

Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 10: Words from Expressions

- this lesson continues our study of words derived from idiomatic sources
- in this case, we'll study terms that have come from popular expressions
 - these popular expressions are usually relics of some past cultural phenomenon
 - often they've been affected by other linguistic processes
 - in particular, Folk Etymology
 - e.g. forlorn hope (“desperate venture”; cf. Ayers, p. 212)
 - < Dutch *verloren hoop* (“lost troop,” i.e. a battalion missing in action)

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- examples of terms drawn from the general suspicion and contempt with which the Dutch were held in early America
 - cowardice:
 - Dutch courage (1812): “bravery stimulated by alcohol”
 - Dutch leave (1898): “a soldier’s failure to return to duty”
 - to do the Dutch act: “to escape” (1900)
 - “to commit suicide” (1920)
 - cheapness:
 - Dutch auction: “a sale in which the price is lowered (not raised) until there is a bid, whereupon the item is sold”
 - Dutch date: “a date in which the woman pays her own way”

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- examples of terms drawn from the general suspicion and contempt with which the Dutch were held in early America
 - strangeness:
 - that beats the Dutch: “it is highly unusual and surprising”
 - it’s all Dutch to me: “it is gibberish”
 - bluntness:
 - to talk like a Dutch uncle: “to speak bluntly and inelegantly”

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- know these examples from Ayers (pp. 211-212)
 - sold down the river (“exploit horrifically”)
 - look a gift horse in the mouth (“be critical of a gift”)
 - crocodile tears (“lament falsely”)
 - swan song (“last book or farewell speech”)
 - lick into shape (“revise with effort”)
 - curry favor (“gain friendship through flattery”)
 - forlorn hope (“desperate venture likely to fail”)
 - flash in the pan (“short-lived triumph”)
 - red-letter day (“date memorable for some reason”)

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Lesson 11: Words from Christian Sources

- know these religious terms we've already encountered in Ayers (see pp. 281-284)
 - Gnostic (“early Christian mystical and philosophical heresy”)
 - agnostic (“one who holds that God’s existence is unknowable”)
 - Apocrypha (“spurious writings”)
 - apostle/apostolic (“those whom Christ ‘sent out’ to preach”)
 - apostate (“rebel, deserter”)
 - canonical (“accepted as genuine”)
 - exodus (“departure, usually of a large group”)
 - encyclical (“a papal letter ‘circulated’ to bishops”)

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Lesson 11: Words from Christian Sources

- know these religious terms we've already encountered in Ayers (see pp. 281-284)
 - evangelical (“p.t. those Protestant sects which stress atonement through faith”)
 - synod (“church council”)
 - synoptic (“having a general or wide view of a subject”)
 - orthodox (“conforming to established doctrine or procedure”)
 - heterodox (“contrary to the standard opinion”)
 - iconoclast
 - (1) “one who attacks est'd beliefs”;
 - (2) “one who destroys religious artwork”

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Lesson 11: Words from Christian Sources

- also, know these examples from Ayers (pp. 215-217)
 - scapegoat (“a person or thing blamed for something”)
 - the handwriting on the wall (“an ominous sign”)
 - talent (“native ability”)
 - shibboleth (“password or watchword”)
 - to orient (“to place in a proper position”)
 - dirge (“funeral song”)
 - adieu (“good-bye”)
 - carnival (“festival, merriment”)
 - bonfire (“large, ceremonial fire”)
 - lewd (“lascivious, obscene”)
 - miscreant (“rascal”)