Bacchus, see Dionysus. A ‘bacchus’ was also the name of a torch carried in ceremonies connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries, and it must be this which is represented on some of the coins of Eleusis.

Baetyl. A word of Semitic origin, meaning ‘house of the god’, which was adopted by the Greeks. It was used to describe a stone which was worshipped; this was was most common with stones of meteoric origin, which of course would have been supposed to have come from a divine source. On the whole such aniconic representations are rare in the Greek world. For a notable exception, see Omphalus.

Bal(l)ista. A Roman siege engine or catapult of the larger size, as opposed to the smaller scorpio.

Band cup. The name given to a type of black figure kylix made at Athens in the second and third quarters of the 6th century B.C. and decorated in a delicate miniaturist style (see Little Master cups). The band cup is so called because has its decoration placed on a reserved band of red running around the cup between the handles.

Banded. A word used to describe a number of different types of pottery decorated with bands of colour, or other kinds of work decorated with bands of varying materials.

Barbiton or -os, see Lyre.

Barbotine. ‘Splashed’, a word used to describe the technique of decorating pottery with designs or letters modelled in a thick slip of clay and applied before firing to a previously shaped vase. This should be distinguished from the process of making pottery with relief decoration in moulds (see Terra sigillata).

Baroque. From the Italian barocco, meaning ‘odd, grotesque’, a term which was invented to describe the more developed, or overdeveloped, stage of Italian art which followed the Renaissance. The word is sometimes applied to the so-called ‘Pergamene’ style of Greek sculpture, to the latter stages of Attic red figure vase painting and to Roman art of the end of the Antonine period, although it has no great appropriateness in any of these cases.

Barrel amphora. An unusual form of amphora made in South Italy during the period when red figure vase painting was in vogue. It has a body with an almost cylindrical, slightly concave profile.

Base. In monumental architecture, columns stand on a moulded base (except in the Doric order). These bases take various forms, of which the most notable are the so-called ‘Attic’ and ‘Ephesian’ bases which are found in some major Ionic buildings of the classical and later periods. These have various combinations of torus and scotia mouldings; their names are given to them because specimens of the former type appear in the Periclean buildings on the Acropolis of Athens, and of the latter in the 4th century temple of Artemis at Ephesus.

In sculpture it was the normal practice for a statue which was to be displayed in public to be set on a base, which might itself be decorated with work in relief. This base often also bore an inscription identifying the work and its donor. Sometimes these bases have survived when the statues which they bore have disappeared, and in such cases they may provide useful information about works of art which would otherwise be completely lost.

Basilica. From the Greek basileus, ‘king’, a word meaning ‘royal’ which in some way not clearly understood became the regular name among the Romans of a type of large building, used for secular rather than religious purposes, which usually stood in the forum of a Roman city. ‘Town hall’ is a translation which is sometimes used. We do not know why this Greek word was so frequently employed by the Romans. It may be supposed that it was originally applied to a specific building or buildings in the Greek world, and was then taken over by the Romans, although it was less appropriate for them. The word does not imply any particular architectural form. The earliest basilicas were simple rectangular buildings. In the course of time a type with a wide central aisle or nave, and with two narrower side aisles, became normal. Sometimes clerestory windows gave light to the interiors of buildings constructed according to this arrangement. In the later Roman Empire vaults began to be used, and semi-domes began to be used in many buildings to create large niches. In a basilica these might contain the tribunal or magistrate’s seat, or a statue of a deity or of the ruling emperor. Although meetings of Christians were at first conducted in private houses or in small buildings usually used for other purposes, the public ceremonies of the
Christian Church began in due course to be conducted on a scale which demanded that they should be staged in larger buildings, and the Roman basilica was, naturally enough, a good model for these. As a result, the word is still sometimes used to describe major churches (e.g., the Basilica of St Peter at Rome).

**Bas-relief.** ‘Low relief’, from the Italian basso rilievo, describing a piece of relief carving which projects from its background for less than half the depth of the figures (cf. alto rilievo and mezzo rilievo).

**Batter.** The sloping of a wall, embankment etc. away from its base. If this batter occurs on both sides, it may have been created for a purely structural reason, because it makes the upper part less thick and therefore lighter than the lower part which supports it, and thus reduces the load upon the lower part and the foundations. In other cases, however, the thickness of a sloping wall remains the same for the whole of its height. In such instances, when the walls of a building lean inwards (an outward batter is structurally unsound and must be the result of incorrect building or subsidence of foundations), it is possible that there was an intention to produce an aesthetic or optical effect. In some Greek temples, for instance, the walls of the cela have a slight but measurable inward batter which matches the inward inclination of the columns of the peristyle. The evidence of Vitruvius suggests that this was intended to make the building appear taller (see Refinements).

**Bead and reel,** see Astragalus.

**Belvedere.** In the earlier stages of the development of the Vatican Palace at Rome, one of the building that it contained was named the Belvedere or ‘beautiful view’ because of its pleasant outlook. Although this view disappeared as the palace was expanded, the name continued to be applied to the building. It was also used as an addition to the titles of some works of art which found their way into that part of the Vatican during the Renaissance. The most famous of these is the Belvedere Apollo or Apollo Belvedere (a Roman copy of a Greek original of the 4th century B.C., which represents Apollo as an archer).

**Bema.** The Greek word for a speaker’s platform. At Athens the bema of the classical period survives, cut into the rock of the Pnyx opposite the Acropolis.

**Berlin goddess.** An early kore figure, now in Berlin. It may have been intended to represent Persephone, because the fruit which it holds in one hand may be a pomegranate, which is an attribute of that goddess.

**Bestiarius.** A man who fought against wild beasts in displays in the Roman amphitheatre, either as a paid professional who might win or lose, or as an unarmed criminal who was sent to execution in this way to provide public entertainment (cf. Gladiator).

**Bibliotheca.** A library. In the ancient world this was a building of very simple architectural form, consisting of a large room or rooms, perhaps with alcoves in which books could be stored. The books, whether they were scrolls or were produced in the later codex form with separate pages, were placed flat on shelves. A library at Ephesus had the unusual feature of a narrow passage running between external and internal walls. This passage provided access to a tomb below, probably that of Celsus the father of the founder of the library, and may also have been intended to protect the books which were kept in the central part of the building from damp.

**Bifrons.** ‘With two fronts’, a word sometimes used as an epithet of the Roman god Janus, also of an archway which faces in two directions (the normal arrangement) as opposed to four (cf. Quadrifrons).

**Biga.** A two-horse chariot, described as ‘slow’ when the horses are walking and ‘fast’ when they are galloping (cf. Quadriga, Triga; the Greek zeugos is not used in English). The name of bigatus was given to a Roman Republican coin issued early in the denarius series, which had a biga as its reverse type.

**Bilingual.** A term which is used to describe inscriptions, coins etc. which have writing in two languages on them. It is also applied to certain Attic vases of the later 6th century B.C. which are partly decorated in the black figure technique and partly in red figure.

**Black figure.** A technique of vase decoration which reached its peak in the middle of the 6th century B.C. at Athens. The basic colours used, a glossy black and a red/orange hue, were not produced from pigments but by a process of firing in three stages, oxygenating, reducing and oxygenating again, at the end of which some parts of the surface of the vase had turned permanently to red, while others remained in the black colour which they had reached at the second stage of firing. This was possible only when the clay
which was used had a sufficiently high iron content, since the changes of colour depend on the conversion of ferrous oxide to ferric oxide and vice versa. In black figure vase painting the figures and decorative patterns were black against a red background, which made it a silhouette style. Anatomical and other details were rendered for the most part with lines incised into the clay of the vase before firing. Some other colours were also used, some applied before firing and some after. The black figure technique was also occasionally used in other parts of the Greek world, and in Etruria.

**Blond boy.** A name which has been given to a marble head of c. 480 B.C. discovered on the Acropolis of Athens, because of the remains of a light colouring pigment visible upon the hair. It was probably once attached to the body of a kouros statue.

**Bluebeard pediment.** A name given to the remains of some pedimental sculpture of the mid-6th century B.C. discovered on the Acropolis of Athens. They are believed to have come from a building of Peisistratid date which originally stood on the site of the Parthenon. On the beard of one of the figures remains of a dark blue pigment are still visible.

**Boeotian shield.** A type of shield which was associated with Boeotia, and was used as a symbol of the Boeotian League of Thebes. It was oval in shape, with a notch cut out at each side. Its appearance suggests that it may have been developed from the ‘figure of eight’ shield which is shown in Mycenaean and Minoan art.

**Boss.** A projecting lump, such as is sometimes formed in the centre of a shield at the front, or in the centre of a phialé (the ‘omphalos’). Rough lumps which are sometimes found projecting from the otherwise finished stones of buildings are sometimes described as ‘lifting bosses’, on the assumption that they were left there so that ropes could be placed around them. This is perhaps possible, but their purpose was more probably to protect the surfaces from damage while the stones were being transported or installed.

**Bouleuterion.** The Greek word for the building in which the council or senate (the Boule) of a Greek city met. The architectural requirements of such a building were simple: it consisted of a covered hall with seating arranged around three sides in straight lines or a curve. The word implies a rather smaller building than an ekklesiasterion, and a larger one than a prytaneum.

**Boustrophedon.** ‘Ox-turning’, a word used to describe writing arranged in the fashion in which a field might be ploughed by a farmer driving an ox, i.e. with alternate lines reading in opposite directions. It is occasionally found in the earliest examples of Greek writing in the archaic period. When writing of this period consists of no more than a single line, it frequently runs from right to left, rather than from left to right. The boustrophedon style is therefore a less unnatural way of writing than it would seem to us.

**Brac(c)ae.** Trousers, which were not worn by the Greeks or Romans, but were used by barbarian nations further north in Europe, and are occasionally represented in works of Greek and Roman art.

**Bracket, see Corbel.**

**Brick.** In the ancient world two kinds of brick were used, baked and unbaked. Unbaked (sun-dried) brick was a good building material, provided that it could be shielded from the weather by cappings, plaster or overhangs, but usually only faint traces of it survive today. Baked brick was not used for walling by the Greeks, and in Roman work it is at first found only occasionally. When it begins to make an appearance it is not used for complete walls, but to provide a facing (see Opus) or occasional through-courses in concrete walls, or around wall openings. In early work flat roof tiles, divided diagonally, were employed as facing bricks, with the cut edge on the outside and the rest of the brick projecting as a triangle into the wall. In due course bricks were made specially for this purpose. Ancient bricks were of various sizes, but were always thinner than modern bricks, and were laid with relatively wide mortar joints; as a general rule, the wider the joint, the later the work.

**Brush, multiple.** The concentric circles and semicircles which decorate Geometric vases sometimes have a small depression at the centre. This suggests that they were created with a compass-like instrument, or that several lines were painted at the same time with a multiple brush.

**Bucephalus or Bucephalas.** The celebrated horse of Alexander the Great, sometimes represented with him in works of art.
**Bulla.** An amulet or protective charm worn by Roman children until they attained adulthood. It was placed in a bag or container and worn around the neck. Boys ceased to wear it when they attained manhood, girls probably put it off when they married.

**Bust.** In Roman art a bust (i.e. a head and neck, with the shoulders and some of the chest shown beneath them), was a regular alternative to a full length statue. In Republican times it was a common practice in upper class families to keep portrait busts of ancestors in the family home, and to display them on certain occasions. During the Empire, Imperial busts were displayed in many places, and a bust, showing enough of the shoulders to indicate whether the emperor was togate or cuirassed, became a common obverse type of the imperial coinage. As a rough guide (with some exceptions) it may be said that the later the bust, the further it is likely to extend downwards from the neck.