S

**Sacrifice.** In ancient times it was normal to reward the gods, or seek their favour, by offering them things which were thought to be made holy (*sacer*) by being used for this purpose. There were many kinds of offering, and the most important, most often represented, was the offering of an animal which was ritually slaughtered (human sacrifice was almost completely unknown among the Greeks and Romans). After the animal was killed, its body was examined, and its condition was thought to be a significant omen of the future. It was then cooked, and certain parts were reserved for the gods, others for the priests, and the rest for those attending the sacrificial ceremony. In Greek art the person conducting the sacrifice is shown bareheaded, but the Roman custom was for the celebrant to have his head covered. In Roman Imperial art the emperor as celebrant is shown holding a patera from which he sprinkles grains of barley on the flames of an altar as a preliminary to the ceremony (see Suoveraurilia).

**Secular,** see Secular

**Sail-vault,** see Pendentive.

**Salomonic,** see Solomonic.

**Saltire.** A pattern consisting of a cross placed at a diagonal to the vertical instead of upright, often decorated with dots in the angles. The derivation of the word is said to be from the Latin/French *saltare* and the French *sauter,* each of which means ‘jump’, because the pattern is reminiscent of a stile or other arrangement of timbers through which one can jump.

**Salus.** The Roman personification of good health or welfare, equated with the Greek Hygieia, who was in Greek mythology attendant upon Aesculapius. She was treated as a goddess, and a temple was dedicated to her on the Quirinal hill at Rome as early as 302 B.C. The Roman emperors made her an imperial virtue or blessing, and coins advertise Salus Augusti, the welfare brought by the emperor. She is represented in art as a female figure bearing a sceptre and feeding the sacred snake of Aesculapius in the same manner as the Greek Hygieia. Occasionally she bears ears of grain, an attribute which is appropriate to her earliest cult at Rome before the connection with Aesculapius began to develop.

**Salutatorium.** When this word makes an occasional appearance in late Latin this word occasionally appears, it seems to have the meaning of an audience hall in which persons came to make their salutations to the emperor (or, in an ecclesiastical context, a bishop).

**Samian ware.** This expression may be used of any pottery produced on the island of Samos, which in the Geometric and Orientalising periods produced some distinctively decorated pottery. Some *terra sigillata* of a much later date has been identified as being of Samian origin, and the term has therefore in the past been applied to all moulded relief ware, but this usage is obsolete.

**Samnite.** The Samnites were an Italian people inhabiting the southern Apennines who in the early days of Rome became powerful and were defeated only after a long period of warfare. In gladiatorial shows thereafter it was customary to present some gladiators in the guise of Samnites, wearing helmets and greaves and carrying shields of Samnite style.

**Sandal binder.** A panel, perhaps the best known one, from the frieze of decorative sculpture placed along a parapet at the side of the temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis of Athens (*c.* 415 B.C.). The panels show a number of figures representing Nike engaged in various activities. The ‘Sandal binder’ is bending to attend to her sandal, a pose which creates an interesting arrangement of drapery.

**Sarcophagus.** A coffin, usually one made in stone, terra cotta or metal (*cf.* Larnax). The Greek word means ‘flesh-eating’. The elder Pliny reports that in one part of the Greek world a certain kind of stone had the property of entirely consuming any bodies which were placed in it; the story may explain the name, but seems fanciful. Sarcophagi were not commonly used in the Greek world or by the Romans of the Republic and early Empire (although there are many Etruscan examples and a few exceptions from the Levant). From the 2nd century A.D., however, they were more commonly chosen by wealthy Romans, perhaps because of a growing belief in the resurrection of the body, and also
because ostentation was an increasing feature of Roman life. Greek and Roman artists developed a range of suitable subjects for the decoration of these sarcophagi; sometimes it is hard to see their relevance at first sight, but the scenes which appear on them must often be interpreted in an allegorical manner.

**Sarissa.** A very long thrusting spear, over seven metres long when first introduced by Philip II of Macedon, although later it was slightly reduced in size. Because of its length it could be used by men who were not fighting in the front rank. It is sometimes shown in scenes in which representations of Macedonian soldiers appear.

**Satrap.** A governor of a province in the Persian Empire, who in his own area of command had all the powers and status of a king. Several portraits of Persian satraps appear on coins a little before and after 400 B.C. It is clear that these are not portraits of the Great King of Persia himself, because in each case the headdress (kidaris, kyrbasia or tiara) is lowered, not raised.

**Satyr.** A half human, half animal figure in Greek mythology and art, regularly represented as a companion of Dionysus (cf. Silenus).

**Scaena.** The Latin equivalent of the Greek skene, used to describe the stage building of a Roman theatre. The Latin phrase scaenae frons, or ‘front of the scaena’ is used to describe the façade of it or as we might say the backdrop (cf. Proscenium).

**Scaenographia** (the Greek skenographia). ‘Stage painting’, a word which occurs occasionally in ancient writers, perhaps in more senses than the most literal one. On some occasions it seems to mean a representation of a perspective view or a projection of a building, as opposed to a drawing of it in plan (ichnographia) or an elevation (orthographia).

**Scotia.** In architecture, a moulding consisting of a recessed or concave half-circle.

**Scroll.** A spiralling curve used as a repeated decorative device; or the curve of the volute of an Ionic column capital.

**Scotia.** A moulding with a concave semicircular form when seen in profile.

**Scylla.** A sea monster who lived on a rock on the Italian side of the Straits of Messina which divide Sicily from Italy. From her waist projected the heads of six dogs which reached out to seize passing sailors; on the other side of the straits the dreadful whirlpool of Charybdis awaited them.

**Scyphus/skyphos.** A drinking cup without a foot. It may be handleless, but more often has two handles, usually horizontal. Other versions have a single handle, or one horizontal and one upright handle.

**Second style.** A name given to a style of wall decoration at Pompeii which was in vogue in the 1st century B.C. (and sometimes occurs later). It is also called the Architectural or Vista Style. It attempts to create an illusion of space beyond the wall, with representations of architectural or landscape scenes.

**Secular Games.** From saeculum, ‘century, age, a period of approximately a hundred years. The Romans had the custom of celebrating the conclusion of a saeculum with religious ceremonies and athletic contests, or Ludi Saeculari (see Festivals and Games). From the time of Augustus onwards the celebration of this festival was an important part of Roman imperial propaganda. The Secular Games which were most advertised, principally on coins, were those of Domitian in A.D. 88, Septimius Severus in A.D. 204 (a date which can be explained only by using a very flexible definition of a saeculum) and Philip Senior and Junior in A.D. 248. The last festival also marked the millenium of the City of Rome (traditional date of foundation 753 B.C.).

**Segmental.** A word used to describe an arch with a curve which is flatter than a semicircle, or a pediment which has a curving rather than an angled top.

**Sella.** A seat. The word is used in several Latin phrases to describe seats of a formal kind. The sella curulis was a seat in the form of an upright U placed above an inverted U, and was the kind which was occupied by the highest Roman magistrates. Its name is derived from currus, a chariot, and goes back to the time when the Etruscan kings used to dispense justice from a seat which was placed in a chariot. The sella castrensis (from castra, a military encampment) was used by military commanders. It was made in the form of an X, and could be folded.

**Semi-column.** An alternative name for an engaged column.
Serapeum. A shrine of the Egyptian god Serapis (Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli contained one in the area named Canopus, a fanciful recreation of one of the mouths of the Nile).

Serratus. The name of a kind of silver coin which was occasionally issued during the Roman Republic. It had small notches cut around the edge. Many theories have been advanced for the use of this technique, but no entirely satisfactory explanation has so far been found. The theory that this treatment was used as a solar symbol is less likely, and it is more probable that it was designed to make forgery of coins by silver-plating a base metal core more difficult. However, plated serrati have been found, so in that case, as so often, the procedure only stimulated criminals to improve their performance.

Sestertius. From semis and tertius, ‘half’ and ‘third’, meaning a coin worth two and a half asses. The sestertius was originally a small silver coin of this value, then because the relative values of silver and copper changed it was retariffed at four asses although its name remained unchanged. In the time of Augustus its metal was altered, and it became a much larger coin, struck in brass (usually called ‘orichalcum’ by numismatists). Some of these large sestertii or sesterces struck during the earliest part of the Roman Empire are among the most impressive of all ancient coins. From the 2nd century B.C. until the 3rd century A.D. the sestertius was also the standard unit of reckoning among the Romans, although it was never the most common coin.

Severe Style or Strong Style. A term used to describe the work of artists in the first stage of the Classical period, in the generation following the Persian Wars (i.e. c. 480-450 B.C.). At this time although a great degree of naturalism had been achieved, poses were still relatively stiff and formal. Examples of this style are the Charioteer of Delphi and the Apollo of the Olympia pediments. The same phrase is also used of the mature phase of Geometric vase painting at the end of the 9th century B.C. ‘Strong’, being an inaccurate translation of the German streng, is the less desirable of the two terms.

Sgraffiatura, see Graffito.

Sgraffito. This form of the word ‘graffito’ is sometimes used specifically to describe a technique of decorating plaster with incised lines which are filled in in colour.

Shaft. In architecture, the part of a column between the base and the capital. The term ‘shaft grave’ is also used to describe graves in the form of a rectangular pit lined with stones.

The Second (sometimes called the Architectural or Vista) Style is first found after the establishment of the Sullan colony at Pompeii in 80 B.C. Artists now attempted to create illusions of architectural compositions, and included vistas of landscape, trying as it were to deny the existence of the real wall and suggest further extension into more distant space. Imitations of panel paintings with mythological subjects are also popular.

In the closing stages of the Second Style, which we would place during the reign of Augustus, there is a tendency for unreal or fanciful elements to be incorporated in the decoration, and by the end of the reign of Augustus (A.D. 14) the Third (sometimes called the Egyptianising or Tapestry) Style had been developed. In this there are still architectural elements, but many of them are fantastic, and such panel paintings as are represented do not suggest a vista. Some of the minor decorative elements seem to be of Egyptian origin. This was the fashionable style at Pompeii until the time of the earthquake which damaged the city in A.D. 62.

Between A.D. 62 and the final destruction of the cities around Vesuvius in A.D. 79 much rebuilding and redecoration took place. As a result the Fourth (the Ornamental or Intricate) Style is better represented than any other. Here the wall is opened up again and often more distant vistas are suggested, but with no logical connection between them. A very common arrangement is for the wall to be divided into nine rectangles on three levels, each of these receiving its own decoration; in such cases it is common to find that the three rectangles at the lowest level are at least partly decorated with imitations of marble slabs in the manner of the First Style.

It should be emphasised that when one is attempting to distinguish between these styles, and to classify the decoration of a room under one heading or another, it is the arrangement of the whole wall that needs to be considered. Individual panels cannot in themselves be dated to any period, and in cases where a
painting which forms part of the decoration of a wall has been removed and is displayed elsewhere, it is not particularly helpful to label it as ‘Fourth’ (or any other) Style.

*Style*. Many words end in these letters, which join the Greek word *stylos* meaning ‘column, pillar’ to other words which describe the number of columns across the front of a building, or the way in which they are spaced relative to their neighbours.

**Stylobate.** The outer part of the floor (see Crepis) of a Greek temple, on which the columns (see -Style) were placed.

**Sub-.** Many archaeological terms begin with this prefix which indicates the last or closing stages of an archaeological period or style, when it is about to be overtaken by its successor (*e.g.* Subgeometric or Submycenaean). It should be remember that in history or archaeology a ‘lower’ date is a later one, just as a ‘higher’ date is an earlier one.

**Sudatorium.** A sweating-room in a bathing establishment.

**Suggestus or -um.** A stage or platform on which a person of importance might appear, or a speaker address his audience.

**Suovetaurilia.** From *sus*, a pig, *ovis*, a sheep and *taurus*, a bull, a triple sacrifice performed by the Romans on occasions of great importance (see Sacrifice).

**Swallow-tail,** see Clamp.

**Swastika.** A cross with arms of equal length, all bent or curved at right angles in the same direction (sometimes also called a gammate cross because the arms resemble the Greek letter *gamma*, or a fylfot). There is no evidence that in Greek art swastikas were thought of as anything but decorative patterns, although in eastern art they may originally have been solar symbols.

**Suspensura.** A name (also used in the plural, -ae) for a suspended floor, particularly that of a hypocaust.

**Syrinx.** An Arcadian nymph who was changed into a bed of reeds by her fellow nymphs to protect her from the amorous Pan. After losing her in this way he made a set of musical pipes from these reeds; the name of syrinx is therefore sometimes given to these ‘Pan pipes’.

**Systyle.** The name given by Vitruvius to the arrangement of a building with the columns spaced two lower diameters apart (*cf.* -Style).
Settling tank. In the Roman aqueduct system a settling tank was used after water had been brought into a city so that suspended matter would fall to the bottom before the water was piped to outlets from which it could be drawn.

Sigillum. A diminutive form of signum, a sign or seal, sometimes used to describe a decorated or embossed object (for example a decorative plaque). For stamped pottery, see Terra sigillata.

Signinum see Opus.

Signum. A sign or seal; in particular, a military standard.

Silenus. In Greek mythology the father of the satyrs. Often, however, satyrs and silens are confused.

Sima. The crowning moulding of the cornice of a building (raking or horizontal), serving the function of a gutter.

Sinter. The word is used by scientists to describe a hard deposit formed on rocks by the deposition of minerals from water; also as a name for the formation of a hard coating by other means, such as firing of vases in a kiln after they have been covered with a wash of some substance for this purpose.

Siphon. In the Roman aqueduct system, pipes forming an inverted syphon were occasionally used to transfer water from one side of a valley to another.

Siren. A creature with the body and wings of a bird and the head of a woman, distinguished by an enchanting voice. The Sirens, according to tradition, lived on the west coast of Italy between the Sorrentine peninsula and the straits of Messina. They sang so sweetly that no sailor could resist being lured to his doom.

Skene. ‘Tent, booth’, a word which may in the early stages of development of the Greek theatre have referred to some temporary structure used as a waiting or dressing room by actors at the edge of the orchestra (see Theatre). It later became the name of the background, which in due course came to be painted in a great variety of ways (hence our ‘scene, scenery’).

Slip. A mixture of clay and water used to give a smooth finish to a completed vase or as the basis for a pigment or glaze. Ancient Greek kilns could not reach a high enough temperature to produce a true glaze, and ‘slip’ is therefore the most correct technical term to use for the finishes used in the red figure and black figure techniques.

Socle. The lower part of a wall, often built more strongly than the upper parts, and sometimes emphasised as a decorative feature.

Soffit. The lower exposed surface of a part of a building, particularly the lower surface of an arch, architrave or cornice.

Solomonic. A term used to describe a column of twisted form, with deep spiralling grooves.

Soros. ‘Mound’; in particular a burial mound, the most famous example being the mound erected on the battlefield of Marathon over the graves of the Athenians who died there.

Spandrel or spandril. A triangular space with two straight and one curved side formed by the curving shoulder of an arch and the horizontal and vertical lines of the architecture or its decorative mouldings above and to the side of it.

Specus. The channel of an aqueduct.

Sphinx. A hybrid creature consisting of a lion’s body with a woman’s head (there is also a male version called an androsphinx). Borrowed from Egypt, it occasionally appears in Greek and Roman art.

Spicatum, see Opus.

Sphyrelaton. ‘Worked with the hammer’, a term used in a general way in Greek to describe work in hammered rather than in cast metal. It is also particularly associated with Greek statues made during the archaic period by fixing plates of hammered metal on to wooden cores. Fragments of some pieces of such work survive. A major work of this kind which is mentioned by Pausanias was the statue of Apollo made in the 6th century B.C. at Amyclae near Sparta which could be seen at the ‘Throne’ of Apollo built there by the architect Bathycles.

Spielbein, see Polycleitan stance.
Spina. ‘Spine’, the word favoured by modern writers as the name of the dividing wall or basin which ran along the centre of an ancient circus (see also Euripus).

Spintria. From the Greek sphinkter, ‘anal muscle’, a word for a male or female prostitute engaging in sodomy. The Roman historian Suetonius retails gossip concerning the emperor Tiberius to the effect that he was accompanied by spintriae at his secluded villa on Capri. As a result, although there is certainly no possible connection with Tiberius, the word has come to be used rather illogically to describe a class of coin-like objects depicting couples engaged in sexual encounters of all kinds. They may in fact have been tokens for use in brothels.

Squinch. A small flat arch set diagonally across the internal angle of a square building, turning it into an octagon. This reduced the stresses which were caused by setting a dome on a square base (cf.Pendentive). The squinch is occasionally found in the architecture of the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

Stadium. Originally a measure of length, two hundred paces or six hundred feet, the stadion became the standard length of a Greek racetrack for athletes (as opposed to a hippodrome which of course was longer). Well preserved stadia exist at Delphi and Olympia. When archaeologists are attempting to estimate the exact length of the foot which was used in different Greek communities, the length of the local stadium is often a relevant fact.

Stamnos. In ancient Greek the word has an imprecise meaning, signifying no more than a jar for storage purposes. Modern writers use it to describe a jar of similar shape to the hydria, with a moderately wide neck and broad shoulders tapering to a narrower base, with two horizontal handles (as opposed to the two horizontal handles and one vertical handle of the hydria).

Standard. According to Roman tradition, in the earliest times Roman soldiers used a bunch of straw on top of a pole as a rallying point, and this was later developed into a standard (signum). By the time of the Roman Empire each legion had a number of standards. One was called the aquila or eagle and was surmounted by the representation of an eagle. Another might bear upon it the figure of the legion’s own animal or bird. Smaller divisions of the legion also had their own standards. All of these were decorated with a variety of objects connected with the history of the legion or its successes: phalerae, torcs, crowns, imagine clipeatae etc. In later times the vexillum replaced the standard in some cases.

Stater. ‘Weighing, weight’, a word which was used in some parts of the Greek world for a standard unit of weight or for a coin which was the major or standard unit in a series. The early electrum coinage of Asia Minor was issued in the form of staters and sixths (hektai), with some other denominations. Some of the silver and gold coinage of
Greece itself was also denominated in staters (for example, the silver coins of Aegina which were didrachms but were usually listed in accounts as staters, the tridrachms of Corinth and the gold coins of Philip of Macedon and his successors).

**Statue.** A statue is strictly speaking a standing figure, as opposed to a bust, herm or *imago clipeata*, or a figure represented in relief.

**Stele.** A pillar or slab of stone or metal with or without inscriptions or other painted or carved decoration which may be set up as a boundary or grave marker, or serve some commemorative purpose (cf.Cippus). At Athens many funerary stelae of the late archaic and classical periods were decorated with sculpture (a sumptuary law of 317 B.C. forbade the practice because too many people were competing with each other and spending too much money).

**Stereobate.** This word is often used by modern writers as a name for the two lowest steps of a Greek temple below the stylobate. It is doubtful whether this is the sense in which it would have been understood by a Greek builder. Vitruvius defines the *stereobatae* (using the plural form) as the walls under the columns, but it is not clear what he means. It might be better to avoid using this word.

**Stilus,** see -Style.

**Stoa.** The Greek word for a colonnade or portico (Latin porticus). As an architectural form the stoa varied from a simple arrangement consisting of a row of columns supporting a sloping roof attached to a back wall, to a building of more than one story with rooms behind the colonnade instead of a simple wall. A stoa might also be built with two wings joining at an angle, or around three or four sides of a rectangular open space. In its simplest form the stoa provided shelter from the elements. In its more developed form it provided accommodation for a great variety of civic and commercial (as opposed to religious) activities. The best known ancient Greek stoa is that of Attalus II at Athens which has been rebuilt by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in conjunction with the Greek Archaeological Service and is now used as a museum and offices.

**Stretcher.** A stone or brick placed in a wall so that its longer side is visible (as opposed to a header).

**Stucco.** The Italian word which is used to describe a very hard plaster which is applied to walls, columns or ceilings of buildings to enhance their appearance. It may contain powdered stone or marble, and colouring pigments. Stucco may be applied as a flat coat, or modelled.

**Strigil.** A scraper, curved in shape and also in section, which was used to remove oil and grime from the skin. In art it is sometimes found as an attribute or a symbol of athletes. The term ‘strigillated’ is sometimes used to describe objects which are decorated with parallel grooves which have the same profile as that of a strigil.

**Strong style,** see Severe Style.

-Style. The Greek *stulos*, meaning a rod or shaft, forms part of a number of words which indicate the number or arrangement of the columns in a building (e.g. distyle, hexastyle, peristyle, prostyle, stylobate). For the terms used by Vitruvius to describe the spacings between the columns of a building, see Intercolumniation.

**Style.** This word is often used, but less often defined. When one speaks of an artistic style, one thinks in the first place of the technical features which distinguish work of different kinds. These may be a result of the materials or tools which are used; for instance, work in a very coarse or hard material will have a different appearance from work in a fine or easily worked material. Work produced with a chisel or an engraving tool is likely to have a different appearance from work produced by modelling or casting, although one may try to imitate the other. Work produced by painting in a variety of colours will have a different appearance from work which consists of painting in one colour only, or drawing with an instrument which can only produce lines of an unvarying thickness. Building in timber will have a different form from building in brick, concrete or stone, although sometimes the decorative elements are the same. The style of a work may be influenced by its purpose; on the other hand the characteristic of a style may be the result of decisions taken by artists, exercising their creative power or ‘artistic will’.
Further than this, the elements of style are line, colour (if applicable), shape (which is perhaps a better word to use than ‘form’, which has too many alternative meanings), the treatment of anatomy and the proportions of figures, the rendering of drapery and other forms, surface texture (real or suggested), composition and perspective, and the choice or range of subjects. Under the general heading of shape or form we may include the degree of modelling or relief which is suggested in two-dimensional work, or made a feature of work which is not completely in the round. We may talk of the style of an individual artist, or of a group or school, or of an area or a period.

Some differences between one style and another are the result of technical developments. Architects may discover new materials or learn new uses of materials which they have already been using. Over a generation or a century artists may learn better ways of representing the human body or folds of drapery in a realistic manner. More sophisticated conventions of perspective may be adopted, or ways of including greater numbers of figures in a scene without creating confusion may be devised. There may on the other hand be a reaction against technical virtuosity, or a loss of the ability to create it, resulting in a move towards simple forms and compositions.

Differences or changes in style may also be the result of external influences, caused by the movement of artists or of works of art from one place to another. Again, they may be caused by historical events or social developments, or they may have their origin in philosophical or religious trends. In modern times there is also the influence of commercial motives, which lead to the creation of new styles as a means of persuading consumers to buy things which they would otherwise not buy.

**Styles, Pompeian.** In the 19th century when the painted wall decorations of houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum were first scientifically studied, a classification into four styles was developed. This is sometimes useful for dating, although it is clear that older styles did not necessarily disappear when newer fashions were adopted.

The so-called First Style does not use figures or decorative patterns. It consists simply of attempts to represent on the plaster of the walls the appearance of slabs of much more expensive materials. It is found in Hellenistic Greek buildings. It is sometimes called the Incrustation (from *crusta*, the Latin word for a decorative facing slab of stone) or Masonry Style. It came into vogue at Pompeii in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. After the arrival of the Second Style it frequently forms a subsidiary part of other decorative schemes.