

# GLOSSARY

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## **ACANTHUS**

A broad-leafed plant with many spikes, used as a decorative pattern on Corinthian capitals and reliefs.

## **ACROTERIA**

Ornaments at the apex of the gable and at the corners of the roof of a temple.

## **AMPHORA**

A Greek vase having an egg-shaped body; a narrow, cylindrical neck; and two curving handles joined to the body at the shoulder and neck. Used for storage and transportation of food and liquids.

## **ARCHITRAVE**

The horizontal architectural element above the columns in a classical temple. Above it are the frieze and then the cornice.

## **AUGUSTUS**

A title for the Roman emperor meaning "revered." The name was originally taken by Octavian but was used subsequently for all reigning emperors.

## **BLACK FIGURE**

A type of Greek vase painting practiced in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. in which the design was painted mainly in black against a lighter-colored background, usually the color of the natural clay.

## **CAPITAL**

The upper, spreading element of a column, forming a transition between the vertical shaft and the horizontal elements of the architrave.

## **CARYATID**

A female figure used as a support, most commonly for columns or mirror handles.

## **CENTAUR**

A mythological creature that was part man, part horse.

## **CHIMERA**

A mythical beast in the form of a fire-breathing lion, with the head of a goat and a snake for a tail.

## **COFFERS**

The box-like shapes in the ceilings of architectural monuments. Used to reduce the mass of the vaulting.

**COLONNADE**

A row of columns, either surrounding a temple or standing as an independent architectural element.

**CORINTHIAN**

The architectural order that is more elaborate than the Doric and Ionic styles. Corinthian capitals combine volutes (scrolls) with acanthus leaves. Below the elaborate capital is a fluted shaft.

**CORNICE**

The projecting top of an entablature in classical architecture, or a molding at the top of a door, window, or facade of a building.

**DENTILS**

The row of rectangular blocks arranged like teeth on the lower edge of a cornice.

**DORIC**

The earliest and simplest of the classical Greek architectural orders.

**EGG-AND-DART MOLDING**

Alternating ovals ("eggs") and spears with heads in high relief.

**EGG-AND-TONGUE MOLDING**

Alternating ovals ("eggs") and simple pointed leaf forms.

**ENTABLATURE**

The upper architectural elements of a temple, above the columns.

**FLUTING**

Vertical grooves or channels on columns. Doric fluting is shallow and meets at a sharp edge. Ionic and Corinthian fluting has a flat edge between the channels.

**FRESCO**

Painted decoration applied to plastered walls before the plaster was dry.

**FRIEZE**

The horizontal space usually decorated with sculpted figures or floral ornament above the main crossbeam in a classical temple. Term often used to describe any decoration arranged in a horizontal band.

**GRIFFIN**

A monster with the head of an eagle, the body of a lion, the tail of a snake and the wings of a bird.

**IONIC**

The classical order of architecture in which a fluted column shaft is topped by a capital composed of two large volutes (scrolls).

**MAENAD**

A female follower of Dionysus, often seen holding cymbals or castanets in ecstatic dances.

**METOPE**

Square space between triglyphs; may be carved or left plain.

**MONUMENTAL**

Frequently used to describe works of art that give the impression of great size, whatever their actual dimensions may be.

**MOTIF**

A distinctive and recurrent feature of theme, shape, or figure in a work of art. Common examples in Greek art are: checkerboard, meander (Greek key), zigzags, and swastika.

**PATRON**

A person or group of persons who sponsors or supports an artist or artistic endeavor.

**PEDIMENT**

The triangular gable below the roof at either end of a Greek temple.

**PERSONIFICATION**

The process of giving human shape to abstract ideas such as Justice, or to rivers and places, such as the Danube or Africa.

**PORTICO**

A porch, or a line of columns in a colonnade.

**POTTERY**

Objects made from clay that is shaped and then hardened by heat (fired).

**RED FIGURE**

A type of Greek vase painting in which the design was outlined in black and the background painted black, leaving the figures the reddish color of the baked clay after firing. This style replaced the black figure style toward the end of the sixth century B.C.

**REGISTER**

A horizontal division, such as a zone or band, of a pictorial area.

**RELIEF**

In sculpture, any work in which the figures project from a background. In high relief the figures project at least half of their circumference from the background (as in many sarcophagi). In low relief (bas-relief) the figures project only slightly, and no part is entirely detached from the background (as in coins and medals).

**RINCEAU**

A sinuous and branching scroll made of a plant stem and leaves.

**SPHINX**

A mythological creature with a human head on a lion's body, often winged.

**STELE**

A freestanding slab of stone bearing a relief or an inscription.

**STUCCO**

Plaster used on walls or ceilings; often refers specifically to three-dimensional plaster ornamentation.

**TERRA COTTA**

Baked clay, usually used in roof tiles or sculpture.

**TRIGLYPH**

Three vertical parallel grooves, each separated by a metope, in a Doric frieze.