

# Latin and Greek Elements in English

## Lesson 22: Doublets

- **DOUBLET**: “a derivative which shares a common origin with another derivative in the same language but has a different meaning or connotation”
  - understanding doublets is a good way to practice deciphering the metaphor behind Latin words, because the doublets show two metaphorical paths that a word can follow
    - also, two ways the words can change its physical form, e.g. lose a syllable, assimilate consonants, etc.

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- Latin *gens*, “noble family, aristocrat clan”
  - genteel: “well-born”
  - gentle: “well-mannered, kind,” e.g. gentleman
    - later, “domesticated, mild, soft”
  - jaunty: “well-bred, elegant, fashionable, stylish”

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- Latin *hostis*, “stranger, enemy”
  - hostile (from “enemy” sense): “p.t. an enemy”
  - host (from “stranger” sense): “one who entertains strangers in his abode, an innkeeper”
    - also, host in the sense of “a body of strangers/visitors,” e.g. the heavenly host
  - guest: “a visiting stranger”
    - from Common Germanic root \*gastiz, cognate with *hostis*
    - both from IE base \*ghostis (“stranger”), cf. Gk. *xenos*

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- Latin *vitulari*, “to celebrate a victory, to be joyful”
  - viola: “alto/tenor violin,” i.e. musical instrument played in celebrations of joy and victory
    - n.b. loss of t through French
    - cf. loss of g in other French forms:
      - Lat. fragile > Fr. frail
      - Lat. flagellate > Fr. flail
      - Lat. gigantic > Fr. giant
  - fiddle: “stringed musical instrument”
    - v > f: typical of Germanic languages

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- Latin *pandurium*, “curved musical instrument”
  - from Greek *pandoura* (“three-stringed lyre”)
    - corruption of the name Pandora?
  - mandolin: “lute-like instrument”
    - Ital. *pandora* > Eng. *bandore* (16<sup>th</sup> c.) > Ital. *mandora* (18<sup>th</sup> c.)  
> Ital. *mandolin* (with diminutive suffix)
  - banjo: “guitar-like instrument with resonating back made of parchment”
    - < African-American pronunciation of *bandore*

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- Latin *pipare*: “to cheep, to peep”
  - pipe: Romance / Germanic *pipa*
    - cf. pigeon < *pipio* (“peeper”)
  - fife: German *pfeife*
    - cf. the name Pfeiffer (“fifer”)
- Greek *spongos* (later, *sphongos*): “sponge”
  - sponge: n.b. Greeks are good divers
  - fungus: originally, “mushroom”
    - later, “spongy excrescence, fungus”

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- Ecclesiastical Latin *unio*: “the number one”
  - union: “act of being united, unity”
    - cf. the Union Jack
      - the flag of the united crowns of England and Scotland
      - jack: “a ship’s flag, usually small”
  - onion: originally, “a large pearl”
    - later, “the bulb of a plant, onion”

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- Latin *taberna*: “booth, hut, tent”
  - tavern: “a shack in which drinks are sold” (13<sup>th</sup> c.)
  - tabernacle: “the tent containing the Ark of the Covenant, any such canopied, moveable structure”
    - later, “a place of worship but not a church,” often with a pointed roof like a tent (17<sup>th</sup> c.)
    - n.b. diminutive suffix -cle

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- Latin *supranus*: “higher”
  - sovereign: “ruler”
    - n.b. folk etymology: -(r)ane suffix > -reign (as in a king’s reign)
  - soprano: “highest singing voice”
- Latin *nescius*: “ignorant” (ne- + SCI-, “not know”)
  - nice: as we saw in Lesson 10
  - unscientific: “not knowing”
- Greek *acme*: “(top) point”
  - acne: “skin infection,” resulting in pointed boils

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**In Lesson 25 (next class), do not try to analyze the suffixes of the word in Exercise I, p. 137-8. These suffixes come directly from Latin and will not necessarily be familiar to you.**