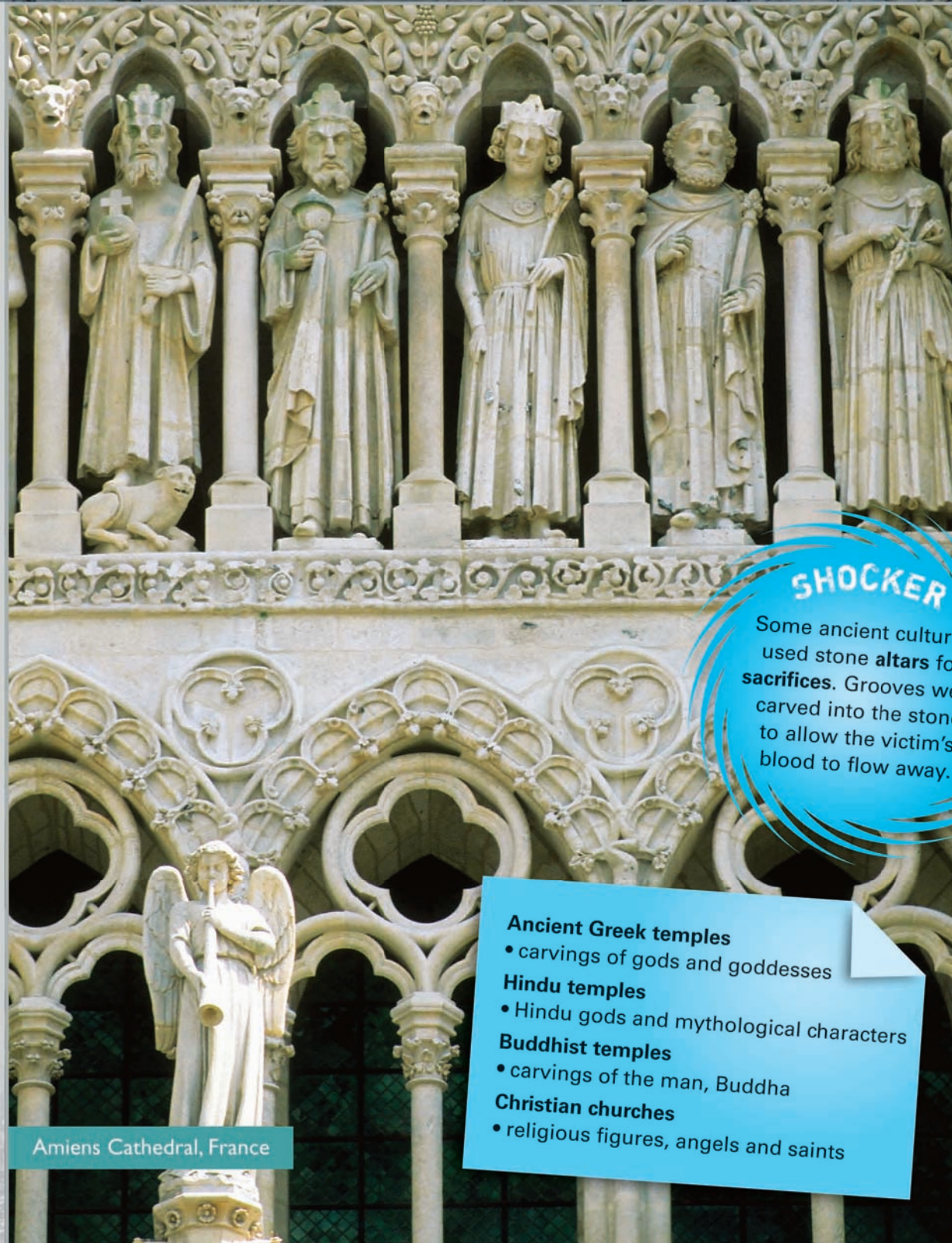


PLEASING THE GODS

Cultures from around the world create works of art to pay tribute to a higher being. Some cultures do this by carving images of that being and making offerings. By using the strongest materials available to them, people hope that their stone carvings will please their gods. In return, they hope that their gods will protect them. The ancient Greeks believed in a group of gods and goddesses who lived high on a mountain and controlled the lives of humans. In order to appeal to their gods and goddesses, the Greeks built temples, which they decorated with reliefs and sculptures carved from marble.

Hindu temples found throughout Asia are intricately carved. In some temples, almost every surface is covered with images of Hindu gods and characters from mythology. **Buddhist** temples feature carvings of Buddha. Buddha was a man who lived long ago and who was respected for having **compassion** for every living thing.

Many **Christian** churches contain carvings of religious figures, including angels and saints. The enormous Gothic cathedral in Amiens, France, has sculptures of saints standing shoulder to shoulder over its arched entranceway. These days, the statues are white, but paint chips show that they were once brightly painted.



Amiens Cathedral, France

SHOCKER

Some ancient cultures used stone altars for sacrifices. Grooves were carved into the stone to allow the victim's blood to flow away.

Ancient Greek temples

- carvings of gods and goddesses

Hindu temples

- Hindu gods and mythological characters

Buddhist temples

- carvings of the man, Buddha

Christian churches

- religious figures, angels and saints

Carving for Buddha

The world's biggest Buddhist temple is Borobudur in Indonesia. This temple is the largest ancient monument in the southern hemisphere. It has 1460 carved reliefs that show the teachings of Buddha. In total, there are 504 statues of Buddha!



Hindu temple covered with carvings, India