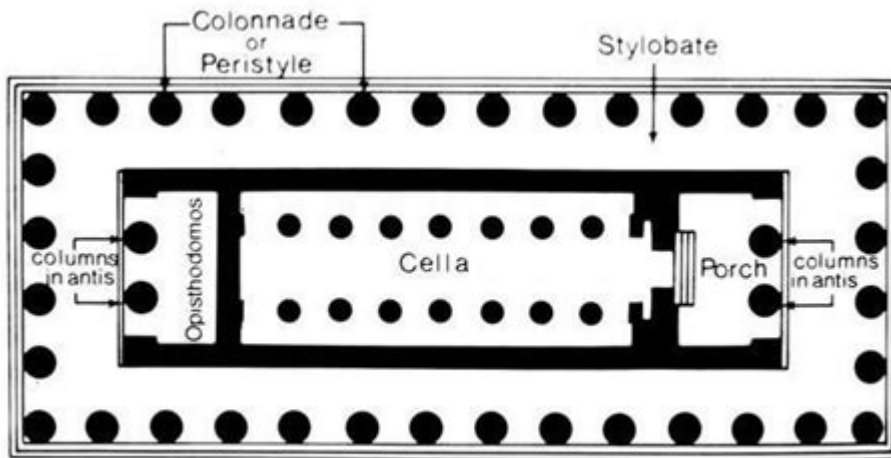


# Cella Art History Definition



## Cella Art History Definition: Unveiling the Heart of Ancient Temples

Stepping into the hallowed halls of ancient Greek and Roman architecture, you'll encounter a term that holds the key to understanding their sacred spaces: the cella. This blog post will delve deep into the cella art history definition, exploring its significance, variations, and its role in the broader context of ancient religious practices. We'll uncover the architectural features, artistic embellishments, and cultural implications that made the cella the very heart of these impressive structures. Prepare to journey back in time and unlock the secrets of this crucial element of classical architecture.

### What is a Cella in Art History?

The cella art history definition is simple yet profound: it's the inner, most sacred chamber of a classical temple. Think of it as the temple's "holy of holies," the space dedicated to the deity or deities it housed. Unlike the elaborate exterior, often adorned with intricate columns and sculptures, the cella itself was typically a relatively plain rectangular room. This seeming simplicity, however, belies its immense religious importance. The cella wasn't merely a storage space for statues; it was the place where the divine presence was believed to reside, a space for ritual, prayer, and offering.

### Architectural Features of the Cella

While the exterior of the temple dictated its architectural order (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), the cella's internal design varied depending on the temple's size, location, and the specific deity it was dedicated to. However, some common features emerged:

### **Interior Walls and Flooring:**

The cella walls were generally plain, often made of stone or brick, and frequently plastered and painted. The floor was usually paved with stone or tile, sometimes featuring intricate mosaics in later periods.

### **The Adyton:**

In some larger temples, a smaller inner chamber, called the adyton, existed within the cella. This innermost sanctum was even more sacred and often contained the most revered statues or cult objects. Access was usually restricted to priests and temple officials.

### **Altars and Statues:**

The main focus of the cella was typically the cult statue of the deity. This wasn't simply a decorative piece; it was believed to be the physical embodiment of the god or goddess. Altars for offerings and rituals were also commonly located within the cella.

## **Artistic Embellishments and Decoration in the Cella**

While the cella's exterior might boast elaborate sculptures and ornamentation, its interior decoration varied significantly across different periods and cultures. Early cellas were often relatively spartan, with the focus solely on the cult statue. However, later periods saw increased use of:

### **Painting and Fresco:**

Walls and ceilings were sometimes decorated with frescoes, depicting mythological scenes, religious narratives, or symbolic imagery related to the deity housed within.

### **Sculptures and Reliefs:**

Beyond the central cult statue, smaller sculptures or relief carvings could adorn the walls, further enhancing the sacred atmosphere.

### **Architectural Details:**

Even without extensive painting, the architectural details themselves, such as the ceiling design or the placement of niches, could contribute to the cella's overall aesthetic and religious significance.

# The Cella's Role in Religious Practice

The cella wasn't simply a building; it was the central location for a wide range of religious practices:

**Ritual Offerings:** Priests performed ceremonies and presented offerings to the deity within the cella.

**Prayer and Worship:** Devotees would come to the temple to pray and seek the deity's favor.

**Festivals and Celebrations:** Religious festivals often involved special rituals and ceremonies held within the cella.

**Storage of Sacred Objects:** The cella served as a secure repository for sacred relics and artifacts associated with the deity.

## Cella Variations Across Different Cultures

While the term "cella" is most strongly associated with Greek and Roman temples, similar concepts existed in other ancient cultures. The basic idea of a sacred inner chamber within a larger religious structure is a common motif in architectural history. Though the specific design and features might vary, the underlying principle of a dedicated space for divine presence remains consistent.

## Conclusion

The cella art history definition transcends a simple architectural description. It represents the heart of ancient religious life, a space where the divine and the human intersected. By understanding the cella's architectural features, artistic embellishments, and its role in religious practices, we gain a deeper appreciation for the beliefs and values of ancient cultures. The cella's enduring legacy serves as a testament to the enduring power of faith and the lasting influence of classical architecture.

## FAQs

1. Were all cellas the same size and shape? No, the size and shape of cellas varied considerably, depending on the size and design of the temple, as well as the specific deity it was dedicated to.
2. What materials were typically used to construct cellas? Cella construction materials varied, but commonly included stone (such as marble or limestone), brick, and sometimes wood.
3. Were cellas always accessible to the public? No, access to the cella was often restricted to priests and temple officials. The public usually only had access to the temple's exterior areas.

4. How did the cella's design reflect the power of the deity? The size, opulence, and decoration of the cella could reflect the perceived power and importance of the deity it housed. Larger, more elaborately decorated cellas suggested a more powerful deity.

5. Are there any surviving examples of cellas we can still see today? Yes, numerous examples of cellas, or at least the foundations and remnants of cellas, survive at various archaeological sites across the Mediterranean and beyond, providing valuable insights into ancient religious practices and architecture.

**cella art history definition:** History of Art and Architecture Joann Lacey, 2021-01-24 This is a survey of the history of art and architecture of Western civilizations. The textbook extends from the age of Prehistory until the end of the Gothic period. The textbook includes illustrations, graphs, and reconstruction images curated from Creative Commons material. The textbook includes original text not protected intellectual property.

**cella art history definition: A History of Roman Art** Steven L. Tuck, 2021-03-30 The new edition of the leading textbook on Roman art, updated with new images and expanded geographic and cultural scope A History of Roman Art is an expansive survey of the painting, mosaic, sculpture, decorative arts, and architecture of ancient Rome. This acclaimed textbook provides a fully-illustrated narrative history of Roman art that spans a millennium, from the early origins of Rome to the era of Emperor Constantine. Interwoven throughout the text are themes of Rome's cultural inclusiveness and the importance of art in promoting Roman values, helping students understand how diverse cultures contributed to Roman life. Accessible, chronologically-organized chapters provide numerous examples of the arts, their cultural and historical context, descriptions of artistic techniques, and writings by ancient authors—enabling students to develop a rich appreciation of art's importance in the Roman world. Now in its second edition, this market-leading textbook features thoroughly revised content throughout. Additional images and excerpts from literary sources are complemented by new historical discussions of metalwork, carved gems, glass, and sarcophagi. This edition features more maps and illustrations, in-depth analysis of iconography, greater emphasis on the types of objects used to decorate the lives of ordinary Romans, expanded coverage of freedmen and women as artists, subjects, and patrons, and much more. A number of works that represent popular art have been added. That is, art in the everyday Roman world, rather than just the large scale works of sculpture and architecture of elite patrons. It also reveals patterns of artistic workshops, trade, and social and economic networks. Additionally, this edition takes into account new approaches in scholarship. This comprehensive textbook: Provides a thorough introduction to Roman art history featuring more than 400 high quality images and illustrations Includes a full set of pedagogical tools, such as historical timelines, key term definitions, and updated references and further reading suggestions Offers "Scholarly Perspective," "A View from the Provinces," "More on Myth," and "Art and Literature" textboxes in each chapter Includes a companion website containing PowerPoint slides and additional instructor resources A History of Roman Art, Second Edition is an ideal primary o

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**cella art history definition: A History of Greek Art** Mark D. Stansbury-O'Donnell, 2015-01-27 Offering a unique blend of thematic and chronological investigation, this highly illustrated, engaging text explores the rich historical, cultural, and social contexts of 3,000 years of Greek art, from the Bronze Age through the Hellenistic period. Uniquely intersperses chapters devoted to major periods of Greek art from the Bronze Age through the Hellenistic period, with chapters containing discussions of important contextual themes across all of the periods Contextual chapters illustrate how a range of factors, such as the urban environment, gender, markets, and cross-cultural contact, influenced the development of art Chronological chapters survey the

appearance and development of key artistic genres and explore how artifacts and architecture of the time reflect these styles Offers a variety of engaging and informative pedagogical features to help students navigate the subject, such as timelines, theme-based textboxes, key terms defined in margins, and further readings. Information is presented clearly and contextualized so that it is accessible to students regardless of their prior level of knowledge A book companion website is available at [www.wiley.com/go/greekart](http://www.wiley.com/go/greekart) with the following resources: PowerPoint slides, glossary, and timeline

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**cella art history definition:** The Frame in Classical Art Verity Platt, Michael Squire, 2017-04-20 This book reveals how 'marginal' aspects of Graeco-Roman art play a fundamental role in shaping and interrogating ancient and modern visual culture.

**cella art history definition:** Religions of the Ancient World Sarah Iles Johnston, 2004-11-30 This groundbreaking, first basic reference work on ancient religious beliefs collects and organizes available information on ten ancient cultures and traditions, including Greece, Rome, and Mesopotamia, and offers an expansive, comparative perspective on each one.

**cella art history definition:** Art History Marilyn Stokstad, 2009

**cella art history definition:** History of Art Horst Woldemar Janson, Anthony F. Janson, 2004 For forty years, this widely acclaimed classic has remained unsurpassed as an introduction to art in the Western world, boasting the matchless credibility of the Janson name. This newest update features a more contemporary, more colorful design and vast array of extraordinarily produced illustrations that have become the Janson hallmark. A narrative voice makes this book a truly enjoyable read, and carefully reviewed and revised updates to this edition offer the utmost clarity in contributions based on recent scholarship. Extensive captions for the book's incredible art program offer profound insight through the eyes of twentieth-century art historians speaking about specific pieces of art featured throughout. Significantly changed in this edition is the chapter on "The Late Renaissance," in which Janson offers a new perspective on the subject, tracing in detail the religious art tied to the Catholic Reform movement, whose early history is little known to many readers of art history. Janson has also rearranged early Renaissance art according to genres instead of time sequence, and he has followed the reinterpretation of Etruscan art begun in recent years by German and English art historians. With a truly humanist approach, this book gives written and visual meaning to the captivating story of what artists have tried to express—and why—for more than 30,000 years.

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**cella art history definition:** *Mathematics and Art* Lynn Gamwell, 2016 This is a cultural history of mathematics and art, from antiquity to the present. Mathematicians and artists have long been on a quest to understand the physical world they see before them and the abstract objects they know by thought alone. Taking readers on a tour of the practice of mathematics and the philosophical ideas that drive the discipline, Lynn Gamwell points out the important ways mathematical concepts have been expressed by artists. Sumptuous illustrations of artworks and cogent math diagrams are featured in Gamwell's comprehensive exploration. Gamwell begins by describing mathematics from antiquity to the Enlightenment, including Greek, Islamic, and Asian mathematics. Then focusing on modern culture, Gamwell traces mathematicians' search for the foundations of their science, such as David Hilbert's conception of mathematics as an arrangement of meaning-free signs, as well as artists' search for the essence of their craft, such as Aleksandr Rodchenko's monochrome paintings. She shows that self-reflection is inherent to the practice of both modern mathematics and art, and that this introspection points to a deep resonance between the two fields: Kurt Gödel posed questions about the nature of mathematics in the language of mathematics and Jasper Johns asked What is art? in the vocabulary of art. Throughout, Gamwell describes the personalities and cultural environments of a multitude of mathematicians and artists, from Gottlob Frege and Benoît Mandelbrot to Max Bill and Xu Bing. *Mathematics and Art* demonstrates how mathematical ideas are embodied in the visual arts and will enlighten all who are interested in the complex intellectual pursuits, personalities, and cultural settings that connect these vast disciplines.

**cella art history definition:** *Karel van Mander and his Foundation of the Noble, Free Art of Painting* Walter S. Melion, 2022-10-04 Winner of the 2023 Roland H. Bainton Prize for Art History  
Written by the poet-painter Karel van Mander, who finished it in June 1603, the *Grondt der edel, vry schilderconst* (Foundation of the Noble, Free Art of Painting) was the first systematic treatise on *schilderconst* (the art of painting / picturing) to be published in Dutch (Haarlem: Paschier van Wes[t]busch, 1604). This English-language edition of the *Grondt*, accompanied by an introductory monograph and a full critical apparatus, provides unprecedented access to Van Mander's crucially important art treatise. The book sheds light on key terms and critical categories such as *schilder*, *manier*, *uyt zijn selven doen*, *welstandt*, *leven* and *gheest*, and *wel schilderen*, and both exemplifies and explicates the author's distinctive views on the complementary forms and functions of history and landscape.

**cella art history definition:** *Religious Context of Early Christianity* Hans-Josef Klauck, 2003-05-01 This is a uniquely well-informed and comprehensive guide to the world of religion in the Graeco-Roman environment of early Christianity. Drawing on the most up-to-date scholarship, the volume paints a carefully nuanced portrait of the Christians' religious context. Besides describing ordinary domestic and civic religion and popular belief (including astrology, divination and 'magic'), there is extended discussion of mystery cults, ruler and emperor cults, the religious dimensions of

philosophy, and Gnosticism. A valuable textbook for advanced students, as well as an authoritative reference work for scholars.

**cella art history definition:** *Ancient Building in Cyprus* George R. H. Wright, 1992 The wealth of excavation in Cyprus conducted across a period of nearly a century and a half has revealed much evidence of ancient building of all functional categories. This picture extends over a vast range of time (ca. 10,000 years) since Cyprus is probably the place where the earliest substantial building known, the Neolithic round house style is better presented than anywhere else in the world. It is the aim of this book to set forth and document the building tradition which hitherto has received no detailed exposition. The book will fill several gaps in the library shelves at one and the same time: architectural history that presents all the archaeological evidence.

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**cella art history definition: Selected Writings: 1935-1938** Walter Benjamin, Howard Eiland, Gary Smith, 1996 Comprising more than 65 pieces - journal articles, reviews, extended essays, sketches, aphorisms, and fragments - this volume shows the range of Walter Benjamin's writing. His topics here include poetry, fiction, drama, history, religion, love, violence, morality and mythology.

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**cella art history definition:** *A Dictionary of the Architecture and Archaeology of the Middle Ages*: John Britton, 1838

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**cella art history definition:** *Angels* George J. Marshall, 2015-08-13 In the 1990s alone, more than 400 works on angels were published, adding to an already burgeoning genre. Throughout the centuries angels have been featured in, among others, theological works on scripture; studies in comparative religions; works on art, architecture and music; philological studies; philosophical, sociological, anthropological, archeological and psychological works; and even a psychoanalytical study of the implications that our understanding of angels has for our understanding of sexual differences. This bibliography lists 4,355 works alphabetically by author. Each entry contains a source for the reference, often a Library of Congress call number followed by the name of a university that holds the work. More than 750 of the entries are annotated. Extensive indexes to names, subjects and centuries provide further utility.

**cella art history definition:** *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, 1927

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