THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 19:
THE ROMANIZATION OF BRITAIN

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a Podcast About the History of English Language. This is Episode 19 – The Romanization of Britain.

In this episode, I'm going to look at the emergence of the Roman Empire following the death of Julius Caesar. And then I'm going to look at what happened when the Romans decided to make another attempt to conquer Britain. As you probably already know, the Romans had more luck this second time around. Britain finally became part of the Roman Empire. Well, at least part of it did. And so I'm also going to explore how Roman economics and culture began to transform Celtic Britain into a new Romanized Britain. And along the way, I will look at how modern English reflects some of these changes.

So this episode will focus on the early period of the Roman Empire and the Roman occupation of Britain. As for the end of the Roman Empire – at least in western Europe – that part of the story is closely associated with the rise of the Germanic tribes to the north. And so next time, I'm going to begin looking at those Germanic tribes in detail. I have intentionally delayed any detailed discussion of those tribes up to this point. But after this episode, we'll be ready to look at the ultimate Germanic roots of English. But let me note that Latin will continue to be an integral part of the story of English. So we won't be leaving Latin behind – not by any means. But the overall focus will shift across the Rhine next time into Germany and the Germanic tribes.

As for this episode, let's pick up with the spread of the Roman Republic into western Europe under Julius Caesar. As you will recall, Caesar led the expeditions which ultimately resulted in the Roman conquest of Gaul. And this was part of the overall spread of Rome throughout Europe and the Mediterranean.

And with the spread of Rome into western Europe, we can see the early fault lines for the division of the Empire into western and eastern sections. In the east, there were pre-existing ancient civilizations with a common lingua franca in Greek. But in the west, the Celtic cultures of Europe were far less advanced. So Roman culture was able to replace the native cultures there much more easily. Roman wealth and culture was actually embraced in many of thee regions, even if the Romans themselves were not always welcome. So Romanization was much more effective in these western regions, and the new societies which emerged bore a distinctly Roman appearance.

Following Caesar's conquest of Gaul, the territory was thoroughly Romanized. The Roman culture and the Roman language soon replaced the native Celtic traditions and languages there. Caesar's victory over Pompey in the Roman civil war had left Caesar as the dominant political and military leader in Rome. He effectively became the dictator of Rome, but unlike his predecessors, he did not serve for a period of 6 months. He was dictator for life, which as it turned out was actually not all that long. In 44 BC, less than five years after his victory over his political rivals in Rome, Caesar was stabbed to death by a group of senators who were alarmed by his rise to power and his disregard of traditional Roman institutions. If the plan was to return

Rome to some form of rule by the Senate, it failed. Left with a choice between anarchy and one-man rule, Rome was ultimately forced to accept one-man rule.

A civil war followed Caesar's assassination with Mark Antony briefly emerging as the leader of Rome, but fortunes soon turned against him and his wife, the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. And in 31 BC, their forces were defeated by those led by the grandnephew and adopted son of Caesar – Octavian. After their defeat, Mark Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. And Octavian finally emerged from all of this civil strife as the ultimate victor in the battle for control of Rome.

Under the leadership of Octavian, Rome completed the transformation from Republic to Empire. His reforms were actually very successful in bringing about peace and prosperity to the Empire. And this period came to be known as 'Pax Romana' – meaning the Roman Peace. Octavian preserved the Senate as an institution, but it offered very little check on his powers. Octavian controlled the army, and he concentrated many political positions in himself. He could initiate legislation himself, and he could veto the Senate's legislation.

In 27 BC, Octavian was given the name 'Augustus,' which was a name that carried with it a sense of reverence. And as I mentioned in the last episode, he had the seventh month of the Roman calendar named in his honor, thereby creating the month of August. This followed July which had been named for Julius Caesar. By the time of Octavian – or Augustus – the terms *Rome* or *Roman* no longer meant the city of Rome itself. It now referred to the entire Rome Empire. By the third century, every free inhabitant of the Empire received Roman citizenship. So *Rome* started to become a very general term for things associated with the Empire itself.

Augustus was a very young man when he became the ruler of Rome and he died at the age of 76. His rule is considered by many historians to represent the peak of Roman culture with its blend of Greek and Roman elements. Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius and then Caligula. The rule of Caigula was marked by cruelty, excess, incompetence – and probably mental illness. I'm not going to deal with all of his exploits here, like attempting to make his own horse a consul, but it was his successor who is far more important to our story of the history of English.

Caligula's cruelty and insanity ultimately led to his assassination in the year 41 AD. And from this point on, we can just assume that all dates are AD – or Common Era – unless I note otherwise. After the death of Caligula, his uncle Claudius became Emperor. And it was Claudius who once again looked to Britain as a possible location for Roman conquest.

One thing to keep in mind about Claudius is that he had been very sick as a child, and he was still frail as an adult. He had a limp, a stutter and a slight deafness. And his poor health may have actually been an asset earlier in his life because he wasn't considered much of a political threat and he survived the political attacks and assassinations which befell other Roman nobles during the reigns of Tiberius and Caligula. But now that he was Emperor of Rome, his frailty was a major liability. He knew that he would become the target of attacks. So what was the best way for a Roman Emperor to secure his position? The answer was simple – conquest! When an Emperor conquered a foreign territory, the Emperor himself was the conqueror and it gave the

Emperor a great deal of prestige and clout. And in the case of Claudius, it would remove any doubts as to his physical ability to rule.

Now to the Romans, Britain was considered to the edge of the world. It was beyond Gaul, across the sea. And even Julius Caesar wasn't able to fully conquer it during his two campaigns there. There were all kinds of rumors about the savages who lived there. And the Romans were particularly concerned about the mysterious power of the Celtic druids.

Between Caesar's attempts to invade the island in the first century BC and Claudius's expedition around a century later, there was actually a fair amount of trade with Rome. There were about twenty major Celtic tribes in Britain. And Rome had actually entered into alliances with some of theses tribes in southern Britain. And Roman coins were being minted by this point in and around modern Belgium, which was part of the northernmost region of Roman Gaul. And these coins were actually in demand among the Celtic tribes in southern Britain. These coins were payment for British goods like cattle, grain, tin, iron, hunting dogs, and even slaves. Rome also traded Roman luxury goods for these items, including wine and olive oil. But the Celtic tribes had reached a stage of economic development where Roman coins were also an acceptable form of currency. Some of the Celtic tribal kings had even established their own mints to make their own coins. Interestingly, these Celtic British coins were inscribed in Latin because the Celtic languages weren't written down at that point. The inscriptions even called the Celtic kings *rex* using the Latin term for 'king.' So even at this early stage, we can see an economy that was in transition to an economy based on currency and minted coins even before the Roman conquest.

But trade and political alliances were not enough for Emperor Claudius. He needed a new territory to conquer, and Britain would serve that purpose very well.

In the year 43, four Roman legions consisting of about 25,000 men landed in southeastern Britain. From there, the Roman armies advanced northward and westward. The exact location where the Romans landed, and the exact tracks of the Roman army after that, they're really unknown. But we do know that one of the first major obstacles for the Roman army was the River Thames. They apparently built a bridge to cross it, and a settlement soon began to emerge at this crossing point. This early Roman city was called Londinium, and of course, it is known today as London. Interestingly, though, that original name Londinium appears to be a Celtic word which the Romans borrowed and modified.

The story of the Roman invasion of Britain actually parallels the Roman invasion of Gaul in many respects. Just like in Gaul, the various Celtic tribes in Britain were prone to infighting, and they were never able to form a cohesive alliance against the Romans. One tribe would ally it self with the Romans for the sole purpose of defeating a neighboring tribe. This 'divide and conquer' approach, which the Romans had used so effectively in Gaul, it continued to be Rome's best weapon in Britain as well.

The Romans initially conquered and settled in the southeastern region of Britain. This region already had established trading relations with the Romans and remember that some of these tribes had alliances with the Romans before the Roman invasion occurred. So its not surprising

that Romans found the least resistence in these areas. Many of the native elites in this region actually embraced Rome which helped Rome establish a secure base there.

Within the next three years or so after the Roman invasion, Rome had conquered much of modern-day England. But the native Celtic tribes continued to resist the Romans to the west in Wales and Cornwall and further to the north in central and northern Britain.

These tribes had elected to engage in a guerilla war against the Romans, and that was something the Romans weren't really accustomed to. The Romans eventually realized that a regional base in the south wasn't going to be enough if they wanted to conquer the entire island. They were going to have to engage those western and northern tribes. And that's eventually what they did.

The Roman campaigns against these western and northern tribes ultimately proved successful – at least in part. After several decades of hard fighting, the Romans were finally able to subdue the tribes in Wales as well as the tribes in some of the northern portions of Britain. But the Romans were never able to conquer the northernmost region which we know today as Scotland. In fact, the later Emperor Hadrian built the now-famous Hadrian's Wall across northern Britain to establish the limits of Roman occupation and to protect it against the tribes to the north.

These tribes in modern-day Scotland included the Scots and another group called the Picts. The Picts occupied northeast Scotland. And they were known to paint their bodies. The term **_Picts_** means 'painted people' in Latin. And there is some disagreement among modern historians as to whether they were Celtic or not. Their language actually appears to be a blend of Celtic and an older native language. But the bottom line is that the Romans finally gave up on trying to conquer that northernmost region. And Hadrian's Wall became the defacto border of the Roman territory.

The Romans also never tried to invade Ireland to the west. So that meant that the regions which we know today as Scotland and Ireland retained their Celtic culture and languages.

So just like the Anglo-Saxons several centuries later, the Romans never realized a complete conquest of the British Isles – only a portion of it, albeit a very large portion of it.

Now I mentioned in an earlier episode that the word **_breeches_** was a native Celtic word for pants. And we know from recorded sources that the Romans were once amused by these barbarian garments, but they soon decided that they weren't such a bad idea after all. The Roman togas didn't provide much warmth in the chilly and wet climate of Britain. So the Romans themselves soon began to wear breeches or pants in Britain.

Now no discussion about the Roman invasion of Britain would be complete without mentioning one of the earliest known military heroes in British history. And this native military and political hero was in fact a heroine. And I am referring to the Celtic Queen Boudicca (or as she is sometimes called Boudicea). I noted that there were many parallels between the Roman occupation of Britain and the earlier Roman occupation of Gaul. As you may recall from the earlier episode on Caesar's invasion of Gaul, just as he had completed his initial conquest, a full-

scale revolt broke out under the leadership of Vercingetorix. And something very similar happened here again in eastern Britain.

Shortly after the death of the Emperor Claudius, his successor Nero became Emperor. The Iceni tribe was located in eastern Britain. It was a very large and important Celtic tribe which generally had a good relationship with Rome. In the year 60, the Iceni king died without a male heir. So he divided his wealth between his two daughters and the Roman Emperor Nero. Now he apparently thought that this would ensure Imperial protection for his family. But he couldn't have been more wrong. The Romans seized the opportunity and annexed his kingdom. But more than that, they flogged his wife Boudicca, and they raped his daughters, and they confiscated the property of the Iceni chiefs. Queen Boudicca and the Iceni were incensed.

And under Boudicca's leadership, the Iceni tribe launched a full-scale revolt. After they began their attacks against Roman forces, other Celtic tribes in Britain began to join the revolt. The Iceni sacked several towns occupied by Romans including Londinium. The Romans had to withdraw from London, thereby leaving it to be plundered by the rebels. And according to the Roman historian Tacitus, about 70,000 Romans and their allies and townspeople were killed by the Iceni and their allies.

All of this happened at a time when the Romans had initiated a campaign in Wales. So they had to immediately recall those troops to deal with the rebellion in the east. The Romans were then able to inflict a defeat on Boudicca just west of London. And the tide by this point had started to change, and the Roman army finally put down the revolt in the following year – 61 AD. In response, Boudicca poisoned herself, thereby effectively ending the last real chance the Celtic tribes had to get rid of the Roman invaders.

After the revolt, the process of Romanization was able to take place in southern and central Britain with relatively little resistance. The Romans often converted the existing Celtic towns into Roman towns. This was unlike in Gaul where Celtic towns were often depopulated and new Roman towns were built. The Romans also built roads between the existing towns in Britain. And in fact, these roads form the basis of many modern roads in Britain.

By this point, the Romans had 'conquest and colonization' down to a science. Prominent local leaders were made auxiliary officers and were encouraged to adopt Roman culture. The Romans took the sons of Celtic chiefs and they educated them as Romans – including grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, and music. They also learned Latin. And the sons grew up to be local leaders. And their sons were given the same education. These subsequent generations welcomed Roman culture. And since this Romanization was focused at the higher levels Celtic society, it tended to filter down to the lower levels and tended to ensure there was little organized opposition to the Roman presence.

Latin was also made the official language of Roman Britain, but that didn't mean that everyone started speaking Latin. During the period of the Roman occupation, most native Britons continued to speak Celtic languages, especially in the rural areas. Latin was spoken by some people in Britain, mainly by the governing classes and administrators, and by the soldiers

stationed there and by certain traders. And some of the better educated natives also learned Latin. So basically Latin was spoken in and around the Roman-occupied towns. But it is important to understand that Britain never experienced the degree of Romanization that Gaul did. The Romans arrived later in Britain, and ultimately they left earlier. And it was also much further away from Rome. So Latin never made the in-roads in Britain that it did elsewhere. It remained a second language, although it did have a great deal of prestige among those who spoke it. And it should be noted that Latin was the only written language in Britain at the time because the Celts in Britain were still illiterate.

Speaking of writing, the Latin word for writing was *scribere*, and a professional who copied texts was a *scriba*. And this word comes into English as *scribe*. It also comes in as the word *script*. We see it in the word *description*. When actors learn their parts, they have to memorize their *script*, which is a shortened version of the word *manuscript*.

Postscript and *inscription* are just a few of the other words which contain the word *script* and which derive from the Latin word for 'writing.' The power of Roman civilization in western Europe is reflected in the fact that the Romance languages, and most of the Celtic languages, and most of the Germanic languages all use this Latin *scribere* as the basis of their respective words for 'write.' Interestingly though, English is one of the few exceptions to that rule. Even though English has borrowed the Latin word in certain contexts, like *scribe* and *script*, the English word *write* comes from an Old English word – *writan*.

Of course, if you were someone who could read and write, you were *literate*, another word that comes to use from Latin. The Romans used the word *littera* to mean individuals letters of the alphabet. The plural version *litterae* referred to a letter written to someone. Ultimately, English lost the distinction between the individual and the plural versions, and today it uses the word *letter* for both. So we use 'letters' to write 'letters.' As I noted, the words *literate* and *literacy* come from the same root. *Alliteration* (which is the repetition of a sound) also comes from the same root.

Now even though many Britons continued to speak Celtic languages during this period of Roman occupation, there is no doubt that the overall culture of Britain began to change during this period. Even though the overall effects of Romanization in Britain were more limited than in Gaul, we can still start to see a society that was becoming more and more Roman.

And one place where we can start to see the Roman influences is in the names of certain cities. After the Roman army arrived, it established camps which were basically forts or military stations, and they did it throughout the region. These camps also recruited locals for enlistment in the Roman army. And some of these camps emerged as modern cities. The Latin word for 'camp' was *castra* – and many modern cities in Britain that begin or end in 'caster' or 'chester' come from this Roman word for camp. So we see it in city names like Chesterfield, Manchester, Dorchester, Winchester and Lancaster. It's also found in city names like Gloucester and Worcester which are no longer pronounced like they're spelled. Both words end in 'c-e-s-t-e-r' when spelled out, so we see the same Roman word for 'camp' in those names as well.

So from that word *castra* which meant camp or fort, the Romans developed the word *castellum* which meant a fortified village. And *castellum* passed from French into English as *castle* meaning a type of fortress. And it's no coincidence that the word *castle* came into English from French. As we will eventually see, when the Norman French invaded England in 1066, they not only brought the French language with them, but they also constructed many large castles to subdue the native population.

Now some of these early Roman camps emerged into modern cities. But they were merely villages during the Roman period. And I want to talk about that word *village* because it actually provides a nice transition to the next topic I want to discuss – which is Roman law.

The word *village* comes from the Roman word *villa*. And shortly after the ancient city of Rome emerged as an actual city, some wealthy Romans decided they didn't like living in such a crowded place. So they built houses outside of Rome in the country. This type of estate was called a *villa* in Latin. And this same basic process happened in Britain after the Romans took over there as well. Villas began to pop up in Britain around and outside of the Roman towns.

Researchers have identified over 600 sites in Britain which were once occupied by a Roman-style villa. And like so much of the Roman influence in Britain, these villas were primarily located in the southern and eastern portions of the island. Some of them were very small and some were very grand consisting of hundreds and even thousands of acres. But most were somewhere in the middle. But they were all constructed in a style that was common throughout the Roman Empire at this point, including Italy and the Roman territory of Gaul.

Now this word *villa* has filtered down to modern English in its original form. But is had also created several new words. These country houses were often so large that they required caretakers and other help. And this eventually resulted in an entire community around the villa. And this was the origin of the term *village* to refer to a small settlement.

But what about the people who lived in these villages. Well the Romans called them *villani*. Early French adopted the term as *villein*. And as the Romans began to occupy much of western Europe, we can start to see the emergence of the later-day feudal system with this arrangement. In later France, the term *villein* came to refer to the peasants or common people who provided service to the lord who occupied the estate. These people were often viewed as crude, uncivilized and amoral. And English later borrowed the word as *villain*. So *villain* comes from the same Latin root as *village*. And much like the creation of the word *castle* from the original Latin word meaning 'camp,' we can see in the evolution of these words a changing economic and social system. Roman *camps* and *villages* gave use Medieval French *castles* and *villains*.

Again, the Medieval Feudal system emerged after the decline of the Roman empire. But certain aspects of that system did have its roots in Roman law and economics. Roman law distinguished between wealthy men and poor men. A poor man would get harsher punishment than a rich man for the same crime. And this wasn't just a consequence of having better representation in court like today. It was actually part of the law itself.

Despite this obvious unfairness given our modern sensibilities, many historians consider the formal Roman legal codes to be one of the greatest gifts to the modern world. Roman law actually began with something called the 'Laws of the Twelve Tables' which were adopted shortly after the last Etruscan king was expelled from Rome. And these laws were engraved on bronze tablets and displayed in the Roman Forum. And this was really the foundation of Roman law. You may remember from an earlier episode that the Roman word *forum* gave us the modern English word *forensic* referring to the law or the courts.

Over time, these laws were expanded – first during the Roman Republic, and then later under the Empire. And as the Roman Empire expanded and acquired new territories and new peoples, they encountered new systems of law and justice. The Romans adopted elements of these non-Roman laws into a universal Roman legal code which could be implemented throughout the vast and varied Empire.

The Romans had also adopted from the Greeks the concept of 'natural law' or 'universal law.' This was the notion that there are certain forms of behavior which we all share as humans and which are not tied to a specific society or culture. So murder, rape, theft and incest were considered unlawful based on universal concepts. Now modern anthropologists would probably quibble with this notion of a 'universal law' which we all share, but the Greeks and the Romans accepted it. And the Romans based their legal code around it.

The Roman legal code was codified by the sixth century by the emperor Justinian, and it still serves as the basis of many modern European legal systems.

Roman Law was highly developed and, not surprisingly, it is the source for many of our legal terms. The Latin verb *stāre* meant 'to stand,' and it is the root of the words *stance*, *staunch*, *status*, *stationary*, and *constant*. This verb was combined with *tres* or *tria* meaning 'three' and produced a reconstructed Latin word **tristis*. And this is the basis of legal words like *testimony* and *testament* in Modern English. So why would *three* be incorporated into the verb *stand* to produce these words – *testimony* and *testament* ? Well, it's because it reflects an aspect of 'threeness' that was common in Roman law. The *testimony* of a witness is the perspective of a 'third party.' In certain cases under Roman law, three people has to witness an action before a person could be found guilty of the accusation. A Last Will and *Testament* reflects the fact that traditionally it had to be signed by the person making the Will as well as two witnesses. So that makes three.

The Latin term *obligatio* meant the actual physical binding of a person to something. Under Roman law, a defaulting debtor was physically bound and delivered to his creditor as a prisoner. After the debtor's prison was abandoned, the term came to represent just the legal duty owed by a debtor to a creditor. This is the context in which the term *obligation* arose.

A common source of disputes for Roman authorities was use of small streams and rivers by property owners and traders. Sometimes multiple individuals would claim competing rights to use the same steam or some portion of it. In Latin, a stream was called a *rivus* – and those who competed for the use of the stream were called *rivales*. And this is the same word which comes

into English as *rivals* meaning 'competitors.' And Roman legal records confirm many court cases between *rivales* over the use of rivers and streams. So the Modern English words *rivals* and *rivalry* come from this source.

Words like *subpoena* and *libel* also came from Latin. In fact, legal systems throughout the English-speaking world are dominated by Latin terms. But many of these legal terms came into English after 1066 with the Norman French who had to impose law and order on those defeated Anglo-Saxons. So I will cover some of those legal terms later. But modern legal traditions also borrow words directly from Latin without any modification. And many of these terms are now part of the common English language. This includes terms like *bona fide*, *de facto*, *in absentia*, *in toto*, *per annum*, *per capita*, *per se*, *prima facie*, *quid pro quo*, *status quo*, *verbatim* and *vice versa*. All of these terms have passed into Modern English in basically their original Latin form.

Now I mentioned that Roman law was connected to the Roman Forum which was the center of Roman politics and law. And now, in Britain, the Romans transferred the idea of the Roman Forum to the new towns built by the Romans. Roman style forums were established in towns like Exeter, Lincoln, and St. Albans. And courts of justice were also established there. These courts consulted the written Roman legal codes and applied Roman law. So the Celtic tradition of trial by druids in the forest was gradually being replaced by these formal legal proceedings. And this is just one example of the transition of Britain from an ancient Celtic tribal society to a more rigid, formal and structured Roman society.

Now I mentioned that the Romans constructed their own mini versions of the Roman Forum in the occupied towns in Britain. But keep in mind that the Roman Forum was not just a place for legal and political activities. It was also the commercial center of Rome. In fact, the Forum in Rome began as a marketplace. Over time, as people congregated there, it became the location for aspiring politicians to give political speeches. And from there, the legal and political aspects of the Forum grew. But it always remained a commercial center.

And these new British forums also served as Roman-style marketplaces. And after the Roman occupation, trade between the native Britons and the Roman Empire grew exponentially. And as a result, wealth began to flow into the Romanized areas of Britain as British exports to the Empire grew.

The new-found wealth also had its own Romanizing effects. Roman-style public baths became common. And Roman luxury goods were consumed. And by the way, all those new straight roads which the Romans built to facilitate the movement of troops, well they also facilitated the movement of goods. As we know from modern economics, you have to have an infrastructure to support economic growth. And since military conquest and economic growth was intertwined in the Roman mind, its not surprising that the Romans figured out how to transform military infrastructure into economic infrastructure. The same roads that allowed the Romans to easily move troops from one town to the next, well they also allowed traders to move goods between those towns. That meant goods produced in one town could easily be sold in another town. That meant that even the domestic market for local goods was bigger. And with more potential buyers, you can sell more produce for more money. And when exports to the rest of the Roman

Empire were taken into account, you can see how quickly the economy began to grow in some of these regions. And of course, the Romans got to tax all that new wealth. So the economic benefits were mutual.

It's also part of the reason why the Roman Empire was so wealthy as it was growing and expanding, but it's wealth began to decline when the Empire ran out of new territories to conquer. Empires are expensive, and massive empires are really expensive. So if you're not growing the empire, it starts to stagnate and collapse under it own weight. And this was one of many factors that contributed to the ultimate decline of the Roman Empire. But for now, with the conquest of Britain, it was pretty much at its peak of power and territory.

And as I said, Britain was enjoying the mutual economic benefits of being a newly acquired Roman territory. And all of this wealth, and the luxury goods it could buy, helped to ensure the ongoing cooperation of the native Britons. This was how Romanization worked. And it worked pretty well, at least in the southeastern portions of Britain where the Roman presence was strongest. And for these same reasons, Latin probably had it strongest impact in this same region.

Now speaking of the growing wealth in Britain after the Roman conquest, I noted earlier that Roman coins were actually being used throughout southern Britain even before the Roman occupation there. And of course, after the occupation, Roman currency poured into Britain. And this too was another catalyst for economic growth. A common, stable currency makes it much easier to buy and sell goods than the old-fashioned barter or trade system. And if that currency happens to be an international currency, well that's even better. So now, the Romanized Britons were operating on the same monetary system with the same currency as the rest of the Roman Empire.

Again, this makes trade much more efficient. That's why the United States adopted a common currency soon after it gained its independence. And that's why we have a Euro today. So let's talk about Roman currency, and the effect Latin has had on modern English words related to money and currency.

Roman coins can be traced back to the first Roman mint which was established around 289 BC. Like everything else in ancient Rome, it had a Goddess and she was named Juno. Juno was actually one of the most important Roman deities. She was the wife and sister of Jupiter. And Jupiter's daughter was Minerva. And a temple was constructed in honor of all three of these deities on the Capitoline Hill in the 4th century BC. This temple was divided into separate sections for each of the three deities.

Now with regard to Juno, she was the queen of the gods and goddesses. And as I mentioned in the last episode, her name is the basis of the name of the month of June. She was also considered a goddess of warning. The Romans believed that Juno warned them in times of imminent danger. Now the Latin verb meaning 'to warn' was *monere*. And since Juno was the Goddess of warning, she was sometimes called 'Juno Moneta' which came from that Latin word meaning 'to warn.'

Now I mentioned that the first Roman mint was established around 289 BC. And as it turns out, this mint was constructed in a building which adjoined Juno's temple, which was known as the temple of Juno Moneta. And since Roman money was coined there, many of the coins minted there featured Juno on one side of the coin. Eventually, the term *moneta* became associated with both the mint itself and the coins that were produced there. And that is how the term *moneta* came to be associated with Roman coins and money. It is the ultimate root of the English word *money*, as well as the word *mint*. Both come from the name Juno Moneta.

The modern British pound sterling originated well after the Romans during the Anglo-Saxon period in Britain. The word *pound* comes from the Old English word *pund* which was used as a weight measurement in the same sense that we use the word *pound* today as weight measurement. But the Anglo-Saxons called a 'pound of Silver' simply a *pound*. So the use of the word as currency comes from its original use as a weight measurement. And it literally meant a 'pound of silver,' or more particularly, it meant a silver coin weighing a pound.

But the Anglo-Saxons didn't invent the idea of minting silver coins weighing one pound. That idea actually came from Charlemagne in the Frankish kingdom which had emerged from Roman Gaul. The Romans had established the weight measurement which we know today as the pound. And in fact, the Romans called it a *libra*, and that's why when we abbreviate a pound of weight in modern English, we still use the initials 'lb' which reflects the Latin origin of the weight measurement.

By the time of Charlemagne, this word had evolved into early French as *livre*. And that is what Charlemagne called this early French one pound silver coin. Since it weighed a livre, he called it a *livre*.

The Anglo-Saxons picked up on this idea. They not only adopted the idea of a silver coin weighing a pound, but they also copied the idea of naming the coin after how much it weighed. But again, Old English had its own native term for a Roman libra. It was the English *pund*. So the coin was called a *pund* and eventually passed into modern English as a *pound*.

By the way, the terms *pence* and *penny* each derive from a separate Old English word which was *pening*. But the American term *cent* for a penny developed after the establishment of the US currency after the American Revolutionary War. Now as I have mentioned in earlier episodes, *cent* ultimately comes from the Latin word *centum* meaning 'hundred.' The word was shortened in French, and the 'k' sound became an 's' sound thereby giving us the word *cent*, as in *percent* meaning 'per 100.' And it was in this sense that the word *cent* was used to refer to 1/100 of a dollar.

The word *dime* comes from Latin word *decima* which meant 'tenth' and has the same root for 10 (*deca)* that is found in words like *decade* and *decathalon*. Of course, a dime is 1/10 of a dollar. And the 'k' sound in the middle of the word *decima* eventually fell away and the word went from *decima* to *dime*.

A *quarter* in Modern English means 1/4 of something. And it comes to us from Latin where it meant the same thing. And that is why was call the US coin which represents 1/4 of a dollar a *quarter*.

A *nickel* is actually named for the metal nickel which comprises about 1/4 of the nickel's weight. *Nickel* itself is a Germanic word originally used by miners to refer to a demonic spirit believed to live in mines.

But what about the *dollar*? Well, *dollar* actually comes from the name of a coin that was minted in the area we know today as Germany in the 1500s. Around the year 1516, a silver mine was discovered in a small town in Bohemia called Joachimstal. Within a couple of years, one-ounce silver coins were being minted there. The coin was called the 'Joachimstaler.' Over time, the name was shortened to 'taler.' The Dutch and Low German speakers pronounced it 'daller.' By the 1700s, the coin was being used internationally. And English colonists in America used the term in reference to both the original German 'daller', as well as other coins that were designed to resemble it like the Spanish peso. After the Revolutionary War in the United States, Thomas Jefferson recommended that the *dollar* be used as the standard name of the currency of the new county. This name was partly a demonstration of independence by the early American founders. They didn't want to use the term *pound* for the new currency since that term was associated with Britain. Since the Spanish peso was also in common use in America at the time – and since the peso was sometimes called a *dollar* in the US since it resembled the German 'daller' coin – that seemed like a good name for the new US currency. So the new currency became the *dollar*.

But what about a *dollar bill*. Well, the *bill* part takes us back to the Romans.

Roman children often wore a round, bubble-like locket called a *bulla*. And in the Middle Ages, it became common to seal official documents with a round bubble-like seal. This type of sealed official document came to be called a *bulla* as well. The term eventually became *billa*, and it meant an account or an invoice during the Middle Ages. And a 'bill of exchange' eventually was shorted to simply *bill* to mean a piece of currency – as in 'dollar bill.' It is also the root of the use of the term *bill* to mean a piece of legislation.

Now again, let's go back to Rome, to the year 309 AD. So this would have been a couple of centuries after the Empire had expanded into Britain. In that year, the Roman Emperor Constantine minted a coin called a *solidus*. This is the root of the English word *solid*. But more significantly, it is the root of the word *soldier*. Now *soldier* originally meant 'mercenary' in Old French. And payment to someone was called **soulde** in Old French from the name of the early Roman coin – the *solidus*. And that made a person who received payment to fight in a war a *souldier*. The word came into English after the Norman Invasion as *soldier*.

And speaking of paying Roman soldiers, I mentioned in an earlier episode that Roman soldiers were paid a salt allowance which was called a *salarium* from the word *sal* meaning 'salt.' And this eventually gave use the word *salary*. It's also the basis of the phrase 'worth one's salt.'

By the way, the term *bank* actually comes to us from Medieval Italian where modern banking first emerged. The moneylenders operated from *bancas* which meant 'benches.' When an Italian moneylender ran out of money, his *banca* was disbanded and he became a *bancarotto* – which is the origin of the term *bankrupt*.

And speaking of bankruptcy, its reflects the fact that some people had lots of money and some people had very little – if any at all. And I noted earlier that these distinctions were important in Rome because the Roman legal code actually made distinctions between wealthy men and poor men.
And I also noted that these distinctions can be seen in the evolution of the word *villain* from the original Latin word *villa* for a home or estate in the country. A common person or peasant was a *villein* which eventually produced the English word *villain* – meaning someone not to be trusted. But again, this evolution of the word *villa* into *villain* happened after the Roman period.

As for the Romans themselves, they actually had lots of different terms for people, and some of those terms were based around the class or social status of certain people.

The term *populus* was a very general term which referred to human beings in general. And from that word, we get words like *people*, and *population* (which refers to the people who inhabit a certain area)*, and *popular* (which is something that reflects the wishes of the people).

Now the Latin word for father which I've mentioned quite a few times in this podcast series was *pater*. And this word was used as the basis of a Latin word describing wealthy, prominent or powerful Romans – basically Roman nobles and aristocrats. This word was *patricius* which ultimately produced the word *patrician* in Modern English.

Now in contrast to the patricians, Rome also obviously had many commoners. The Romans also used the word *plebe* to refer to a commoner. We sometimes see that word in English words like *plebeian* or *plebiscite*. But the key here is to note that the Romans were making these general class distinctions very early on.

The Romans also used the term *vulgar* to refer to lower-class commoners. We see that word in the term *Vulgar Latin* to refer to the Latin dialects of the common people in various regions of the Roman Empire. Originally, it just referred to things associated with commoners. But it has since taken on a more negative connotation in modern times, and it is reflected in Modern English words like *vulgar* and *vulgarity*.

Another Latin word sometimes used for common people or peasants was the adjective *paganus*. This eventually came to mean people who didn't serve in the military. So it came to mean civilians. During the spread of the early Church, the early Christians considered themselves 'soldiers' of Christ. So that term *paganus* came to describe those people who were not Christians, and it's the basis of the later English term *pagan*.

There's an old saying that 'misery loves company.' And that was probably true for the Romans as well. The Romans combined the words *cum* (meaning 'with') and *panis* (meaning 'bread') to produce the word *companionem* meaning the person with whom you shared bread or food. This became the word *companion* in English. And it is also the root of the word *company* which initially meant a close relationship as in, "We enjoy each other's company." But it later came to mean a close business relationship as in, "I'm tired of working for this company."

Now, I've mentioned in earlier episodes that the Romans also had a term for crude or uncivilized foreigners which has passed into Modern English. That term was *barbarian*, and it was ultimately borrowed from Greek. The Latin term *barbarus* was an adjective used to describe crude and savage foreigners. Medieval Latin created the term *bravus* meaning 'cutthroat or villain.' And some linguists think this word *bravus* came from that original word *barbarus*, but this etymology is disputed. We do know that this word *bravus* created the word *brave* meaning a wild savage as in an Indian 'brave' as used by European settlers in reference to Native Americans. It is also the origin of the word *bravo* to describe a brave or bold performance.

And speaking of foreigners, there is another English word which has an interesting etymology related to the Latin word for foreigners. In an earlier episode of the podcast, I mentioned that the Latin term *ager* meant 'field' in Latin. It shares the same Indo-European root with the Greek word *agros* which gives us Modern English words like *agriculture*. And this same root provided the English word *acre* from Old English. Well, the Romans combined the Latin prefix *per* meaning 'through' with that term *ager* meaning 'field' to create the term *peregrinus* which literally meant 'through the field.' And this term was used to describe a visitor who came from another place, and therefore had to cross the field to arrive from elsewhere. This term *peregrinus* evolved into the word *pelegrin* which meant 'foreigner.' And this term eventually evolved into the modern English word *pilgrim*, but it was initially used to refer to Christians who traveled to sacred sites in foreign lands. And it also resulted in the term *pilgrimage*.

And lastly in my look at Roman words for people, the Romans called a young boy a *pupus* and a young girl a *pupa*. Now *pupa* also meant 'doll' in Latin, so apparently they equated little girls and dolls. Since those who began their learning in school were young boys and young girls, the terms became the source of the word *pupil* in English meaning a 'student.'

The Romans also noticed that when you look into the very center of a person's eye, you can see a very small image of yourself reflected in the eyeball. They therefore used the word *pupula* (which literally meant 'little doll') to name that part of the eye, which also became *pupil* in English. The same word *pupula* meaning 'little doll' is the source of the English word *puppet*. And even the English word *puppy* meaning 'little dog' also comes from the same word *pupula*. So *pupil* meaning 'student,' ans *pupil* meaning 'part of the eye,' and *puppet* and *puppy* are all derived from the same Latin root words.

So let's turn our attention back to Roman Britain. As I have noted, despite problems in the north and the west, the Romans were able to establish a strong foothold in the southern and eastern portions of Britain. And in this region, Romanization was at its strongest. Even though Latin had to compete with the native Celtic languages, it had its strongest presence in this southeastern

region. The Latin names for the months, which I mentioned in the last episode, they began to be used in Britain during this Roman period. The Germanic names for the days of the week would arrive later with the Anglo-Saxons.

The Romans also had a version of 'Bless You' in response to a sneeze, and some historians believe that the modern 'Bless You' came into Britain with the Romans during this period. Wedding customs like a wedding cake, a wedding ring, a bridesmaid, and a bride's veil, these were all Roman wedding traditions which came into Britain with the Romans. Also, the tradition of putting flowers on a grave came to Britain with the Romans. And if you have ever heard someone say that their ears are burning because someone is talking about them, well that too is a saying and belief that came to Britain within the Romans.

So at this point in our story, we now have the Roman Empire at its peak. Its influence was spread throughout the Mediterranean and western Europe. But Rome's days were numbered. To the east, the Roman army had pretty much given up on trying to conquer the vast territory occupied by the Germanic-speaking tribes. The Rhine and the Danube had become the de factor border between the Romans and the early Germans. And since Rome could no longer expand, economic decay began to set in. Internal corruption and struggles for power made the problems even worse. And all of this was exacerbated by invading Germanic tribes who sought to take advantage of the weakening Empire. And one group of those tribes were the Anglo-Saxons who would eventually find their to that Romanized island of Britain in the North Atlantic.

So next time, I'm going to begin looking at the Germanic tribes who were ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons.

So until then, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.