THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 40: LEARNING LATIN AND LATIN LEARNING

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 40: Learning Latin and Latin Learning. In this episode, we're going to explore the first significant foreign influence on the English language. With the rise of the Church and monastic schools, more and more people in Britain were speaking Latin. And as a result, Latin words began to infiltrate English. And this process was well under way over 3 centuries before the Normans arrived with their horde of Latin-derived words. So in this episode, we will explore the first period of Latin influence on English.

Before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can always reach me directly at kevin@historyofenglishpodcast.com. And I'm on twitter at englishhistpod.

So let's turn to English's first flirtation with Latin. As we know, Latin had once been a prominent language in Britain during the period of Roman rule. But after the Anglo-Saxons arrived, English had displaced the other languages which had been spoken before – including Latin and the native Celtic languages. Over the next century or so, Latin largely fell out of use in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. With the decline of Roman civilization, much of Britain not only lost the language of Rome, it also lost Rome's formal education system. The illiterate Anglo-Saxons had no use for schools or serious academic study.

But with the arrival of the Church in the 600s, both of those legacies of the Roman Empire began to make a comeback. The Church brought Latin, it brought writing, and it brought schools. In fact, Augustine had established the first school in Canterbury shortly after he arrived in Kent in 597. But the more important contribution to Anglo-Saxon education came from those northern monasteries – the ones which had maintained the tradition of those monastic schools in Ireland.

As monasteries spread around Britain, the culture of the region started to change. Scholarship, literacy and formal education was returning for the first time since the Romans. New towns and villages were popping up around many of those new monasteries. The monks were cultivating the monasteries' lands with new farming methods introduced from the continent. Those techniques were also spreading out to the natives. So there was a mini 'cultural revolution' going on. And part of that cultural revolution is reflected in the language because some of those Latin words imported from the continent began to mix with English words.

During this period, the school at Canterbury flourished. Scholars also came to London and Wessex, but the epicenter of this cultural earthquake was Northumbria. A couple of episodes back, we saw that the Northumbrian king Oswy had sided with Rome in matters of dispute between the Roman Church and the Irish Celtic Church. But despite that decision, Northumbria remained solidly within the cultural orbit of the Irish Celtic Church. As we've seen before, that Irish monastic movement preserved much of the early Roman education system with its teaching of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music). Those were the seven liberal arts. So as monastic schools were established in Northumbria, those schools continued that tradition. In addition to training

students in Christianity, they also taught all of those classical subjects. And prominent families would send their children to the Northumbrian monasteries for this type of education. In fact, some of the more prominent monasteries attracted people from all over continental Europe.

The spread of these schools also led to a literary revival. Bibles and gospel books were copied, and lots of new texts were created. New religious commentaries were written. The lives of monks and saints were composed. General histories were compiled. And poems were written down and preserved. Most of this literature was composed in Latin, but increasingly English was taking its place beside Latin as an alterative language.

And it's important to keep in mind that monks were not always stationary. Very often, they traveled around to different monasteries, not only within the same kingdom, but also to other kingdoms. And as they moved, they would bring books with them and they would stay for extended periods of time at the new monastery. And this meant that monks from different regions began to mix together. And that's how those different regional letters like the thorn and the eth, and the Roman U and the runic wynn, they all started to be mixed together. And the regional dialects of the various monks also began to be mixed together. In some of the earliest Old English texts, words are spelled in a variety of ways throughout the manuscript. A West Saxon diphthong might be used in one part of the text, but an Anglian spelling might be used in another part. And that suggests that different monks from different regions were contributing to the same manuscript.

We might wonder if those spelling differences were a concern at the time. And the answer is probably not. There were no dictionaries or standard spellings, so words were written like they sounded, and since the various monks often spoke different dialects, they spelled their words differently. And those variations were normal and expected, just as pronunciation differences were normal and expected. In fact, the concern over the one correct or proper way to spell a word is a relatively recent phenomenon – really as recent as the 18th century. Before that, spelling variations were common and acceptable.

Now, not only did monks travel around the kingdoms of Britain, they also traveled to Ireland and to continental Europe. Ireland was still the homeland for this literary revival which was taking place in Northumbria. And very often, clerics would travel back to Ireland for additional education, and they would often return with books from Irish monasteries. And the same thing happened with monks who traveled to continental Europe. They would also return with new books and manuscripts, and those books were added to the libraries of those monasteries in Britain.

And this was a very important development because those monastic libraries compiled much of the learning and education of the day. And the reputation and prestige of a given monastery was often based around the size of its library.

When King Oswy of Northumbria sided with Rome in the dispute with the Celtic Church, it opened new avenues of communication between Northumbria and Rome. It gave Northumbrian scholars direct access to Roman learning, as well as the traditional Irish Celtic scholarship.

One of King Oswy's thegns was a nobleman named Benedict Biscop. Throughout his life, Benedict made multiple trips to Rome, and he spent extended periods at monasteries in the Frankish kingdom as well. Thanks to his trips, he acquired a great deal of knowledge about the monasteries of Western Europe.

After the death of King Oswy, Oswy's son Ecgfrith became King of Northumbria. And the new king reached out to Benedict to construct a new monastery. He gave Benedict some land, and Benedict looked to build a great monastery in the tradition of all of those he had visited on the continent. So he headed back to the Frankish kingdom for artisans to help with the construction, but more importantly, he made multiple trips to Rome and other parts of Western Europe to stock the library of the new monastery. The new monastery ended up being a twin monastery, meaning it consisted of two separate buildings – one at Monkwearmouth and the other about seven miles away at Jarrow. But it was considered to be one monastery. And thanks to the efforts of Benedict, that twin monastery had one of the best stocked libraries in all of Western Europe. It's a perfect example of the continental influences which were streaming into Anglo-Saxon Britain at the time. And that monastery is also important for another reason because it produced the greatest scholar and teacher in all of northern Europe – a monk named Bede.

Bede grew up and spent most of his life in and around Jarrow. This is the region of northern England where the modern Geordie dialect emerged, and that dialect actually derived from the original Old English dialect spoken by people like Bede in and around this region of Northumbria.

Bede was actually a small child when he was handed into the care of the monastery – initially at Monkwearmouth site. He was only seven years old, and it's not clear why he entered the monastery at such a young age. He may have been an orphan. Another theory is that he was a member of a noble family, and sometimes noble families placed small children with monasteries. There is actually some evidence to support the second theory in the name 'Bede.' It was not a common Anglo-Saxon name, and some later scholars have noted that his name is coincidentally the name of the Old English word for 'prayer.' Remember from the last episode that a prayer in Old English was a ***bid*** (/beed/). So some have speculated that this name was intentionally given to him at birth with intentions that he would be raised as a monk.

At any rate, from that very young age of seven, Bede was exposed to life in the monastery. A short time later, the second building at Jarrow was constructed and Bede moved there, and that is actually where he spent most of his life. The Jarrow monastery was built in stone, and it had glass windows based on the styles in Rome, and that type of construction was unheard of at the time in Britain. This was also where Benedict Bishop constructed the massive library for all of those books he had amassed from his travels in Europe.

But a few years after the Jarrow monastery was completed, a plague spread throughout the region and killed most of the monks there. The only survivors were the abbot in charge and the now twelve-year old Bede. Between the two of them, they kept the services going, and it is likely that Bede passed the lonely hours reading books in the library and studying Latin and other Roman subjects.

During his lifetime, Bede wrote at least 68 separate books, but he is most famous for his Ecclesiastical History of the English People. It's the oldest proper history of England. And unlike other writers who purported to write history but routinely mixed in myths and legends, Bede tried to stick to the facts.

He diligently researched and fact-checked his material as much as he could. He relied upon the vast library around him, as well as other sources which he could access and verify. Almost all histories of the early Anglo-Saxon period cite Bede as a source because, in many cases, he is the only source we have.

In addition to his history, Bede also compiled a book of hymns and wrote commentaries on the Bible and stories about the lives of Christian martyrs. He was also teacher. So he wrote about academic subjects, which included a spelling guide, science books, as well as books related to poetry, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and grammar.

Unfortunately, most of Bede's works didn't survive the centuries. Part of the reason why scholars know that he wrote so many other books is because his Ecclesiastical History actually contains a list of other books which he wrote. And even though most of those books no longer exist, scholars have used it to estimate the number and content of his other books.

Bede wrote in the same manner as other scribes of his day – on animal skin. And like other monks, Bede wrote with a quill and used a special type of acidic ink that literally ate into the skin. It was called ***encaustum*** in Latin, and that word is directly related to the word ***caustic*** in Modern English meaning 'biting or burning.'

As an historian, Bede did something else which was somewhat unique at the time – at least to the extent which he did it. And that was the use of dates in his history. Other historians used dates occasionally, but Bede put an emphasis on the timing and sequencing of events, and he really tried to tie the events down to a specific date where he could. And thanks to his emphasis on dating, he is primarily responsible for the fact that we still measure dates in history from the birth of Christ. It was Bede who coined the phrase 'anno domini' meaning 'in the year of our Lord' and known to us today by the initials 'AD.' The Romans had used a dating system based upon the dates in which their emperors acceded to the throne, but Bede argued that Roman dating methods were pagan, and he felt strongly that the church should rely upon an alternative method. He suggested that the Christian era should be dated from the birth of Christ, and he later used that method of dating for the first time when he wrote his Ecclesiastical History. So when we use the initials 'AD' after a date, we are actually harkening back to Bede – an Englishman – not some Roman historian.

Like most scholars of his day, Bede wrote in Latin – not English. So his writings didn't have a great impact on English at the time. But his works were so important and influential, that they were soon translated from Latin to Old English. This process can be primarily attributed to the Wessex king Alfred who came to power a couple of centuries later. As we'll see in an upcoming episode, Alfred is one of the most important figures in the overall history of English because he preserved the language from destruction by the Viking invaders. And Bede's Ecclesiastical

History was one of those Latin works which was translated into Old English at Alfred's instruction. So thanks to that translation, we do have Bede's history in Old English as well as Latin.

Even though Bede wrote in Latin, it is clear that he held English in high regard. It is very apparent from his writings that he was a proud Anglo-Saxon, and the best evidence we have of the value he placed on English can be found at the time of his death. He died at the age of 62 surrounded by his students. They were actually helping him to finish his last work. And what was that work? Well, it was a translation of the Gospel of St. John into "our language" – in other words, from Latin into English. So by the end of his life, even Bede had recognized the importance of translating Latin religious texts into English. And this little historical nugget confirms that English was increasingly seen as an alternative to Latin within those monasteries.

Last time, we looked at what happened when those monks tried to translate those Latin terms into English. And we saw that the Anglo-Saxon scribes tried to use English terms where they could, but there were limits on their ability to do that. The limited vocabulary of Old English meant that it was sometimes easier to just borrow the Latin word directly – without translation. Occasionally, a Latin word was translated into Old English for a while, but that English word eventually died out, and at some point it was decided to just use the original Latin word. So let's take a closer look at some of those Latin words which began to enter the English language during this period. So these are some of the oldest Latin words in English.

And let me begin by noting that a few Latin terms related to Christianity had been borrowed by the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons when they were still back on the continent. Words like ***church*** and ***bishop*** had been borrowed during those earlier times, but words like that were very much the exception rather than the rule. Initially, Old English had very few Latin words, and the Anglo-Saxons apparently like it that way.

But over time, the heavy influence of the Church overcame those language barriers. And to illustrate that process, let's think back to the last episode and the Ruthwell Cross inscription. As we saw, the Anglo-Saxons didn't use the word ***cross*** at first. They preferred to use their own native word ***rood*** – R-O-O-D. ***Cross*** is a Latin word, and it doesn't appear in English texts until the middle 800s, well over a century after the Ruthwell Cross inscription. So at some point, the Latin term overcame and replaced the English term. So why did that happen? Well, part of the answer may actually have to do with the Vikings.

The original Latin word was ***crux*** – C-R-U-X. The original Irish missionaries used that word, but in Ireland it evolved into ***cros*** – C-R-O-S. And the Irish missionaries brought that version of the word with them to northern Britain. And even though it was used in the Church Latin spoken in the Northumbrian monasteries, it didn't transfer over to English at that time.

But about a century later, the Viking invasions began. And interestingly, the Vikings had picked up that Latin word ***crux*** from the Latin speakers on the continent. I say 'interestingly' because the Vikings weren't actually Christians. They were Germanic pagans. But for some reason, this word had filtered into their vocabulary anyway, and they brought the word with them as ***kross*** –

typically spelled K-R-O-S-S. And many of the Viking invaders settled in northern and eastern Britain in the area which became known as the Danelaw.

And it was really after that point, that the word '***cros***' began to appear in English writings. So the Old Norse speakers living in Britain may have provided the transition from Latin to English – at least for this particular word. As well see in an upcoming episode, a lot of Old Norse words began to filter into English around this time. And since the word ***cross*** appeared in both Old Norse and Old Irish, it was one of those words which got picked up and came in as well.

Cross is also a good example of how a word originally came in as a religious term, but then expanded over time to become a very generic word. As often happens in English, the noun became a verb. When Christians made the sign of the cross on their chest, that process became the verb 'to cross.' And the first use of the word ***cross*** in this manner is first documented in the 1200s. And from there, a couple of centuries later, it came to mean the process of moving over a particular point or line. So when did the chicken cross the road? Sometime after the year 1400 or so because that was the first period in which the word ***cross*** was used in this general sense to mean 'pass over' or 'traverse.' It also gave us a preposition to describe this process – ***across*** – A-C-R-O-S-S.

Of course, this more general sense of the word then gave us new noun forms. So today, we have words like ***crossing*** and ***crossroads*** to mean a point of passing over or traversing. And it later produced words like ***crossbow***, ***cross-stitch***, ***cross-section***, ***crossword***, and so on. So if the Latin word ***cross*** had not entered English, we wouldn't have crossword puzzles today. We would have 'rood-word' puzzles, which actually sounds kind of intriguing in its own way.

We also eventually got the word ***crisscross***, but this word didn't come from the later generic sense of the word ***cross***. It actually came directly from the original Christian sense of the word. In fact ***crisscross*** was originally ***Christ-Cross***. And it actually has an interesting etymology related to Medieval education, and since that is one of the themes of this episode, let's look at that history.

In the late Middle Ages, so during the period of Middle English and early Modern English, education was still very basic in Britain and most of Europe. Students learned reading, writing and math, and standard textbooks were used to teach those subjects. A common textbook used during that period contained the basic numbers, a few spelling words, the alphabet, and the Lord's Prayer.

The alphabet was written in a single line, and above the line of letters was a cross. The cross stood for the phrase "Christ-cross me speed" which meant 'May Christ's cross give me success.' And each student was expected to recite that phrase before reciting the alphabet. So a student would say, "Christ-cross me speed – A,B,C,D" and so on. Well, the line of letters below the cross came to be called the 'Christ-Cross Row' – or /creest-cross row/ in Middle English. Over time, /creest-cross row/ became 'Crisscross Row.' And by the 1600s, ***crisscross*** was actually a synonym for the alphabet itself. The word then passed into ordinary English, but the original meaning of the word was lost on later generations. As education advanced, and as new textbooks

appeared, people forgot that the term ***crisscross*** referred to the alphabet. And since the word ***cross*** was in general use by that point, the word ***crisscross*** was simply appropriated as a general term for a cross or crossing action.

So today ***cross*** and ***crisscross*** have very similar meanings, but ***crisscross*** implies multiple intersections, instead of the single intersection of a traditional cross. So the many streets of a city are said to '***criss-cross***,' and if you play tic-tac-toe, you play it on a 'criss-cross pattern.' But again, the sense of the word has completely changed from its original meaning as a line of letters largely because speakers forgot the original etymology of the word.

By the way, the original Latin verison of the word – ***crux*** – gives us lots of other words thanks to later borrowings. It gives us ***crusade***, ***crucify*** and ***crucifix*** from French. Directly from Latin, it gives us the word ***excruciate*** which is derived from the torture experienced during crucifixion.

As you probably know, lots of medical terms are derived from Latin. So in medicine, the ligaments of the knee cross over each other. And these crossing ligaments are called ***cruciate ligaments*** from that same word. And even if you're not a doctor or a nurse, you have probably heard of knee problems like an ACL tear. Well, ACL is the 'anterior cruciate ligament,' and it refers to one of the main crossing or 'cruciate' ligaments in the knee.

Another borrowing directly from Latin is the word ***crucial*** meaning 'decisive or critical.' So when you reach a proverbial fork in the road or cross roads, you have to make a 'crucial' decision as to which way to go. And we can actually pinpoint exactly when the use of the word ***crucial*** began. In the 1600s, Francis Bacon used the term 'Instantias Crucis' in one of his texts on philosophy. He wrote in Latin, so he used that particular Latin phrase, and he used the term to describe a situation in which only one theory among many would hold true. So it was akin to that crossroads or fork in the road, where one option was correct, and all the others were wrong. And from this original usage, the word 'crucial' developed as an English word to describe the decisive or critical point in an event.

And in previous episodes, I've mentioned that English borrowed a lot of sailing and nautical terms from the Dutch who the English traded with and sometimes fought against. Well, the Dutch language had borrowed this same Latin word ***crux***. And they used it to described the back and forth action of a ship as it crosses from one side of an ocean or lake to the other. And that process became the word ***cruise***.

So as you can see, this Latin word for an instrument used to punish and torture people generated a lot of words in modern English. But I wanted to start with this example, because it really illustrates the relationship between Latin and English. At first the word was rejected by the Anglo-Saxons who preferred their native word ***rood***. But the combination of Irish missionaries and Viking invaders finally forced the word into the English language, and once it was there it expanded and grew over time to create lots of new words. And then the Normans brought the their French version of the original Latin word, and that produced even more words in English. And then after the Renaissance, the original Latin word was borrowed again and produced more new words. And then another form of the original Latin word was borrowed from Dutch. And

that gave us another new word. And in a nutshell, that's really the history of Latin and English. Once those first Latin words finally broke through the English dam which was keeping foreign words out, the dam was broken, and all of those Latin words began to flood into the English language. And that process occurred over many centuries.

In addition to ***cross***, many other Latin words related to Christianity entered English after the Church arrived in Britain. A short time later, words like ***nun*** and ***abbot*** can be found in Old English texts. Another very early borrowing was the original version of our modern word ***master***. The Latin word was ***magister***, and it was one of those words which was borrowed multiple times. When it borrowed a second time after the Normans, it gave us the word ***magistrate***. And when the word was first borrowed by the Anglo-Saxons, it still had that 'g' sound in the middle. And as we've seen before, the 'g' sound shifted to a 'y' sound in many Old English words. So ***magister*** (/mah-gee-ster/) became /mah-yee-ster/, and later shortened to simply ***master***.

Other early borrowings from Church Latin included words like ***preach, priest, deacon, apostle, pope, disciple, temple, creed, shrine, psalm, hymn, martyr, altar*** and ***sabbath***.

The very common word ***offer*** was also taken in during this period. ***Offer*** originally had a religious sense. It meant 'to present something in worship,' and it eventually passed into general use.

Another Latin word borrowed from the early Church was the word ***candle***, but what about the large candle-holder that held multiple candles? Well, the Latin word was ***candelabrum*** or ***candelabra***. But the Anglo-Saxons didn't borrow that word. Instead, they chose to use a native English construction. They combined the Latin word ***candle*** with the English word ***tree*** to produce the Old English compound word ***candeltreow*** – literally 'candle-tree.' But ***candle*** itself was a Latin word and it passed into general use around this time.

The early Anglo-Saxons also borrowed the word ***angel*** from Church Latin. Originally, the word was ***engel*** (/ain-gull/), but after the Norman Conquest, the word re-entered the language, and the modern pronunciation with the soft 'G' evolved after the French influence of the Middle English period.

The Romans had borrowed the word ***angel*** from the Greeks. In fact, many of these Latin terms associated with Christianity originated within Greek, and specifically the original Greek version of the Bible. Within Greek, the original version of the word ***angel*** meant a 'messenger.' The Anglo-Saxons actually came up with a native English way of expressing the same idea of a messenger of God. They created an Old English compound word ***aerendgast*** which was literally 'errand-ghost' or 'errand-spirit' – a spirit which runs errands. And that word was commonly used during the Old English period, but the French influence after the Normans ultimately meant that ***angel*** replaced ***aerendgast***.

Early Christianity also gave us the Latin word ***mass*** which was the central act of worship in the Catholic Church. The Latin word had been used by the Romans to translate the Greek word

eucharistia for the service commemorating the Last Supper and the consecrated bread and wine. And that original Greek word still survives in English as ***Eucharist***, but let's focus on the Latin translation of that word – the word ***mass***.

Mass is the Modern English form of the word, but the original Latin word was ***missa***, and it meant to 'send away,' and we can see that Latin root word in the words ***dismiss*** and ***dismissal***. At the end of the Eucharistic service, there was always a formal dismissal which was expressed with the words "Ite missa est" which meant "Go, it is the dismissal." And that concluding phrase, especially the word ***missa*** meaning 'dismissal,' ultimately became the name of the service – ***mass***. But there is another aspect of that word ***missa*** which was important in the name of the service. When everyone was dismissed, they were then free to go out and spread the message which had been given to them. And that became their ***mission*** – another word derived from the word ***missa***. So we have to think of ***mass*** in relation to both 'being dismissed' and 'pursuing a mission' – both of those words being cognate.

Interestingly, we can see the initial Anglo-Saxon reluctance to borrow foreign words in an Old English translation of the word ***mass*** which is used in a few texts, but apparently never really caught on. The Old English translation was 'sendnes' which was literally 'send-ness' – to send someone away – ***send*** being a native English word.

The past participle of ***missa*** also gave us a couple of other words in English. Since ***missa*** meant to 'send or dismiss,' the past participle meant something which had been sent or put in place, and it came to refer to a place setting for a meal. And from there, it came to mean the meal itself, and that produced the word ***mess*** as in 'mess hall.' And communal eating tended to be disorganized and sometimes dirty. In other words, it was ***messy*** – another word derived from the word ***mess*** meaning 'meal.' So don't make it your mission to make a mess in the mess hall, otherwise you will be dismissed. All of those key words being cognate thanks to the same Latin root word, and all being cognate with the word ***mass*** which came into English at this early point in Old English.

You might remember that words like ***monk*** and ***monastery*** came from the original Greek word ***monos*** meaning 'alone,' and from there, those words passed into Latin. And just as the word ***monk*** entered Old English very early on, so did the word ***monastery***. But in Old English, it was usually rendered as ***mynster***, and we still see it in a name like ***Westminster***. By the way, words like ***minister*** and ***ministry*** are derived from completely different Latin words and are linguistically unrelated to ***minster*** and ***monastery***.

Another Latin word which entered English shortly after the arrival of the Church was the word ***noon***. And it also has an interesting etymology. The word ***noon*** is actually derived from the number 'nine' – specifically from the Latin word ***nona*** which meant 'nine' in Latin and is actually cognate with the English word ***nine*** thanks to common Indo-European roots. But I know what you're saying – ***noon*** isn't 9 o'clock, it's 12 o'clock. So what happened?

Well, for the answer, we have to go back to early Roman Christianity and the way time was kept before modern mechanical clocks were invented. Way back in Episode 18, I discussed Roman concepts of time, and you might remember that sun dials were once used. Each period from

sunrise to sunset was divided into twelve equal segments, and those segments were indicated by markings on the sun dial. That also meant that the length of each hour was 1/12 of the day light – so an hour was longer in the summer months and shorter in the winter months.

Well, the first hour of sunlight was the first hour. And the last hour of sunlight was the twelfth hour. And you might remember from Episode 18 that we got the phrase 'eleventh hour' from that time-keeping method. The eleventh hour was the next to last hour of the day, so it was the point near the end of the day when things needed to be wrapped up while there was still some daylight left.

So all of that means that the middle of the day – the point at which the sun was at its peak – was the sixth hour halfway through the 12-hour day. But throughout the day, there were a series of prayers which were conducted at specific times. And one set of those prayers was held in the middle of the afternoon at the ninth hour, so around 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon using modern time-keeping methods. Since this was the ninth hour, it was called the 'nona hora' in Latin. And those particular prayers were called the ***nones***. And this time of day – the middle of the afternoon – was called ***non*** in Old English. And this was the Old English version of the word ***noon***.

So in Old English, it had the same meaning as Latin – around 3:00 p.m. – the ninth hour. But in the 1100s, shortly after the Normans arrived, the Church shifted these so-called 'noon' prayers up about three hours from the middle of the afternoon to the middle of the day. And with the move of prayer time, the word ***noon*** moved with it. And from that point on, ***noon*** has been associated with the middle of the day – 12:00 p.m. using the modern time-keeping method. So ***noon*** was another term which originated within the Church and eventually passed into general use.

Another Church-related word which passed from the original Greek through Latin into English was the word ***canon*** – C-A-N-O-N – not the weapon, but the word which originally meant 'church law' and today refers to any set of rules which are generally accepted. The original sense of the word as 'church law' meant a set of righteous rules – what one must do to live a straight life without deviation into sin or immorality. And that sense of straightness can been seen in the other version of the word ***cannon*** – C-A-N-N-O-N – the weapon. That version of the word arrived after the Normans, and it also derives from the same Greek root word which produced the other version of ***canon***. The original Greek word was ***kanna***, and it meant a 'straight reed.' So the sense of the word as 'straight' gave us ***canon*** – C-A-N-O-N. And the sense of the word as a 'reed' ultimately led to its meaning as a tube in Latin, and then that led to the word ***cannon*** – C-A-N-N-O-N – meaning a large tube used for firing projectiles. By the way, that original Greek word ***kanna*** also produced another common English word – the word ***cane*** which was a specific type of reed.

One final word which entered Old English from Church Latin was ***ark*** both in the sense of Noah's Ark and in the sense of the Ark of the Covenant. In Latin, ***arca*** meant a large box or chest, so we see that in the sense of a large box-shaped boat and in the sense of a box which contained the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. That same Latin word ***arca*** came to refer to things hidden or concealed within a box, and that ultimately produced the word

arcane. By the way, speaking of storage boxes, I should note that both the words ***box*** and ***chest***, as in a storage box, also passed from Latin to English around this same time. So that suggests that all of those church monks were using a lot of boxes, maybe because they were moving around so much.

So that's an overview of the primary words which passed from Church Latin into Old English shortly after the Church arrived. And as you can see, many of those words passed into general use over time.

This was also the same time in which the Latin names of the months began to enter English for the first time. This transition didn't really become complete until the Normans arrived, but the Church was using the Latin verison of the names in Britain before 1066. So the natives were aware of the alternate names, and that probably allowed the Latin versions to replace the native English versions very quickly after the Normans arrived.

With the spread of the Church throughout Anglo-Saxon Britain, there was a corresponding spread of support personnel who spoke Latin, and that led to a general spread of Latin throughout the island. And as I noted earlier, once the Anglo-Saxons began to borrow Church-related Latin terms, the barrier to those foreign words was broken. And soon, more and more Latin words were beginning to appear in Old English. And many of those words were for general use.

So for example, the Christian missionaries brought an advanced culture, and that included new technologies derived from the late Roman civilization. And since these were new technologies, their Latin names began to appear within English. So a word like ***mill*** – as in 'water mill' – began to appear. Also, words like ***tower***, ***sickle*** and ***fork*** came into Old English. ***Fork*** was originally used in the sense of pitchfork, not as an eating utensil.

It's not a very sophisticated technology, but the word ***mat*** in the sense of a sleeping cushion also came into English from Latin during this period.

Another new technology was ***plaster***, and that word also entered English around this time. ***Plaster*** served many purposes. It was used for building and construction, and it was also used for medical purposes in early versions of casts. In fact, the arrival of Latin-speakers from the Continent meant that there were lots of new methods of diagnosing and treating sickness. And monasteries actually became de facto hospitals for treating the injured and sick. Terms like ***cancer*** and ***fever*** entered English from Latin during this period, as did the word ***sponge*** which was a common tool used when treating sick people.

The word ***strap*** also came in. It was originally used in the sense of a leather strap used to sharpen knives or razors.

Those Christian missionaries also brought new types of clothing. Words like ***cap***, ***sock*** and ***silk*** came in. Purple dye had been common in the Mediterranean since the Phoenicians. And purple fabrics had spread to Rome and then to the Church. So not surprisingly, the word ***purple*** entered English during this early period as well.

And all of those new arrivals from the continent brought knowledge of new plants and animals, and they brought knowledge of how to cook and prepare new foods. So a word for ***cabbage*** came into English, but it wasn't ***cabbage***, it was ***cawel***. That ultimately gives us the word ***cole*** in coleslaw, and it gives us the word ***kale***. That Latin root also passes through in the word ***cauliflower***, as well as the first part of the word ***collard***. But again, ***cabbage*** came from a different root word after the Normans arrived. In fact, it came from a Latin root word we've seen before – the word ***caput*** meaning head. So when we speak of a 'head of cabbage,' we're actually being redundant because ***head*** is a native Old English word, and ***caput*** is the Latin equivalent from the same Indo-European root. And Latin ***caput*** gave us ***cabbage***.

Other new words for vegetables and plants include ***beet, radish, fennel, periwinkle*** and ***aloe***. Old English also borrowed a word for a specific plant used for flavoring. The word was originally ***gingifer*** (/gin-gee-ver/), but after the Normans, those hard Germanic G's became soft French G's, and ***gingifer*** (/gin-gee-ver/) became ***ginger***. And the word ***pear*** (P-E-A-R) also appeared in English during the Old English period. All of those words being borrowed from Latin.

And speaking of foods and seasonings, an incredibly common English word like ***cook*** arrived in Old English from Latin during this early period. And all of this suggests that the new monastery culture brought new types of cooking and food preparation. Back when we were looking at the Germanic tribes on the continent, I mentioned that one of the Latin words which entered the early common Germanic language was the Latin word for the place where meals are prepared. That place was ***kokina*** in the original common West Germanic language. But in English, that hard 'K' sound in the middle shifted to the newer 'CH' sound. So ***kokina*** became ***kochina*** and then ***kitchen*** over time. Well, if we go back to that original form of the word ***kokina***, we can see and hear the connection to the modern word ***cook***. ***Cook*** and ***kokina*** came from the same Latin root. So when you 'cook' in your 'kitchen,' you're just using two different forms of the same Latin root word.

And speaking of foods, new Latin words like ***lobster*** and ***mussel*** came into Old English during this early period. ***Lobster*** is actually derived from the same Latin word which produced the word ***locust***.

The new language also introduced knowledge of new plants. Words like ***balsam, cedar, cypress, pine*** and ***lily*** came into English during this same period. The word ***mallow*** for a specific kind of plant also came in. One version of the mallow plant was the marsh mallow – in Old English the word was ***mersc-mealwe***. And that ultimately gave English the word ***marshmallow***, which believe it or not is a very old word which has been in English since the Anglo-Saxons thanks to Latin.

And speaking of plants, I should note that the word ***plant*** was also borrowed from Latin during this same period.

Now being a Mediterranean language, Latin also brought words for animals that weren't native to the British Isles. So the word ***camel*** came into English during this period, but the Anglo-Saxons apparently weren't sure what a camel was. They actually created another word for camel from Latin. That word was ***olfend*** which is cognate with the word ***elephant*** which came into English after the Normans. But the fact that ***olfend*** was derived from the same word as ***elephant*** suggests that the Anglo-Saxons only had a vague sense of those African animals.

Another African animal which came in during this period was ***tiger***. By the way, English already had a word for ***lion*** – the word ***leo*** (/lay-o/) or ***Leo*** as we would pronounce it today. That word was borrowed from Latin by the Germanic tribes on the continent, and it had passed into Old English. ***Lion*** is a later French verison of the word pronounced /lee-on/. And that verison came in after the Normans. So ***Leo*** is the version which actually precedes Old English, and ***lion*** is the version which came after Old English. But again, ***tiger*** was borrowed at this point during the Old English period.

The word ***phoenix*** also came in during the Anglo-Saxon period. It was borrowed from Latin, but that 'PH' at the beginning is a give-away that it was originally a Greek word.

So, as you can see, Latin words began to infiltrate English very early on long before the Normans arrived. All in all, scholars have estimated that more than 400 words were borrowed from Latin during the Old English period, but many of those words eventually disappeared from English. So it is believed that many of those Latin words were rarely used by the Anglo-Saxons at first. Sometimes a Latin word was borrowed and disappeared, but then the word was borrowed again after the Normans arrived. That's what happened with words like ***sign*** and ***giant***, which were first borrowed during the Old English period as ***segn*** and ***gīgant***, but soon disappeared. Then after 1066, they were re-borrowed in their more modern forms from Old French.

Out of those 400 or so total Latin words, the vast majority disappeared altogether. But about 100 of them survived, and they permanently entered the English language during this period, including the ones we've looked at so far. And those words have been amazingly resilient because they're still quite common today over a thousand years later.

Some other common English words that were borrowed from Latin during this period include ***port, prime, false, place, turn, crisp*** (which originally meant curly), and ***palm*** (as in the part of the hand).

As education and scholarship expanded in places like Northumbria, the religious schools within those monasteries used those Latin words on a daily basis. And not surprisingly, many new Latin words were borrowed in relation to scholarship and education.

So a Latin word like ***philosopher*** came in during the Anglo-Saxon period, as did the words ***school*** and ***scholar***. Again, all ultimately from Greek. And the increasing literacy of the Anglo-Saxons is reflected in the many new Latin words related to writing. The word ***verse*** was originally used in relation to the Bible, but it soon took on a more general sense as part of a

poem. The related word ***meter*** also entered English. The word ***title*** came in as well, as did the first use of the word ***grammar*** in English.

The Latin word ***notary*** meaning a scribe was also used within those monastic schools, but that word was often translated with a native Old English word ***mearcere*** which was literally 'marker' – one who makes marks.

And the Latin word ***manual*** for a type of instruction book was based on the Latin word for 'hand' which was ***manus***. Rather than borrow the word ***manual***, the first Anglo-Saxons effected a literal translation into English which was ***handbook*** – an English compound word which still exists. But ***manual*** eventually found its way in and became a synonym for ***handbook***.

As we've seen, the education offered in those early monastic schools was based on the traditional Roman model, so it included a very basic course is early geometry. And from there, the word ***circle*** came into English during this early period.

With the teaching of arithmetic and geometry, new precise forms of measurement were required. As we've seen before, the Germanic tribes back on the continent had borrowed words like ***mile*** and ***pound*** from Latin long before the Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain. And words like ***yard*** and ***foot*** were native English words used for measurements. Now, the Anglo-Saxons borrowed the Latin word ***inch***. It meant 1/12 in Latin because the Romans sometimes measured in increments of twelve as we saw earlier when measuring the daylight. A 1/12 increment was an ***uncia*** in Latin. The Anglo-Saxons borrowed the term as ***ynce***, and they applied it to the English measurement of a foot. So a ***ynce*** or 'inch' became 1/12 of a foot.

And thanks to courses in music, the word ***cymbal*** came in, as did the word ***organ*** which was originally a general term for a musical instrument. The Latin word ***pipe*** also came in. ***Pipe*** was originally a term for a wind instrument. And the related word ***piper*** also came in.

The word ***anthem*** was also borrowed during this period. ***Anthem*** originally had a religious connotation, referring to a song set to sacred music. But again, it has passed into general use over time.

So with that, we've actually looked at most of the words in Modern English which came in from Latin during the Anglo-Saxon period. So these are some of the oldest Latin words in English.

And as I've noted before, many of these Latin words are directly related to the growth of monasteries in the 600s and 700s. And going forward, we'll move the story away from the monasteries. But before I conclude this episode, I have one more anecdote related to those monasteries in Northumbria which I wanted to share with you. And it also relates to English.

I noted earlier that when the Northumbrian King Oswy died, he was succeed by his son, Ecgfrith. Ecgfrith was the king that commissioned Benedict Biscop to build that twin monastery at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow where Bede lived. Well King Ecgfrith's wife was a princess from East Anglia named Æthelthryth, and she came to be known in later Catholic literature as

Ethelreda, and that's the version of her name which I am going to use here because, frankly, it's easier to pronounce.

Now it's important to note that Ethelreda's marriage to Ecgfrith was another one of those political marriages. Her father was the King of East Anglia, so their marriage had been arranged as part of a marriage alliance between the two kingdoms. So apparently there was never much of a personal relationship there. In fact, Bede tells us that the marriage was never consummated, which is actually kind of important because when Ecgfrith became king after his father died, Ethelreda didn't have any desire to continue as the Queen of Northumbria. So she actually decided to renounce her husband and her royal position to become a nun. Bede tells us that her husband the king was not happy with this development, and he actually tried to force her back into the marriage, so she fled to the Isle of Ely near Cambridge in Eastern Britain. Eventually, the king accepted the situation, and Ethelreda was permitted to retire in Ely. And having settled there, she decided to establish a monastery in the year 673. And she actually became the abbess of the monastery, but late in her life, she acquired a tumor in her throat. And as a devout nun, she felt that her throat condition was a judgment or punishment from God for her previous life as a princess and briefly as a queen. As a princess, she loved to wear necklaces in the manner of proper royal, and she felt this neck tumor which happened to be located in the same place where she had once worn necklaces was God's divine punishment.

She eventually died from the affliction. And after her death, she was heralded for having given up the life of a queen to become a num and an abbess. So she soon became Saint Ethelreda, and over time, she became known simply as 'Saint Audrey.' And her monastery in Ely became a source of many pilgrimages.

After a few years, an annual fair was held there in her honor. Like many fairs of the Middle Ages, a lot of cheap trinkets and jewelry were made and sold there, and a specific type of necklace made from lace was also sold. In fact, the word ***necklace*** is actually a compound word – ***neck*** plus ***lace*** – literally lace word around the neck. And this particular type of 'neck lace' sold at those fairs was called 'St. Audrey's lace.' But over time, 'St. Audrey's lace' became 'tawdry's lace.' And eventually, the term ***tawdry*** became associated with all of the lace necklaces and other trinkets sold at those types of fairs.

By the 1600s, the Puritans were very prominent in England, and they rejected any type of fancy dress, including lacework. So thanks to the Puritans, the word ***tawdry*** became a negative word for any type of trinkets or lacework, especially lace necklaces which again is kind of redundant – 'lace neck lace.' Anyway, the negative connotation imposed by the Puritans resulted in the modern sense of the word ***tawdy*** as something cheap, showy or gaudy. And ironically, it was the Purtians who turned St Audrey's name from something divine to something cheap and negative.

Believe it or not, there is also another connection between neck diseases, Christianity, Latin and English. This bit of history actually comes from the later Middle English period, but given the parallels, this seems like a good time to bring it up. In the Middle Ages, there was a common type of tuberculosis which affected the lymph nodes in the neck region called 'scrofula'. It was most common in children and was usually spread by unpasteurized milk from infected cows.

Some people thought that a king's touch would cure the condition, so it was sometimes called the 'king's evil.' Of course, kings usually had more important things to do that walk around rubbing sick people's necks, so those sick people looked for an alternative. And what they decided to do instead was use one of the king's coins, and they just rubbed the coin on the affected area. They actually preferred a specific coin which was minted with an image of the archangel Michael standing over and slaying a dragon. This coin was often called an 'angel-noble' in English because the coin featured the archangel Michael. Remember ***angel*** is one of those Latin words which goes back to the Old English period. Well, the process of rubbing the 'angel-noble' coin on the affected area of the neck ultimately led to the phrase 'touched by an angel.' So that phrase doesn't actually mean 'touched by an angel' in the religious sense. It actually refers to a purported medical cure derived from a king's touch.

So as you can see, the intersection of English and Latin sometimes produces some surprising results. But despite some of the strange etymologies, Latin gave English something it desperately needed if it wanted to become a great literary language. It gave English an enhanced vocabulary, and it gave English the ability to express nuance and subtlety.

These new Latin words were combined with new English translations of Latin words. And English was always creating new words by compounding – putting two or more words together to create a new word. Together, all of these new words and influences gave Old English the ability to express abstract thoughts in a way that wasn't really possible before. And this development was somewhat unique to English. It wasn't really happening in the same way within the other Germanic languages.

From this point on, the English word stock continued to grow, and it was increasingly capable of expressing subtleties of thought that was only surpassed by Latin in Europe. And in the process, English was starting to take its place behind Latin as the second great literary language of Europe. And as we move into the second half of the Anglo-Saxon period, we'll see English begin to distinguish itself. Outside of Latin, English literature will be unrivaled in Europe over the next 3 centuries. Even a very expressive and important language like French won't emerge as a literary language until after the Norman Conquest of Britain. So next time, we'll continue to move the story forward.

We'll look closer at how the Anglo-Saxons created new words, specifically how they used compound words. And we'll begin the explore the emergence of English as a literary language. And we'll see how that influence spread beyond the shores of Britain to continental Europe.

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