



PRELUDE

After a brief stint abroad I have decided to resume my work on the fabulous *Quotidian*. While I was away on my travels, many questions presented themselves to me, mostly about the strange and exotic lands and peoples of the European continent. I resolved to answer them here, not only for my own benefit, but so that all may be a little more familiar with the subtle—yet important—distinctions the Europeans make amongst themselves.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

“Travel only with thy equals or thy betters; if there are none, travel alone.”
—the Dhammapada

“The World is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.”
—St. Augustine

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”
—Mark Twain

“I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad.”
—George Bernard Shaw

“A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.”
—Lao Tzu

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

JULY 27, 1794: Robespierre, architect of the French Revolution's "Reign of Terror," is placed under arrest by the National Convention. The following evening, he and 21 followers are guillotined without a trial in the Place de Révolution. Four years earlier, Robespierre was elected to the Committee of Public Safety, which had been formed to protect France against enemies both foreign and domestic. With Robespierre at its head, the Committee exercised virtual dictatorial control over the French government, and was responsible for the imprisonment of some 300,000 suspected enemies of the Revolution. More than 10,000 died while in prison, and another 17,000 were executed, mostly by guillotine. When the threat of foreign invasion waned, Robespierre's Reign of Terror was seen as too radical, and he was subsequently removed from power. Source: www.historychannel.com/tdih.

3 WORDS

Memorize these by week's end and you shall quickly develop an enviable lexicon.

This week's theme: words of European peculiarity.

agio (AZH-ee-oh) *noun*

1. a fee charged for exchanging currencies (more commonly known as *commission*)

Ex. The agio is typically lower at banks and ATMs than in airports.

feuilleton (foi-yay-*TON*) *noun*

1. the part of a European newspaper or magazine devoted to light literature, reviews, and things of interest to the general reader
2. an article appearing in this section
3. a novel published in installments

Ex. In the 19th century, feuilletons were commonplace; readers were thus accustomed to waiting a full week to read the next chapter of a novel.

Note. Because this word is French, the final 'n' should be pronounced nasally.

haver (HAY-ver) *verb*

1. to talk nonsense (Scotland & N England)

Ex. Don't ask him, he'll just haver at you about how good things used to be.

Note: havers! = nonsense!

ETYMOLOGY 101

This week's word has little use in an everyday English conversation, but it can easily impress friends or family if you find yourself reading a European newspaper in their presence. A sentence like "Did you read this little *feuilleton* accusing Chirac of being churlish with the Brits?" will leave your listeners bewildered.

The word is a diminutive of the French word *feuille* (pronounced *foy*), which means "leaf." *Feuilleton* therefore literally means "leaflet." The term came into use after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, when French newspapers were faced with a shortage of war news and had to fill up their pages with lighter material.

For a more extensive discussion of diminutives, see "Plain English" in *Quotidian* 1.7.

WELL I'LL BE! THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION YOU NEVER ASKED

Which is it: Holland or the Netherlands?

This question came up when I was on the train from Brussels to Amsterdam. One of my fellow travelers asked me what the capital of Holland was, and I was stumped. *I'm pretty sure it's Amsterdam* I thought. Yes, it is Amsterdam, but the fact that I didn't know bothered me, especially since I was in the presence of residents of that fair country. I resolved not to be another "dumb American," and to spread the good word to others.

The correct name is **The Netherlands**, since **Holland is actually a smaller portion of the country**, covering two of twelve provinces (North and South Holland, or, in Dutch: Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland). Holland was long the cultural, political, and economic center of the area, and many of the largest cities (such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam) are located within it. Dutch merchants would sail from these cities to all corners of Europe and the world, and many Europeans would come to trade in the cities of Holland. As a result, most people heard of the area as Holland, rather than its actual name, the Republic of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands (small wonder the former name stuck).

This more cumbersome title was the official name for the region from 1581 to 1795. Before 1581, the region was a collection of duchies and counties, which eventually came under the control of Charles V and his son, King Philip II of Spain. Determined not to succumb to Philip's efforts to modernize and centralize the area, the duchies signed the Treaty of Utrecht, in which they promised to support each other against Philip. This agreement lasted until 1795, when the French invaded and established the short-lived Batavian Republic.

"The Netherlands" is actually an outdated term, referring to the time when the region was not yet united. The true, actual name of the country is thus *Nederland* (meaning "low land"). Its people are *Nederlanders*, or—in English—Dutch.

So, if you're going to Amsterdam like most people, you can say "I'm going to Holland" or "I'm going to The Netherlands," and you'll be right. But people from provinces outside of Holland might be offended if you refer to their country as Holland or if you call them Hollanders.

Hey, knowledge is power.

F Holland comes from the Old Dutch *holt land*, which means "wood land."



*The Netherlands, with
provinces of North and South
Holland in light grey*

WELL I'LL BE! THE ANSWERS TO TWO MORE QUESTIONS YOU NEVER ASKED

What's the difference between Dutch and Flemish?

After visiting Belgium and The Netherlands a few weeks back, I learned that the most widely spoken language in both regions is Dutch. However, some locals referred to it as Flemish, and shrugged when I asked them the difference. Their shrug was not one of ignorance, but perhaps one that suggested I would not be able to appreciate the subtle distinction.

Flemish is like a variation of Dutch, with some differences in vocabulary and pronunciation. The differences between Dutch and Flemish are like those between American English and British English, though much more pronounced.

Most Flemish dialects are spoken in the northern region of Belgium, and are distinct from the Hollandic Dutch spoken in The Netherlands. This distinction has even been recognized by Microsoft, which has language settings for Dutch (Belgium) and Dutch (Netherlands).

So what's the difference between Irish and Gaelic?

Irish is the official language of the Republic of Ireland, even though only a fraction of the population speaks it fluently. Since it is called *Gaeilge* in Irish, many English speakers confuse it with Gaelic, which is not only

incorrect but offensive to the Irish. My experience in Ireland led me to believe that the Irish are fiercely independent and proud of their heritage, so to confuse something truly Irish with anything else is not something you want to get in the habit of doing.

For the linguists out there, both Irish and Gaelic (sometimes called Scottish Gaelic) are members of the Goidelic branch of Celtic languages. For the rest of us, that just means that while the languages have much in common, they are distinct and should not be confused.

So to keep your head from being bashed in by a Guinness-imbibing Irishman, just remember that Irish is spoken in Ireland, and Gaelic is spoken in Scotland.

NEAT-O A BRIEF HISTORY OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Of all the churches and buildings I visited while in Europe, Westminster Abbey was by far my favorite. I knew that William the Conqueror had his coronation in the Abbey back in 1066, but the architecture is in the Gothic style, which did not become widespread in Europe until the 12th century. So a question presented itself: exactly how old is the abbey? Furthermore, there are many famous people buried within its walls, not least of whom are former kings of England (including Edward I and Henry III) and prominent scientists and statesmen (Charles Darwin and Sir Isaac Newton). Why had the abbey become such a desirable place to be buried?



The first abbey was built by Edward the Confessor between 1045 and 1050. It was consecrated on December 28, 1065, about a year before the historic Battle of Hastings. Edward's motives for building an abbey were likely twofold. The first: Edward failed to keep a vow to go on a pilgrimage (probably to Jerusalem or Rome), and the Pope suggested he earn salvation by building an abbey. The second: Edward presumed he would be buried within the abbey, and so the monks would pray for his soul. Furthermore, the construction of a great abbey would show the world how powerful he was.

Whatever his motives, Edward's abbey stands to this day, albeit in a greatly altered way. The abbey was rebuilt in the Gothic style—the one we see today—between 1245 and 1517, though most of the work was finished in the late 14th century under Richard II. The reconstruction was initiated by Henry III to honor Edward and to provide a more suitable burial place for Henry's own tomb. The easily recognizable west towers

were completed in 1745, and further rebuilding and restoration took place in the 19th century.

My question on the abbey's age is thus answered: William the Conqueror had his coronation at the *site* of the present day abbey, but the newer abbey we see today is, for the most part, some 600 years old.

Some 3,300 people are buried within the church and cloisters of the abbey, though this does not include monks buried in the cemetery behind the chapter house. Among the famous are Geoffrey Chaucer, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling (writers), George Frederic Handel, Henry Purcell Ralph Vaughan Williams (musicians), and Laurence Olivier (the last to be buried in the abbey, in 1991). Because both Chaucer and Purcell worked in the abbey, they were buried there; their renown made it an honor to be interred nearby, and the abbey soon became a popular place for the high and mighty to be memorialized.

Among the more interesting individuals buried within the abbey's walls is Thomas Parr, an Englishman who supposedly lived for 152 years, through the reigns of 10 monarchs. Parr did not marry until he was 80, and twenty years later he did penance for being unfaithful to his wife and having an illegitimate child. Parr's recipe for longevity was reputed to be: "Keep your head cool by temperance and your feet warm by exercise. Rise early, go soon to bed, and if you want to grow fat [prosperous]

keep your eyes open and your mouth shut."

In 1635, Parr was taken to London to visit Charles I, who asked Parr what he had done to live so long. Parr replied, "Sire, I did penance when I was 100 years old." Old Parr died within a few weeks of arriving in London, apparently due to a change in his diet and the pollution of the city. The Scotch whisky *Old Parr* is named for him and carries the dates of his birth and death (1483-1635) on its label.

F The abbey's real name is the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster.

F During the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century, Henry VIII diverted money from Westminster Abbey to St. Paul's Cathedral. The expression "robbing Peter to pay Paul" may come from this period, since the abbey was dedicated to St. Peter.

Sources: www.wikipedia.org, www.westminster-abbey.org.

LITERARY GENIUS

This week's selection comes from the well known Italian author Machiavelli, whose most famous work, *The Prince*, was published posthumously, and had an enormous effect on European thought. Some of the methods of leadership espoused in Machiavelli's work are still followed to this day, perhaps because Machiavelli so clearly understood the true nature of men, and did not allow ethical concerns to cloud his judgment.

The Prince was aimed at Italian aristocrats, and is largely concerned with telling them how best to acquire and maintain the strongest possible dominion over their subjects. Machiavelli felt that a prince should be utilitarian and make the best use of the men he had, rather than seek to enlighten them. He further felt that it was more important for a prince to be *seen* as ethical than for him to *be* ethical.

Following is a selection on a subject that has always been of great interest to me: whether it is better for a leader to be feared or loved.



FROM *IL PRINCIPE (THE PRINCE)*

Niccolò Machiavelli

Chapter XVII: Concerning Cruelty And Clemency, And Whether It Is Better To Be Loved Than Feared

COMING NOW TO the other qualities mentioned above, I say that every prince ought to desire to be considered clement and not cruel. Nevertheless he ought to take care not to misuse this clemency... Therefore a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to

mind the reproach of cruelty; because with a few examples he will be more merciful than those who, through too much mercy, allow disorders to arise, from which follow murders or robberies; for these are wont to injure the whole people, whilst those executions which originate with a prince offend the individual only.

And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to avoid the imputation of cruelty, owing to new states being full of dangers...

Nevertheless he ought to be slow to believe and to act, nor should he himself show fear, but proceed in a temperate manner with prudence and humanity, so that too much confidence may not make him incautious and too much distrust render him intolerable.

Upon this a question arises: whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. And that prince who, relying entirely on their promises, has neglected other precautions, is ruined; because friendships that are obtained by payments, and not by greatness or nobility of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon; and men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women. But when it is necessary for him to proceed against the life of someone, he must do it on proper justification and for manifest cause, but above all things he must keep his hands off the property of others, because men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony. Besides, pretexts for taking away the property are never wanting; for he who has once begun to live by robbery will always find pretexts for seizing what belongs to others; but reasons for taking life, on the contrary, are more difficult to find and sooner lapse. But when a prince is with his army, and has under control a multitude of soldiers, then it is quite necessary for him to disregard the reputation of cruelty, for without it he would never hold his army united or disposed to its duties.

Among the wonderful deeds of Hannibal this one is enumerated: that having led an enormous army, composed of many various races of men, to fight in foreign lands, no dissensions arose either among them or against the prince, whether in his bad or in his good fortune. This arose from nothing else than his inhuman cruelty, which, with his boundless valor, made him revered and terrible in the sight of his soldiers, but without that cruelty, his other virtues were not sufficient to produce this effect. And shortsighted writers admire his deeds from one point of view and from another condemn the principal cause of them. That it is true his other virtues would not have been sufficient for him may be proved by the case of Scipio, that most excellent man, not of his own times but within the memory of man, against whom, nevertheless, his army rebelled in Spain; this arose from nothing but his too great forbearance, which gave his soldiers more license than is consistent with military discipline. For this he was upbraided in the Senate by Fabius Maximus, and called the corrupter of the Roman soldiery... [S]omeone in the Senate, wishing to excuse him, said there were many men who knew much better how not to err than to correct the errors of others. This disposition, if he had been continued in the command, would have destroyed in time the fame and glory of Scipio; but, he being under the control of the Senate, this injurious characteristic not only concealed itself, but contributed to his glory.

Returning to the question of being feared or loved, I come to the conclusion that, men loving according to their own will and fearing according to that of the prince, a wise prince should establish himself on that which is in his own control and not in that of others; **he must endeavor only to avoid hatred**, as is noted.

Translated by W.K. Marriot

Full version available online at <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm>.