



GREEK INFLUENCE

The Renaissance brought three great languages in contact with English. They are Greek, Arabic and Italian. The Greek contribution has increased rather than diminished with the passing of the time, turning in recent years into an imposing scientific and technical vocabulary which bids fair to make the English language, the richest of the languages. These scientific terms consist not only of words like atom, cyclo, tron, telegraph, hydro, therapy etc but also of prefix like hyper, hypo, etc whose Latin counterparts are super and some, which often lead to the formation of hybrid words. For instance, the word 'hyper tension' is a hybrid of the Greek 'hyper' and the Latin 'tension'. The word 'dictaphone' also has the Greek suffix 'phone' coupled with the Latin derivation 'dicta'. Some other scientific and technical terms borrowed from Greek are graph, chorus, cycle and acrobatic.

The total Greek contribution is not merely scientific and technological. Numerous Greek words appear in the popular speech. 'Idiot' for example, is Greek for 'private'; 'adament' is Greek for 'unsubdued'; 'cyclone' is Greek for 'the coil of snake'. The Bible comes for another Greek name for the same material. Among recent Greek addition



to the English vocabulary is the word 'hoipolloi' for 'the many'.

Greek was a European language for expressing philosophical ideas. Such philosophical terms, for example, in English are 'peripatetic', from the Greek 'peripatetikos'. 'Phenomenon' is a hybrid of the Latin suffix 'all' and Greek, 'phainomenon' meaning 'that which appears' etc. A few more examples in which Greek suffixes and prefixes are attached to English are hypersensitive, amorel, etc.

Medical science has borrowed a large number of words from Greek and is thus responsible for new coinages on Greek model such as psychology, neurology etc.

To sum up, before the Middle Ages, English had acquired from Greek such words as academy, atom, Bible, diphthong, harmony, ecstasy, nymphs, tragedy, tyranny and theatre.

The 16th century provides words like irony, alphabet, drama, elegy, dilemma, chorus, basic, pathos, epic and theory. The next century brought bathos and philander. The 19th century shows the coining and adaptation of such words as phase, phylon and



acrobat, therm and agonistic. Some other terms borrowed recently are allergy, electric, cosmetic, amphora, etc. We see, therefore, that Greek has been one of the potent influences on the English language down the ages.

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