

Glossary

Adeia: immunity from harm, a privilege accorded to heralds

Angelos, angeloi: messenger

Automolos, automoloi: deserter

Boulé: a council. In some oligarchies, it consisted of the ruling elements and exerted considerable authority. In democracies, it was elected by vote or lot to take care of daily business and to prepare an agenda for the ekklesia. In Athens, it was responsible for admitting foreign envoys, screening proposals, and running background checks on candidates for office.

Chresmologos, chresmologoi: collector and distributor of oracles

Ekklesia: the meeting of citizens of a polis as a political entity. In democratic states, it was the ultimate sovereign body, made up of all citizens, deciding on all matters of policy and administration, and electing magistrates. Its political clout in other forms of government varied. In Sparta, it was called the Apella and could not deliberate issues but voted yes or no on matters put before it by the council (Gerousia).

Ephebos, epheboi: a youth who has come of age and is fulfilling his military duty, typically on the frontier

Ephoros, ephoroi: “overseer;” a magistrate in Dorian states. In Sparta there were five, elected annually, who exercised executive powers.

Episkopos, episkopoi: In Homeric times: a scout, overseer, or spy. In the Athenian Empire: a roving official appointed by the boulé to check on the administration of the subject “allies.”

Epistoleus, epistoleis: letter writer, secretary; sometimes a particular office attached to a general or magistrate

Grammateus, grammateis: secretary; often elected and attached to a governmental body or a general

Harmost: Spartan official sent to states within Sparta’s sphere of influence during her hegemony (404–371), sometimes commanding a garrison.

- Helot: state-owned slave or serf in Laconia and Messenia
- Hemeroskopos, hemeroskopoi: “day-observer,” typically stationed in an observation post to keep an area under surveillance
- Hermeneus, hermeneis: translator
- Hippeus, hippeis: literally, a horse-man. It can be used either of cavalry, or of a social class having little to do with horses. In Sparta, three hundred men who comprised an elite fighting force. Cf. the English “knight.”
- Kataskopos, kataskopoi: scout or spy
- Kerux, kerukes: herald. Some had purely ceremonial functions; from the fifth century they were used by military forces for official communications with enemies
- Mantis, manteis: a diviner, who interprets signs to predict the future
- Ota (normally in the plural): “ears,” usually those engaged in domestic espionage
- Otakoustes, otakoustai: “eavesdropper,” again, usually somebody engaged in domestic espionage
- Peltast: light infantry, typically armed with javelins and unarmored except for a small shield, often used for skirmishing, protecting flanks, fighting on rough terrain, and scouting
- Perioikos, perioikoi: literally, “dweller-about;” often in reference to those in Laconia who were neither citizens nor slaves but engaged in commercial activities forbidden to citizens
- Peripolarkhos, peripolarkhai: commander of the peripoloi (below)
- Peripolos, peripoloi: patrol; in Athens, the ephebes served as peripoloi on the frontiers
- Philia: tie of personal friendship
- Phrouarkhos, phrouarkhai: garrison commander
- Phulax, phulakes: guard; often a night watchman
- Potagogeus, potagogides (prosagogeus in the Attic dialect): domestic spies and provocateurs in Syracuse
- Presbus, presbeis: literally: old man; envoy
- Presbeutes, presbeutai: envoy
- Prodromos, prodromoi: advanced guard, vanguard
- Proxenos, proxenoi: consul; a citizen of one state appointed by another as its official friend and agent on its behalf
- Prutanis, prutaneis: in Athens, a section of the Boulé, comprising fifty men who acted as a committee to prepare business and receive envoys

- Pseudautomolos, pseudautomoloi: fake-deserter, either acting as a spy or a disinformation agent
- Psilos, psiloi: unarmored or light-armored troops, often archers or slingers
- Skiritai (normally in plural): a unit of the Lacedaemonian army, of about six hundred men, from the Arcadian district of Skiritis; they were often used as nightwatchmen
- Skoparkhos (or skoparkhes): commander of skopoi
- Skopos, skopoi: generic term for observer or scout
- Skutale: wooden rod around which a strip of leather was wrapped; lengthwise on the strip was written a message that, when unwound, became illegible until wrapped around the recipient's rod
- Strategos, strategoi: an elected magistrate whose duties included command of military forces or, simply, a commander of army or fleet

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