

SOME ANCIENT AND SOME
LESSER KNOWN SACRED PLACES

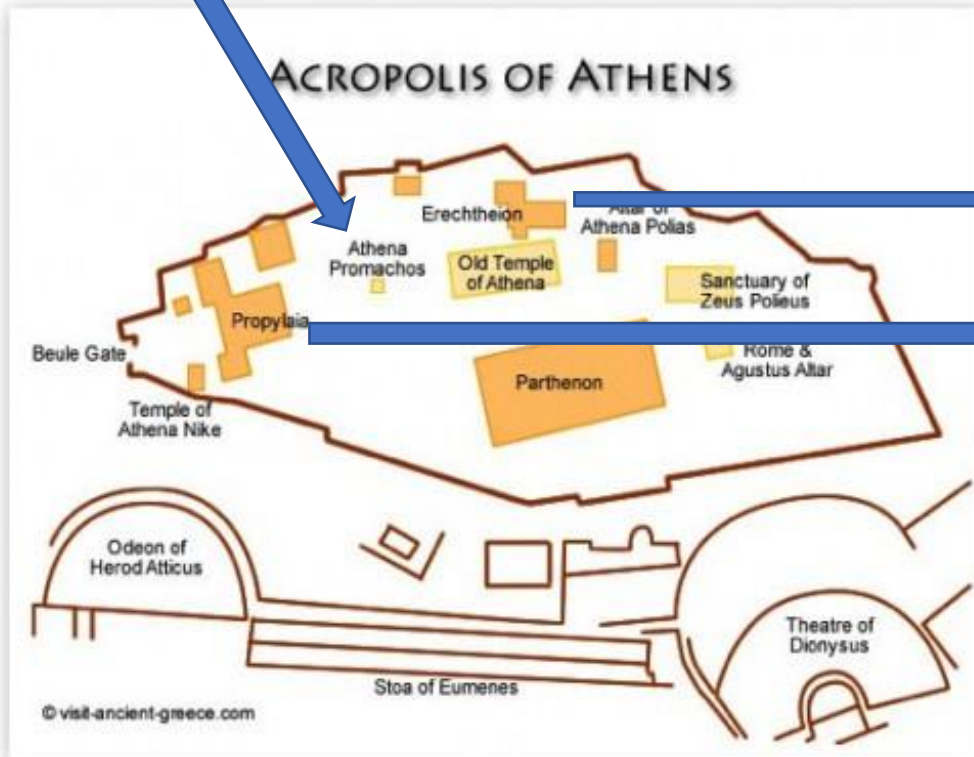
Continental Europe

Ancient Greece

A place of philosophers, sculptors, literary giants, warriors and monuments.

The Acropolis, site of The Parthenon and other structures dedicated to Athena.

- Athena Promachos: a huge bronze statue of the goddess.



In homage to Athena.

- The Parthenon is a former temple on the Athenian Acropolis, Greece, dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their patron (BCE copy of 500BCE original by Phidias.)



An idealized view.

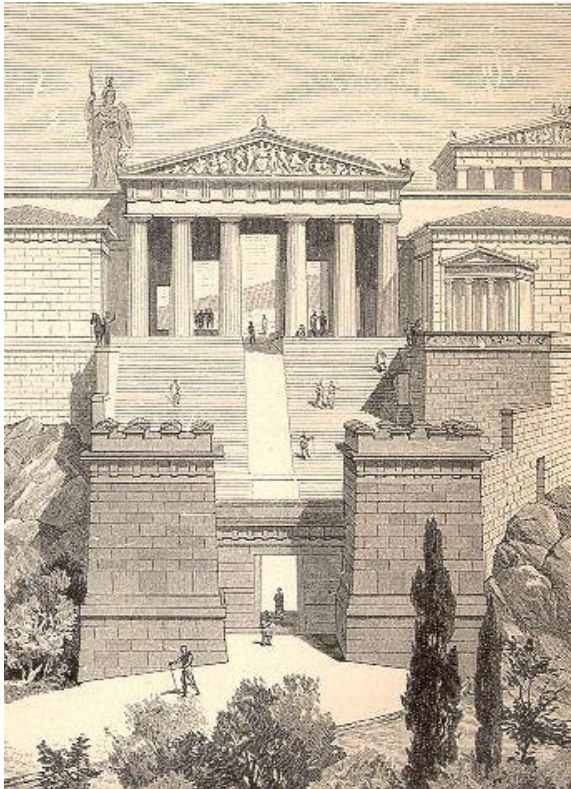
Idealised view of the Acropolis and Athena Promachos, by the painter Leo von Klenze in 1846.

The artist imagined the great statue of Athena Promachos to be visible from far away, and carrying a great spear in her right hand.



The monumental gateway(propylaia) to the acropolis.

- A sketch of what the propylaia would have looked like, and how it appears at present.



What happened?

- In the 5th century CE, the Parthenon was converted into a Christian church dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
- After the Ottoman conquest, it was turned into a mosque in the early 1460s.
- On 26/9/1687, an Ottoman ammunition dump inside the building was ignited by Venetian bombardment.
- The resulting explosion severely damaged the Parthenon and its sculptures.

Another site.



The Oracle at Delphi.

- The Pythia, commonly known as the Oracle of Delphi, was the name of any priestess of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.
- Priestess of Delphi (1891) by John Collier; the Pythia was inspired by pneuma rising from below.



A huge limestone mountain.

- The temple was located on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, beneath the Castalian Spring.
- The Pythia was widely credited for her prophecies inspired by Apollo.
- Mount Parnassus, central Greece.



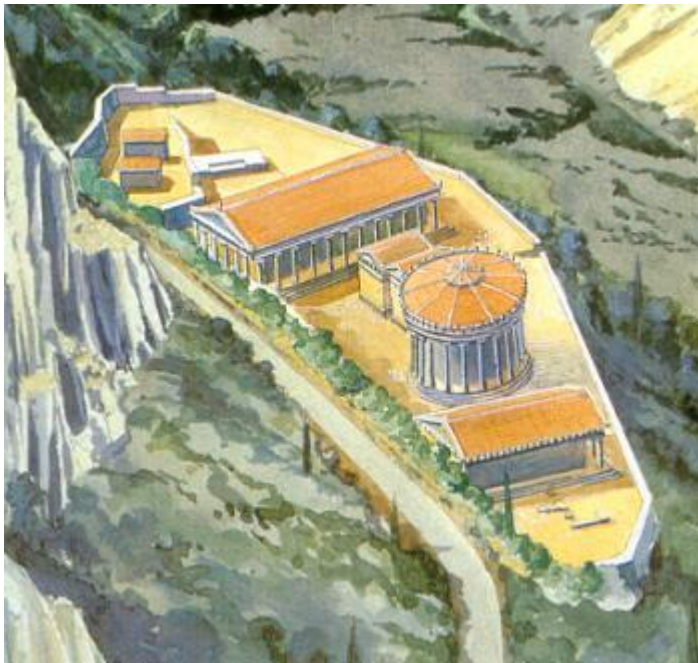
The Castalian Spring.

- The Castalian Spring, in the ravine at Delphi, is where all who came to consult the Delphic Oracle stopped to wash their hair.
- It is claimed that Lord Byron, the poet, washed his hair at the spring.
- Lower Castalia is a rectangular structure of 8.20 by 6.64 metre enclosing a rectangular stone-built basin with a system of pipes and spouts.



The Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia (gateway to) Delphi.

- Pictures reversed.



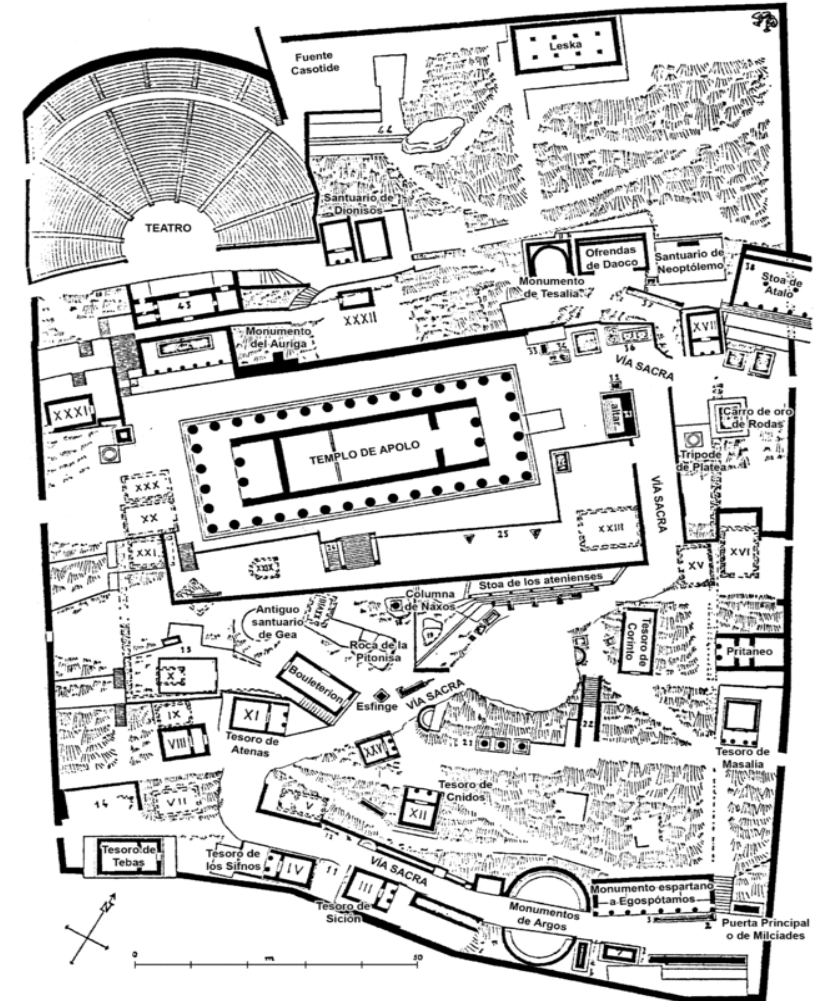
Remnants of beautiful structure.

- Remains of the Temple of Apollo, Delphi.



Site plan of the Sanctuary of Apollo, Delphi.

- The temple survived until 390CE, when the Christian emperor Theodosius I silenced the oracle by destroying the temple and most of the statues and works of art in the name of Christianity.
- The site was completely destroyed by zealous Christians in an attempt to remove all traces of Paganism.



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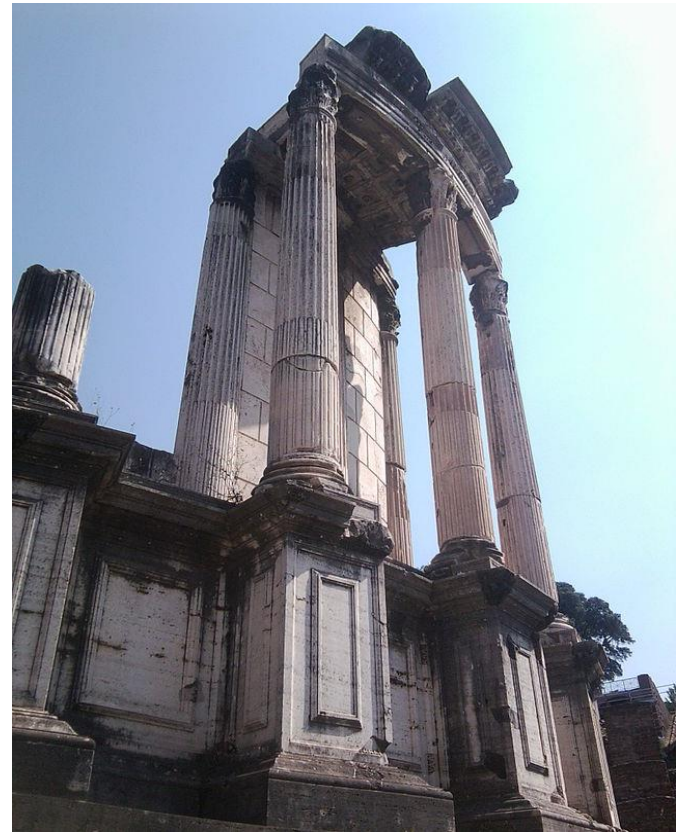
Ancient Rome

- According to legend, Rome was founded in 753 BCE by Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a she-wolf.



Only decaying remnants remain.

- The Temple of Vesta is an ancient edifice in Rome, located in the Roman Forum near the Regia and the House of the Vestal Virgins.
- The section standing today was reconstructed in the 1930s during the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini.



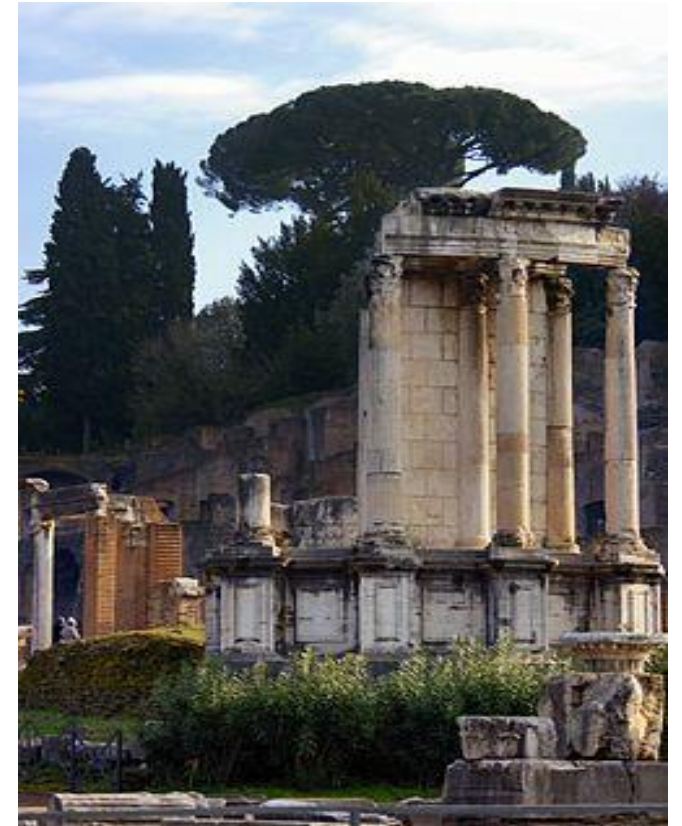
Authorised vandalism.

The Temple of Vesta remained reasonably intact until the Renaissance. However, in 1549 the building was completely demolished and its marble reused in churches and papal palaces.

Vesta is the virgin goddess of the hearth, home, and family in Roman religion.

Vesta's presence was symbolized by the sacred fire that burned at her hearth and temples.

The hearth is seen here in the foreground.



The Jerash Temple of Diana/Artemis is a Roman temple in Jerash, Jordan

- Diana/Artemis is the Goddess of the Hunt, Forests and Hills, the Moon, and Archery



Temple of Bacchus, Baalbek, Lebanon.

- Dionysus /Bacchus was regarded as the Greek and Roman god of wine and good times.



Roman Temple of Jupiter, Baalbek, Lebanon.

- Jupiter or Jove was the Roman name for Zeus, the king of the gods and the god of sky and thunder.



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Bulgaria

- Remains of the ancient Thracian city of Perperikon.



Temple of Dionysius.

- It is thought that the famous Temple of Dionysius was in Perperikon in the Eastern Rhodopes, 15 km northeast of the present-day town of Kurdzhali, Bulgaria, on a 470 m high rocky hill.



Dionysus in *Bacchus* by Caravaggio.

- Dionysus (Roman Bacchus) is the god of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine, of ritual madness, fertility, theatre and religious ecstasy in Greek mythology.



The Oracle of Dionysius.

- It is the opinion of a majority of scholars that Alexander the Great and Octavian, who became Augustus Caesar, consulted the oracle.
- Marble statue of Augustus Caesar, 23/9/63 BCE – 19/8/14 CE, which was discovered on 20/4/1863, in the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, near Rome.



Divider slide.



Norway

Borgund, Norway



It is not shown on the map but the co-ordinates of 61N 7.8E locate it roughly north-east of Bergen

The stave church at Borgund

- It is also the best preserved of Norway's 28 extant stave churches.



Interior explains the name.

- The name derives from the buildings' structure of post and lintel construction, a type of timber framing where the load-bearing posts are called *stafr* in Old Norse and *stav* in modern Norwegian.
- “Stave” also refers to the vertical wooden boards of the walls.



The wood must be incredibly durable.

- Built just before 1150, and dedicated to the Apostle St. Andrew.
- It is one of the best preserved stave churches and it has not been added or rebuilt since it was new.

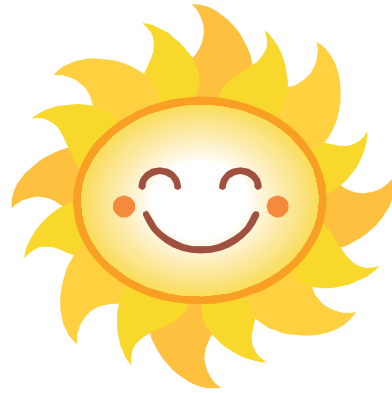


Another stave church. Note the dragon heads that ward off evil spirits.

- The dragon heads serve the same function as gargoyles on cathedrals.
- Instead of a church, Borgund now serves as a museum.



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Sweden

Gamla Uppsala ("Old Uppsala") is a parish and a village outside Uppsala. Sweden.

- Burial site.



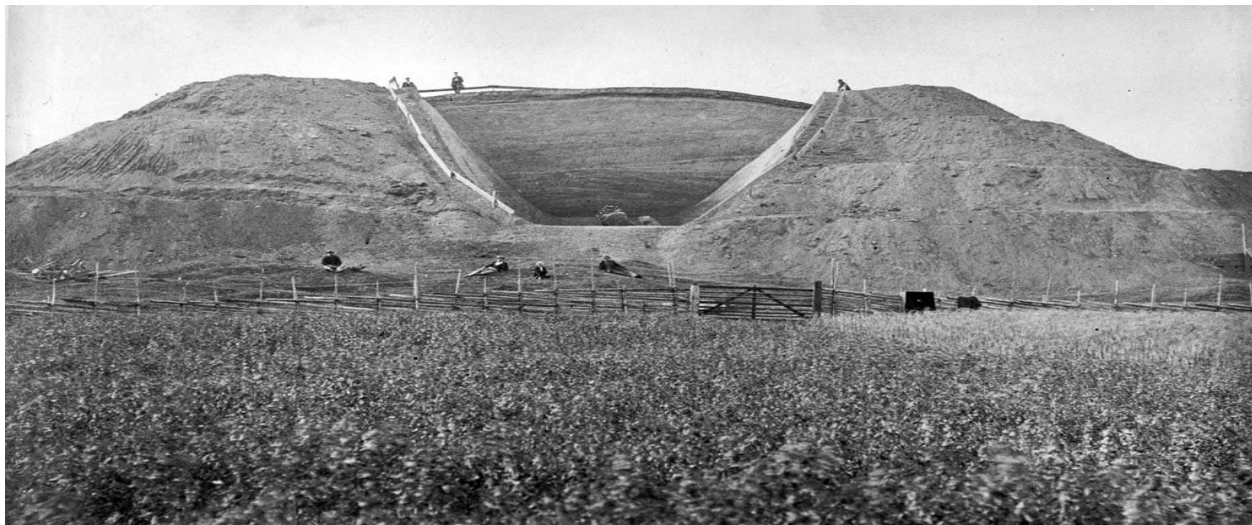
According to the (Icelandic)Ynglinga saga the kings Aun, Egil and Adils were buried in Old Uppsala.

- One interpretation is that these are buried in the three great mounds.



This belief has never been confirmed by archaeologists.

- In the western mound were found the remains of a man and animals, probably for food during the journey.
- The remains of a warrior's equipment were found.
- Luxurious weapons and other objects, both domestic and imported, show that the buried man was very powerful.



Many of the level burial sites have been ploughed and used for agriculture.

- Seen from the grave field whose larger mounds (left part) are close to the royal mounds.
- The building beyond the mounds is the church.
- To its right is the low Thing-mound from which the Law-speaker spoke.



As well as a burial site for thousands it was also a meeting place.

- It was the location of the Thing of all Swedes which was a Thing (general assembly) held, at the end of February or early March, from very early times up until the Middle Ages.
- It was held in conjunction with a great fair called Disting, and a pagan celebration called Dísablót.



Divider slide.



Finland

Finland Töölö neighbourhood of Helsinki.

- Location.



Temppeliaukio Church.

- Lutheran.



The “Rock Church”.

- Plans for the Temppeliaukio/Tempelplatsen (Temple square) were started as early as the 1930s when a plot of land was selected for the building and a competition for the design was started.



Also “Church of the Rock”.

- The church was designed by architects and brothers Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen and opened in 1969.
- Underside of the copper dome.



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Lithuania

Šiauliai, northern Lithuania.

- Hill of the crosses.



The **Hill of Crosses** is a site of pilgrimage about 12 km north of the city of Šiauliai, in northern Lithuania.

- It is believed that the first crosses were placed on the former Jurgaičiai or Domantai hill fort after the 1831 Uprising.



Over the centuries, the place has come to signify the peaceful endurance of Lithuanian Catholicism despite the threats it has faced throughout history

- Another view.



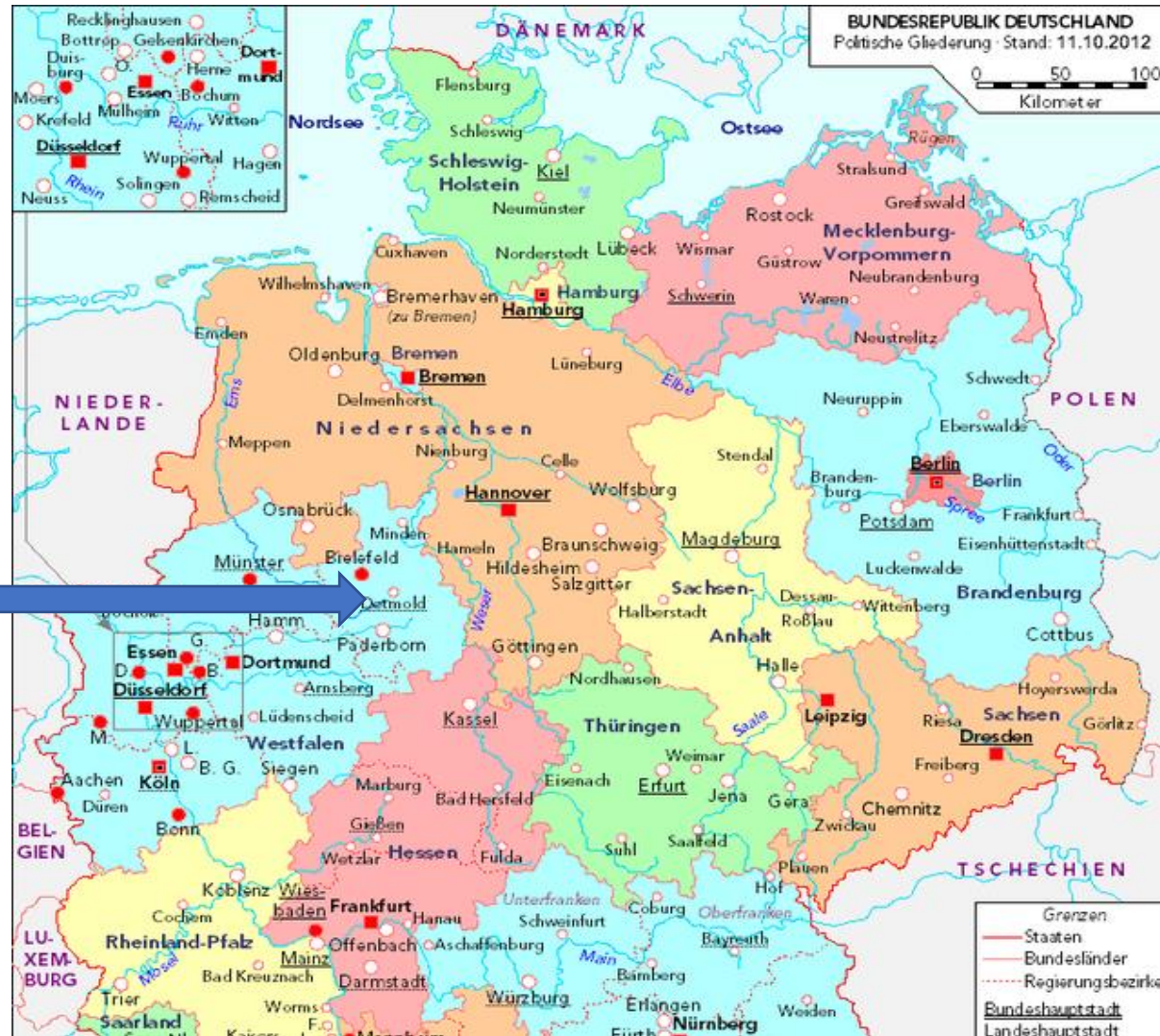
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Germany

Externsteine, Germany, Near Detmold.

- Location.



The name **Externsteine** means “Star Stones of the Egge(ridge). Also: “The Extern Stones”

- The formation is a tor consisting of several tall, narrow columns of rock which rise abruptly from the surrounding wooded hills.



In the “Grove of the Gods” i.e. Teutoberg Forest.

- There are 5 large sandstone columns. Inside the top of one of them is a chapel.



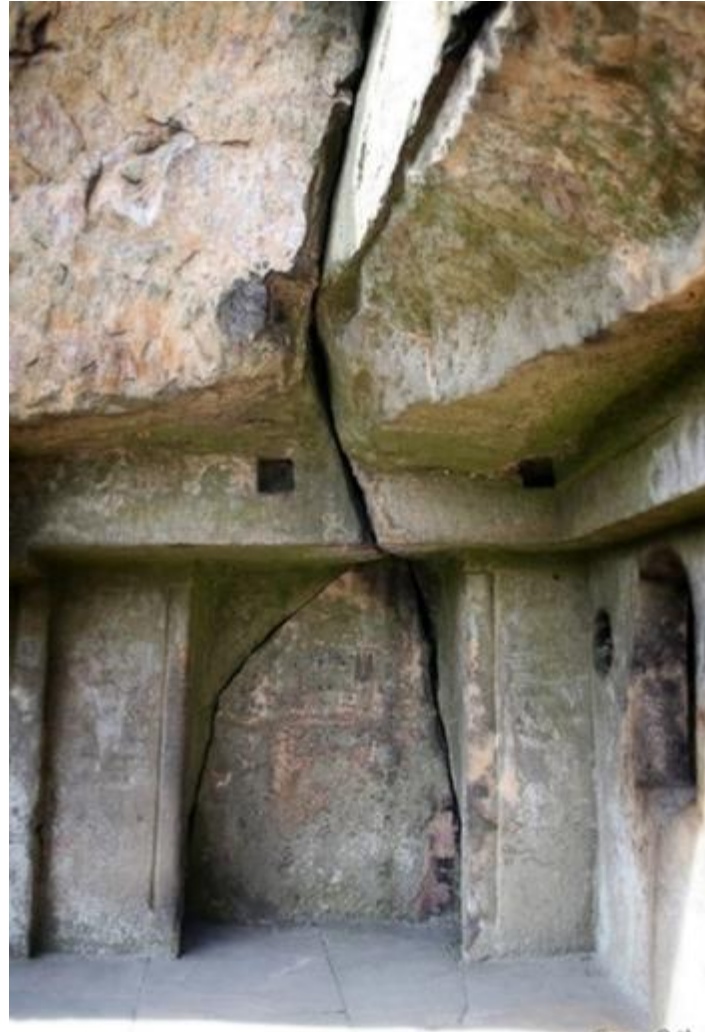
The date when it was used for pagan rites is unknown.

- Bridge to the chapel.



One book claims there are 13 columns.

- Interior of the chapel.



Uncertainty about earliest religious use.

- The Externsteine may have been a centre of religious activity for the Teutonic peoples prior to the arrival of Christianity.
- Stone tools dating to before 10,000 BCE have been found at the site.
- The Christian relief, “Descent From The Cross” has been dated to the 9th century CE.

