

# ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE Roman Architectural Orders

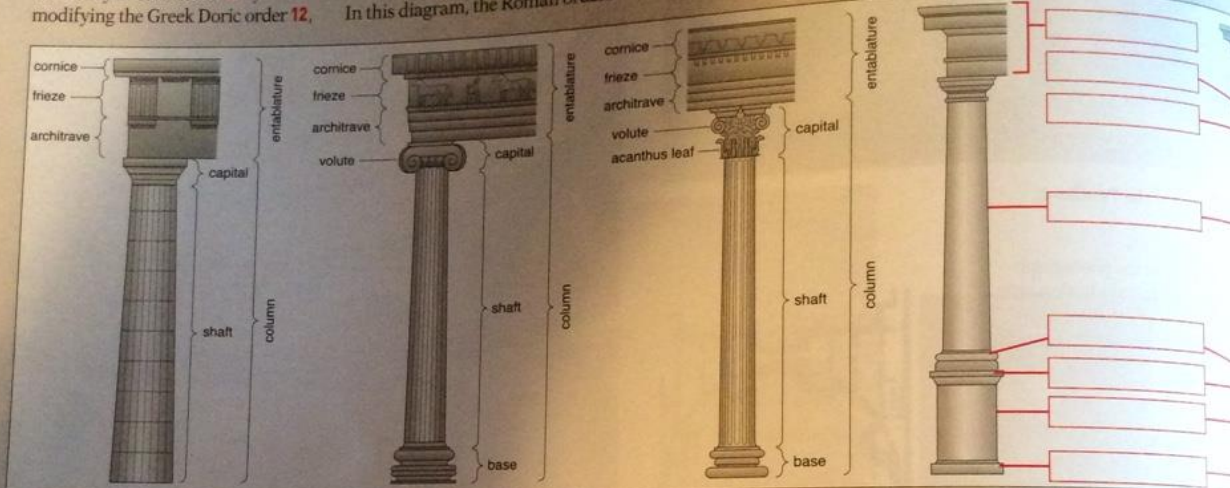
The Etruscans and Romans adapted Greek architectural orders to their own tastes, often using them as applied decoration on walls. The Etruscans developed the sturdy Tuscan order 15 by modifying the Greek Doric order 12.

smoothing out the shafts and setting them on a base. The Romans created the Composite order 16 by combining the volutes of the Greek Ionic capital 13 with the acanthus leaves of the Corinthian order 14. In this diagram, the Roman orders

are shown on pedestals, which consist of a plinth, a dado, and a cornice.

- ART GLOSSARY
  - shafts: fusti.
  - plinth: plinto, zoccolo.
  - cornice: cornice, cimasa.
- GLOSSARY
  - smoothing out: levigando.

Label the elements of the Tuscan and Composite orders on the right.



12. Doric order.

13. Ionic order.

14. Corinthian order.

15. Tuscan order.

16. Composite order.

## PRACTICE

1. Provide brief definitions for the following terms.

- caementa .....
- apse .....
- rotunda .....
- drum .....
- oculus .....
- coffer .....

2. Complete the text with the following verbs.

- called
- faced
- included
- flanked
- surround
- partitioned
- served
- consisted

Forums ..... of a large open space generally ... by colonnades leading to a temple. They sometimes ... a basilica, which ..... a variety of administrative functions, housing imperial audience chambers, armory halls, courts of law, or schools. The Basilica Ulpia was one of the largest buildings in the Forum of Trajan: its interior was ..... into a large central area ..... a ..... by two lower colonnaded aisles. You could see the basilica through several doors that ..... the open square.

3. Write the name of the emperor next to the period when he ruled, then add the matching work of art.

- Domitian
- Hadrian
- Titus
- Trajan
- Vespasian

- Pantheon
- Colosseum
- Column and Markets
- Arch of Constantine

69-79

79-81

81-96

98-117

117-138

# UNIT 2 Roman Imperial Art and Architecture

## COMPETENCES

- In this unit you will develop the following competences:
- understand how historical and social events relate to works of art
  - understand how Roman emperors used the arts as part of public policy
  - identify changes of style over time
  - interpret visual elements
  - analyse works of art
  - express ideas and opinions using knowledge and an art vocabulary

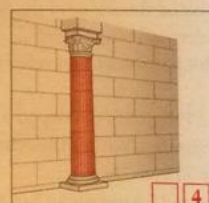
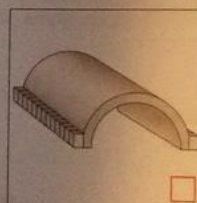
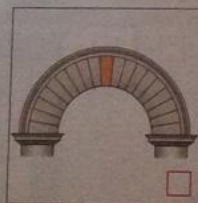
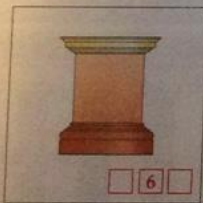
## LEAD IN

### 1. Working in pairs, answer these questions.

1. Have you ever been to Rome? What monuments of ancient Rome did you see or visit?
2. If you haven't been to Rome, what monuments of ancient Rome do you know or would you like to see?

### 2. Link the beginning of each sentence to its end, then match the resulting definitions to the pictures below.

- |                         |                                     |   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. A barrel vault is    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | a. the topmost stone block of an arch and the last one to be placed.  |
| 2. A groin vault is     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | b. a horizontally projecting element found at the top of a pedestal.  |
| 3. An engaged column is | <input type="checkbox"/>            | c. the base of a pedestal.  |
| 4. The shaft is         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | d. a semicircular vault shaped like a half-cylinder.                  |
| 5. The cornice is       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | e. the vertical section of a column between the capital and the base. |
| 6. The dado is          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | f. attached to a wall.  |
| 7. The plinth is        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | g. created by the intersection of two barrel vaults of equal size.    |
| 8. The keystone is      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | h. the central part of a pedestal.                                    |



## READING AND COMPREHENSION

### The Empire

The sequence of related Roman rulers that follows Augustus, beginning with Tiberius and ending with the reign of the despotic and capricious Nero, is known as the Julio-Claudian dynasty (14-68 CE). A powerful general named Vespasian seized control of the empire after Nero's death to found the Flavian dynasty (69-98 CE). The Flavian emperors Vespasian (ruled 69-79 CE), Titus (ruled 79-81 CE), and Domitian (ruled 81-96 CE) restored the empire and stabilized the empire's frontiers. Five outstanding rulers followed the Flavian dynasty: Nerva (ruled 96-98 CE), Trajan (ruled 98-117 CE), Hadrian (ruled 117-138 CE), Antoninus Pius (ruled 138-161 CE), and Marcus Aurelius (ruled 161-180 CE). These "Five Good Emperors" oversaw a long period of stability and prosperity. Under Trajan, the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent, annexing Dacia (roughly, modern Romania) in 106 CE and expanding the empire's boundaries in the Near East.

### COMPREHENSION 1

Tick the correct statements.

1.  The Julio-Claudian dynasty started with Nero.
2.  Vespasian was the founder of the Flavian dynasty.
3.  The conditions of the Roman Empire improved under the Flavians.

### GLOSSARY

related: imparentati tra loro.  
CE: d.C., dopo Cristo (Christian Era)  
outstanding: eccellenti

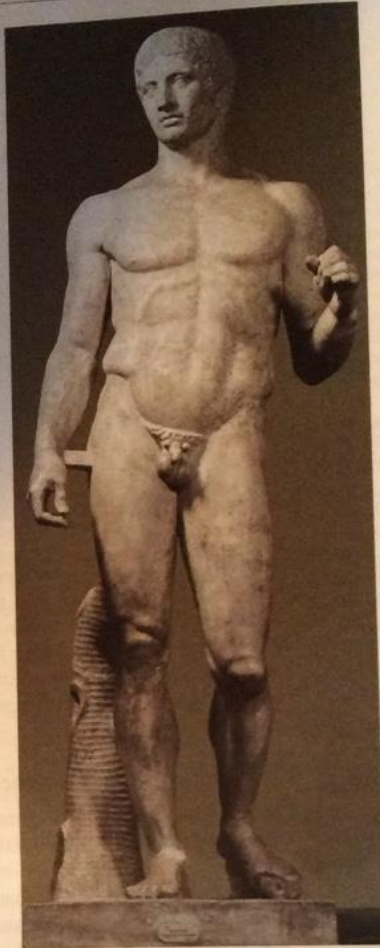
## ART AND ITS CONTEXTS The Canon of Polykleitos

Just as Greek architects defined and followed a set of strict standards for ideal temple design, Greek sculptors sought an ideal for representations of the human body. Studying human appearances closely, the sculptors of the Classical period selected those attributes they considered most desirable and beautiful, such as regular facial features, smooth skin, and particular body proportions, then combined them into a single ideal. The best-known art theorist of the Classical period was the sculptor Polykleitos of Argos. About 450 BCE he developed a set of rules for constructing what he considered the ideal human figure, which he set down in a treatise called *The Canon* (*kanon* is Greek for "measure," "rule," or "law"). To illustrate his theory, Polykleitos created a larger-than-life bronze statue of a man carrying a spear – perhaps the hero Achilles. Neither the treatise nor the original statue has survived, but both were widely discussed in the writings of his contemporaries, and later Roman artists made marble copies of the *Spear Bearer* (*Doryphoros*) 7. By studying these copies, scholars have tried to determine the set of measurements that defined the ideal proportions in Polykleitos' canon. The canon included a system of ratios between a basic unit and the length of various body parts 9. Some studies suggest that this basic unit may have been the length of the figure's index finger or the width of its hand across the knuckles; others suggest that it was the height of the head from chin to hairline.

The canon also included guidelines for *symmetria* ("commensurability"), by which Polykleitos meant the relationship of body parts to one another. In the *Spear Bearer*, he explored not only proportions but also the relationships between weight-bearing and relaxed legs and arms in a perfectly balanced figure. The cross-balancing of supporting and relaxed elements in a figure is sometimes referred to as *contrapposto*. The Roman marble copy of the bronze *Spear Bearer* illustrated here shows a male athlete, perfectly balanced, with the whole weight of the upper body supported by the straight (engaged) right leg. The left leg is bent at the knee, with the left foot poised on the ball of the foot, suggesting movement. The pattern of tension and relaxation is reversed in the arrangement of the arms, with the right relaxed on the engaged side and the left bent to support the weight of the (missing) spear 10. This dynamically balanced body pose – characteristic of Classical standing figure sculpture – evolves out of the pose of the "Kritios" Boy 8 of a generation earlier. The tilt of the *Spear Bearer's* hipline is a little more pronounced to accommodate the raising of the left foot onto its ball, and the head is turned toward the same side as the engaged leg.

### Answer the questions.

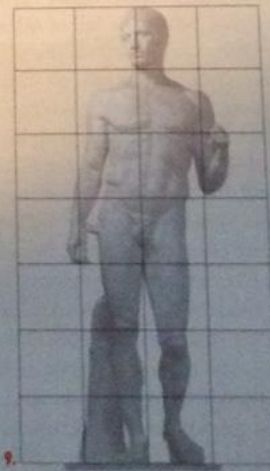
1. What did Polykleitos of Argos develop?
2. What did Polykleitos' canon include?
3. What did Polykleitos mean by the term *symmetria*?



7. Polykleitos, *Spear Bearer* (*Doryphoros*), Roman copy after the original bronze of c. 450–440 BCE (free trunk and bracing strut are Roman additions), marble, height 6' 11" (2.12 m), Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).



8. "Kritios" Boy, c. 480 BCE, marble, height 3' 10" (1.17 m), Acropolis Museum, Athens (Greece).



9.



10.

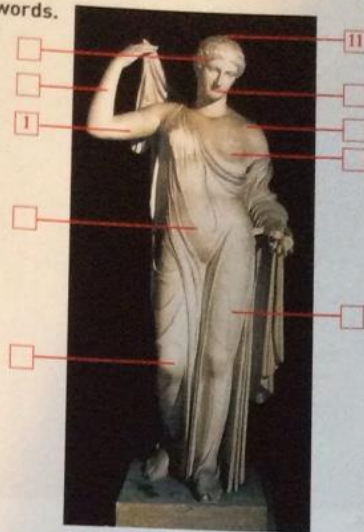
### GLOSSARY

features: tratti.  
smooth: liscia.  
treatise: trattato.  
larger-than-life: più grande del vero.  
spear: lancia.  
ratios: rapporti.  
width: larghezza.  
knuckles: nocche.  
height: altezza.  
chin: mento.

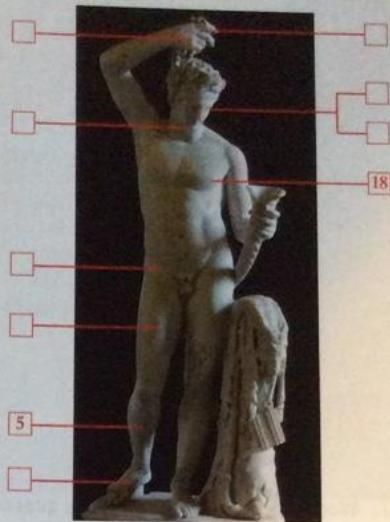
hairline: attaccatura dei capelli.  
weight-bearing: che sostengono il peso.  
balanced: in equilibrio.  
straight: diritta.  
bent: piegata.  
ball of the foot: avampiede.  
pattern: schema.  
hipline: linea dell'anca.

3. Label the pictures with the listed words.

1. arm
2. ball of the foot
3. belly
4. breast
5. calf
6. chin
7. eyebrow
8. eyelash
9. forearm
10. hairline
11. head
12. hip
13. index finger
14. knee
15. knuckles
16. leg
17. lips
18. nipple
19. shoulder
20. thigh



14. "Fréjus" Venus, Roman copy of work from Phidian school.



15. Pouring Satyr, Roman copy after Praxiteles.

4. Complete the text with the appropriate words.

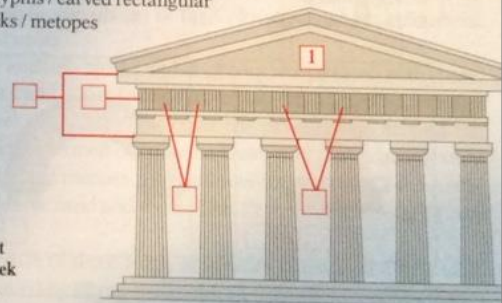
- *contrapposto* ■ height ■ rules ■ length ■ proportions  
 ■ ratios ■ supporting ■ *symmetria*

A canon is a set of ..... that Greek sculptors used to construct the ideal human figure. The first canon was developed by Polykleitos of Argos. It contained a system of ..... between a basic unit and the ..... of various body parts, and it also included guidelines for ..... the relationship of body parts to one another. To illustrate his theory Polykleitos created the statue of the *Spear Bearer*, in which he explored the cross-balancing of ..... and relaxed elements which is sometimes referred to as .....

In the fourth century BCE Praxiteles developed a new canon of ..... for figures. While Polykleitos' canon called for figures 6 1/2 or 7 times the ..... of the head, Praxiteles created figures about 8 or more "heads" tall.

5. Look at the front of a Greek temple and identify its elements, then describe them using the given words. Follow the example.

1. *pediment* / triangular section / entablature → The pediment is the triangular section above the entablature.
2. entablature / consist / cornice / frieze / architrave
3. frieze / central section / entablature
4. metopes / plain or painted rectangular spaces / frieze
5. triglyphs / carved rectangular blocks / metopes



16. Front of a Greek temple.

6. Write a brief description of the Propylaea, the Erechtheion, and the Temple of Athena Nike. Include information about construction period, location on the Athenian Acropolis and special features of each building.

PRODUCTION

7. Thomas Bruce brought the Elgin Marbles to Britain. In recent times the Greek government has tried to have them returned, but hasn't succeeded so far. Working in groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think the statues should be returned to Greece? Why? Why not?
2. If they were returned, this would set a precedent that would empty museums all over the world. Would this be right?

3. Do you know any Italian works of art that are housed in museums in foreign countries? Should they be returned to Italy?

8. Few artists in ancient Greece were women, but there is evidence of some women artists (for example, Aristarete, Iaia, Eirene, Kalypto, and Timarete). Use material available in the school library or the Internet to find information about a woman artist of this period.