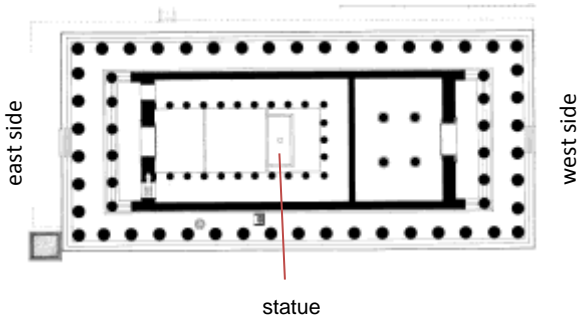


Trail area: **The Parthenon**



The Parthenon (447-432 BC) is the largest and most impressive building on the Athenian Acropolis. The temple was dedicated to the goddess Athena Parthenos, in her role as goddess of war.

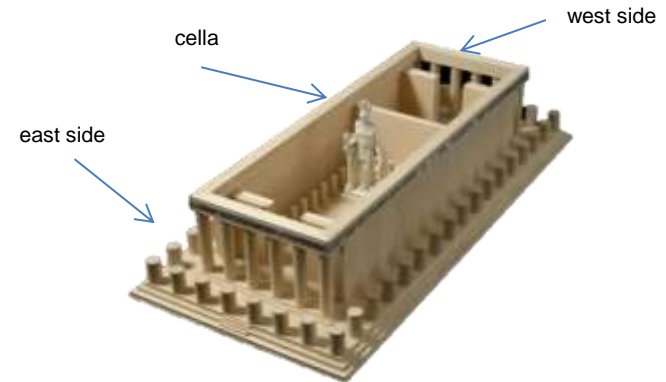


Observe the plan of the temple and then the temple itself and fill in the “architectural identity” of the building.

The Parthenon is almost \_\_\_\_\_ years old. It is a temple made of marble and belongs to the \_\_\_\_\_ order. Its type is characterized as “peripteros”, because of its rows of columns on all 4 sides (“peri”= around, “pteron”= row of columns), but also as “oktastylos” (of 8 columns), because of its \_\_\_\_\_ columns on every narrow side of the temple. On its long sides it has \_\_\_\_\_ columns. The architects of the temple were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ had the general responsibility of the whole project.

Correct answers: 2500, Doric, 8, 17, Iktinos, Kalikrates, Phidias

In order to better understand what the temple’s interior was like, look at its floor plan and the image of its model:



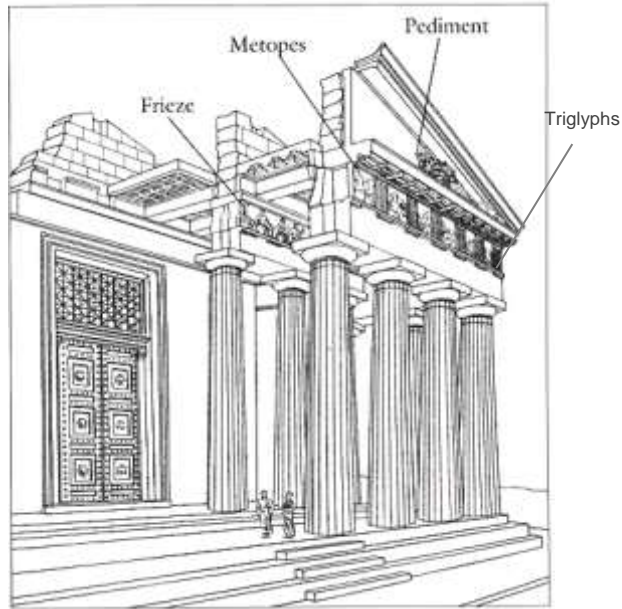
- The cella, the central closed part of the temple used to be: divided into two compartments (rooms): Right  Wrong
- The two compartments, the east and the west, communicated with each other: Right  Wrong
- The east compartment, the larger one, housed the gold and ivory statue of goddess Athena, almost 13 m. high, created by Phidias. The parts of it that represented the skin of the goddess were made of ivory, whereas its dress equipment was made of gold. Can you imagine that huge statue inside the Parthenon? What do you think that the goddess held in her hand?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Did you know that...**

The west compartment (room) had a roof that was supported by four most likely Ionic columns? The valuable objects and the money of the public treasury of the Athenian Alliance were probably kept there.

**Look carefully at the monument and answer the questions!**

1. Apart from the gold and ivory statue, the Parthenon was also famous for the rest of its very rich sculptural decoration. There were three basic sculptural groups of the temple: the pediments, the metopes and the frieze.






- The Parthenon was built in a record time! Guess how long it took! Its construction and sculptures were carried out in  
 5  15  25  years

2. Now let's walk around the temple, beginning from the west side, the one you see just after you pass through the Propylaea. Firstly, look carefully at the pediment, the triangular space which is formed high up on the narrow side of the temple. Continue by observing the triglyphs (parts with three vertical sections in relief) and the metopes, the square plaques that fill in the gaps between the triglyphs. Looking carefully behind the top of the external columns, you will see the copies of the ionic frieze, which is a continuous band of marble reliefs.

3. The sculptures of the temple narrate stories about...

- the goddess of the temple, Athena
- the most favorite theme of Greek art, the battle, and...
- the biggest festival of Athens, the Panathenaia.

**Read about these subjects and fill in the gaps:**

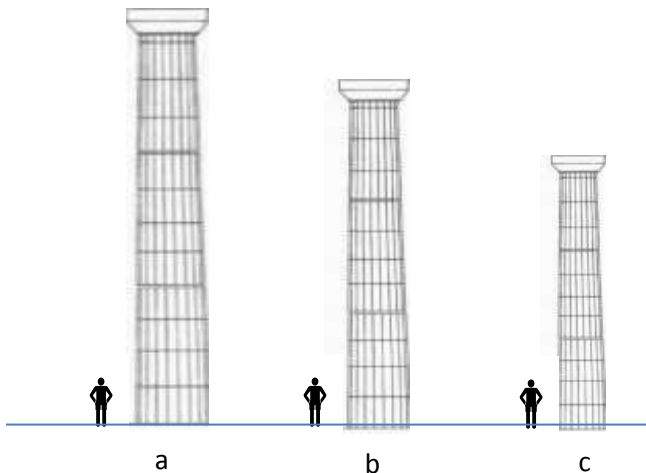
<p><b>Pediments</b></p> 	<p>The themes of the pediments are drawn from the myths about the goddess Athena. The <b>east</b> pediment, above the entrance, depicted the _____ of the goddess from the head of her father, Zeus, in the presence of the Olympian gods. In the <b>west</b> pediment was depicted the contest between _____ and _____. The two gods claimed the protection of the Attica land.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Correct answers: birth, Athena, Poseidon</small></p>
<p><b>Metopes</b></p> 	<p>The temple once had <b>92</b> metopes with relief decoration to its four sides. On the <b>east end</b> one could see scenes of the Gigantomachy, the mythical battle between the Olympian gods and the _____. On the <b>west</b>, they were scenes of the _____, the battle between the Greeks and the Amazons. On the <b>north</b> side events of the Trojan War were depicted. Finally, on the <b>south</b> side was depicted the Centauromachy, the battle between the Greeks and the _____.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Correct answers: Giants, Amazonomachy, Centaurs</small></p>
<p><b>Frieze</b></p> 	<p>The frieze comprised <b>115</b> marble blocks and had a total length of <b>160</b> m. The main theme of the Parthenon frieze was the _____ to the Acropolis that took place during the Great _____, the great festival of the city in honour of the goddess Athena.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Correct answers: procession, Panathenaia</small></p>

Few of the sculptures have survived in their original position. Some of them have been completely lost and others have been looted and now are in museums around the world. Those that have survived were transferred to the Acropolis Museum, where they are protected and displayed in a special gallery on the third floor.

4. Now walk along the **north** side of the temple. Observe the first six columns towards the west, the best preserved of the temple. The temple once had 108 columns in total in its exterior:

Now,

- count the number of the pieces or drums (“*spondyloi*”) that each column has in comparison to your own height, which of the following drawings do you think corresponds to the Parthenon columns? a, b or c



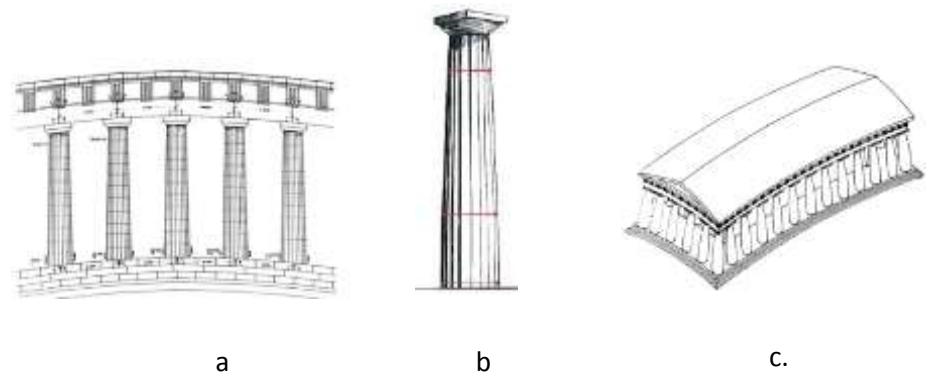
Correct answer: a. The first drum is 0.90m. high. The total height of each column is 10.43m.

5. Now you have arrived at the **east** side. The entrance to the temple was once here. Imagine that the door of the temple would open and you would see the huge gold and ivory statue of Athena standing as tall as a modern four-storey building. How do you think you might feel looking at it?

6. Complete your stroll, at the **south** side of the temple, and note again the architecture of the temple. What is astonishing about the Parthenon is its visual refinements. There are supposed to be very light differentiations that give to the temple a sense of harmony and vitality!

Now, try to observe the following points/facts:

- All the lines of the temple have a slight curve that is they are not exactly straight.
- The columns reduce very slightly upwards (reduction- *meiosis*) and they have a barely perceptible swelling (the *entasis*) mainly at their lower part.
- All the columns incline lightly inwards, towards the interior of the temple.

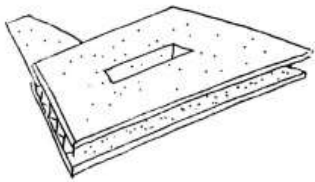
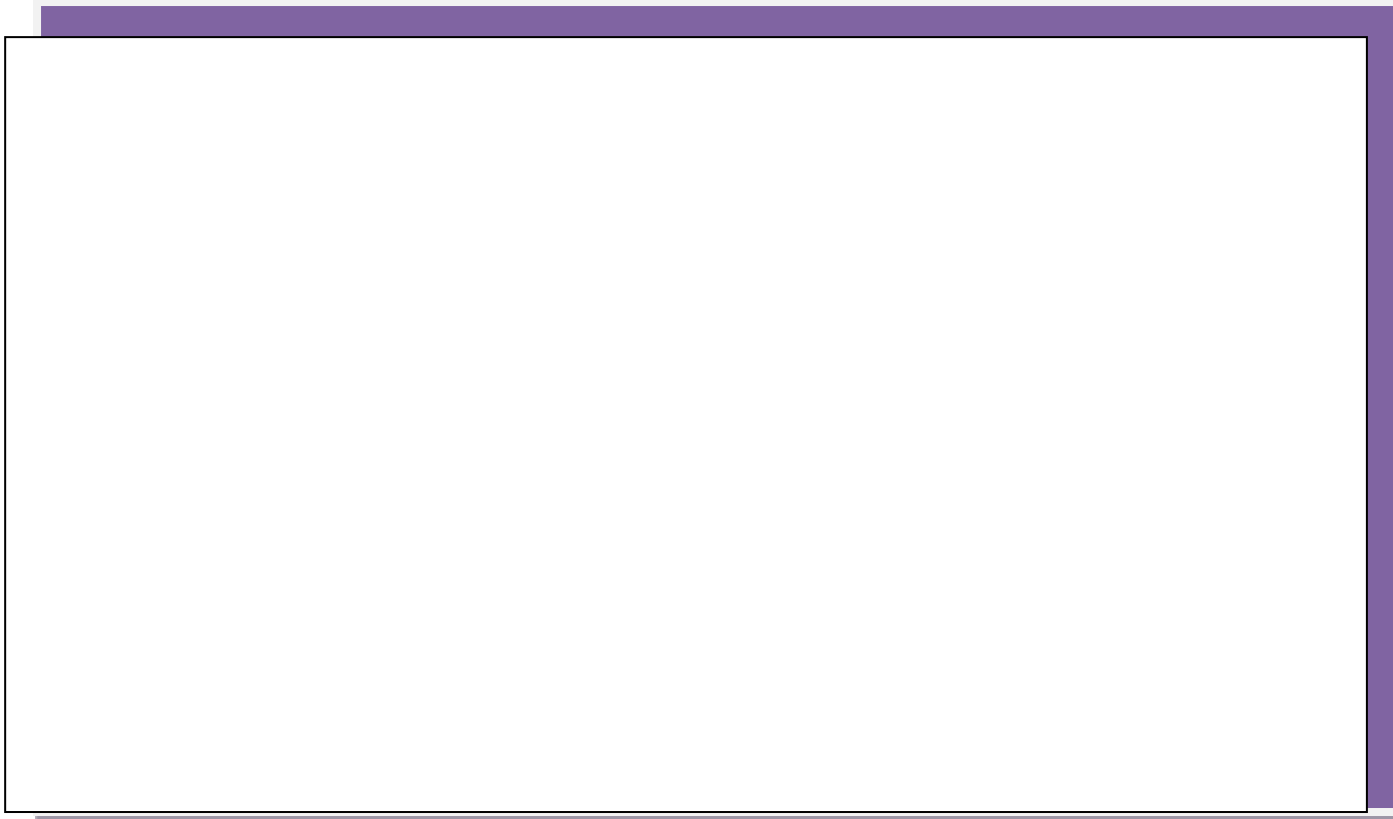


## Acropolis Trail

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### Make your own creation!

Take a camera with you when you visit the Acropolis and take pictures of the whole temple or a part of it that may have excited you most! Then choose one of your photos, edit it with filters or other tools on your PC (or smartphone) and copy it to the frame below. You can also write a comment about it. Share your creation with us, by sending it to [education.ysma@culture.gr](mailto:education.ysma@culture.gr) !



Don't forget to visit the Acropolis Museum and search for the original **Parthenon Sculptures!**