

Glossary of Non-English or Unfamiliar Terms

- abaton* A porch or dormitory surrounding a temple. Worshippers slept here in hopes of being visited by the god(s).
- Acrocorinth* The large, steep, rocky summit just to the south of Corinth. It rises almost 2000 feet above sea level.
- acropolis* Ancient cities were frequently built at the foot of hills, providing a defensive fall-back position for citizens in case of attack. The Athenian acropolis is the most famous example. These were more than simply fortresses, however. Temples and treasuries were sited on top of these crags. In Corinth, the acropolis was known as the *Acrocorinth*.
- aedile* A city manager. Oversaw streets, public buildings and facilities, the water supply, drains and sewers, markets, weights and measures, etc. One of several civil posts that marked the *cursus honorum* (see below), the ladder of positions that marked a man's rise in the city. This was an elected post.
- agora* The market area in Greek (and Roman-Greek) cities. Larger cities boasted several of these. Often (as in Corinth), the business functions of the agora were combined with the governmental/administrative/legal functions of the *forum*, the space filled not only with shops but surrounded by courts, senate halls, and *basilicae* (public meeting halls).
- amphorae* Clay containers (variously sized) with wide bodies and thin necks. Used primarily for storing and transporting liquids such as wine, olive oil, and sauces (although, sometimes, they were used for olives, oysters, dates and nuts).
- andron* The "men's room." Actually, a dining room, square in shape, with a door let into one wall. The other walls were lined with platforms which, topped with cushions, formed couches. Diners would recline on these, eating from low, moveable tables that held the food dishes and wine bowls.
- architrave* An architectural term. Most temples and public buildings were constructed using stone columns. 'Architrave' designated the band of stone blocks spanning gaps at the top of these columns and supporting the rafters and roof.
- Asclepion* A sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius. Son of Apollo and a mortal, Asclepius was taught the healing arts by his father and became so proficient that he was even reputed to raise the dead. Hades (god of the underworld) complained to Zeus who killed Asclepius with a thunderbolt – punishment for presumption. The Greeks worshiped

Asclepius as a god, praying to him for health and healing. His sanctuaries (containing temples, dormitories, and pools) were highly revered and grew into centers of medical learning.

- aureus* A gold *denarius* (see below). Equal to 25 *denarii* in the first century.
- basilica* A large building devoted to public activities. Often erected at individual expense, memorializing a city's richest (if not greatest) citizens. These often contained a large hall in which "town meetings" were held and civic votes taken.
- bestiarii* Gladiators trained to fight wild beasts in the games. These men were recruited from the ranks of slaves, criminals or prisoners of war.
- caldarium* A term referring both the hottest room in a public bath and the hottest pool contained in it. This pool was heated by a series of furnaces (*hypocausta*) beneath the floor.
- charismata* "Gifts." From the Greek. Used by Paul to speak of God's gifts (i.e., graces) such as eternal life. In particular, Paul uses the term to refer to "spiritual gifts" enjoyed by the Corinthian Christians. (See 1Cor 12).
- client* A free man (or ex-slave, *freedman*) who was bound by obligation to a patron. The client was required to obey the wishes and serve the interests of his patron. In return, he was granted various favors (loans, introductions, insider information). The patron/client relationship was a vital feature of the ancient world. Everyone was embedded in a complex network of social relationships that obligated them to some (their patrons) and empowered them with others (their clients).
- cognomen* The last name of a Roman male, intended to distinguish him from others who might share his first and family names. The cognomen was frequently a nickname and the name by which people were most often called. Gaius Julius Caesar, for instance, went not by Gaius (it sometimes seems that every other ancient Roman bore this particular moniker) or his family name (Caesar was a Julian), but by the nickname "thick haired." Cognomens like "Lucky," "Pretty boy," and "Darling" were almost exclusively slave names.
- collegium* An association of men drawn together by common need or occupation. A guild. Most members of *collegia* were humble in origin, although men of influence often served as patrons for the groups. The authorities were always suspicious of these assemblies and carefully regulated and monitored their meetings. The Christian *ekklesia* (see below) would have closely resembled such a group.
- Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis* Official name of Corinth as a Roman colony

- cursus honorum* The “way of honor” referring to the career ladder upper class males climbed in Roman cities. There were designated “steps” along the path, specific civic posts and duties which had to be filled or performed in proper order and at certain ages.
- daimon* A supernatural spirit inhabiting the bodies of mortals. Similar to our “demon” except, in the ancient Greek world, these spirits could be good as well as evil.
- denarius* A silver coin. Equivalent to one day’s wage. (See Matthew 20:2, although ancient wages are notoriously difficult to determine.)
- dignitas* A term that describes a man’s status, worth, reputation, entitlement to respect and the deference of peers. It was an accumulation of personal clout that derived from deeds, benefactions, client base, and wealth. A very powerful and coveted attribute in the ancient world.
- diaspora* The dispersion of the Hebrew people from Palestine throughout the known world. In the first century, far more Jews lived in various parts of the Empire than in the Promised Land. Some 200,000 Jews lived in Alexandria; 50,000 in Rome. But every major city of the Empire had a sizeable population of Hebrews, with a synagogue (or several) and a kosher market.
- diolkos* The marble road way – stretching between the Saronic and the Corinthian Gulfs – on which cargoes (and even entire ships!) were hauled across the Isthmus.
- duovir* One of two annually elected officials who served the city as chief magistrates, overseeing the functions of the senate, and effectively performing the role of “mayor.” This was a very expensive position that only the wealthiest could afford – it drew no salary, required expensive benefactions, and obligated the office holder to sponsor “games” for the benefit of the entire city.
- ekklesia* A Greek term meaning “assembly.” This word was, for the Greeks, a political term, referring to the citizen assemblies of the *polis* (city). Paul borrowed this term to characterize the assembly of believers. Often, *ekklesia* is translated “church,” although that fails to catch many of the overtones Paul had in mind when adopting the word – citizenship, participation, competition with the prevailing community. For Paul, the *ekklesia* was a local community of believers comprising an alternative society with different rules, relationships, and values.
- fasces* Cylindrical bundles of rods bound together with leather thongs which served as an indication of a magistrate’s or consul’s *imperium* (see below). These were carried by *lictors* (see below) who preceded the office holder wherever he went. The rods signified the authority to

impose corporeal punishment. A single-headed ax, inserted among the rods, signified authority to execute.

- forum* See *agora*.
- garum* A condiment made from ground fish. The intestines and other waste parts left over from processing were placed in a vessel, buried, and allowed to ferment for extended periods of time. The resulting (and malodorous) mash was then strained and marketed. *Garum* was reputed to have a very distinct flavor. The ancients were mad about it.
- genius* A guardian spirit, or shade, thought to reside in the paterfamilias. The idea was extended to groups and places so that not only individuals and families benefited from the protection of a *genius* but cities and nations as well.
- gravitas* The mix of respect, honor, obligation, envy, and fear that every Roman citizen tried to cultivate in peers.
- head-count* The lowest classes of Rome's population were called "head-count" Romans, a means of designating citizens whose only political clout lay in their numbers, the voting bloc they represented, and the trouble they could cause if grain distributions were slow in coming.
- hetaerae* "Female companions" – a euphemism for women at the highest rung on the prostitution ladder. These were often sophisticated, witty, well-read women who enjoyed the patronage of powerful men and were idealized in ancient literature for their beauty and culture. The most desirable of these women could own their own homes and welcome "gentlemen callers." Others served the wealthy as entertainers/companions/prostitutes at *symposiae* (see below) and as cult prostitutes in temples.
- imperium* The time during which an office holder has authority. Or the authority itself. Can refer to an emperor's reign or the shorter terms of office for lesser positions. During a proconsul's term, for instance, his *imperium* involved the authority to command in war and in the interpretation and execution of the law. This included the pronouncement of judgment and sentencing in civil and criminal cases – fines, corporal and capital punishment.
- insulae* Apartment buildings, often several stories high, that crowded major cities of the ancient world. These were most often unheated hovels, lacking kitchens or plumbing. The higher the apartment, the cheaper the rate.
- Isthmus* The strip of land connecting the Greek mainland with the Peloponnese.

- kalends* Romans counted days from the beginning of a month (the *kalends*), the middle of the month (the *ides*), and the *nones* (the ninth day before the *ides*) – identifying a particular day of the month by how many days it occurred before one of these marks. Unlike the Hebrews, Romans (and Greeks) had no concept of a seven day week. For the sake of narrative simplicity, I have mostly ignored this fact.
- kantharoi* A deep-bowled drinking cup. Not commonly used at well-ordered *symposiae* (see below) since the purpose of such gatherings should involve conversation and friendship. However, there is plenty of evidence that the *symposium* had degenerated to the opposite of “well-ordered” by the first century.
- koine* The “common” Greek of the first century. The unifying influences of “hellenization” (after Alexander) and the Empire led to a uniform Greek dialect, the universal language of the day. Xenophon was the first writer to use the *koine*.
- legate* Senior members of a general’s staff. Legates had to hold senatorial rank before serving in this position.
- legion* At full strength, a unit of some 6000 men. 4800 were actual combat soldiers, divided into ten *cohorts* of six *centuries* each. The rest were support personnel – cooks, armorers, carpenters, etc.
- libation* A sacrifice of liquids – often a few drops of wine – poured on the ground, as an offering to the gods.
- lictors* The group of men (usually six) who accompanied magistrates/consuls carrying the *fasces* (see above) that signified the authority of office. They also served as staff assistants and body guards.
- obol* One of the smallest Greek coins. Six obols equaled one drachma. (See **Talent** below.)
- optio* Sergeant major, a soldier from the ranks who provided the bulk of the day-to-day training, discipline, and leadership for the legionaries. These men comprised the backbone of the Roman army. Notoriously tough. Took control of a century if the Centurion went down in battle.
- ostraka* Broken pieces of pottery often used like scrap paper in ancient times. Words were scratched on the surface – to send messages, note reminders, or vote.
- patricians* A privileged group of families belonging to the Roman aristocracy. These families had large land holdings, refrained from commerce (deemed to be unworthy), and exercised influence in the senate. Their primary shared characteristic, however, was the ability to trace their ancestry to prominent early Romans. By Caesar’s time, their influence

had waned. In the first century, they'd become little more than yes-men to the Emperor.

- patron* (See *client* above.)
- payos* The traditional side curls worn by Jewish males in obedience to the words of the Law: "Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard" (Leviticus 19:27, NIV). This practice was probably more common in Israel than for Jews living in the *Diaspora* (see above).
- pedagogue* A male domestic slave charged with looking after the children of a household, caring for their needs and watching over their development and education. Though pedagogues were often reputed to be harsh, there are instances of very close relations developing between the servant and those under his protection.
- pontifex* A religious position that was part priestly and part civic. The pontifex took auspices, set festival days, determined days on which business could (or could not) be conducted, and oversaw the state religion.
- praefect* The quartermaster of a legion. Responsible for the administration and supply of 6000 soldiers and officers – everything from food to mules to clothing to weapons. This position lent itself to graft, bribery and kickbacks (for which praefects had a deserved reputation). However, so long as supplies remained of sufficient quality and the budget was not exceeded, a certain amount of misappropriation was tolerated. Praefects could become very wealthy men.
- proconsul* The final step in the *cursus honorum*. Once a man had served as consul of Rome (the highest elected position), he was granted *proconsular* status and took control of a Roman army or province. Lucius Mummius (who destroyed Corinth) and Gallio (the governor of Achaia during Paul's time in Corinth) served in this role. Proconsuls were notorious for their venal, brutal habits, frequently going to war or stripping entire provinces in order to enrich themselves. Indeed, the process of becoming consul in the first place was so massively expensive that only a *proconsular* position could help a man pay off his debts and establish financial stability.
- propylon* A monumental gateway forming the entrance to a city, a sacred precinct, or a public area. In Corinth, the Propylon stood between the Peirene Fountain and the Roman Basilica on the north side of the agora. The major road in Corinth – the Lechaion Way – passed through it.

- quaestor* Technically, the bottom rung of the *cursus honorum*. An elected position that gave a man responsibility for the fiscal order of a city or province. Individuals were usually 30 years old when serving as quaestor.
- salutation* The “salute” clients offered their patron by gathering with others at his door in the mornings and waiting for an interview. It was during this time that clients asked for favors and patrons suggested ways in which those clients could be supportive.
- sestercius* a bronze coin. Four *sesterces* equaled one *denarius* (see above).
- Shema* The basic confession of Judaism, drawn from Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:3-21; and Numbers 15:36-41. It was recited each morning and evening by faithful Jews, as well as in the synagogue and during certain ceremonies and festivals.
- stibium* A black, animony-based powder, used as a cosmetic to line the eye-lids and darken eye-lashes. Very popular in the ancient world with both males and females.
- strigil* Curved pieces of bronze or iron (rarely ivory) used to scrape oil, sweat and dead skin from the body.
- symposium* A form of private entertainment in wealthy homes. Although described by Plato as an opportunity for companionship and prolonged philosophical discussion (*Symposium*), these entertainments differed greatly according to the nature of hosts and those invited. Ideally, the symposium involved a meal, a ritualized period of drinking and discussion, and some form of entertainment (e.g., flute girls who would play and recite poetry). Friendship and dialogue would be the main purpose of a “well-ordered” symposium, with neither drunkenness or orgiastic revels imposing on the evening. However, by the first century, the symposium was notorious for encouraging the ‘unholy trinity’ of gluttony, drunkenness and sexual excess. This will become important in the second volume of this series, for the probable background of the Corinthian problems with prostitution (see 1Cor 6) was the banquet rather than the brothel.
- talent* a very large sum of money. Equivalent to 6000 drachmas.
- taverna* The ancient equivalent of a bar, serving wine and a limited menu of food. A popular gathering spot for business or friendship.
- toga* an expensive, heavy garment made of fine, white wool that draped over the left shoulder and wrapped around the body. It was a complicated, unwieldy article of clothing worn by upper class Romans and mostly – except for senators and other holders of high office – during civic ceremonies. The toga showed differences in social order,

hemmed in different colors and widths to designate the status of the wearer.

toga virilis A plain white, unstriped version of the toga worn by adult male citizens.

two-obol woman The lowest rung on the prostitution ladder. These poor women (usually at the end of their "careers," worn out, diseased, and absolutely without resources) offered themselves for sale in the city's cemeteries, back alleys, and empty lots.