

Religion and the City

Key Terms

Sanctuary - an area of holy land dedicated to a god or gods contained the temple and altar

Pollution - when a person has done something to make them impure in the eyes of the gods

Ionic frieze - an unbroken strip of marble that goes around a temple

Doric frieze - a continuous strip of stone or marble square spaces called metopes

Hiereus - 'one who sacrifices to a god' a Greek priest

Hiereia - 'one who sacrifices to a god' a Greek priestess

Colonnade - an open-air covered walkway supported by columns

Cella - meant a small room in Latin and was the temple that contained the cult statue

Opisthodomos - the rear room in a temple that contained a city or town's treasure

Mantis - Greek soothsayer who read entrails of animals or bird signs to predict the outcome of future events

Augur - a person who reads the flight of birds to predict the outcome of future event

Blood sacrifice - the killing of an animal as offering to the god

Hecatomb - the sacrifice in honour of a god of at least 100 oxen during large festivals

Gilding - the covering of a surface in a thin layer of gold

Parthenon - Greek temple to Athena in Athens at the centre of the Acropolis

Allis - the sacred area in the centre of Olympia that contained religious buildings

Semi-engaged column - a supporting column that is embedded in a wall, half protruding from it

Pax decorum - the peace of the gods

Pontifex - a Roman priest in charge of protecting temples, regulating religious law and overseeing the religious calendar

Pontifex Maximus - the head of the pontiffs, greatest pontiff

Lituus - staff used by a Roman augur

Vestal - female priests in charge of the cult of the goddess Vesta

Mola salsa - a mix of salt and flour made by the Vestal Virgins in Rome and sprinkled on the heads of sacrificial victims

Haruspex - a Roman priest who read omens from entrails

Popa - an official at a Roman sacrifice who struck the sacrificial animal with a wooden rod

Cultrarius - an official at a sacrifice who slit the throat of the sacrificial animal

Rotunda - a round Roman building, especially one with a dome

Oculus - a circular opening at the top of a dome

Greece

Priests/Priestess

The Greeks had both priests called a *hiereus* and priestesses called a *hiereia*; their name highlighted their chief role as one who sacrifices to a god.

Usually the gods were attended by priests, while the goddesses were attended by priestesses.

A priesthood was a temporary role that required no special training.

Temples


The temple was a home for the god – it was not a 'place of worship' like today where the 'congregation' entered and worshipped indoors: the actual sacrifice and ceremony happened outside, at the altar (more practical and healthy when blood is always present)

Larger sanctuaries had other methods of entertainment for their many visitors, such as theatres and amphitheatres. Sanctuaries associated with healing gods often had an Asklepiion, or healing centre/temple. These areas were picked because of their beauty, importance, or symbolism/function. A sanctuary would consist: A temple, an altar outside, space enough for worshippers, a basin of water at the entrance to allow visitors to purify themselves before entrance and area marked off by a wall or marker stones

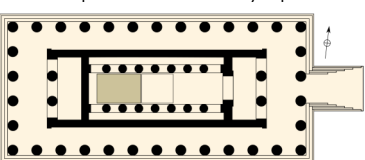
Sacrifice

In order to honour the gods the Greeks would give them offerings. These could be money, the dedication of songs or war booty. Food was the most popular choice and the main way this was done was through a blood sacrifice. This was the careful, ritualised killing of an animal led by a priest.

Prescribed sources



The Parthenon



The Temple of Zeus at Olympia

Rome

In Rome the priesthood was an excellent example of the role of religion in society. The priest's role was to uphold the state religion by maintenance of the *pax deorum* (in Latin *pax* means peace and *deorum* means 'of the gods'). This was done by uttering the correct prayer, completing the appropriate sacrifice and fulfilling their priestly roles at festivals. Unlike today, priests did not preach a way of life or moral code, it did not matter if a Roman killed or behaved poorly, provided the *pax deorum* was maintained. The main priests are the

Ancient Roman temples were among the most important buildings in Roman culture, and some of the richest buildings in Roman architecture. Their construction and maintenance was a major part of ancient Roman religion (*Religio*), and all towns of any importance had at least one main temple, as well as smaller shrines. The main room (*cella*) housed the cult image of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, and often a table for supplementary offerings or libations and a small altar for incense. Behind the *cella* was a room or rooms used by temple attendants for storage of equipment and offerings. The ordinary worshiper rarely entered the *cella*, and most public ceremonies were performed outside where the sacrificial altar was located, on the *portico*, with a crowd gathered in the temple precinct.

Roman sacrifices follow the same general procedures as Greek sacrifices and the most popular type being blood sacrifices



The Pantheon



The Temple of Portunus

Possible Questions

Describe what is shown on the eastern pediment of the Parthenon (2)

Give two roles of the Vestal Virgins (2)

Which do you think is a better way to honour a Roman god, building a temple or conducting a sacrifice? (8)

Which temple fulfils its purpose better, The Parthenon or the Temple of Zeus? (8)

Sources	
Prescribed	Further
The Parthenon	Cicero - On his House
The Temple of Zeus at Olympia	Pausanias - Description of Greece
The Temple of Portunus	Pseudo-Apollodorus - Bibliotheca
The Pantheon	