Macellum. The Roman word for a meat market.

Macchina, see Mechna.

Macmillan aryballos. Named after its former owner, this Protocorinthian aryballos which is displayed in the British Museum, is an excellent and well known example of the best work which this refined and delicate style can offer. It shows a battle with hoplites.

Maenad. ‘Mad woman’, a female follower of Dionysus or Bacchus (also known as a Bacchant or -ante), who accompanied him in his journeys and celebrated his rites in a state of ecstatic frenzy (cf. Satyr).

Maenianum. The Latin word for a balcony projecting from a building. It was said to have been derived from the name of a certain Maenius, who at an uncertain date had a balcony built looking out from the Basilica Aemilia on to the Forum. It was later also used for another kind of viewing place, being applied to a tier of seats in an amphitheatre (maenianum primum for the first level, maenianum secundum for the second, etc.).

Maeander (also meander). A decorative pattern (also sometimes known as a Greek key pattern) which is first found in Greek art in the geometric period. It takes its name from the river Maeander in Asia Minor, which follows a winding course through flat terrain. Ancient writers used the word to describe a decorative pattern of some kind, and since the pattern to which we give the name ‘meander’ is so well established in Greek art of all periods, it seems likely that this is indeed the one to which they are referring.

Marble. A fine-grained stone used in building, for sculpture and for the carving of inscriptions. Some marbles are plain, others are coloured with variegated patterns. The kind which was most prized for sculpture came from quarries on the island of Paros. This Parian marble was also know as lychnites, from lychnos, ‘lamp’, a term which one ancient author tells us comes from its being quarried by the light of lamps, but more probably was inspired by its luminous appearance or its translucent quality when cut in thin sheets. A famous source of marble for the major buildings of the 5th century and later at Athens was Mount Pentelicus, Pentelic marble being distinguished by a creamy tone resulting from a slight iron content in the stone. Another notable source was the island of Proconnesus, now called Marmara (i.e. the marble place) in the sea of Marmara between Europe and Asia. Many other sources of marble were exploited by the Greeks, and to an even greater extent by the Romans, whose major buildings were often decorated with a splendid array of coloured marbles.

Mask. In Greek and Roman art, masks are found in two principal contexts. The first is that of actors’ masks, since in the Greek and Roman theatre performers wore masks. The origin of this practice lies in religious rituals in which someone takes on the quality of another person or being. In the end, a large number of stock types of mask evolved – slave, hapless maiden, retired courtesan, grandfather etc. The masks themselves do not survive, because they were made of perishable materials. They are, however, represented in many works of art, and models of them were used for decorative purposes.

Funerary masks were not used by the Greeks or Romans (the gold masks found at Mycenae and in northern Greece are an exception, suggesting the importation of a foreign practice). Among the Romans, however, it was the practice in some families in the later Republic to take impressions from the faces of dead persons, and to use them not only for commemorative purposes but in something which went some way towards ancestor worship. This must have been at least partly responsible for the great interest shown by the Romans in realistic, as opposed to idealising, portraiture.

Mausoleum. The name given to the tomb built in the 4th century B.C. for King Mausolus of Caria by his widow Artemisia. Fragments of the building and its sculpture survive (most of them displayed in the British Museum), and since the elder Pliny preserves some information about the dimensions of the building, an approximate reconstruction of its arrangements is possible. In modern English the word is used for a major tomb, or jocularly for a large and lifeless building.

Meander, see Maeander.
**Mechane.** We are told that in the ancient Greek theatre actors representing gods were able to ascend or descend to or from the heavens by means of a ‘machine’ or *mechane*, which must have been either a crane or a hoist. Since in some Greek tragedies the otherwise insoluble problems of mortals are solved at the end of the play by a divine figure who announces the future course of events, the Latin expression *deus ex machina*, ‘a god from the machine’, has come to be used to describe a god (or a person acting in a similar way) who takes charge of events and resolves them in some way.

**Medallion.** In numismatics, the word has come to be used of a coin-like object which seems to have been issued to mark some special occasion, and can be distinguished from a coin because of its larger size, the extra care with which it has been prepared, the unusual type and legend which it bears, or the fact that its weight does not allow it to be classified as being of a denomination which would allow it to circulate as a coin. We reserve the word ‘medal’ for something issued to an individual to commemorate service of some kind. The Greeks did not produce medallions (although some of their more splendid coins may be described as being medallic in character), and neither the Greek nor the Romans issued medals to individuals as happens in the modern world, although some Roman medallions were certainly designed as presentation pieces.

We also use the word medallion to describe a decorative object, or a piece of unusually fine decorative work of circular form, which is set into some other work of sculpture, architecture or mosaic (*cf.* Roundel, Tondo).

**Megarian bowls.** A Greek predecessor of the Italian *terra sigillata*, made during the Hellenistic period. In spite of the name which is conventionally given to them, they were made in many Greek cities, not only at Megara. It is very likely that the moulds from which they were made were exported from one place to another. They are more or less hemispherical in form, about 140-150 mm in diameter, and have relief decoration on the outside. Some of the more complex figure scenes seem to show consecutive scenes from literature, and this has been claimed as a forerunner of the ‘continuous style’ which is found in some Roman art.

**Megaron.** When this word first appears in Homer, it seems to have no very specific sense other than that of a large room or hall. Modern writers have, however, chosen to use it to describe an architectural arrangement which occurs regularly in Mycenaean palaces, of a large public room, approached by way of an ante-room with a colonnaded entrance, usually with another room at the rear of it. This plan seems to have survived in the interior arrangements of later Greek temples. The word is also used to describe private houses, which in the earliest times in Greek often had a similar plan, and are therefore said to be ‘of megaron type’.

**Meniscus.** ‘Little moon’, a term used to describe any crescent-shaped object, particularly the crescent which appears in art as the attribute of a lunar deity, or a crescent (without any lunar significance) which was sometimes attached to the heads of statues in the hope that it would deter birds from perching there.

**Metope.** The panel, square or approximately so, which appears between the triglyphs in a Doric frieze. Some have thought that the metopes in a building represent the ends of beams in timber architecture. This is unlikely, because it seems more probable that this is the origin of the triglyphs. Metopes might be left plain, or might be decorated with paintings or sculpture in relief.

**Minoan.** The modern name for the civilisation which dominated Crete from approximately 3,000-1000 B.C. It takes its name from the legendary King Minos who was said to have ruled at Cnossus, with its labyrinth in which the hybrid Minotaur, half man and half bull, dwelt until it was slain by Theseus of Athens.

**Mirmillo,** see Gladiator.

**Mithraeum.** A building devoted to the cult of the Indo-Iranian god Mithra or Mithras, which was popular with Roman soldiers, and therefore spread widely throughout the Roman world. A Mithraeum consisted of a long hall with seating on each side and a space for an altar. It might also contain a pit in which initiates were sprinkled with the blood of a bull. Mithraea were built in caves or underground to ensure the secrecy of the rites which were practiced there. A Mithraeum might also contain works of art showing Mithra; the
most common one represents him in the act of slaying the bull which represents the powers of darkness, while a dog and a snake drink its blood; other scenes show his birth from a rock, and his association with the sun (Mithra is also a god of light).

Mitra, see Tiara.

Modelling line. A term used by some modern writers to describe a line or fold of drapery which is represented in such a way in a piece of sculpture or a painting that it suggests or emphasises the shape of a limb or an object beneath it. Greek sculptors and painters began to develop this feature of style in the 5th century B.C., and it continued to be part of the repertoire of artists until the arrival of Late Antique conventions of art.

Modillion. A small bracket supporting the projection of a cornice. A mutule is a kind of modillion.

Module. A unit of measurement which is used in planning the arrangements and proportions of a building or of a work of art. The word is first used in this sense by Vitruvius.

Monolithic. Made from a single stone (the modern use of the word as a synonym for ‘large’ should be avoided). Since it is easier to find and transport small pieces of stone than large ones, the use of large monolithic elements in architecture is often worthy of comment.

Monopteral. Vitruvius uses this word to describe a circular building with a colonnade around it (cf. Peristyle, Pteron) and no cela.

Morellian analysis. Giuseppe Morelli was a connoisseur of European Old Master paintings who in the 19th century caused distress to some owners of what were considered to be major paintings by showing that it was unlikely that they were in fact painted by the great artists whose names had been attached to them. His method of investigation was based on a very close study of what might be considered minor and trivial details, and is akin to that of a graphologist. Morelli’s approach is now accepted as correct, and it is agreed that it is often in these details, when he is working unconsciously rather than consciously, that an artist’s ‘signature’ can be most clearly recognised. Morelli’s method has been adopted with great success in other areas, most notably in the task of assigning the thousands of surviving black figure and red figure vases to individual artists (cf. Painter’s signature).

Mosaic. The word is derived, after some changes, from the late Latin musivus meaning ‘connected with the muses’, i.e. artistic. It was sometimes applied to ‘artistic’ as opposed to plain floors, and so came to be used in the special sense of a floor (or a wall or panel of some kind) decorated with stones arranged in an artistic pattern. The earliest mosaics, from c. 400 B.C., were made with pebbles (pebble mosaics) of the same colour, and then with simple arrangements of stones of different colours. The practice then began of cutting stones into rough cubes, which gradually began to be produced in more and more regular sizes. Black and white mosaics are the norm at first, then stones of a greater variety of colour were employed, and in the later Roman Empire when wall as well as floor mosaics became increasingly more common, glass tesserae, as they were called, became more common.

Once mosaic decoration had become established, it was used to reproduce figure scenes as well as geometric and vegetable patterns. The mosaics which survive, principally from Roman rather than Greek times, are an important form of evidence helping to reconstruct the appearance of lost wall and easel paintings. It is assumed, because mosaics often repeat motifs found elsewhere, that artists used pattern books which contained reproductions not only of standard decorative patterns, but also of major works of art from which the patron could make a selection.

Moschophoros. ‘Calf bearer’, a name which has been given to an archaic statue found on the Acropolis of Athens which shows a bearded man carrying a calf on his shoulders. If the animal were a ram, we might identify the figure as a representation of Hermes Kriophoros, but we do not know of any Greek god who is represented as a calf bearer. The statue is therefore probably intended to represent a worshipper who is bringing a calf to be sacrificed.

Motion line. A line used with a double curve which is used in the representation of drapery to suggest movement. It is first found in archaic Greek sculpture and painting, and continued to be used even after the arrival of Late Antique conventions in Roman art. It is used by cartoonists today in the same way.
**Moulding.** A general term used to describe a variety of different profile shapes used to enhance minor elements of architecture such as cornices, column capitals and bases, and transitions between one part of a building and another. The most common are the astragalos, the cyma recta and reversa, the hawksbeak, the ovolo and the cavetto. Each moulding is traditionally associated with its own kind of painted or carved decoration.

**Multiple brush.** The concentric circles and half circles which decorate Protogeometric and geometric vases may in some cases have been drawn with an arrangement of multiple brushes, attached to a central leg; occasionally the mark of this central leg may be seen on a vase.

**Museum/Mouseion.** Originally a place connected with the Muses or the arts which they inspired. The name was given to many places in the ancient world, the most famous one being the Mouseion at Alexandria, founded c. 300 B.C. by the first of the Ptolemies.

**Musivum, see Mosaic, Opus.**

**Mutule.** A thin flat rectangular slab projecting under the cornice in the Doric order. It has the same angle as the roof, and therefore probably represents a petrification in stone of a constructional feature in timber building. It is decorated with three rows of six guttae on its underside, a feature which suggests rows of dowels in timber building.

**Mycenaean.** A name given by modern writers to the civilisation of mainland Greece c. 1600-1100 B.C. It presupposes the supremacy of Mycenae, which is certainly the most impressive site yet excavated. Professional archaeologists often prefer the term Late Helladic. The Mycenaean civilisation was strongly influenced by the Minoan civilisation of Crete; it is not yet clear what the political relationship between the two may have been, although it is likely that the Mycenaeans invaded Crete after the middle of the second millennium B.C.

It has sometimes been thought that the upheavals for which there is some evidence at the end of the Mycenaean period may have caused a break in culture, and for this reason Protogeometric art has been treated as if it were the beginning of Greek art. It is still convenient to do so, but in fact a great deal of evidence has been accumulated to show that there was a considerable degree of continuity in Greek art and other aspects of life at the end of the second millenium B.C.