Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Word Analysis in Greek

• all in all, the same rules apply to the analysis of Greek words as those for Latin words

• but be careful not to confuse Greek and Latin BASES:
  – TACT-: Latin “touch” vs. Greek “arrange”
  – MIS-: Latin “send” vs. Greek “hate”
  – PATRI-: Latin “fatherland” vs. Greek “clan, family, fatherland”
  – ACR-: Latin “sharp” vs. Greek “highest part of”
  – MON-: Latin “warn” vs. Greek “one, single”
  – BI-: Latin “two” vs. Greek “life”
  – PED-: Latin “foot” vs. Greek “child”
    • also, Latin PAR- (“produce”) vs. Greek par(a)- (“alongside”)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 8: Word Analysis in Greek

• in light of this, be on guard for Latin/Greek hybrids
  – e.g. automobile, amoral, semicolon, Technicolor
• by the end of the class, we’ll focus on distinguishing the independent elements in Latin- and Greek-based words
  – and the final will have both Latin and Greek words on it!
    • and sometimes — horrendum dictu! — an English word will be shown to miscegenate in a Greco-Roman style
  – remember that the purpose of this class is to build your English vocabulary by understanding all classical roots
    • don’t let the Latin word elements we studied earlier fall away completely!
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• many words are created not from the additions of affixes or because they were derived from an ancestral language, but out of some particular circumstance
  – e.g., from the name of a certain person or place
  – or from a popular expression
  – also, from religion, sports, arts, law, the military or literature

• we’ll address just such words in Lessons 9-19 (the Greek section of the class)
Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• e.g., words derived from personal names
  – clothing
    • cardigan: James Thomas Brudenell, 7th Earl of Cardigan
      – he led the famous “Charge of the Light Brigade”
    • derby: Edward Stanley, the 12th Earl of Derby, who founded a famous horse race in 1780
      – and a special type of hat was later associated with that race
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• e.g., words derived from personal names
  – flowers
    • **poinsettia**: J.P. Poinsett, the American ambassador to Mexico
      – he first classified the flower
    • **camellia**: Josef Kamel, a Moravian monk
      – he first described the flower
    • **begonia**: Michel Begon (1638-1710)
      – French ambassador to Santo Domingo and amateur horticulturalist
    • **zinnia**: Johann Gottfried Zinn, German botanist (d. 1759)
    • **gardenia**: Dr. Alexander Garden
      – a Scottish physician who lived in South Carolina and fought for the British in the Revolutionary War and eventually moved to England
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• e.g., words derived from personal names
  – food
    • filbert (hazelnut): St. Philbert
      – because this nut ripens on or near his Saint’s Day in the catholic calendar (August 22)
    • listerine: Sir Joseph Lister, an English physician
      – he promoted antiseptic methods of surgery
    • nicotine: Jacques Nicot, French ambassador to Lisbon
      – it was through him that tobacco was introduced to France in 1560
    • sandwich: John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-92)
      – he was a corrupt nobleman who couldn’t bear to leave the gambling table even to eat
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• e.g., words derived from personal names
  – other things
    • saxophone: Antoine Joseph Sax
      – he invented the saxophone in 1840
    • silhouette: from a French phrase “à la silhouette”
      – from Etienne de Silhouette, French finance minister in 1759
      – but his connection to the silhouette is not clear
    • guillotine: Joseph Ignace Guillotin (1738-1814)
      – a Parisian physician who recommended in 1789 to the French National Assembly that they use the guillotine, rather than the sword or the noose
      – but he did not invent it, or die by it
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• e.g., words derived from personal names
  – other things
    • derrick: Godfrey Derrick, a famous English hangman (ca. 1600)
      – he invented a raised platform with a trapdoor and performed more than 3000 executions, included the beheading of Robert Devereux (the Earl of Essex and a favorite of Elizabeth I)
      – from there, derrick came to mean “any raised platform with a crane that can sustain great weight,” e.g. oil derrick
      – ultimately, the name Derrick can be traced back to Theodoric, the Ostrogothic conqueror of Italy (593): Theodoric > Thuidareiks > Deitrich > Derrick

• also, watt, volt, zeppelin, derringer
Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

- e.g., words derived from personal names
  - other things
    - **crisscross**: originally “Christ’s cross”
      - in early printing, multiple cross patterns (“Christ’s cross rows”) were often put on the front of primers (reading textbooks)
    - **sadist**: from the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814)
      - a French nobleman infamous for excessive and cruel sexual behavior
    - **chauvinism**: Nicolas Chauvin, a French military hero
      - remembered for his aggressive, almost ridiculous patriotism
      - later (1960’s), extended to sexist behavior (generalization)
    - **mirandize**: “to read a person under arrest his/her legal rights”
      - from the Miranda ruling, a famous legal case
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Idiomatic Sources

• obviously, it’s not possible to etymologize words from “idiomatic sources” like words from Latin and Greek roots
  – so just learn the particular terms I mention in class
  • these are listed in the handouts attached to Lessons 9-19
    – e.g. the handout for Lesson 9 (Place Names)
  • or those listed in Ayers
    – you should memorize (1) the definition of the term and (2) its general source, e.g. law, sports, the arts, etc.
    – you will only ever have to do these in matching exercises
      • e.g. match the term to three examples of the term
      • or match the term to its definition
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Place Names

• sherry: “a strong, non-sparkling Spanish wine”
  – from Jerez in Spain
  – Jerez was originally “Urbs Caesaris” (Caesar’s City)

• china: “fine porcelain tableware”
  – from China where the porcelain was first invented

• attic: “top story of a house”
  – from Attica (the area around Athens in Greece)
  – because the pediments of Victorian houses often had classical-looking decorations (columns, carvings, etc.)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Place Names

• **arabesque**: (1) “complex move in ballet”; (2) “elaborate design of flowers, leaves and geometric shapes”
  – from Italian *arabesco* (“Arabic”)
  – Islam forbids all realistic art (“Thou shalt not make graven images.”)

• **blarney**: “smooth, deceitful talk; flattery”
  – from Blarney, a village in Ireland (near Cork) . . .

“. . . in the castle of which there is an inscribed stone of difficult access; the popular saying is that anyone who kisses or licks this ‘Blarney stone’ will ever after have a flattering tongue and the capacity for shameless lying.”

(C.T. Onions, ODEE)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Place Names

• **meander**: “wander aimlessly”
  – from the ancient name of a river in Asia Minor

• **parchment**: “animal skin prepared as a writing surface”
  – from Pergamum (northwest Turkey)
  – parchment was invented when the Greeks suffered an embargo of papyrus from Egypt in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} c. BCE

• **cf. papyrus/Bible**: from Byblos (mod. Lebanon)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 9: Words from Place Names

• **cologne**: “scented water”
  – from the German city (west central Germany)
    • originally, a Roman outpost named Colonia Agrippinensis
      – named after Agrippina, the wife of the emperor Claudius and the mother of his successor Nero
      – it was her birthplace when her father was stationed there in the army
    – in the 18th century, an Italian chemist living in Cologne invented a perfume made of alcohol and citrus oils
      • the French called this *eau de cologne* ("cologne water")
  – in Texas today there is a town named Cologne
    • it’s right next to a slaughtering plant (euphemism!)