

A Glossary of Greek and Roman Architecture

Abacus: The slab at the top of a capital.

Acroteria: "things at the top"; Floral motifs or "apotropaic:" representations of mythological beasts such as griffins, sphinxes, etc. to ward off evil.

Aedicule: an opening or niche framed by columns or pilasters, carrying an entablature and pediment.

Alae: wings, alcoves for ancestral shrines in Roman house.

Anathyrosis: method of dressing the joints of stone blocks: faces of stones to be joined are finished and smoothed only in narrower margins on the sides and top of the faces to be joined, while the interior of adjoining faces were recessed.

Anax: Gr. absolute ruler in the Mycenaean era.

Anthemion: from "anthos," flower. Ornament based on honeysuckle or palmette.

Architrave: "primary beam." The principal beam; the lowest of weight-bearing parts of an entablature.

Archon: Gr. leader of democratic polis.

Atrium: Roman interior court and audience hall.

Basileus: Gr. monarchy, kingship.

Cella: Roman (Gr. naos): the interior sanctuary of a temple.

Corbelling: successive horizontal courses each project out beyond the one below until the opening until the opening is bridged.

Chthonia: Gr. the earth and its virtues.

Cubiculum: bedroom in Roman house.

Echinus: Gr. "sea urchin"; rounded molding between the shaft and the abacus of a Doric column.

Encarpus: "containing fruit." A sculptured festoon of fruit and flowers.

Entablature: the superstructure of the order above the abacus: architrave, frieze, and and corona or cornice.

Entasis: from Gr. *enteinen* "to stretch tight." Slight convexity or swelling of a column about one-third of the way up, diminishing with height.

Exedra: *ex + hedra*, "outside seating." Large niche or recess, semicircular or rectangular, roofed or unroofed.

Frieze: the part of an entablature between the architrave and the cornice. Often decorated with sculpture.

Hortus: Roman garden.

Impluvium: pool for collection of rain water in Roman house.

Isorropia: Gr. order of equilibrium among different elements.

Kratos: Gr. domination, including in the military sense.

Metope: "opening between." In the Doric order, square spaces between beam ends marked by triglyphs. Often with guttae (drops) on the underside.

Modillion: a projecting ornamental bracket under the soffit of a cornice, principally in the Corinthian order.

Mutule: in the Doric order, a block under the cornice, centered over the triglyph.

Naos (cella): the inner sanctuary of a temple.

Oikema: Gr. a dwelling.

Pediment: a pitched gable crowning a portico or façade, containing triangular tympanum, often sculptured.

Peristyle. The range of columns surrounding a building or a court.

Plinth or krepis (shoe, sole, foundation): three steps to a building: two stereobates leading up to stylobate.

Polis: Gr. social order of the city.

Pteron (wings or aisles); Gr. the external colonnade around a building.

Pyr: Gr. fire.

Regulae: in the Doric order, the fillet beneath the taenia, in line with the triglyph above, from which the guttae hang.

Skene: Gr. scene; structure behind the stage of a theatre.

Stoa: Gr. colonnade, as at agora of Athens. Where Stoic philosophers taught.

Summetria: Gr. symmetry as well as good, suitable, or fitting proportionality.

Tabernae: Roman shops.

Tablinum: Roman archival room and master study.

Taenia: "band" or "ribbon"; in the Doric order, a small "fillet" molding near the top of the architrave.

Temenos: Gr. sanctuary; the sacred space reserved for a temple and sacrificial altar.

Triclinium: "three chaises longues." Roman reception and dining room.

Triglyph: "three grooves." Doric beam end, surmounting guttae.