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bigot, *n.* and *adj.*

Pronunciation: Brit. /'bɪɡət/, U.S. /'bɪɡət/

Forms: 15– **bigot**, 16 **biggot**.

Frequency (in current use):

Origin: A borrowing from French. **Etymon:** French *bigot*.

Etymology: < Middle French *bigot* (French *bigot*) (noun) person who shows excessive religious zeal, a religious hypocrite, (adjective) showing excessive religious zeal (15th cent.), of uncertain origin, perhaps ultimately < either English *by God* at BY *prep.* 2b or an equivalent expression in another Germanic language (although there is apparently no evidential basis for this supposition: see further e.g. *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* at *bî got*). With sense A. 2a compare earlier BIGOTED *adj.* 2.

It is uncertain whether the Middle French word shows a direct connection with Old French *bigot*, attested in the 12th cent. as an offensive name given to the Normans (and also attested in both England and France as a byname, earliest in the 11th cent.). If not directly connected, it is likely that both words show the same or a similar ultimate etymology.

Compare (< French) Italian *bigotto* (a1698), German *Bigott* (18th cent.), etc. Yiddish *bagotish* bigotted has been suggested as an etymon of the French word, but there seems no reason for seeing this as other than a modern borrowing from another Germanic language, ultimately reflecting the French word.

A. *n.*

†1. A religious hypocrite; (also) a superstitious adherent of religion.

Obs.

- 1598 T. SPeght *Wks. G. Chaucer* sig. Aaaa.ii *Bigin, bigot*, superstitious hypocrite [1602 *adds* or hypocritical woman].
- 1653 T. URQUHART tr. Rabelais *1st Bk. Wks.* xl. 181 He is no *bigot* or hypocrite.
- 1656 T. BLOUNT *Glossographia* *Bigot* (Fr.), an hypocrite, or one that seems much more holy then he is, also a scrupulous or Superstitious fellow.
- 1664 H. MORE *Modest Enq. Myst. Iniquity* 436 One part of their Church becomes Sotts and *Bigots*.
- a1721 J. SHEFFIELD *Wks.* (1740) 201 Yet some thought the Vacancy open was kept, Concluding the *Bigot* would never accept: But the Hypocrite told them, he well understood, Tho' the Function was wicked, the Stipend was good.
- 1787 W. BECKFORD *Portuguese Jrnl.* 18 June (1954) 88 I should never finish were I to tell you all the nonsense trumpeted about in my favour by nuns, friars, and *bigots* of every rank and denomination.

2.

a. A person considered to adhere unreasonably or obstinately to a particular religious belief, practice, etc.

- 1661 A. COWLEY *Vision Cromwell* 52 He was rather a well meaning and deluding Bigot, than a crafty and malicious Impostor.
- 1741 I. WATTS *Improvem. Mind* I. i. 21 A Dogmatist in Religion is not a long way off from a Bigot.
- 1774 A. TUCKER *Light of Nature* (1777) I. I. 312 [The freethinker] is not so prone to anger as the bigot, except now and then when gravelled in argument.
- 1844 A. P. STANLEY *Life & Corr. T. Arnold* II. viii. 13 [Dr. Arnold] was almost equally condemned, in London as a bigot, and in Oxford as a latitudinarian.
- 1892 *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc. Amer.* 7 77 He singled out the most aggressive of his opponents, Pastor Goeze, in whom he saw the type of a religious bigot.
- 1938 P. KAVANAGH *Green Fool* (1971) vi. 66 The Protestant Rector..was a bit of a bigot.
- 2007 *Calgary (Alberta) Sun* (Nexis) 3 Feb. 15 This was intolerable to Sunni bigots and Shiite fanatics alike.

b. In extended use: a fanatical adherent or believer; a person characterized by obstinate, intolerant, or strongly partisan beliefs.

- 1683 R. DIXON *Canidia* I. iv. 26 A Bigot, to revenge his Brothers death Arms Cap-a-pee.
- 1693 W. CONGREVE *Old Batchelour* I. i. 8 Yet is ador'd by that Biggot Sr. Joseph Wittoll, as the image of Valour.
- 1837 H. HALLAM *Introd. Lit. Europe* I. vii. 539 Lord Bacon, certainly no bigot to Aristotle.
- 1863 C. KINGSLEY *Water-babies* vii. 290 The children of Prometheus are..the bigots, and the bores.
- 1952 *Burlington (N. Carolina) Daily Times-News* 30 Jan. 8 B/3 It was political bigots who opened the gates to Russian communism.
- 1992 *Face* June 5/2 The way to defeat the bigots is to not let them create hate inside you.

B. *adj.* (*attrib.*).

Of or characteristic of a bigot; bigoted. Also *fig.* Now *rare*.

- 1623 LD. HERBERT in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* III. 164 The most common censure, even of the bigot party.
- 1680 DRYDEN *Kind Keeper* Ep. Ded. sig. A4 In a Country [*sc.* France] more Bigot than ours.
- 1751 T. SMOLLETT *Peregrine Pickle* II. lxxvii. 316 The crazed tory, the bigot whig.
- 1787 J. BARLOW *Vision of Columbus* IV. 135 The deep veil, that bigot zeal has thrown O'er pagan books, and science long unknown.
- 1844 A. W. KINGLAKE *Eothen* xxvii. 388 Old bigot zeal against Christians.
- 1903 E. FAWCETT *Voices & Visions* 108 The mob has gone..into the shambles of gross bigot faiths.
- 2001 C. MANCARI *Walking on Grass* viii. 71 Carla's urge to puke was successfully repressed, as her silence approved his bigot opinions.

COMPOUNDS

† **bigot-maker** *n.* *Obs.*

a1720 J. SHEFFIELD *Wks.* (1753) II. 155 The best of all the Bigot-makers that ever I read of.

1863 B. F. BARRETT *Catholicity of New Church* I. xvi. 163 The bigot-maker's trade, since there would no longer be a demand for his wares, would be given up.

DERIVATIVES

† '**bigotish** *adj.* *Obs. rare*

1652 J. EVELYN *State of France* 80 The Roman Catholicks of France are nothing so..bigotish as are..the Recusants of England.

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