

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”)

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- 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!

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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)

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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

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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

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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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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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

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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.)

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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)

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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 2nd c. BCE
 - cf. papyrus/Bible: from Byblos (mod. Lebanon)

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- 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!)