

Temple decoration

The triangular spaces at the ends of Greek temples are called pediments.

The pediments often contained sculptures that told a mythical story about the city or the place where the temple had been built.



This is one of the pediments from the temple of Zeus at Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held in honour of Zeus. Among the most popular events at the Games were the chariot races.

The sculptures show two men getting ready for a chariot race. One of the men is going to win the race by cheating. In the middle of the pediment stands Zeus. Zeus was god of justice and punished crimes.



This is one of the pediments from the Parthenon in Athens, a temple to the goddess Athena.

In the middle, Athena and Poseidon are having a contest to decide who will be patron god of the city of Athens. They each had to give the city a gift. Athena has won by giving Athens an olive tree.