

finds its way into the literary language. A good example of this in Modern English is *faggot* for "effeminate male homosexual." The folk etymology of this word is that it derives from the male sodomites who were used as *faggots* (bundles of firewood) when witches were burned at the stake. Little does it matter to the folk mind that the word is attested in its homosexual meaning only in American English in 1914, that it comes from the dialectal use of *faggot* (and *fadge*) in the sense of "fat, slovenly woman," and that the penalty for buggery in English law was hanging, not burning at the stake, which was the punishment of heretics until the homosexual monarch James I put an end to the practice. The speaker who knows *faggot* only in its primary meaning (and does not consult such a source as Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*) can accept such an explanation because it matches his imperfect command of the range of senses of the word with his hazy recollection that "in the Middle Ages people were burned at the stake for various crimes that offended the church."

The origin of *dyke* in the sense of "lesbian" (with the variant *bulldyke*) has inspired several folk etymologies, because the exact source of the term is unknown. One of the more fanciful interpretations is that the word is a deformation of Boadicca, the name of the British queen who fought against the Roman invaders. A more recent interpretation of the second syllable of *bulldyke* is that it comes from the American slang expression "to be diked out," presumably in male attire. A possible etymology is that the second element is the word *tyke* in the meaning "bitch," attested in English and other Germanic languages; a *bulldyke* would then be "a bitch who behaves like a bull" (the male animal par excellence). In American English *tyke* has gone its own way to become an endearing expression for a child, hence the organization of lesbian mothers Dykes 'n Tykes.

The English language may lend itself to etymological curiosity and speculation more than others because so much of its vocabulary is foreign, hence the perennial question "What does it mean?," while the native vocabulary is often opaque to the specialist because its origins are lost in the obscure centuries of Middle and Old English. Also, in the sexual realm there has been a long battle between the vulgar terms banned from literature and public life and the learned euphemisms that were created or borrowed so that certain topics could be discussed at all. It is commonly believed that the little "four-letter words" that cannot be used in polite conversation are of Anglo-Saxon origin, when in fact most of them are not attested in the Old English period, and Anglo-Saxon had its own sexual vocabulary, now lost even in the British dialects.

The etymon of a word was supposedly its "true" meaning, but to the professional linguist it is only an earlier meaning or form. In the case of the modern languages most words can be traced to sources attested in medieval and ancient writing, and recent coinages can often be assigned to a particular author who first used them in speech or print. For the general public, literature on "word origins" can be an entertaining set of anecdotes, while for the specialist the discipline of etymology is a clue to problems in cultural history, as words can preserve customs and beliefs of bygone eras even when their primary meaning is lost in the mists of time.

See also *Language and Linguistics*.

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### EUGENE, PRINCE OF SAVOY (1663–1736)

Austrian general and statesman.

Born the son of Eugène Maurice count of Soissons and Olympia Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin, Eugene was destined for the clerical profession by Louis XIV,

but in 1683 fled from Paris to the court of the Holy Roman (Austrian) emperor, as he was denied entry into the French army. In 1697 he was entrusted with the high command in the Turkish war (1683–99), and at Centa on September 11, 1697, he won a decisive victory against the sultan's forces. In the War of the Spanish Succession his victories over the French at Carpi and Chiari (1701) contributed to the conclusion of the Grand Alliance at The Hague. The victory over France and Bavaria at Höchstädt on the Danube on August 13, 1704 was the outcome of his strategic planning and collaboration with the British under the duke of Marlborough. After the death of margrave Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden, Eugene was named imperial field marshal by the Diet. Fighting alongside Marlborough once more, he won victories at Oudenaarde (1708) and Malplaquet (1709). He was commissioned by the emperor to conduct the preliminary peace negotiations at The Hague in 1709, and to represent Austria at the peace conference at Rastatt and Baden in 1714. In the Turkish War of 1714–18, after victories at Petrovaradin and Temesvár he besieged the fortress of Belgrade, where on August 16, 1717, he defeated an enormous Turkish relief force and by capturing Belgrade decided the outcome of the struggle. Court intrigues and a subsequent crisis in which Eugene was involved ended with his complete vindication, but led him in 1725 to renounce the governor generalship of the Austrian Netherlands which he had occupied since the War of the Spanish Succession.

Eugene of Savoy was the most talented general of his day and a far-sighted politician as well, one who replaced the dynastic outlook of the seventeenth century with the concept of *raison d'état*. A generous patron of the arts and sciences, he entertained relations with Montesquieu, Voltaire, Leibniz, and the historian Muratori; in Vienna he had the Belvedere Palace built by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt. In nationality and character he was Italian;

although he understood German, he never wrote a sentence in that language. As a general and a statesman he served the multi-national Habsburg monarchy and the Holy Roman empire; his political horizon was still that of the feudal order based on a harmony of the estates, not the democratic outlook of the later eighteenth century. In the twentieth century German National Socialism and Italian fascism claimed him as one of their predecessors in the struggle for a "new order" in Europe—rather anachronistically, although he did acquire Hungary and the South Slavic lands for the Habsburg crown.

Eugene lived at a time when his lack of interest in the opposite sex could be lauded by naive panegyrists as meaning that he was "chaste and pure as a seraph." His long association with countess Eleonora Batthyány led to no greater intimacy than card playing, never to marriage. His enemies, however, whispered that he "does not bother with women, a couple of handsome pages are his *métier*." He even received the nickname "Mars without Venus." His best friend at the court of Louis XIV was also homosexual, the Prince de Turenne, who accompanied him on his flight to Austria. But while the prince repented and returned home, Eugene vowed that he would set foot on French soil again only at the head of a hostile army—and kept his word. Only a few anecdotes surfaced in regard to his sexual life, but these tell enough. One is a soldier's song in kitchen Latin that alludes to his voyage on the Rhone River with his friend, the marquis de la Moussaye. When a storm broke out, the general dreaded the worst, but the Marquis consoled him with the words: *Securae sunt nostrae vitae/ Sumus enim sodomitae/ Igne tantum perituri/ Landeriri*, "Our lives are safe/ For we are sodomites/ Destined to perish only by fire/ We shall land." A comment made by Schulenberg in 1709 should probably read that the prince enjoyed "*la petite débauche et la p[ine] au dela de tout*," which means that he derived his sexual gratification from

the virile member—of others. So Eugene of Savoy was one of those military figures whose homosexuality freed them to devote their lives to a dangerous career without the distractions of a wife and family, and he is remembered as one of the ablest generals in Austrian history.

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### EULENBURG UND HERTEFELD, PHILIPP FÜRST ZU (1847–1921)

German politician and diplomat, an intimate of Kaiser Wilhelm II. A former guards officer, jurist, and owner of a vast estate, he entered the German diplomatic corps in 1877. Eulenburg formed a close personal relationship with the future Kaiser in 1886 thanks to which he was able to play a key role in German politics that far exceeded his official position as Ambassador to Austria–Hungary (1894–1903). He both reinforced the megalomania of the Kaiser and judged him critically, but also acted as intermediary between Wilhelm II and the Foreign Office.

Eulenburg was the center of a homosexual clique that was effectively penetrated by the first secretary of the French legation and later ambassador to Berlin, Raymond Lecomte (1857–1921), who used his position to reveal to the Quai d'Orsay that Germany was bluffing in the Morocco crisis of January–April 1906, which ended in a French diplomatic victory at the Algeiras Conference. This reverse for Germany inspired a bitter attack on Eulenburg and his circle in November 1906 by Maximilian Harden, the jingoist editor of *Die Zukunft*, an influential political weekly. In the series of trials that followed, Harden was victorious and Eulenburg was exposed as a homosexual and socially ruined, spending the remain-

ing years of his life in isolation on his country estate, though he was spared the final disgrace of imprisonment. The **Scientific-Humanitarian Committee**, the homosexual rights organization headed by Magnus Hirschfeld, who testified as an expert witness, suffered a severe setback and loss of support, and the monarchy itself was exposed to such humiliation that the whole subject has been a “blind spot” for German historians ever since. Although this episode was the Watergate of the Second Reich, references to it in standard works are laconic and uninformative. In all likelihood, the missing piece in the picture was Wilhelm II's own homosexuality—hence the peculiar attachment that gave Eulenburg such influence over his sovereign in the shaping of German foreign policy, which Lecomte in turn intercepted to his country's advantage. Ironically enough, it was the journalistic use of the term *homosexual* in the vast contemporary coverage of this scandalous affair that confirmed it as the usual word for the subject in German and the other modern languages.

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### EUNUCHS

Eunuchs are men or boys whose testes or external genitals have been removed. This condition differs from other physical defects such as amputation of the hand or foot or removal of the eye in that, at various historical epochs it was intentionally created, so that the eunuch had not merely a physical or medical but also a social definition.

*Antiquity.* The practice of castrating slaves or prisoners of war began in the Ancient Near East and reached Greece