

The chief distinguishing feature of the Ionic order as illustrated in Figs. 2-3, is the volute or scroll capital, the origin of which has been traced to different sources. The columns, including shaft, base and capital are in height about nine times the lower diameter and therefore more slender than the Doric in proportion. The base is usually moulded with torus and scotia, the square plinth being absent. Later examples have a lower torus added, making what is named the Attic base. The shafts have flutes, usually twenty-four in number, differing from the Doric in being separated by fillets.

The capital consists of a pair of volutes or spirals at back and front of column, being, in height, about two thirds the diameter. It should be mentioned that the "diameter" is the lower diameter of the column, which forms a scale by which the other parts are proportioned.

The volutes are connected at their sides by what is known as the cushion which is either plain or ornamented and connecting them at front and back is an echinus moulding ornamented with the egg and dart, having a bead moulding under. The volutes, extremely intricate, were formed by hand or geometrically, those on the angle column being generally formed to face both facades, as sketched in Fig. 4. One example, the temple at Bassae, has all the volutes so placed. The entablature, though varying in height is usually about one fifth that of the whole order. The architrave is formed in three faces, apparently representing superimposed beams, and the frieze, though sometimes plain, is ornamented with a band of continuous sculpture. Forming the cornice are the cyma-recta moulding, the corona and usually a dentil course. The Doric Order provided a setting for sculpture while the Ionic incorporated the carving with the order.

The more ornate Corinthian Order was seldom used. Column, base and shaft are similar to those of the Ionic, the total height of the three being about ten times the diameter, thus becoming still more slender. It stands, as do the two previous orders, on a stylobate and its distinctive feature is the very ornamental capital, which is from one to one and one sixth times the diameter in height. The origin of the capital is clothed in obscurity. Its probable derivation is from the Ionic examples, such as at the Erechtheion, where bands of sculpture occur beneath the volutes as illustrated in Fig. 2. As seen on the illustration Fig. 3, it consists of a bell upon which are carved two tiers of eighth acanthus leaves and between those of the upper row are eight cauliculi surmounted by a curled leaf or calyx, from which spring the volutes, supporting the corners of the abacus, and in the centre small volutes support a floral ornament. The moulded abacus is curved on each face, the angles being either brought to a point or chamfered off.

The entablature, its height normally about one fifth that of the whole order, resembles the Ionic, though the cornice mouldings are more enriched.

Practically all the important ancient buildings now found in Greece are the temples which were built in the fifty years following the final defeat of the Persians in B.C. 480, a period of national exultation.

The temples were designed with special regard to external effect, richly sculptured, to form fitting shrines for the deities, in whose honour they were erected. They were erected in a "temenos" or sacred enclosure and consisted of a "naos" or cella, which was usually oblong in plan, containing the statue of the God or Goddess; a treasury or chamber beyond and a front and rear portico and flanking colonnades, the whole resting on a stylobate generally of three steps. The roofs were constructed of timber, covered with marble slabs, the overlapped joints of which had antefixae at the eaves. In most cases, the door was placed in the centre of the end wall, behind the portico and sometimes planned to enable the lighting of the statue opposite.

As the temples had no windows, with one exception, at Agrigentum, many theories have been advanced as to the method of lighting. Many authorities maintain that light was obtained only through the doorways, while others hold that transparent Parian marble roofing slabs sufficed, or that artificial illumination was resorted to. However, there seem grounds for believing that a "hypoethral" opening was formed in the roof; but as the roofs have naturally long since disappeared, there is no conclusive evidence. In the larger temples, internal colonnades of columns placed over each other were employed to support the roof. The two end facades had a triangular pediment, corresponding to the slope of the roof, frequently filled with sculpture.

The temples are classified according to the disposition of their columns. For instance the simplest is termed "di-style in antis" where one end only has two columns between the antae or pilasters terminating the side walls.

The exterior columns with their entablature constitute the entire height of the building. The example which is regarded as the most representative of Greek architecture is the Parthenon on the Acropolis at Athens. It is, "peripteral octastyle" on plan, that is, having porticos at each end with eight columns and columns on each side, in this instance numbering seventeen, thus being completely surrounded with columns. In addition to the cella, at the western end of which was the famous statue of Athena, and which was called the "Hectatompedon," there was, at the western end of the cella, the Parthenon, or virgin's chamber, from which the temple took its name. The latter chamber was probably used as the Hieratic treasury.

In addition to the temple many other buildings were erected, including the theatres, palaces and tombs. The orders were an outstanding feature of the architecture. The first used, the Doric, was also mostly employed. The succeeding, the Ionic is seen in fewer examples while the Corinthian was least employed. The succession is well expressed in Thomson's lines:—

"First, unadorn'd,
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
Th' Ionic, then, with decent matron grace,
Her airy pillar heaved; luxuriant last,
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath."