

acropolis

a raised area  
holding a cluster of  
buildings

aediles

junior magistrates in charge  
of maintaining water supply,  
streets and buildings,  
markets, games and festivals

alae

rooms with images  
of family ancestors

alba

white tablets on which  
political notices were  
inscribed

amphitheatre

an oval-shaped, open-  
air area surrounded  
by seating

amphora

a large pottery container, often used for olive oil and wine

anthropogenic

from human causes

apse

a semi-circular vaulted recess at the end of a building

atrium

an entrance hall

Augustalis

a priest involved in emperor worship

basilica

a building, usually large and impressive, where law courts were held

bas-relief

a sculpture or carving with some parts projecting out from the background

carbonise

to convert into carbon as in the timber doors and beams in Herculaneum

colonnade

a row of columns

comitium

a voting assembly

compluvium

an opening in the  
roof to let in light  
and air

concord

harmony

cubicula

a bedroom

cursus honorum

Roman career path of  
political offices which  
had to be held in a  
particular order

debris

scattered broken  
pieces or rubbish  
left behind

deities

gods and  
goddesses

dendrochronology

the dating of timber  
by counting the  
growth rings in trees

disarticulated

disconnected

duoviri

senior magistrates in charge  
of the administration of justice  
through the courts, council  
meetings and public finance