THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 150:
A CAPITAL OFFENSE

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 150: A Capital Offense. In this episode, we're going to look at heads and the loss of heads. Two important developments took place in England in the early 1530s. The first was the emergence of Henry VIII as the supreme 'head' of the Church of England. Henry took control of the Church and became one of the most powerful kings in English history, but in the process, he also became a tyrant. Those who crossed his path or refused to recognize his authority committed a capital offense, and they often lost their head in the process. The other major development during this period was the emergence of the modern punctuation system. The language of punctuation is also full of violence. It also involves heads and the loss of heads, puncturing with pointed implements, and cutting off clauses with words related to axes. So this time, we'll explore the violence of the early 1500s in the realm of politics, religion and English writing.

But before we begin, let me remind you that the website for the podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And you can sign up to support the podcast and get bonus episodes at Patreon.com/historyofenglish. Transcripts of most of the episodes are also available there.

Now let's turn to this episode, and let's pick up where we left off last time. In the last episode, we explored the early stages of the Protestant Reformation, and we looked at William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament into English. We also examined the efforts of Henry VIII to end his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. To end that marriage, he needed to obtain an annulment from the pope, but in 1529, the pope put the matter on hold indefinitely and refused to grant Henry's request. Henry was outraged at the refusal, and in a fit of anger, he lashed out those who failed to give him what he wanted.

Now Henry was never really known for his restraint, but as he began his third decade as king, the little bit of patience and tolerance that he had quickly disappeared. His personality hardened – and he started to demand full obedience and loyalty. Anyone who showed the slightest signs of disloyalty often paid for it with their life.

All in all, Henry ruled England for almost 40 years, and most historians agree that his personality changed around this time about half way through his reign. The man who had once been highly regarded as a young renaissance king now began to rule as a tyrant. It isn't really clear why this change occurred, and not all historians agree that there was a specific change in Henry's personality. But for those who think that something happened around this time, one theory points to a series of injuries that Henry sustained while jousting.

A few years before in 1524, Henry was struck in the head with a lance during a joust. He forgot to pull down the visor on his helmet, and the lance struck him above the eye. He reportedly suffered severe headaches and migraines for much of the rest of his life after that point. The next year, he fell head first while trying to cross a brook, and the fall left him unconscious. So that was a second head injury. And then a few years later, he suffered a more severe fall off his horse during a joust which injured his leg and left him unconscious for two hours after his horse fell on

him. Again, that was another blow to the head. In 2016, a group of neurologists at Yale University considered the evidence and compared it to modern head traumas, and in a study published in the Journal of Clinical Neuroscience, they concluded that it was very possible that the multiple head injuries contributed to the changes in Henry's personality in the later part of his reign. [*SOURCE: 'Head Injuries May Explain Henry VIII's Erratic Behavior, Study Suggests,' Mary Elizabeth Dallas, medicinenet.com, 2016.*] Of course, we can never know for sure if that was cause, but the second half of Henry's reign was a violent period in which executions became a regular occurrence.

Whatever Henry's mental state, the unresolved annulment didn't help matters any. He was in love with Anne Boleyn, and he desperately wanted to marry her and produce a male heir with her, so he needed to annul his marriage to his aging wife Catherine of Aragon. But the pope controlled Henry's fate and the fate of England. And when the pope put the matter on hold indefinitely, Henry reached a breaking point. Frustrated and angry, he seems to have taken complete control of his fate and demanded that everyone get on board with his plans. He had nearly lost his head in a jousting accident a few years earlier, now those who opposed him risked losing their heads.

One of the first victims of Henry's new rage was his chancellor Cardinal Wolsey. Wolsey had been Henry's closest advisor and right-hand man, but he was also in charge of the securing the annulment. So when those plans fell apart, Henry dismissed Wolsey as chancellor, and Wolsey retired to York in the north of England where he was still the Archbishop of York. But within a few months, Wolsey was accused of placing the interests of the pope before those of the king. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 55.*] He was soon called back to London to face charges of treason. Wolsey knew that accusations of treason were difficult to overcome and that his trip back to London would probably be his last. But the executioner's axe never fell on Wolsey's head because he died on the trip south to the capital city. Some reports indicate that he died of dysentery, but others have suggested that the stress of his inevitable fate contributed to his death.

A few days after Wolsey's death, Henry accused all of the clergy of England of colluding with Wolsey and of also placing the interests of the pope above those of the king. It quickly became clear that Henry's enemies list was not limited to Wolsey. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 62.*]

Now I mentioned Henry's head injuries, and I noted that Wolsey died while 'headed' south to the 'capital' city of London where he faced the 'capital' offense of treason – a crime punishable by 'decapitation' or losing one's 'head.' If you've listened to the earlier episodes of the podcast, you may have noticed a pretty obvious theme by now. The Latin word ***caput*** meant 'head,' and it actually comes from the same Indo-European root as the English word ***head***. ***Caput*** closely resembles the original Indo-European root word, whereas the English word ***head*** has undergone a lot of changes over the centuries.

That Latin word *caput* gave us lots of words in Modern English. And we've looked at quite a few of those words over the course of this podcast. Those words include the word *decapitation* meaning 'to remove the head.' And it gave us the word *capital* as in the seat of government or the 'head' city of a country.

But that isn't the only sense of the word *capital*. It can also refer to a 'capital crime' or a 'capital offense.' A *capital* offense is a crime punishable by death – originally the loss of one's head. That's why a death sentence is referred to as 'capital punishment' today. In fact, the word *capital* in reference to a crime punishable by death is first recorded in English around the current point in our overall story. It's found for the first time in an English document composed in the year 1531.

But there's also another sense of the word *capital*. And that's an uppercase letter. When we spell our names or write the first word of a sentence, we almost always begin with a capital letter. Well, as you might have guessed, that sense of the word *capital* is also related to the head, but the connection is a little harder to see because it's buried in the history of manuscripts.

Even though the word *capital* is derived from Latin, it can be found in documents as early as the Anglo-Saxon period. In Old English, the word often appeared as *capitle*, spelled C-A-P-I-T-L-E. And it was used to refer to a section or portion of a manuscript. When a manuscript was divided into sections, each section often had a 'heading,' usually in the form of a large illuminated letter. And the word *capitle* could refer to either that heading itself or the section of the manuscript that was marked by that heading.

Since that heading or *capitle* often took the form of a large decorated letter. That type of letter became known as a *capital*. And from there, the sense of the word *capital* was extended to all uppercase letters which were larger and more prominent than lowercase letters.

But again, that word *capitle* could also refer to the entire section of the manuscript that was marked by that fancy *capitle* letter in the heading. But over time, English borrowed a separate related word from French to refer to that section of the manuscript. That related word was the word *chapter*. You might remember from earlier episodes that Latin words that began with a 'C-A' sound like *caput* developed a 'C-H' sound within French. So *caput* ultimately produced the words *capitle* and *chapitle*. And within English, *chapitle* evolved into *chapter*. So *capital* came to be applied to the large letter at the head of the section of text, and *chapter* came to be applied to the section of text marked by the capital.

So we've seen that the Latin word *caput* gave us terms like *decapitate* and *capital punishment* on the one hand, and literary terms like *chapter* and *capital letter* on the other. And there is another interesting connection between those terms. They all have to do with separation. Of course, decapitation and capital punishment (in its original sense) involved the separation of the head from the body. Well, chapters and capital letters originated with the earliest attempts to separate one part of a text from another. And the markings that were used to do that were probably the oldest punctuation marks in western literature.

From the very beginning, punctuation was an effort to separate and divide. In fact, it's right there in the name. The word *punctuation* is closely related to the word *puncture*. They both come from the same Latin root word. In fact, words like *punch* and *point* also come from that same root. And that's ultimately what punctuation was. It was an attempt to puncture or divide a line of text to make it easier to read. Today, punctuation also serves a grammatical function, but as we'll see, that wasn't really the case prior to the 1500s.

The story of punctuation really goes back to the ancient Greeks. The earliest Greek writings didn't contain any punctuation at all. And interestingly, they didn't even contain spaces between words. The writings were just a collection of letters. A passage like "I am fine. How are you?" would have been written I-A-M-F-I-N-E-H-O-W-A-R-E-Y-O-U. Just a series of letters – no punctuation and no spaces between the words. And that would continue sentence after sentence throughout the entire scroll or manuscript. All of that made it difficult to read anything longer than a short passage or a short inscription.

So around the fourth century BC (or BCE), Greek scribes started to place a little line or mark in the margin of the scroll to indicate the point in the text where there was a change of topic, or a new passage or idea. It the first attempt to 'puncture' or break up those long continuous lines of letters. Since the mark was placed beside the text, the Greeks combined the word *para* meaning 'beside' (like in the word *parallel*) and the word *graphien* meaning 'to write' (like in the word *biography*). The result was the word *paragraphos* meaning a 'mark written beside the main text.' And of course, that is the early form of the word *paragraph*. [*SOURCE: Shady Characters, Keith Houston, p. 7.*] Much like the word *capitle*, the word *paragraph* also evolved from the mark itself to the section of the text it was marking. Again, that Greek 'paragraph' mark was an early attempt at dividing or separating those long streams of letters into smaller units.

Now if we move forward a few centuries to the Romans, we find that they basically adopted that same Greek practice. The Romans were heavily influenced by the Greeks, and they also adopted the practice of writing in long continuous lines of letters. And they also needed a way to divide up those lines to indicate a change of topic. But rather than putting a mark beside the text like the Greeks had done, the Romans adopted the practice of putting a letter K – and later a letter C – in the text to mark where the change of topic occurred. Of course, that K or C stood for the word *caput* meaning 'head' because it marked the head of the new topic. [*SOURCE: Shady Characters, Keith Houston, p. 13.*]

Now whereas the Romans used a letter K or C to mark a change of topic, I noted earlier that medieval scribes used the first letter of new section to mark the change. So if the new section began with the word *the*, that section would begin with an elaborate, decorated capital letter T. Again, that's why we associate the word *capital* with uppercase letters. But we don't generally do that anymore. Today, we mark the beginning of a chapter or a paragraph with an empty space – what we call an indented line. Well, that empty space is also part of this story. And that space is largely the result of the printing press.

In the Middle Ages, books were rare and expensive. They were produced through the joint effort of scribes and illustrators. Scribes would leave a large empty space on the left side of the text at the beginning of each chapter. When the scribe was finished, the illustrator would fill in the empty space with the fancy decorated letter. Well, printers didn't have time for all of that. They were printing off hundreds or thousands of copies at a time. So very often, that empty space was never filled in with an illustration. And that empty space at the beginning of a chapter contributed to the idea of the modern indented paragraph. Printers still needed a way to mark the beginning of a new topic or section, so rather that using a specific mark or a fancy illustrated letter, they just left a black space there. And that served largely the same purpose. So rather that marking the chapter or paragraph with a specific heading or capitle, it was marked by a blank space, which was the absence of a heading or capitle. In other words, the heading was removed. So in that sense, it was a different kind of decapitation.

That is one of many ways that the printing press shaped the way we read today. Printers of the early 1500s were motivated by profits, and that meant that efficiency was often more important than a fancy appearance. Printing was a business, and if there was a demand for a particular book, profits were made by churning out copies as quickly as the press could produce them.

As we saw last time, one of the books that was in high demand in the late 1520s was William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament. Tyndale's translation was banned in England, but that didn't prevent Tyndale from printing them in places like Antwerp in the Low Countries and then smuggling them across the Channel into England. Of course, by providing that translation, Tyndale was violating the restrictions of the English government and the English Church. It was a capital offense, and he was risking his life by producing that translation.

But the translation made its way into England anyway. In fact, even though Henry VIII officially opposed Tyndale's Bible, the translation made it all the way into Henry's court. And we know that because Anne Boleyn had her own copy of the translation. Her copy of Tyndale's New Testament is maintained at the British Library to this day. Her name is written on the edges of the pages. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 130.*]

By this point, Henry had surrounded himself with people who were giving him conflicting messages. While it appears that Anne Boleyn was a fan of Tyndale and his translation, Henry's new chancellor had the exact opposite opinion. When Cardinal Wolsey was dismissed as chancellor, Henry brought in Thomas More to replace him. More was the prominent scholar and statesman who had written Utopia several years earlier. He was also a devout Catholic, and he strongly opposed Tyndale and his English translation of the New Testament. In the last episode, I talked about a long diatribe that More composed and published in which he condemned Tyndale and Martin Luther. And More remained a bitter opponent of Tyndale even after he assumed the position of chancellor.

But attitudes were starting to change in England. The pope's refusal to give Henry his annulment meant that Henry also became a critic of the pope. And it wasn't just the king who felt that way. Going all the way back to the time of John Wycliffe, there had also been broad popular support in England for Church reforms. England was a long way from Rome, and a lot of people in

England resented the fact that the local Church was controlled by officials on the other side of Europe. And they resented that the money they donated and paid to the Church left England for Rome. So there was a lot of support for reform, and that support was reflected in the parliament that met late in the year 1529. That parliament has become known to history as the Reformation Parliament because it enacted a series of laws over the next seven years that formally separated the Church of England from the Catholic Church in Rome. We often hear it said that Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church when he couldn't secure a divorce from his wife, but it wasn't quite that simple. The break with Rome came through a series of acts passed by parliament over several years. Of course, those laws reflected Henry's wishes, but the process was a bit more gradual than is often depicted in historical accounts.

But that meant that Thomas More was now in an awkward position as the new chancellor. He was a devout Catholic who bitterly opposed William Tyndale and the Reformation, but the government he served was now starting to move in that very direction.

If More had hoped that William Tyndale would just go away and disappear into obscurity across the Channel, that didn't happen. In fact, at the very moment that the Reformation Parliament met in England, Tyndale was making plans to print an English translation of the first five books of the Old Testament. Tyndale had just completed his translation of those books known as the Pentateuch, and he brought them to Antwerp to be printed and shipped to England.

As I noted in the last episode, Tyndale's translations proved to be so popular within England that they served as the basis for later English translations of the Bible, including the King James Version. As a result, many of Tyndale's words and phrases have passed into Modern English over the intervening centuries, and that includes several terms from his translation of the opening books of the Old Testament.

For example, from Tyndale's translation of the Book of Genesis, we got the line "Let there be light." In the 1300s, John Wycliffe rendered the line as 'light be made." In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyndale was the first to refer to Lot's wife being turned into 'pillar of salt.' Wycliffe had previously written that she had been turned into an 'an image of salt.' In the long lines of genealogy contained in the book of Genesis, Tyndale was the first to use the word *begat*, which is now synonymous with those provisions. Wycliffe has used the word *gendred*. Tyndale's translation of Genesis also gave us the first known use of the phrase 'men of renown.' In the same passage, Wycliffe had referred to 'famous men.' So 'famous men' now became 'men of renown.' Tyndale's translation of Genesis also contained the first recorded use of the phrase "the fat of the land." It occurred in a passage which Wycliffe had translated as 'the marrow of the land.'

In the following book – the Book of Exodus – Tyndale gave us the first known use of the term *taskmaster*. Tyndale used the term to refer to the oppressors or slave-masters of the Hebrews in Egypt. Wycliffe had previously used the term 'masters of works.' So 'masters of works' now became *taskmasters*. Tyndale's translation of Exodus also contains the first recorded use of the phrase 'a stranger in a strange land.' The line is translated as "I haue bene a straunger in a straunge lande." Over a century earlier, Wycliffe had rendered the line as "Y was a comelyng in

an alyen lond" – 'I was a comeling in an alien land." A *comelyng* was 'one who comes to a particular place' or a newcomer. Tyndale apparently thought that word was old-fashioned, so he replaced it with *stranger*.

Interestingly, Tyndale's translation of Exodus also contained the first recorded use of the word *Passover*.   The original Hebrew word was *pesach* which meant 'a passage.' Wycliffe had translated the word as 'passing' in his Middle English Bible in the line "the passyng of the Lord." Tyndale changed that wording to "the Lordes passeouer," which again is the first known use of the word *Passover*.

In the next book – Leviticus – Tyndale gave us an early recorded use of the term *stumbling block*. He is the first known English writer to use that term, and he used it on several occasions in his translations of both the New Testament and the Old Testament. In Levitius, he used it where Wycliffe had used the word 'hurting.' In the passage, Wycliffe had written "thou schalt not curse a deef man, nether thou schalt sette an hurtyng bifor a blynd man." Tyndale rendered the same lines as "Thou shalt not curse the deaffe, nether put a stomblinge blocke before the blynd." Again, this is one of the earliest known uses of the term *stumbling block* in English.

And in the same book, Tyndale gave us the first known use of the word *scapegoat* – which appears to be a term that he coined. Believe it or not, in its original usage, a *scapegoat* was literally an 'escape goat' – a goat that escapes. In Leviticus, God instructs Moses about the selection of two goats – one that will be sacrificed, and one that will be allowed to go free or 'escape the sacrifice' and symbolically bear the sins of the people. Wycliffe had referred to that goat as "the goot that schal be sent out." But Tyndale referred to the goat as the "scapegoote." Of course, that was an innocent goat that bore the sins of the people, and over time, the term *scapegoat* came to apply any person who is blamed or punished for the sins of others.

In the following book – the Book of Numbers – Tyndale gave us the first known use of another common English phrase – 'to fall flat on your face.' It occurred in the story of a diviner named Balaam who sees an angel and falls to the ground. In the 1300s, John Wycliffe has described the man's actions by writing, "Balaam worschipide hym lowli in to erthe." But Tyndale changed that line. He wrote, "And he bowed him selfe and fell flatt on his face." Again, that is the first recorded reference to someone 'falling flat on their face' in the English language.

So as we can see, Tyndale's influence on English wasn't just limited to his translation of the New Testament. His Old Testament translation also had an impact on the language. Tyndale knew that his translation was controversial and would give more ammunition to those who accused him of being a heretic. He was risking his life by producing his English translations, but it was a risk he was willing to take.

Tyndale acknowledged the risk and the criticism he would receive in a preface he composed to the Book of Genesis. He said that his critics claimed that it was impossible to translate the scriptures into English, and that an English translation would turn the English people into heretics and make them turn against their king. And he acknowledged that his critics had scrutinized every word of every translation that he had produced. He wrote, "there is not so much

as one 'i' therein if it lack a tittle over his head, but they have noted it, and number it unto the ignorant people for an heresy." So in other words, he's saying that his critics seized upon any mistake they could find to declare it a heresy – even something as minor as a letter I that's missing a dot. Or we might say an 'I without its head' in keeping with the theme of this episode.

Now that's an interesting passage by Tyndale because what he is referring to there is not a mistake in the translation, but instead, a mistake in the punctuation or marking of the translation. If someone was upset about a letter I without it's dot, that was really the fault of the printer – not the writer or translator. But as Tyndale noted, his critics looked for any reason to complain.

Now Tyndale's critics may have considered his translations to be radical, but in one respect he was very conservative in his writings and that was in his use of punctuation. He lived and wrote at a time when several new punctuation marks were starting to appear in English for the first time, but he tended to stick with the traditional marks that had been used since the Middle Ages. It's notable that he avoided the use of one particular punctuation mark that had just stated to appear in northern Europe. That new mark was the comma. In fact, we find the first English reference to the word *comma* in a document that was composed in the year 1530 – the same year as Tyndale's Old Testament translation.

From its obscure origins around this time, the comma has gone on to become one of the most popular punctuation marks in the English language. According to scholars, it is in fact the most commonly used punctuation mark in English, being slightly more common that the period or 'full stop' as it is known in many parts of the English-speaking world. In fact, those two punctuation marks account for about 90% of the punctuation used in a typical English document. [*SOURCE: 'Making a Point,' Crystal, David. St. Martin's Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*]

So where did the comma come from? And why did it suddenly appear around this point in history? Well, once again, the answer to those questions takes us back to the ancient Greeks. And it takes us back to those efforts to divide those long written passages where all the letters just ran into each other without any spaces or punctuation. In the third century BC, we find the first serious effort to 'puncture' or 'carve up' those lines of continuous text with punctuation marks that resemble the marks we use today. And if my use of words like 'puncture' or 'carve up' seems a little violent, well there's a reason for that.

The word *comma* is a Greek word that can be traced back to this early period of Greek history, and in Greek, the word literally meant 'to cut off' or 'a piece of something that had been cut off.' Punctuation was a process that involved a lot of hacking and splitting. And in fact, some scholars think the word *comma* is cognate with the word *hatchet*. *Hatchet* was borrowed from French, but it's ultimately a Germanic word – probably used by the original Frankish tribes. Some scholars think it comes from an Indo-European root word that meant 'to cut or strike,' and that the same root word also produced the word *comma* in Greek. If that connection is accurate, then we see the same 'C' to 'H' sound change between *comma* and *hatchet* that we see between *caput* and *head*. That's one of the specific sound changes identified by Jacob Grimm back in the 1800s.

So if the word *comma* originally referred to a piece of something that had been cut off, how did it evolve into our modern punctuation mark?

Well, the answer to that questions takes us back to the city of Alexandria in Egypt in the third century BC. Alexandria was located on the northern coast of Egypt, but it was a Greek city. And it had a large and important library. The person in charge of that library was named Aristophanes, and he came up with a way to divide up the text in those Greek scrolls to make them easier to read out loud because almost all reading was done out loud at the time. Remember that the lines of text had no punctuation, and they didn't even have spaces between the words. So they were very difficult to read. Aristophanes' idea was to insert a small dot between certain words in the text to mark the point where a reader would take a pause while reading. So the marks didn't really serve a grammatical purpose like today. They were merely included to indicate a vocal pause when reading.

But there was more to Aristophanes' system than that. He actually came up with the idea that the elevation of the dot could indicate the length of the pause. So let me explain. On any given line of text, the dot could be placed up high, down low or in between, sort of like the lights on a traffic light. And the specific placement or elevation of the dot told the reader whether he or she should take a long pause, a short pause or a medium pause at that point in the text.

If the dot was placed up high (sort of where we would put a dot if we were dotting an I), it indicated that a long pause or a long breath should be taken at that point. And in Greek, the section of writing that preceded one of those high dots was called a *periodos*. And that is the origin of our modern word *period*. Again, the word originally referred to a section of text, but over time, it was extended to the dot that appeared at the end of that text. And since people tend to take a long pause when they have completed their statement, that punctuation mark came to indicate the end of a sentence. And that's why the dot we use today to indicate the end of a sentence is called a *period* in North America. It was also once called a *period* in England as well, but that term competed with other terms like *full stop*, and American English eventually settled on the former, while British English settled on the latter. So that was the high or elevated dot.

Now if the Greek scribe wanted to indicate to the reader that he or she needed to take a medium length pause or breath between words, the scribe inserted a low dot at that point in the text. The low dot would have looked like a modern-day period or full stop. But again, it would have represented a medium-length pause. And the section of text that preceded that mark was called a *colon* in Greek. And that is the source of our modern word *colon*, as well as the related word *semi-colon*. Again, just like with *period*, the word *colon* originally referred to the section of text before the punctuation mark, and later was extended to the mark itself. So that was the low dot – which again represented a medium pause.

Finally, if the Greek scribe wanted to indicate to the reader that he or she should take a short pause or breath between words, the scribe would insert a mid-level dot. So it was elevated, but not as high as the high dot. Again, this mid-level dot between two words told the reader to take a very short pause between those words when reading. And the section of text that preceded that

mid-level dot was called a *comma*. Again, as I noted earlier, the word *comma* meant something 'cut off,' and in this case, it referred to the specific line of text that was cut off or separated thanks to that mid-level dot. And just like with those other terms, the word *comma* was eventually extended from a specific section text to the punctuation mark inserted at the end of that text.

So we've now seen the ultimate origin of the period or full-stop, the colon, and the comma. And again, those marks originally represented pauses. They didn't have a specific grammatical function.

Now much of that early Greek punctuation system was abandoned over time, even though some of the concepts and terminology are still with us. Then in the 600s, a Spanish scholar and cleric named Isidore of Seville reconfigured the old Greek system and re-introduced it to medieval Europe. For much of the Middle Ages, scribes used a variety of marks to indicate long and short pauses. There wasn't much consistency, and most punctuation still didn't have a grammatical function.

Then in the 1100s, an Italian scholar named Boncompagno da Signa came up with a new idea. Instead of using a dot to indicate a short pause, he decided to replace it with slash mark that resembled a modern forward-slash symbol. It was called a virgule, and it was soon adopted by scribes throughout Europe. Again, it represented a short pause – just like that mid-level dot used by the Greeks.

Now if you look at a medieval manuscript, you'll see a lot of these virgules or slashes. But then the printing press was invented, and that was the development that finally converted the virgule into the modern comma. And that development largely took place in Italy. That was where Aldus Manutius had his very important printing shop. I've mentioned him before in the podcast. He was the printer who invented the typeface that we know today as italics. And I noted a couple of episodes back that he was largely responsible for printing and preserving most of the ancient Greek works that were known to exist in the early modern era. Well, he also gave us the modern comma, as well as the first modern semi-colon.

Manutius often used a slim and attractive typeface called Roman type, which is the basis of modern Roman fonts used in printing and word processing today. And when he designed his version of that typeface, he made the virgule small and curvy. It was better suited to that typeface style, and other printers throughout Europe soon started to mimic that typeface. It became common to print documents written in Latin with that Roman typeface, which included that new smaller, curvy virgule. But most documents printed in local languages and vernaculars like English continued to use the more traditional typeface called 'black letter,' which was thicker and blockier. And black letter type tended to use the traditional virgule or slash mark. So as a result, there was a general difference in the shape of the mark used in Latin documents and the shape used in vernacular documents like English. Latin documents often featured the small curvy punctuation mark, and English documents featured the long straight slash mark. That's why it took a while for the new mark to show up in English documents.

But that new little curvy mark did start to gain acceptance throughout Europe, and it started to appear alongside the virgule in books published in Europe in the first couple of decades of the 1500s. And of course, that little curvy mark became known as a **comma** using that old Greek word meaning 'to cut off.' When the word first appeared in English in 1530, it was used in reference to the mark found in Latin documents. But by that point, it was starting to appear in English documents as well.

Now at this time, the comma still represented a pause. It didn't have the specific grammatical functions that it has today. But there was at least one situation where that new little comma was used for something other than a pause. Around this time, some writers and printers used it to mark a quote. Some of them started to put double commas in the margin of the text to indicate the presence of a quote. And in the year 1525, we have a document printed in England that not only used those double commas to indicate the location of a quote, it also turned those comma typefaces upside down to mark the beginning of the quote. That's why those marks came to be called 'inverted commas' in many parts of the English-speaking world, though Americans tend to call them 'quotation marks.'

By the way, the document that featured those modern-style quotation marks or inverted commas was a text composed by a bishop who happened to be a colleague of Thomas More. His name was John Fisher, and he prepared a Latin manuscript that was an attack on Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. It's Latin title roughly translates as 'Defense of the King's Assertion Against the Babylonian Captivity.' Again, it's one of the earliest documents to convert those brand-new commas into a new way of marking a quotation, and he specifically used those marks to indicate quotations from Martin Luther that he disagreed with. [*SOURCE: Shady Characters, Keith Houston, p. 198.*]

So as we can see, the brand-new comma was a versatile punctuation mark, and it soon replaced the virgule in most English documents. But as I noted earlier, William Tyndale didn't use the new comma in his translations and writings. He continued to use the traditional virgule or slash. And that was consistent with the general practice at the time of using the virgule in documents that were printed in English with black letter type.

Now in that same year that we find the first reference to the comma in an English document, and the same year that Tyndale published his English translation of part of the Old Testament, he also composed another book called 'The Practice of Prelates.' And this other book by Tyndale is important to our story for two reasons.

First, Tyndale used the book as an opportunity to respond to his most vocal critic Thomas More. In one section of his book, Tyndale referred to More as 'the Proctor of Purgatory.' He also took exception to a remark More had made in his earlier criticism of Tyndale. More had made a reference to prominent duke who supposedly had the ability to detect charlatans and debunk miracles that were false. In Tyndale's reply, he included the following line which read: [ORIGINAL TEXT: (*"if a man be so cleare eyed that he can spye false myracles / howe can iugglers gette theyr lyuinge and be in price where such a fellow is?"*)] – 'if a man is so clear-

eyed that he can spy false miracles, how can jugglers make their living and be held in high esteem where such a fellow is?' Now in that passage, Tyndale used the word *jugglers*, but at the time the word referred to magicians or tricksters or con-men. So Tyndale was asking how tricksters and con-men could make a living by deceiving people if it was so easy to detect their deceptions. Well, in that passage, when Tyndale referred to a man so 'clear-eyed' that he could spy false miracles, that was the first recorded use of the term *clear-eyed* in the English language. And I should note that the passage was also divided with a virgule or slash mark in the middle to mark the short pause that one would make when reading it. Again, 'if a man is so clear-eyed that he can spy false miracles [virgule] how can jugglers make their living and be held in high esteem where such a fellow is?' Again, today we would put a comma there, but Tyndale used the older symbol.

The other reason why this particular book by William Tyndale is so important to our story is because its primary purpose was to attack Henry VIII's proposed annulment from Catherine of Aragon. Tyndale said that the annulment violated the Scriptures. Now up until this point, Tyndale had started to acquire a sympathetic ear in the royal court. Anne Boleyn apparently read his works. He was also a fierce critic of the pope, and as I noted in the last episode, he had suggested that kings should be allowed to rule their realms without papal interference. All of that sounded pretty good to King Henry, but any sympathy that Tyndale had garnered up to that point was lost with this new book that attacked Henry's proposed annulment and remarriage.

After that, the target on Tyndale's back became even bigger, and Henry insisted that his agents in Antwerp locate Tyndale and arrest him for heresy.

In that same year, Tyndale also composed a formal response to his nemesis Thomas More. It was called 'An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue.' In it, he referred to More as 'a lying papist,' and he refuted the arguments that More had made against him. [*SOURCE: God's Bestseller, Brian Moynahan, p. 237.*] Well, More wasn't about to let Tyndale's book go unanswered, so he responded with his own reply called 'The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer.' It was a massive work published in the 1532 that eventually expanded into a second volume published the following year. And this massive reply is also important to our story.

First of all, unlike Tyndale, More actually used the brand-new comma in his reply. He used it and the traditional virgule. Now this wasn't necessarily the first English document to use a comma, but it was certainly one of the first.

Another interesting aspect of More's reply is that it contained the first recorded use of another very common idiom – the expression 'out of the frying pan and into the fire.' It occurred in a passage where More was responding to something that Tyndale had written about him in Tyndale's book. Tyndale referred to More as a 'juggler' using that same term that we just looked at. Again, as I noted, a *juggler* meant a trickster or deceiver at the time. That meaning evolved out of the original sense of the word as a jester or entertainer because jesters sometimes performed magic tricks or acts of deception. From there, it acquired a negative sense because it was often used to refer to a deceptive person or a con artist. That meaning was common in the

1500s, and that's how Tyndale used the word when he referred to More as a 'juggler.' And of course, More took offense to that. In response, he wrote the following:

> "Tyndale's answer, wherein he calleth me a juggler, hath not yet juggled away the force…
> but hath, by his false cast of juggling, featly conveyed himself out of the frying pan fair
> into the fire."

Again that is the oldest surviving use of the phrase 'out of the frying pan and into the fire' in an English document, though similar phrases can be found in other languages before this point. In retrospect, More's statement that Tyndale conveyed himself 'out of the frying pan and into the fire' was very apropos because that was Tyndale's inevitable fate.

He was still a marked man, and the agents of Henry VIII were looking for him throughout the Low Countries. And in case you don't know how this story ends, Henry's agents did eventually catch up to Tyndale, and he was later burned at the stake as a heretic.

Another idiom that appeared a few years later also relates to heretics who were burned at the stake. That's the expression 'to rake someone over the coals.' If someone is 'raked over the coals,' it means that they have been severely rebuked or reprimanded. The phrase first appeared in English in the mid-1500s as 'to fetch over the coals.' It appeared in a manuscript written by an English cardinal named William Allen. It's entitled 'A Defense and Declaration of the Catholike Churches Doctrine touching Purgatory, and Prayers of the Soules Departed,' and it contains the line, "S. Augustine that knewe best howe to fetche an haeretike ouer the coles." So if you ever refer to someone being 'raked over the coals,' you're using a phrase that originally referred to heretics who were burned at the stake.

Now while the heat was being turned up on Tyndale in the Low Countries, his rival Thomas More was facing his own challenges back in England. Remember that More was now Henry VIII's chancellor responsible for advising Henry and carrying out his wishes. And while More had spent the past few years ripping apart William Tyndale and Martin Luther and the entire Protestant Reformation, the king he was serving was starting to embrace some of those very same ideas.

While More was working on his book attacking William Tyndale, Henry VIII demanded that the Church officials in England recognize him as the 'supreme head' of the English church. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 63.*] At first, the church officials didn't know how to respond. After some back and forth between Henry and the archbishop of Canterbury, the Church officials agreed to recognize Henry as the head of the Church in England 'so far as the law of Christ allowed.' [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 65.*] So they gave a qualified consent.

Up to this point, it appears that Henry was still trying to put pressure on the pope to secure his annulment, but around this time, the decision was made to formalize the break with Rome. As I've noted in prior episodes, the Church had its own set of laws and it own separate court system

to deal with alleged violations of those laws by anyone involved with the Church. This was actually a source of frustration within England because many people avoided punishment for major crimes – even murder – by seeking the refuge of the church or 'ecclesiastical' courts. Well in May of 1532, Henry demanded that all of those ecclesiastical laws be reviewed by a panel of government and church officials to determine which ones should remain in effect and which ones should be nullified. The panel was given the authority to abolish any of those church laws that it chose, and Henry claimed the right to uphold that decision as the 'head' of the English church. The English bishops had little choice but to agree, and in doing so, they acknowledged Henry's authority over the Church of England. Their submission became known as the 'Submission of the Clergy.' [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 71.*]

And it was an action that Thomas More couldn't tolerate. The next day, he resigned his position as chancellor. Several other Church leaders and monks also expressed their opposition, including that bishop I mentioned earlier named John Fisher. He was the bishop who wrote that text attacking the Reformation which contains one of the first uses of inverted commas or quotation marks. Well, he and More were of the same mind, and they ultimately suffered the same fate.

King Henry now turned to the Reformation Parliament to begin the process of formalizing the legal break between the Church of England and the Church in Rome. Having declared himself to be the 'supreme head' of the English Church, it became obvious that Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was finally at an end. He no longer needed the consent of the pope. In fact, by this point, Anne Boleyn was accompanying Henry at royal events, so she was the 'de facto' queen. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 71.*]

In January of the following year – 1533, Henry married Anne in a secret ceremony, even though he was technically still married to Catherine of Aragon. We might describe the whole situation as *preposterous* – in the original sense of that word. The word *preposterous* makes its first known appearance in English in this very year – 1533. It's contained in a work that had been written by the Dutch scholar Erasmus several years earlier. You might remember from the last couple of episodes that he was a close friend of Thomas More, and he had produced a Greek version of the Bible and advocated for the translation of the Bible into local vernaculars. Well this particular manuscript by Erasmus was called 'Handbook of a Christian Knight., it was written in Latin, but William Tyndale translated it into English and published the English version in this year – 1533. The word *preposterous* appears for the first time in the book. It appears in a line that reads, "Is not thy relygyon preposterous & out of ordre?"

Well, that was actually the meaning of *preposterous* at the time. It meant 'out of order' or 'in reverse order,' or as we might say today, 'putting the cart before the horse.' And that's why I said that Henry's marriage to Anne was 'preposterous.' He married Anne before he had officially ended his marriage to Catherine.

By the way, that original meaning of *preposterous* is right there in the word if you look closely enough. It's a Latin word that combines the prefix *pre-* meaning 'before' and the word *posterous* meaning 'subsequent or coming after.' It's the same word that gives us *posterior* for buttocks.

So it literally means 'to put the buttocks or rear end first.' That sense of something being completely backwards or out of order ultimately led to the modern sense of the word *preposterous* as 'irrational, illogical or nonsensical.'

Now even if Henry's marriage to Anne was preposterous, it didn't matter because Henry was the king. And around the same time that he married Anne in that secret ceremony, she became pregnant. Now that was an important development because one of the primary reasons why Henry wanted to marry Anne Boleyn was so that they could produce a legitimate male heir. Now that Anne was pregnant, it meant that Henry had to get a formal annulment from Catherine within nine months because Anne Boleyn needed to be the Queen when she gave birth. The clock was ticking, so Henry couldn't afford any further delays.

A few months later in May of 1533, the archbishop of Canterbury formally annulled Henry's marriage to Catherine, and he declared Anne Boleyn to be Henry's only legitimate wife. A few days later, Anne was crowned as the Queen of England, but she was an unpopular queen. Most people resented the fact that she had replaced Catherine. But Henry didn't really care. He now had a queen who was pregnant with his child, which he presumed would be the male heir he so desperately wanted.

At the time, there was concern that Catherine would appeal the annulment decision to the pope, so in the spring, Parliament enacted a statute called an Act in Restraint of Appeals. It decreed that all legal matters touching on religious issues were to be determined within England, and nowhere else. In other words, the decision of the Church of England was final. There were no more appeals to Rome. Of all the laws enacted by the Reformation Parliament, this particular act was probably the most definitive step in severing the Church of England from the Catholic Church. It has been called the single most important piece of legislation enacted in England in the sixteenth century because it meant that the Church of England no longer had to answer to Rome. [*SOURCE: A History of England, Volume 1: Prehistory to 1714, Clayton and David Roberts, p. 253.*]

A few weeks later, in September of that year, Anne Boleyn gave birth, but it wasn't a baby boy; it was baby girl. For everything Henry had gone through to produce a male heir, he was still denied. But Anne's baby daughter would grow up to be one of the most important monarchs in the history of England. She was given the name Elizabeth, and she would eventually become Queen Elizabeth I. But at this point, England had never been ruled by a queen, so her birth didn't provide Henry with the heir that he wanted.

The following year parliament enacted a statute called The Act of Supremacy. It formally declared Henry to be the 'Supreme Head of the Church of England.' Going forward, the head of the English Church would be the monarch – not the pope. [*SOURCE: A History of England, Volume 1: Prehistory to 1714, Clayton and David Roberts, p. 253.*] A few months later, parliament adopted the Act of Treason which declared it to be treason if anyone denied the king's authority over the Church.

Parliament also passed the Act of Succession which recognized Anne Boleyn as Henry's legal wife, and declared their descendants to be the legitimate heirs to the throne. It also declared the prior marriage to Catherine to be invalid, and all descendants of that marriage to be illegitimate. Just as important as those provisions was a requirement that most of the people of England had to swear an oath that they agreed with all of those terms. That included all present and former officials of the church and the government all the way down to village priests, monks and local officials. If any of those persons had a religious objection because the pope had never consented to Henry's annulment, it didn't matter. They had to swear the oath anyway. If they refused, it was considered treason.

So refusing to take the oath was treason – and refusing to accept Henry as the head of the English Church was treason. Even uttering a word critical of Henry or his new marriage was treason. And treason was punishable by death. No English king had ever demanded that kind of total obedience. Over the next six years, over 300 executions were ordered on the charge of treason. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 80.*] That included many monks and priests who refused to take the oath required by the Act of Succession.

All of those who had any objections to the break with Rome were being forced to surrender or 'capitulate' to Henry. And speaking of *capitulate*, that's takes us back to our original theme. It's another word derived from that Latin word *caput* meaning 'head,' and it also appeared in English for the first time around this point in the 1530s. You might think that *capitulate* is related to the word *capital* in sense of capital punishment. One might 'capitulate' to Henry in order to avoid 'capital' punishment like hanging by the 'head' or 'decapitation.' Well, that's not actually how we got the word *capitulate*. Believe it or not, *capitulate* comes from that other sense of the word *capital* – as the heading of a manuscript or document. And that's because *capitulate* original referred to the process of drafting a document with specific provisions under specific headings. It was typically used in reference to a contract or other document whereby two parties agreed to certain terms. And in the following century, the meaning was extended to a peace agreement or surrender agreement with specific terms and conditions. And that's how we got the modern sense of *capitulate*.

But at this point in the year 1534, Henry wasn't interested in negotiating any terms of surrender. He was demanding a full and unconditional surrender. And that was a problem for Thomas More, and also a problem for his colleague John Fisher. Remember that Fisher was the bishop who criticized the Reformation in that early document that used inverted commas or quotation marks.

Well, More and Fisher were both summoned to take the oath acknowledging the legitimacy of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn and the legitimacy of their children as heirs to the throne. More and Fisher didn't really have a problem swearing to the succession itself, but they did have a problem with the specific wording of the oath because it denied the supremacy of the pope. [*SOURCE: The Story of Britain, Rebecca Fraser, p. 267.*] As devout Catholics, that required them to deny their fundamental beliefs, so they both refused to take the oath. But the matter wasn't negotiable. Both were accused of treason and sent to the Tower of London.

While Thomas More was kept in the Tower, he was allowed to continue his writings, and during that period he wrote a text called 'A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation.' In it, he included a passage in which he wrote that some people believe in the afterlife, but hate the idea of dying because "they love so much the wealth of this world, and such things as delight them therein, that they would fain keep them as long as ever they might, even with tooth and nail." So they fight 'tooth and nail' against the idea of dying. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, that was the first known use of the phrase 'tooth and nail' in an English document. It refers to the idea of a person or animal using its teeth and nails as weapons to put up a fight – biting and scratching to the very end.

And perhaps it's appropriate given More's predicament that this work also contained the earliest recorded instance of the phrase 'in the dumps.' In an early part of the book, More included this very notable passage, ". . . what heaps of heaviness hath of late fallen among us already – with which some of our poor family be fallen into such dumps that scantly can any such comfort as my poor wit can give them, anything assuage their sorrow." Again, this was the first known use of the phrase 'in the dumps' which bore much of the same meaning then as it does today.

After being confined to the Tower for several months, both Thomas More and John Fisher faced their respective trials in the late spring and summer of 1535. Bishop Fisher's trial was first. His refusal to swear the required oath led to his conviction for treason. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, but King Henry gave him some leniency. Henry allowed Fisher to have a quicker – and supposedly less painful – death by beheading. He was executed by swing of the axe in May of 1535.

In an account of Fisher's life called 'The Life of Fisher,' which was composed a couple of decades later, it was written that Fisher "chaunced … to be one of the first that brake the yse," and that Fisher showed the inconvenience that followed the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon. Now that passage is notable because, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, that's the first recorded use of the phrase 'break the ice' in an English document. The phrase alludes to a frozen river or lake, and 'to break the ice' was to be the first boat to plow through the frozen water and open the way for others to follow. And that was what the writer of that passage meant when he said that Bishop Fisher 'broke the ice' for those who followed. He was one of the first to be executed for violating the new laws passed by parliament in the wake of Henry's divorce and the break with the Catholic Church. Today, we typically use the phrase 'break the ice' to refer to opening in a social setting like beginning a conversation with someone. But it originally had a more literal sense.

And Fisher did indeed 'break the ice' for those who followed. And that included Thomas More. His trial was conducted a few weeks later, and he was also convicted of treason for refusing to swear the required oath. And just like Fisher, he was given leniency by King Henry. He was allowed to die by beheading. More was executed a couple of weeks after Fisher on July 6, 1535.

For more than a decade, Thomas More had railed against William Tyndale and his English translations of the Bible. But Tyndale couldn't have been pleased to hear of his rival's fate. That's because Tyndale himself was captured by Henry's agents in Antwerp just a few weeks before More's execution.

An undercover agent named Harry Phillips had befriended Tyndale in Antwerp. A short time later, he turned Tyndale into the authorities. Tyndale was arrested and was held for a year before finally being sentenced to death as a heretic for translating the Bible into English. In October of 1536, he was executed near the city of Brussels. As a convicted heretic, Tyndale's form of capital punishment was much harsher than that reserved for his rival Thomas More. Tyndale was strangled and then burned at the stake.

But there was a great irony to Tyndale's death for translating the Bible into English. And that irony is that, while he was awaiting his execution, the first English Bible was published with the tacit approval of Henry VIII.

Even though some religious scholars like Thomas More had strongly opposed the idea of an English Bible, Henry's main problem with Tyndale wasn't his Bible; it was his opposition to Henry's annulment and re-marriage. And with Thomas More now out of the way, some of England's bishops and some of Henry's close advisors approached him with the idea of approving an English translation of the Bible. Around the time that Tyndale was arrested, Henry gave his verbal consent to the idea.

As it turned out, one of Tyndale's associates named Miles Coverdale had just finished a complete translation of the Bible. He completed Tyndale's translation of the Old Testament. And the rest of his Bible was largely based on Tyndale's work. Coverdale's Bible was published in Cologne, Germany and was shipped to England, but this time, the translation wasn't banned. People were allowed to read it. And that's probably the best word to use for Coverdale's translation. It wasn't formally 'authorized' by the Church, but it was 'allowed.' People could read it without risk of heresy. [*SOURCE: The Bible Through the Ages, Robert V. Huber, Ed., p. 310.*] This was an important development because it shows that English was finally winning the battle against Latin within the English Church.

Coverdale's translation is also notable for another reason. Unlike Tyndale who had always used the traditional virgule or slash to indicate a pause, Coverdale didn't use that older punctuation mark at all. He used the brand new comma for that purpose. [*SOURCE: The Establishment of Modern English Prose in the Reformation and the Enlightenment, Ian Robinson.*]

The following year, Coverdale's Bible was revised under the supervision of another Tyndale associate named John Rogers. This translation is officially attributed to Thomas Matthew, and it known today as Matthew's Bible. But Thomas Matthew was probably a pen-name used by Rogers because Rogers is thought to be the primary translator of the text. At any rate, Henry VIII licensed the translation and authorized 1,500 copies to be printed. It also contained a dedication to Henry. [*SOURCE: 'God's Bestseller,' Brian Moynahan, p. 388, and 'he Bible Through the Ages,' Robert V. Huber, Ed., p. 311.*]

But that translation used notes from Tyndale and other Protestant reformers, so Henry's advisors went back to Miles Coverdale and asked him to revise his translation to produce a version without the controversial notes. Coverdale's revised and updated version is known today as the Great Bible because of its massive size. The printing of the Bible began in Paris in 1538, but French authorities confiscated some of the early sheets on the grounds of heresy, so the printers brought the presses to England and finished the publication there.

Coverdale's Great Bible is important to our story for two reasons. First, Henry VIII not only licensed and authorized the translation, he also commanded that a copy be placed in every Church in England. It was a decision that ensured that the Church of England would use English going forward. By the end of Henry's reign, Church services in England were conducted in English, and parishioners were taught how to recite the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English. [*SOURCE: 'The Story of Britain,' Rebecca Fraser, p. 265; and 'England: A Concise History,' F.E. Halliday, 89-90.*] The people of England finally had access to the Scriptures in their own language.

The other reason why Coverdale's Great Bible is important to our story is because it is the first document printed in English to use a semi-colon. It was a punctuation mark that had been innovated by Aldus Manutius in Italy, but it finally made its way into English in 1538. Despite that early appearance, it didn't become common in English until the late 1500s.

So by this point, English documents were using the semi-colon, the colon, the comma, the period or full stop, and early versions of the question mark, parentheses, and quotation marks or inverted commas. So most of the modern punctuation marks were in place by this point, and the apostrophe would appear for the first time a couple of decades later.

Now you will have noticed by this point that I have mentioned the existence of those punctuation marks, but I haven't really discussed how they were used other than to mark pauses. In other words, I haven't really discussed their specific grammatical functions. And that's because those functions were still being worked out. Over the course of the following centuries those rules were formulated within English, and in some cases, the rules still haven't been entirely worked out, like the use of the comma before 'and' in a series of items – called the 'serial comma' or the 'Oxford comma' today. There's still a raging debate about whether or not the comma should be used in that situation. I'll discuss those specific grammatical developments in future episodes. But at the current point in our story in the 1530s, the comma was quickly replacing the old virgule, and by the end of the century, the virgule had largely disappeared from English altogether as an early punctuation mark. It does still survive, however, as the forward slash symbol on our modern computer keyboards.

The net result of all of this is that English documents finally started to look like contemporary modern English documents around the middle of the 1500s. The vocabulary, the syntax, and the punctuation marks all resembled contemporary Modern English. Spellings were still unsettled, but that was an issue that was soon to be addressed.

There was also another notable difference between the appearance of English documents in the 1500s and the appearance of English documents of today, and that difference existed in the gray area between punctuation and spelling. It's the way words were capitalized then versus now. Again, the modern rules had not been formulated yet. It was common during the early 1500s to begin a sentence with a capital or uppercase letter just like we do today. That was a tradition that went back to the original use of the word *capital* as the marker of a new idea. But beyond that, there were no fixed rules for capitalization. By the late 1500s, certain categories of nouns were capitalized like personal names, geographical terms, kinship terms, and foreign words that hadn't been anglicized yet. By the early 1600s, just about any word in a given sentence could be capitalized. In the 1700s, it was common to find books where every noun was capitalized in much the same style as found in Modern German. But then, there was a movement in the opposite direction. Many of those capitals were lost and restricted to specific situations.

And that's really the story of the episode – the loss of capitals, and the loss of caputs or heads. And it wasn't just prominent writers and theologians who were losing their heads and receiving other capital punishments; even Henry's new wife Anne Boleyn suffered the same fate. She lost her head just a few months before William Tyndale was burned at the stake near Brussels. And she wasn't the only wife of Henry VIII to lose to her head.

But I'll save those developments for next time. In the next episode, we'll conclude our look at the reign of Henry VIII by exploring the end of his marriage to Anne Boleyn, and we'll look at the four marriages that quickly followed. We'll also examine one of the most devastating events in the history of English when Henry dissolved the monasteries in England, which resulted in the loss of an unknown number of manuscripts from earlier periods of English. And along the way, we'll also look at developments across the Atlantic Ocean where France was finally getting in on the action in the New World.

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