

Dictionary OF New Testament Background

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COPPER SCROLL (3Q15)

One of the most enigmatic of the *Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Copper Scroll* is a list of buried treasure inscribed in Hebrew on three copper sheets, originally riveted together to form a single metal scroll. When it was discovered in 1952 in Cave 3 (2 km north of *Qumran), the copper was completely oxidized, and the scroll could not be unrolled. In 1956 it was finally coated with adhesive and then cut open for reading. It proved to contain a text that consists of sixty-four sections, each describing a treasure (usually various amounts of gold and silver) and indicating where the treasure is hidden (usually in places in or near the *temple in Jerusalem). Although some scholars have doubted the authenticity of the document or dated it later than the other Dead Sea Scrolls, most accept it as a genuine first-century record of real treasure, originally belonging either to the Qumran covenanters or more probably to the temple in Jerusalem. Thus the treasure may well represent part of the vast wealth of the temple, hidden before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 (see Jewish Wars with Rome).

Apart from this probable connection with the temple in Jerusalem, the *Copper Scroll* is relevant for the study of the NT in two ways: in demonstrating that *Hebrew was a living language in first-century Palestine and in helping to recover the name of the pool in Jerusalem where Jesus healed an invalid (Jn 5:2).

The *Copper Scroll* is written in a kind of Hebrew that is quite different from the classical literary Hebrew of the other Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls. In fact, it represents an early form of Mishnaic Hebrew, marked for example by the use of the preposition *sel* and the masculine plural ending *-in*, and thus reflects the spoken form of the language as it had developed from bibli-

cal Hebrew. This provides decisive evidence against the view that Hebrew was no longer a living language in the first century and that Jesus is therefore unlikely to have spoken it.

In column 11, line 12 of the *Copper Scroll* one of the hiding places is described as follows: "In Beth Eshdatain, in the reservoir [or pool]." This is probably a reference to the place described in John 5:2 as "a pool, which in Aramaic [or Hebrew] is called Bethesda." The Greek manuscripts of this verse vary between "Bethzatha," "Bethsaida," "Bethesda," and other readings, but the evidence of the *Copper Scroll* seems to clinch the correctness of the reading *Bethesda*.

See also DEAD SEA SCROLLS: GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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A. Wolters

COPTIC NEW TESTAMENT. See NEW TESTAMENT VERSIONS, ANCIENT.

CORINTH

Corinth was named from the currant, a type of grape that grew in abundance in the vicinity. The city is situated about 50 miles west of *Athens on the northern side of the Peloponnesus. Three locations named Corinth exist in proximity. A modern village called Old Corinth, which was partially destroyed by an earthquake in 1858, contains the ruins of ancient Corinth (the Corinth of Paul's time). The devastation wrought by the earthquake allowed excavations in search of the ancient city to begin in 1886, and they continue today. New Corinth, the modern commercial city, was rebuilt in recent times 3.5 miles northeast of the old city, on the coast of the Gulf of Corinth, 1.5 miles west of the Corinthian canal.

1. Location and Description
2. Religious Structures in Corinth
3. Prominent Converts in Corinth

4. Opposition to Paul in Corinth
5. Paul and Gallio
6. Roman Influence in Corinth
7. Jewish Influence in Corinth

1. Location and Description.

Unlike Athens, Corinth was an international crossroads of commerce and travel. Since it was situated southwest of the Corinthian Gulf and northwest of the Saronic Gulf it was served by harbors on these two gulfs (Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.22). Ships sailed from Asia and Egypt into the eastern Saronic harbor at Cenchrea and from Europe into the western Corinthian harbor at Lechaëum. Corinth was thus a gateway between Asia and Europe. All the vices and crimes of such a melting pot must have characterized this city. It would undoubtedly have been the last city of all those through which Paul traveled that he might have expected to be receptive to the gospel.

The city was situated between the northern slopes of the Acrocorinth (elevation 1,886 feet) and the Gulf of Corinth, 4 miles to the north. It had a population far exceeding that of Athens, and although no scientific calculation has been definitively made, estimates run from 150,000 (Wiseman) to 300,000 or more (Barber), plus 460,000 *slaves, according to Athenaeus, who lived in the first century B.C. The walls are now known to have extended for 6 miles around the city.

Corinth was one of the largest and most important commercial cities in the Roman Empire, ranked by some after *Rome and *Alexandria (Fee, 2 n. 5). Strabo wrote that "the city of the Corinthians was always great and wealthy" (Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.23). Isthmia, near Corinth, was one of four permanent sites for the Pan-Hellenic Games, which resembled the modern Olympics (see Athletics; Circuses and Games). Mentioned by Strabo (*Geog.* 8.6.20), Plutarch (*Conv.* 5.3.1-3; 8.4.1) and Pausanias (*Descr.* 2.2), these games must have provided enormous income for the city. The superintendent of these games had his office in the south stoa of the forum at Corinth.

There was a large forum in Corinth around which were located a number of commercial and civic buildings, as well as fountains, shops and public toilets. The forum was entered from the north by means of a gravel road, later paved, originating in the harbor of Lechaëum on the

Gulf of Corinth. On the south it could be entered on a road coming from Cenchrea, a route Paul would have walked when he left Corinth at the end of his second journey (Acts 18:18).

2. Religious Structures in Corinth.

In A.D. 49, during his second missionary journey, Paul, being unable or unwilling to wait for the return of Timothy and Silas from Thessalonica, left Athens and went on to Corinth. He probably entered the city from the north on the Lechaëum road. Architecture everywhere reflected the transition from a half millennium of Greek culture to a Roman colony—religious, commercial, civic and athletic—a shift the apostle had recently seen in the Roman colony of *Philippi.

Pagan sanctuaries abounded in Corinth. Just inside the northern city wall, on the west side of the road, was the sanctuary of Asclepius, where medicine was practiced in the context of pagan idolatry. Nearer the forum was the temple of Athena. It is one of the oldest in Greece and had been restored by the time Paul arrived. Its earlier identification as the temple of Apollo is derived almost entirely from the imprecise account of Pausanias (*Descr.* 2.3.6.). Fragments of an inscription found on Temple Hill, where this temple is located, suggest Athena as a better possibility (Williams, 26-37; Wiseman 1979, 475, 530 and footnotes). Nearby, on the west end of the forum there was a huge temple that was probably built during the reign of the emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37; see Roman Emperors) or possibly earlier to house the imperial cult. The temple testifies to the shift in emphasis in the first century from worship of the Olympian gods to that of the emperor (see Ruler Cult). Adjacent to the temple of the imperial cult, another small temple stood on the northeast corner of its temenos, and the identity of this temple is uncertain.

The sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, on the slopes of the Acrocorinth, had been remodeled, and one of its buildings served as the temple, while ritual dining was done outside in tents. In addition, several other smaller temples were standing at the western end of the forum.

According to Strabo, the temple of Aphrodite, located on the Acrocorinth, once "owned a thousand temple-slaves, prostitutes, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess," and because of these temple slaves, he maintained, "the city was crowded with people and grew rich." The accuracy of this statement has

been challenged by J. Murphy-O'Connor (1984, 152), who calls it "pure fabrication" (*ABD* 1:1136). But there can be little question that Corinth had a history of being an exceptionally immoral city, and it was still filled with immorality in Paul's day. Paul speaks of the "prevalent immorality" in the city (1 Cor 7:1).

The existence of the temple of Aphrodite in the time of Paul is clearly indicated by Strabo, who used the present tense when he said "Now the summit [of the Acrocorinth] has a small temple of Aphrodite" (Strabo *Geog.* 8.6.21). C. Blegen, who did some limited excavation on the Acrocorinth and found evidence of the temple's foundations, estimated its size to have been no larger than 33 feet by 52 feet, which agreed with Strabo's description of it as small. Furthermore, Corinthian coins show the temple of Aphrodite as restored on the Acrocorinth (Williams).

3. Prominent Converts in Corinth.

During the eighteen months he was in Corinth (Acts 18:11) Paul evidently converted a man named Erastus, who provides an interesting cross-cultural link in the Corinthian church. One of the most imposing structures in Corinth was the fourteen-thousand-seat *theater, located northwest of the forum and renovated about five years before Paul arrived. About this time (c. 50, during the reign of Claudius) a large stone plaza was also laid at the northeast corner of the theater area. There an inscription was found that contained part of an abbreviated Latin statement: "Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense." The Erastus of this inscription is identified by the excavators with the Erastus mentioned by Paul in a letter later written from Corinth to Rome, in which he said: "Erastus, the city treasurer, salutes you" (Rom 16:23). This is undoubtedly the same Erastus who later remained in Corinth when Paul was taken to Rome (2 Tim 4:20). He was also with Paul in *Ephesus on his third journey (Acts 19:22). Although this name is found among prominent people in Ephesus, it is an uncommon one in Corinth, not otherwise found in the literature and inscriptions of the city.

People who held Erastus's position possessed both wealth (Kent, 100) and high civic status (Meeks, 59). Those who held office by the permission of Roman authority (*see* Roman Administration) found it expedient to express appreciation by donating some work of art or ar-

chitecture to the city. It is obvious that Paul did not limit his ministry to the poor. Another inscription was found on a monument erected earlier by Cnaeus Babbuius Philinus, who was a city treasurer in the reign of Augustus. This inscription says Babbuius erected the monument at his own expense.

Another example of the sociological level of Paul's churches includes a couple who were also somewhat prosperous. In Corinth, Paul met Priscilla and her husband, Aquila (Acts 18:2), who had recently arrived from Rome because the emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews (c. 49). Like Paul, they were tentmakers, or leatherworkers (Acts 18:2-3), but apparently they had done well in their business. They were prosperous enough either to have a home in which Christians could meet, presumably in Corinth, certainly later in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and even later in Rome (Rom 16:5), or possibly they rented a vaulted shop with a high ceiling, and, as was customary, built a wooden platform halfway up to the top to divide the room into two levels. The upper room was often used as living quarters for the shopkeepers. These rooms were usually 8 to 14 feet wide and 12 to 24 feet deep. Such a room could accommodate ten to twenty persons. In large cities only prosperous people could afford a private home, called a *domus*, or a villa, some of which have been found in Corinth just northwest of the forum. The poorer classes lived in high-rise apartment houses.

The fact that Priscilla's name is mentioned before that of her husband, once by Paul (Rom 16:3, but not in 1 Cor 16:19) and twice by Luke (Acts 18:18, 26, but not in 18:2), may suggest that she had a higher status than he (Meeks, 59). And the fact that she, as well as her husband, was involved in teaching the eloquent and learned Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), her name even being mentioned first on this occasion, underscores her stature.

In Corinth, Paul "argued in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4). The typical reaction of Jewish opposition and reviling of his message caused Paul to "shake out his garments" and "go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6). He was subsequently hosted by a Godfearer, Titius Justus, who "lived next door to the synagogue" (Acts 18:7). The use of the word *synagogue* in this context indicates a building, not just a group of people. The ruler of this synagogue, Crispus, also believed, together with

all his house (Acts 18:8). Titius Justus was among Paul's "first converts in Achaia" (cf. 1 Cor 16:15 with 1:15-16), and since he was Paul's host in Corinth, he may be otherwise known as Gaius, whom Paul also says was host to him in Corinth and to all the church (Rom 16:23). If so, his Roman name would have been Gaius Titius Justus. Paul specifically remembered baptizing Gaius, as well as Crispus and the house of Stephanas. "Beyond that I do not know whether I baptized anyone else," he said (1 Cor 1:15-16). Timothy and Silas probably did most of the baptizing for Paul, since they arrived soon after Paul arrived in Corinth (Bruce, 252).

4. Opposition to Paul in Corinth.

Even though Corinth was different from any other city where Paul had ministered, he did not become discouraged by his rejection and leave Corinth as he did at Athens (Acts 17:33-18:1). Nor did he feel the need to flee the city as he had at Iconium (Acts 14:6). Neither was he driven out by irate synagogue members and civic leaders as he had been in some cities of Galatia and Macedonia (Acts 13:50; 14:19; 16:39). Nor did the new converts send him away for his own safety as they had previously done in Thessalonica (Acts 17:10) and Berea (Acts 17:14). Why? Luke writes that in Corinth "the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city'" (Acts 18:9-10).

After a year and a half, the Jews made a united attack on Paul, presumably because of the inauguration of a new proconsul named Gallio in May or June of 51 (Acts 18:12). This man was the brother of *Seneca, a Greek *Stoic philosopher who would become an adviser to the emperor Nero and perhaps influence the favorable outcome of Paul's first arrest in Rome. Gallio found no violation of Roman law or custom by Paul, no "wrongdoing or vicious" crime (Acts 18:14). Refusing to be a judge of Jewish law, Gallio drove Paul's accusers from the "tribunal" (Acts 18:16-17).

5. Paul and Gallio.

One of the most important discoveries at Corinth relating to the NT is this very tribunal (Gk *bēma*), or speaker's platform, from which official proclamations might be read and citizens

might appear before appropriate officials. Here Paul stood before Gallio. The structure was identified by several pieces of an inscription found nearby and dated to the period between A.D. 25 and 50, just prior to Paul's arrival in the city (Scranton).

Since Gallio became proconsul in A.D. 51, the year in which the Pan-Hellenic Games were being held at Isthmia, he may have been en route to the games and stopped by Corinth, where the office of the superintendent of the games was located in the forum.

6. Roman Influence in Corinth.

The extent to which the rebuilt Greek city of Corinth had become Roman, after the commissioning of the colony in 44 B.C., is seen in the fact that after this date Latin predominated its inscriptions. Of 104 inscriptions prior to the reign of Hadrian in the early second century, 101 are in Latin and only 3 in Greek (Kent, 19). The structure and administration of Corinth was Roman, but Paul wrote to the church there in Greek, which indicates that the unofficial language was still Greek. By the time of Hadrian and the visit of Pausanias, Greek had established itself once again as the official language. Corinth was a Roman colony, like Philippi, and exhibited evidence of its Roman base through these Latin inscriptions. Eight of the surviving seventeen names of Corinthian Christians are Latin: Aquila (Acts 18:1), Fortunatus (1 Cor 16:17), Gaius (Rom 16:23), Lucius (Rom 16:21), Priscilla (Acts 18:1, or Prisca, Rom 16:3), Quartus (Rom 16:23), Tertius (Rom 16:22) and Titius Justus (Acts 18:7). The other names are Greek: Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17), Erastus (Acts 19:22; Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:20), Jason (Acts 17:5, 6, 7, 9; Rom 16:21), Crispus (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14), Phoebe (Rom 16:1), Sosipater (Rom 16:21), Sosthenes (Acts 18:17; 1 Cor 1:1), Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15, 17) and Chloe (1 Cor 1:11).

7. Jewish Influence in Corinth.

Corinth contained a sizable Jewish population. There were Jews in Corinth as early as the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37-41; Philo *Leg. Gai.* 281), and others came during the expulsion of Jews from Rome under Claudius (Acts 18:2; Suetonius *Claudius* 25.4; Orosius *Hist.* 7.6.15). Jewish inscriptions have appeared in the recent publication of inscriptions that were found piecemeal in the area of Corinth from 1951 to 1976. Most

of these are funerary inscriptions of the Christian period, and one of them (#29) is bilingual, in Hebrew and Greek (Pallas and Dautis, 61ff.; Blegen, VIII. Part I, 111, 115, Part III, 214).

See also ATHENS; GREECE AND MACEDON.

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J. R. McRay

CREEDS AND HYMNS

Hymnic and creedal statements are thought to have played a significant role in the development of the Christian church. Fragments of these and references to others are thought to be

found in the NT and merit further discussion.

1. Definition of Terms
2. Approaches to the Material
3. A Closer Look at Some Hymns and Creeds
4. Other References to Hymns and Creeds

1. Definition of Terms.

The writing of hymns has a long history. For instance, the Greek word *hymnos* ("hymn") was used for many centuries in Greek classical culture before Christianity's inception. At least since the time of Homer, a hymn was a song of adoration to a god (Allen and Sikes). Performance of a hymn addressed to a god was also the focus of competitions in the ancient world, which probably includes the second-century B.C. paean to Apollo, known as the First Delphic Hymn (Henderson, 363; see also West, 14-21). Later examples include Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* (SVF I, no. 537).

Biblical psalms that are considered hymns are those that express adoration to God (Cumming, 18), and the language of some NT hymnic passages is reminiscent of hymns found either in the *Hebrew Bible or in the Greek *Septuagint. However, the kind of language found in OT psalms/hymns is common also to some Assyrian and Sumerian hymns (see, e.g., Cumming; Vanderburgh). The Christian hymn from the third century after Christ (*P. Oxy.* 1786 in Grenfell and Hunt) also shows a use of language similar to that of these various predecessors.

Sometimes the context distinguishes NT hymns from pagan hymns, and sometimes it is the language, such as the use of terms like "the God of Israel" and certainly references to Christ. Many NT hymns and creedal statements are also distinct from those found in the OT in that they are christological (although see Hengel, 86, who refers to Psalm 110 as christological).

The earliest Christians' perspective on the hymn seems to be fairly broad. E. Werner writes that "early Christianity frequently referred indiscriminately to all sung praises as hymns" (1959, 1:207) and that the "difficulty lies chiefly in the ambiguous term *hymnos*, since Biblical pieces like the canticles, as well as post-Biblical spontaneous utterances and Apocryphal compositions were all termed hymns" (1947, 434). Augustine's often cited definition is "Hymns are praises of God with song. . . . If there be praise, and it is not of God, it is not a hymn; if there be praise,