

In the ancient Greek religion the various gods were the most important focus, and Classical Greek temple architecture created structures that emphasized that focus. An inner, windowless room, or *cella*, housed an image of a god, and an altar stood outside the temple, usually at the eastern end. The *cella*, Greek *Naos*, is the body of a temple: it was a simple room, usually rectangular, with the entrance at one end and with the side walls often being extended to form a portico (Greek *Pronaos*). Most Greek temples from the Archaic were constructed of wood, and later were built of marble or other stone. The transition from wooden temple to temple stone or marble occurred in about two centuries: is called "litizzazione" (Greek *lithos*). The temples were richly carved and polychromed, stepped platform (*stylobate*) and having sloping roofs supported on a portico by columns in a variety of styles and placements. Ancient Greek architecture developed two distinct orders (or styles), the Doric and the Ionic, together with a third (Corinthian) capital (designed by Kallimachos in 445 b. C.), which, with modifications, were adopted by the Romans in the 1st century b. C. and have been used ever since in Western architecture.

The Doric and Ionic orders originated nearly simultaneously on opposite shores of the Aegean Sea; the Doric on the Greek mainland and in the colonies of "Magna Grecia" and the Ionic in the Greek cities of Asia Minor. The Doric may be considered the earlier order of the two only in its developed form. Both orders originated in temples constructed out of wood. The earliest well-preserved example of Doric architecture is the Temple of Hera at Olympia, built soon after 600 b. C. From these beginnings, the evolution of the stone Doric column can be traced in architectural remains in Greece, Sicily, and southern Italy, where the Doric was to remain the chief order for monumental buildings for the next eight centuries.

The Doric order is characterized by a slightly tapered column that is the most squat of all the orders. The Greek forms of the Doric order have no individual base and instead rest directly on the *stylobate*. The Doric shaft is channeled with 21 shallow flutes. The capital, as stated before, consists of a simple necking; a spreading, convex *echinus*; and a square *abacus*. The frieze section of the Doric entablature is distinctive. It is composed of projecting *triglyphs* (units each consisting of three vertical bands separated by grooves) that alternate with receding square panels, called *metopes*, that may be either plain or carved with sculptured reliefs.

The Ionic order differs from the Doric in having more flutes on its shaft and in the scrolls, or volutes, that droop over the front and rear portions of the *echinus* in the capital. The *echinus* itself is carved with an egg-and-dart motif. The base of the column has two *tori* (convex moldings) separated by a *scotia*. The shaft, has 23 flutes. On the entablature, the architrave is usually made up of three stepped fasciae (bands). The frieze lacks the Doric triglyph and metope, and hence this area can hold a continuous band of carved ornament, such as figural groups.