swore to tell the truth. If I believe in supernatural matters, it is quite inevitable that I believe also in supernatural beings; for I assume that you agree, since you do not answer.

[27d] But do we not think the supernatural beings are gods or children of gods? Yes, if there are supernatural beings, as you say, if these beings are sort of gods, that would be all right. If you were saying in suggesting that I, while I do not believe in gods, I do believe in supernatural beings. If on the other hand, supernatural beings are a kind of children of gods, by the same argument as they are said to be, what man would believe that there are children of gods, but not gods?

[27e] It would be just as absurd as if one were to believe that there are children of horses and asses. No, Meletus, [...] there is no way for you to persuade any man that it is possible for the same person to believe in spiritual and divine existences and not to believe in spirits or gods or heroes.

**Activity**

Do you think Meletus is justified in his accusations? Justify your answer.

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## Divine justice (prescribed knowledge)

This concept went back to Homer. In *Odyssey* Book 1 Zeus says:

'Look you now, how ready mortals are to blame the gods. It is from us, they say, and themselves, through their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained.'

*Athena continues:*

'Father of us all, thou son of Cronos, high above all lords, aye, verily that man lies due; so, too, may any other also be destroyed who does such deeds'

In the council of the gods, Zeus complains about mortals who blame the gods for suffer through their own error. This belief set a sort of definition of divine justice: deserve. In the *Odyssey*, the suitors are punished, the gods are punished and Odysseus' fame causes him to lose men in the Cyclops's cave.

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates challenges the traditional view of justice in terms of returning what one owes.

[331c- 332a] Speaking of this very thing, justice, are we to state without exception that one must pay back to each one what one has received from anyone, or may these very actions sometimes be unjust?

I mean, for example, as everyone I presume would admit, if one took some weapon from a friend, and then the friend, the lender should go mad and demand them back, and then in that case and that he who did so return them would not be acting justly – speak nothing but the truth to one who was in that state."

"You are right," he replied.

"Then this is not the definition of justice: to tell the truth and return what one has said Polemarchus breaking in

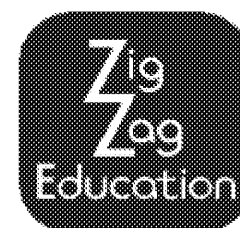
The scholar Peter Wyss explains Socrates' ideas:

- (1) Nobody does wrong intentionally. If we act immorally, this is because of a lack of understanding: i.e. ignorance.
- (2) It is better to suffer an injustice than to do an injustice.

### What did Socrates believe?

Belief	Interpretation
He believed in the gods He respected the gods He was not an atheist	He did not believe in the gods He introduced new gods These beliefs 'infected' the Athenians
He discussed the gods and thought about theology but never felt he had to prove the existence of the gods	The Athenians wanted him to prove the existence of the gods
The nature of the gods: gods were superior to humans – gods help those who are good	
He used the Socratic method for teaching: question and answer	His words were clever He discusses the gods This type of questioning was not popular
He had the support of the gods as he had visited Delphi, and Apollo had told him to practise philosophy	
He believed in a <i>daimonion</i> : an inner voice guiding him	The Athenians wanted him to follow the divine

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## Section C: Examination Advice

There are important links on the OCR website which tell you:

- What the examination paper will look like: [zzed.uk/11776-SAM](http://zzed.uk/11776-SAM)
- What candidates do right and what do they do wrong: [zzed.uk/11776-exam](http://zzed.uk/11776-exam)

### Keeping the examiner on your side:

Examiners only have a short time to mark your script – help them to see you at your best.

1. Answer the questions in the order they appear on the question paper. Don't skip a question.
2. Leave a space after each question, or even start each question on a new page.
3. When answering questions, try to avoid adding information with arrows and underlining. Examiners should avoid this. An examiner prefers a clear answer straight through your question.

### Introductions to 10-, 20- and 30-mark responses:

The examiner's guide from OCR states:

'Candidates should answer questions directly and not waste time writing lengthy introductions. Here are some suggested introductions which can be used for the topics of Greek religion.'

1. Ancient Greek society was deeply religious, but they did not have a word for 'hierarchy', which referred to 'holy matters'.
2. To the Greeks our modern ideas of religion, magic, science and philosophy were all influenced by Greek religion.
3. The home, politics and entertainment were all influenced by the Greeks' attitudes to religion.

### Making your points, succinctly:

1. Avoid making your essays like lists: 'The next/third/sixth important point about...'
2. Quotes should not be too long – no more than a line, or a few words. They should be relevant. Don't make up quotes! The learning of lists of quotations from the text is not what is required. 'Detailed reference' does not require this and is not expected by examiners.
3. Make sure the argument links to the question. Use key words from the question. Don't let your argument go adrift.
4. A conclusion is required but should be no more than two sentences.

### Setting your work out:

1. Use paragraphs.
2. Do not use abbreviations Hes., Soc., TZO (Temple of Zeus at Olympia) as this is not what the examiners want. Those who can spell these terms correctly.
3. Also, long length of response does not mean a good response as better responses are 'concise and to the point' (OCR examiners' report).

### Using information outside the specification:

In your study of other units, you may find examples of the nature of the gods or goddesses and mythology. Offering this information can be impressive.

*'Examiners were particularly impressed when candidates went off syllabus to discuss literature, art, places, festivals or other material culture' [...] 'being able to throw in extra information made a candidate stand out.'* (OCR examiners' report)

### 'General' essays

Essays which make points without any supporting detail are referred to as 'general' essays. These are marked in the higher levels.

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**Activity**

What do we learn about the gods from Hesiod and Homer?

Here is an essay plan (from Section A) with some general points. Add examples of religion and you may include any wider knowledge. Homeric Hymns are added to the specification.

Author	General point
Hesiod	Tells us the origins of the gods What to do to stop the gods getting angry
Homer	Gods are <b>powerful</b> Gods have <b>favourites</b> be they individuals or nations Gods have <b>personal enemies</b> Gods have <b>emotions</b>
Homeric Hymns	The <b>character</b> of the gods

**References** **Scholars: aim for two references**

Sections A and B include ideas from a range of different scholars, though only what examiners' report says: *'Often a quote and a scholar would be mentioned but it was not a topic under discussion. The best responses were able to weave the ideas seamlessly.'*

Quotations from scholars from even two centuries ago count as modern scholars. The twentieth centuries may not seem very modern to us but they are a key period in the time, fierce debates were conducted over the interpretation of Greek religion and questions as we have tried to address in this guide.

**Activity**

Here is a selection of scholars and what they have said (notice not all are direct references you have studied where might these references be relevant?)

Scholar	Quotation
Ludwig Preller 1809–1861	Described polytheism as an inherent weakness of Greek religion.
Jane Ellen Harrison 1850–1928	'the idea of the unity of a group.' Gods were a 'by-product' that emerged gradually out of pre-existing rituals which expressed group cohesion.
Jasper Griffin 1937–2019	Homer's epic is full of 'really impressive gods'.
William Allen (current scholar)	The gods offer divine justice.
F G Hermann (current scholar)	Of Socrates' methods: 'Forms part of a wider trend which had called traditional [religion] into question.'
Jeremy McInerney (current scholar)	Plato's Maieutics links Apollo to Asclepius as Malos was Asclepius's ancestor.
Robert P. Wright (current scholar)	'societies create order by stigmatising certain disorderly conditions and events and persons'
Nigel Spivey (current scholar)	Parthenon is a work of art
Louise Zaidman (current scholar)	Religion... impregnated each and every civic activity

**Further learning:** Other quotations to consider may be found at: [zzed.uk/11776](http://zzed.uk/11776)

This list is not exhaustive and is not intended to be learned.

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## Types of worship Panhellenic: local, private

### Activity

As you read *Frogs*, consider how many jokes depend upon knowing about Athenian politicians and war.

Panhellenic	City state / Local	
Asclepion at Epidaurus	Eleusinian Mysteries	Eleusis
Delphic Oracle	Athenian Acropolis	Oracle
Olympia		

### Roles of married women

When considering the role of women in Greek religion, details from the following

Home: <i>oikos</i>	City State: <i>polis</i>	
Bridal processions	Priestesses	P
	Preparing animals: Nausicaa Painter	P
End of life ceremonies	Panathenaia procession/frieze	T
	Eleusinian Mysteries: Ninnion Tablet	A

Also to be considered are the roles available to unmarried women and to married women.

### Activity

Now complete a similar table for the role of men.

### Where religion and politics meet

In this guide we have seen how religion and the state were linked.

Panhellenic	City state	Political significance
	Athens	Role of magistrates in religion Great Panathenaia to showcase the city and the state Significance of the decoration on the Parthenon
Delphi		Many leaders came and offerings were left to be seen in the Sacred Way
Olympia		Treasures to show off

Consider also:  
Effect of acts of impiety on the state  
Miasma

### Activity

In what ways was religion important to the successful functioning of the Athenian state?

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## Sport, entertainment, and religion

1. Make a list of the sites where sport and religion took place.
2. Make a list of the sites where the theatre and religion took place.

### Activity

How far do you agree that sport and entertainment could not exist in ancient Greece?

### Limitations on evidence

We have seen both visual and literary sources which give us evidence about Greek religion. There are always limitations. Consider:

- What sources tell us about the classical world – and what they do not
- Message in visual material
- Bias of authors
- What was the audience?

### Activity

To what extent is it possible to reconstruct the mysteries at Eleusis?

Finally, study the examples of answers and see what examiners thought of them.

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