

Names and meanings (2)

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Aug 1998

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mary whalen — 05 Aug 1998, 12:59

This is Sean Whalen (prion).

Alambrera. Spanish for wire screen or cover. Building in Viron where the weapons are stored.

Ambion. Greek for pulpit. Also means something that has two functions. In the Whorl, the two are probably religious and mechanical.

Aureate Path. Aureate means golden, brilliant, decorated, or marked by a style that is affected, grandiloquent, heavily ornamental, excessively rhetorical, and employing foreign words. This is used for the Long Sun itself and also for the way of life that Pas supposedly wants his followers to lead. The style described as aureate seems quite a bit like all of Gene Wolfe's works. On the subject, is there any passage in the books where the sword of Pas is used to have something to do with password?

Ayuntamiento. Spanish for union, joint, corporation, body of magistrates, town council, municipal government. Also means sexual intercourse. The advisory body of Viron that is subservient to the Calde in the Charter, but has taken complete power in his absence.

Azoth. From Arabic az-zaa'uuq (the mercury), from zaa'uuq (mercury). Used by alchemists. In the Whorl the azoth is apparently a laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) gun. The gem on it may be the same gem used in creating the laser beam.

Bufe. Also boof. The sound made by a dog, or a name for a dog. On the Whorl, the dog-like animals that live in the tunnels. Also called gods (dog reversed) by the soldiers.

Calde. Alcalde or alcade (Spanish for mayor or administrative or judicial officer) from Arabic al-qaadī (the judge). Leader of Viron under the holy Charter.

Canna. Irish for can. Name used by Flyers for the propulsion device they use. Possibly it is just a cannister of compressed air.

Catachrest. Anything that is catachrestic or possessed of catachresis. From Greek katakhrestos (misused) from katakhresis (misuse) from katakhresthai (to misuse, use up) from kata (down) and khresthai (to use, need). Catachresis is the misuse of words, such as using the wrong word for the context, or using a forced figure of speech. A kind of animal found on the Whorl that speaks with catachresis. I think that catachrests may be the genetically altered form of some kind of ape, probably a tamarin, like the golden lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*). *Leontopithecus* means lion-ape, and this ties in with the cat usage. The golden lion tamarin also has a main of hair on its head (like a crest).

Chrasmologic Writings. Probably some form (maybe dialectical) of chresmo- and the common suffix -logy. Khresthai is Greek for to use, to need. Khrestos means useful, serviceable, good.

Khresma would be a useful thing. Khresmos means oracle, prophet. Related words with this stem mean devoted to useful knowledge and learning, and a selection of passages and stories from various authors compiled as an aid to learning. The Chrasologic Writings are the major religious work of the Vironese religion, and of other cities in the Whorl as well.

Gammadion. Any device or symbol made of gammas (gamma is the Greek letter corresponding to g in sound and has the shape of T without the left-pointing line when capital and the shape of y with an oval or circle instead of the down-pointing line when lower case). This can be one of many shapes or devices, such as swastikas, Greek crosses, or a square with a cross-shaped hole in the center. It is not completely certain what shape the gammadion worn in the Whorl has, though I favor the square with a cross-shaped hole design. The gammadion is a tool that disassembles for easy use, used to make adjustments and fix the various holy machinery.

Gens. Latin for a clan, a group of families of common ancestry and name, an offspring, a people, tribe, nation, district, country. Stem gent-. A city in the Whorl.

Gleachaiocht. Irish for wrestling, fighting, acrobatics, gymnastics, and trickery. Spelled with an acute accent over the i. Apparently an unarmed martial art using hands and feet utilized by flyers (who can't carry weapons when flying because of the weight).

Hus. Word in several Germanic languages for house. However, it probably is the word for dog, hound in some Germanic language (I haven't located it yet) because it is similar to Gothic hunds, etc. Animals from Blue that the humans train.

Inhumu. Plural inhumu. Latin for either not on the ground, unburied, buried, or covered with earth. The not on the ground/earth part indicates both their flying ability and extraterrestrial origin. Unburied suggests undead, relating to their vampiric attributes. Covered with earth might relate to their concealment abilities, covering themselves with an appearance of being earthly. The shapechanging, plastic, vampiric inhabitants of Green.

Jefe. Feminine is jefa. Spanish for boss, chief, leader. Vironese term for boss.

Juzgado. Spanish for judged. Used as name of a court, panel of judges, courtroom. Origin of English hoos(e)gow (prison).

Limna. Latin for pool, from Greek limna (pool, marshy lake), from limne, from limen (harbor, port). Limna is the name of a lake and its port controlled by Viron.

Manteion. Greek for the place of an oracle (mantis). The Whorl equivalent of church, where auguries are made to see the future.

Maytera. I couldn't find this exact word anywhere. It is assumed by the Whorl inhabitants to mean mother (Latin mater and Greek meter). Metera is modern Greek for mother, and sounds like maytera is spelled.

If it has a liquid association like patera, it might be related to metron (Greek for a measure) or metretes (Greek measure of nine gallons). It could also be related to materia (material, matter) or teaching (Latin magistra). It could be a way of spelling the pronunciation of Latin metere (to reap, mow, gather, harvest). My guess is that it's some old form for Magistra, Mistress in English. The Whorl holy women.

Orilla. Spanish for bank, shore, edge, water's edge,, fresh breeze. The name of a district in Buenos Aires. A poor section of Viron.

Palaestra. Also palestra or palaistra. Greek for a place where teaching, wrestling, and practicing other sports or just a gymnasium or stadium. From palaiein (to wrestle). In the Whorl the equivalent of school as a service of the priesthood.

Palatine. From Latin palatium (palace). Relating to a palace, being royal. Rich area of Viron.

Palustria. From Latin paluster/palustris meaning marshy, boggy, swampy, fenny. Palus with stem palud- means marsh and palus with stem pal- means stake. Oreb is from the marshes by Palustria and dislikes inhum, so this might be like a stake through a vampire's heart. A city in the Whorl near marshes.

Patera. Latin for a shallow dish or saucer used to pour libations to the gods. In the Whorl it is a religious priest and augur. Assumed by them to mean father (pater).

Prolocutor. Latin for one who speaks for others (from pro- plus locutus (from loqui, to speak)). A spokesman, interpreter, advocate in a court of law, president in a convocation of the English Church, presiding officer/chairman of any meeting or assembly. Prolocution is also archaic English for deliberately ambiguous language or a prefatory statement, the former is found in abundance in these books and the latter is desperately needed. The head of the Vironese church.

Rani. Also ranee. From Hindi raanii, from Sanskrit raajni, the feminine of raajan (king). Hindu queen, rajah's wife, or a princess. Also a prefix meaning related to frogs, which could relate to the fact that the government police of Viron are associated with frogs. The title of the ruler of Trivigaunte.

Talus. Plural taluses or tali. The ankle bone. Talus with plural taluses only is from Latin talutium (slope) meaning a slope, especially of rock debris. Talus is also the Latin form of the Greek name Talos (meaning patient, enduring, suffering). Talos was a man made of brass or bronze who lived on Crete. He was supposedly the last survivor of the Age of Bronze that came after the Silver Age. He had only one vein that ran from his head to his ankles. This contained the blood of the gods (ichor) and was sealed at the foot with a membrane of skin or a nail. He had to run around the island three times each day and repel all invaders by throwing stones at them or making himself red hot. Medea killed him when the Argonauts wished to come to Crete. There are many stories about how she killed him. In the Whorl the tali (the formal plural is only used once in the books, by Remora) are robots made by the inhabitants and used as indentured servants until they fulfill their duty, usually to guard a place. They may be a newer form of tractor robots, and this would relate to the slope talus that tractors sometimes make.

Trivigaunte. Looking at this word, I couldn't image its origin.

Parts of it looked Latin, but I couldn't place it at all. In Latin, tri- means three (from tres), vi- means road (from via), and there is no stem gaunt-. However, the closest is gaud-, meaning joy. This might mean Joy at the Three Roads, or something. This seems a bit of a stretch, however. Trivia is also a by-name of Hekate, the goddess of witches, magic, and other things, who was often worshipped by women. Trivialis means trivial, unimportant, which is what the Trivigaunte war is. Another Latin word meaning trivial is levis. Levis with a long e means smooth, beardless. Trivi means I rubbed, I wore away, from terere, to rub, to wear away. This verb is the Latin equivalent of Greek tribein, to rub, wear away. A tribade is a lesbian, so Trivigaunte might be Joy of Lesbianism. This reminded me of when Siyuf tells Chenille that in Trivigaunte, men are duty, women are pleasure. Duty in Latin is officiu, munus, pietas, religio, or fides, so I don't know if the second part of that phrase has anything to do with it. None of this is perfect, though, so I looked further. The closest word to this in Latin is triginta (thirty). Taking the letters in

triginta out of Trivigante, we are left with u, v, and e. The only Latin word I can form out of these is uve, which means, approximately, "be wet!". This wasn't going anywhere, so I thought that maybe the letters were scrambled. The closest word I could find was vigintiviratus, the office of the vigintiviri (a council of twenty men). The vocative form of vigintiviratus, the form used to address as "you", is vigintivirate. Taking the letters in Trivigaunte out of vigintivirate, we're left with v, i, and i. This could form 7 (VII) in Latin. Taking the letters of Trivigaunti (the adjective) out of vigintiviratus, we're left with i, u, and s. Ius (stem iur-) is Latin for both, soup, right, or LAW. This would make vigintiviratus equal to Trivigaunti law (Trivigaunti ius = vigintiviratus). Since it is scrambled, this might mean that men no longer rule in Trivigaunte. However, virago (stem viragin-) is Latin for warrior-woman. Taking the letters of viragin- out of Trivigaunte, we're left with t, u, t, and e. Tute is the vocative form of tutus, meaning watched over, guarded, protected. With a long e, it is also the adverbial form of this adjective, meaning safely, guardedly, while being protected. This would mean Trivigaunte means "Guarded by Warrior Women." I'm fairly sure that the explanation for the name can be found among these speculations, but the exact one is still unclear to me.

Ur. Name of an old city on Earth. A city in the Whorl.

Urbs. Latin for a city, especially one with a wall. A city in the Whorl.

Viron. French for circle, from virer (to turn), from Latin virare (to turn). The stem vir- in Latin means man, power, or slime. City in the Whorl.

Whorl. Also wharl. A coil, a spiral, a thing that whirls, any arrangement of things in a spiral shape, groups of things that resembles whorls. The name of the ship Typhon sent to colonize Blue and Green.

Wick. Old English for a dwelling place, farm. A farmstead, particularly a dairy farm. Also a bundle of fibers, used especially in candles. A corner, an inlet, creek, a narrow passageway, or dialectical for week or quick. A city in the Whorl.

prion