

The general characteristics of temple architecture



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The general characteristics of Temple Architecture Grade's 10 Dec 2008 The people of the ancient world believed in properly designing their places of worship. Whether these were temples, churches, synagogues or mosques, the buildings had to exude dignity, power and sacredness to represent properly the dwelling place of God. This was achieved through the architecture. The holiness and power of a particular place of worship was portrayed in the skillfulness and quality of its composition. The architectural settings were also a way of demonstrating power and authority to the neighboring empires. Thus ancient Rome, Greece, Mesopotamia through to Egypt all have magnificent temple architectures built in their time.

One of the key characteristics of ancient temple architecture was their dedication to a deity. Most of the ancient temples were built as a dedication to the gods that were worshipped in those times. The Roman temple of Fortuna Virilis is also referred to as the temple of Portumnus because it was in dedication to the Roman god Portumnus, the god protector of the harbors and trade at sea (history of roman). The Greek temple of Poseidon in Paestum, Italy was also a dedication to the Greek sea god, Poseidon and even had a massive statue of him in its main hall (Cape Sounion, 2008).

While the temple of Amenhotep was largely a dedication to his father amen, the northern part of it was dedicated to the Egyptian god Osiris (Andrews, 2005). The Mesopotamian white temple was built at a very high place, on the ziggurat platform, because the people of Mesopotamia believed that it was in high places that their god would visit the earth (Sumerian Art). Thus as part of their architecture, most of these temples had statues that represented the deities to which they had been dedicated

All temple architecture was inspired by religious beliefs but perhaps none

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portrays this so much as the Egyptian Temple designed by Amenhotep the third during his reign. This is the largest temple to ever be built in Egypt. It boasted 385, 000 square meters coverage and was built in such a manner that it could flood when the waters of the Nile rose, leaving only the inner part dry. This was based on the religious belief that when the water level went down, the re-emergence of the temple would signify a sort of rebirth of the world, like in the time of creation (Andrews, 2005). The Greek Poseidon temple was also based on the religious belief that since Poseidon was the sea god and the temple was located near waters then it would only be fitting to dedicate it to the sea god in order to win his favor (Cape Sounion, 2008). The construction of the Mesopotamian temple on a high place was in the belief that god would visit them at a high place (Sumerian Art).

The temples were also constructed in a lavish manner in order to signify the splendid and magnificence of their gods, as well as their dignity and authority due to their gods' magnificence. The temple of Amenhotep was thus built with high quality sandstone that was white in color and covered everywhere in gold. It also had a floor of pure silver and doorways of electrum (Andrews 2005). The Roman temple was also a small but quite elegant building that stood on a very tall base with elegant columns and the design was an improvement from the peripteros style of the Greek period (history of roman). The Poseidon temple was also believed to have been made of marble all around and had a massive statue of the god Poseidon (Cape Sounion, 2008). The white temple at Warka with the Ziggurat has been termed as one of the world's early magnificent structures. The Ziggurat referred to the raised platform and the temple was reachable by a staircase and had three main doors for entry and exit. Trees were even planted at the <https://assignbuster.com/the-general-characteristics-of-temple-architecture/>

Ziggurat in Ur so as to make it look like a mountain (Sumerian art).

Most of the ancient architecture have been termed as the most magnificent structures in history and serve as major tourist attraction sites in their respective countries. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of temple architecture therefore, is their ability to remain relevant as historic sites.

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