Galerus. A Roman priest’s cap (cf. Apex).
Games, see Festivals and Games.
Geison, see Cornice.
Genius. ‘Spirit’, a Latin word which usually means a supernatural inhabiting or protecting force associated with a person or place (the modern sense of ‘intelligence’ is rare in Latin). In Greek and Roman art an otherwise unidentifiable figure which does not seem to represent a human being is sometimes described as a ‘genius’. In Roman Imperial art figures are sometimes found which represent the Genius (or personification) of the Senate (bearded), the Genius of the Roman People (beardless), and the Genius of the Emperor. The last named was probably created as an expedient so that honours could be paid to an emperor in almost the same way as to a god, without deifying him in his lifetime (this was unacceptable in the western part of the Roman Empire).

Geometric. The name given to a period of Greek art (approximately 1000-700 B.C.) and to the works of art produced during that time. Geometric art is distinguished by its use of patterns of a geometric kind, triangles, circles and curves, often repeated in bands on the objects which they decorate. When human and other natural forms are represented in painting and sculpture (principally at the end of the period), they are reduced as far as possible to Geometric elements. At the end of this period, ‘orientalising’ elements creep into Geometric art. Many of the decorative patterns developed during this time were retained in later Greek art as minor or framing elements.

Gladiator. ‘Swordsman’ (from gladius, a sword), a trained warrior, usually a slave, condemned criminal or captive (although occasionally free men volunteered in the hope of making money), who fought in public contests. This was a feature of Roman rather than Greek civilisation, and seems to have had its origin in the Etruscan custom of arranging such contests at the funerals of dead warriors. In the course of time four standard types of gladiator evolved. The Samnite was armed with a short sword, and equipped with an oblong slightly curved shield, greaves and a large helmet with a visor covering the face. The Mirmillo was similarly accoutred, and distinguished by a crest on his helmet in the form of a fish. The Retiarius, or Net Man, wore no armour, and was equipped with a large net, in which he hoped to entangle his opponent, and a trident. The Thracian was lightly armed, with a round shield or pelta, and a curved sword of scimitar-like shape.

Gorgon. In Greek mythology the Gorgons are usually three in number, and are female in gender and fearful in their aspect (although in the Hellenistic and Roman periods there was a tendency for gorgons to become more beautiful). In early Greek art they are shown with wings, tusk-like canine teeth, and snakes in their hair. The sight of a gorgon’s face could turn a man to stone. The most famous gorgon was called Medusa, and it was her head that the hero Perseus was ordered to obtain. A gorgoneion, or gorgon’s mask, is a regular decoration of an aegis, and also sometimes appears alone. In early Greek art and architecture (where it might be used to decorate an antefix or a metope) a gorgoneion may have had an apotropaic purpose. In other cases it may, because of its use on the aegis, be a symbol of the goddess Athena/Minerva, or of Zeus/Jupiter.

Graffito (pl. graffiti). ‘Scratch’ (Italian), a word used to indicate a piece of writing or drawing made on buildings, pottery, coins etc. at a time after they were first made. A graffito should be distinguished from an inscription or coin legend made at the time of production of the object.

Greave. A piece of armour protecting a soldier’s lower leg.
Guilloche. An ornamental band, painted or carved, in the form of a braid or continuous figure of eight. It first appears in Greek art at the end of the Geometric period.
Gutta. ‘Drip’, the name given to a small cylindrical peg-like projection which is a feature of the Doric order. In canonical Doric, six guttae are placed under each regula, and three rows of six under each mutule. They have the appearance of timber dowels, and it is possible that this is what they are intended to represent.
**Guttus or Gutturnium.** In Latin texts these words occasionally appear as the names of a container from which liquids might be poured at a party or a religious ceremony. It is possible that one of these was the name of the narrow-necked jug which is represented sometimes in works of Roman relief sculpture or on coins together with other religious implements.