

Do the temples you have studied. bear out tomlinson's view that there was a "lack...

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Greek art and architecture is one of history's most renowned beauties, and wonders of the world.

Even up to this day and age, where these unique and admirable buildings and temples may have deteriorated and eroded into mere blocks of stone, years and centuries filled with history and myth are explained in these remains. Tomlinson's opinion that Greek architecture lacked innovation is invalid to me, as I know that there were significant changes amongst the various temples in Ancient Greece. They are not all the same; each one is unique and symbolic in its presence and significance. Tomlinson may have thought that Greek Architecture all looked the same because many of them did have similar features. The Ancient Greeks loved tradition, and they loved unity in the structure and architecture of their buildings.

However, this is not to say that they were all made in the same image, and they are all identical and mere duplications of one another. For one thing, they all had columns. This is an obvious evidence to differentiate Greek architecture from, for example, Roman architecture which seldom, or didn't have columns on their buildings. All the Ancient Greek architecture was made out of stone, some even made of Pentelic marble. The temples in Ancient Greece were rectangular shaped, although some were larger than others. All temples had to follow a certain style, as previously stated: the Greeks did not like disorder, and favoured tradition and unity amongst the buildings they built.

The styles used on these various buildings were either in Doric style or Ionic style. All temples have and externally traditional appearance, and these

buildings all faced from East to West. The temples were also thinly, rectangular shaped to conserve more space, and the roof was also lower, as temples could not be wider than the lintel (a thin beam of wood across the top of the temple). The temple of Zeus at Olympia for example, is one of the earliest temples to be built. This temple housed the gold and ivory statue of Zeus, and was completed in 456 BC.

The pediments of the temple showed two very legendary scenes: the pediment in the East showed the chariot race between Pelops and Oinomaos, and in the West a battle between Lapiths and Centaurs is depicted. The temple was built c. 470 – 450 BC (14 years – the average time taken to build a temple). The temple was central, southwest of Altis, but stands out as other roofs were made out of terracotta. The temple of Zeus may have had stone roofs. It is also the biggest building in the sanctuary.

The temple of Zeus is the largest temple anywhere in mainland, Greece. The next temple to be chronologically built would be the Parthenon. This temple was dedicated to Athena, as the Parthenon was known as ‘ Temple of the Maiden/The Maiden’s House’. There were two architects – Iktinos and Kallicrates. Pheidias built the cult statue at Olympia, but also built a chryselephantine statue inside the temple. The pediment could be decorated along with frieze – Doric and ionic.

The Parthenon is a Doric ordered temple. Its columns have flutes, which swell due to entasis, and do not have a cushioned base like other temples. It has 8 x 17 columns. Normal columns merely have 6 x 13. The temple was larger and wider simply because a lot of people went to gather round the

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altar. The Greeks wanted this to be an outstanding representation of power and wealth.

Another example of a different temple would be the Erechtheum, which was built roughly between 421 and 405 BC. The architect of this temple is unknown, however we do know from other surrounding pieces of remains from the nearby location, that the architect must have faced great difficulty in constructing and building this temple. The Erechtheum was initially to be located at the centre of the Acropolis at Athens, however in the centre lay the remains of a temple which was left in ruins by the Persians. The Greeks decided to leave the remains there as a symbol and evidence of Persian impiety. This temple was built in ionic order, original as most temples were built in the Doric order. The architect adopted an ionic order which included sculpted column bases, slim and almost parallel-sided columns, as opposed to tapering flute column and volute capitals.

There as less expectation those Ionic buildings conformed to a rigidly symmetrical model. The peculiar plan of the building can be explained with the technicality of the optical refinements, and also the asymmetrical nature of the Erechtheum. The site of the building is narrow, constricted and uneven. The north side of the Acropolis was not levelled up to the other side of the Acropolis, as the Athenians flattened out the site in order to build the platform for the Parthenon. The Erechtheum is also significant, and complex in its immediate surroundings, as mythical and natural features are present.

These would be the place where Poseidon had struck his trident to produce a source of salt water, and Athena had made an olive spring from the rock, the

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tomb of Cecrops, the first king of Athens. The Erechtheum had to cater for these special areas, and not conceal them. Hence there are three or four separate rooms. Also, a combination of walls in the way, and the attraction of the Parthenon combined to ensure that there was just one way around the Acropolis, and that included visiting the Parthenon first and only then coming to the Erechtheum. Irregularities or unusual features of the Erechtheum:* It has ionic columns, as opposed to Doric columns. As a matter of fact, the Erechtheum being a Doric building in itself is an unusual factor.

* There are two main ground levels, but three different roof levels.* The Erechtheum has an underground entrance, thought to be the entrance in order to get to the floor above the ground level.* The south porch sticks out at the west end of the wall, rather than the middle of the wall, with a small flat roof. This allows the porch to be inaccessible unless accessed from the inside, through an opening, thought to be an underground entrance.* The West porch is also a “ false porch” with no entrance from outside.

This time, it has a basement room beneath it. In conclusion, I strongly disagree with the statement made by Tomlinson regarding Greek architecture and innovation. I believe that Greek temples do not lack innovation, as the above information on three very different and unique temples specify that they are all originally planned and built according to the discretion of the Greeks and the architects. Each of the temples served a different purpose, and these temples were built in the best of the ability of the architect, successfully built to carry out the temple’s purpose.