

Greek influence is visible in everything that we have today. Our laws, cities and even our system of government all come from aspects of Greek civilization, but maybe what we have been influenced the most by the Greeks is in architecture. Maybe the reason this is, is that it was a new form of architecture that had little to do with function and everything to do with looks. A good example is the Greek temple. They were built in honor of the gods, but the architects were most likely more concerned with beauty than function.

Unlike the Romans who used the arch to support their buildings the Greeks used columns. Their system is called the post and lintel system. This system wasn't very efficient and is now outdated, but in ancient times it was the only way of building. Another thing that the Greeks are famous for are their great theaters, where they held many plays. Some of these plays were building blocks for modern drama.

The Greek theater was incredible. The Greeks spent years of time and effort to perfect their theater design. In their theater there were four things that most theaters had. The orchestra, paraskenia, theatron, and skene.

The orchestra was the stage, located in the center of the theater. Unlike many modern stages, which are raised above the seats the orchestra was located below the seats. There were sometimes, but not usually, seats located behind the orchestra.

The theatron was the audience's seating. The theatron was raised above the orchestra, which extended in circles. These circles were divided by walkways which extended outward from the orchestra. The shape of the theater allowed the actor's voices to carry without the use of modern day equipment. The theaters were usually cut out of hillside, meaning that they were usually one big piece of rock. Most theaters could hold about 20,000 people!

The skene was the backdrop of the stage. It had a picture of the front of a house painted on it. Because of this, all Greek plays took place in front of a house. The skene had windows, doorways, and arches, which allowed many entrances into the orchestra. The rooms located behind the skene were storage rooms for props and dressing rooms for actors. We get the word scene from the Greek word, skene.

The Paraskenias were the walls that extended away from the skene so that the audience could not see anything beyond the play. The paraskenia was also sometimes built to be a high arch above the orchestra. This framed the stage and helped keep the audience's attention.

Another thing that many theaters had was the proskenium. The proskenium was a bunch of arches or columns placed above the skene. This was used to add more layers to the stage as the scenes changed.

Greek architecture is known for its magnificent columns. Columns were used on the outside of buildings and were the main supports of roofs. The three mostly used columns were the Dorian, Ionic, and Corinthian columns.

The Dorian columns were the oldest and the most commonly used. They were first used in the seventeenth century B.C. They were pretty simple and they had a stone slab at the top and the bottom of the column separating it

from the floor or ceiling. Dorian columns were masculine and were supposed to represent the male body.

The Ionic columns were first used in the 16 century B.C. The ionic columns were thinner and more detailed than the dorian columns. The ionic columns were supposed to represent femininity and were eventually full sculptures of woman as columns.

The corinthian columns were introduced in the 14 century B.C. These columns are the most decorated of the three columns. The tops of these columns were sculptures of plants. They had a complicated base with many layers. The corinthian columns symbolized life.