THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 154:
ENGLISH EQUALITY

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 154: English Equality. In this episode, we're going to look how at the perception of English began to change in the mid-1500s. For many decades, people in England had considered Latin and Greek to be the languages of advanced scholarship and technical study. English was considered to be too rustic and crude to deal with the sophisticated ideas associated with the Renaissance. But in the mid-1500s, some writers were elevating the use of English. They started to use English beside – or even in place of – those classical languages when dealing with technical subjects like medicine and geometry. English was increasingly seen as the equal of Latin and Greek. This was also a period when English replaced Latin in the regular church services in England. That was another example of the rise of English, even though it was met with fierce resistance. So this time, we'll explore those developments, and we'll also continue our look at the brief reign of Henry's VIII's young son Edward as king as of England.

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.

Now let's turn to this episode, and the rise in the perception of English in the mid-1500s. As we know, the status of English was dealt a heavy blow with the Norman Conquest in 1066. French and Latin largely replaced English in the government, in the courts, in the church and in the schools. In the late Middle English period, English clawed its way back and gradually overtook French in many of those areas. But Latin remained more entrenched. It continued to be the language of the Church and advanced learning. As the number of loanwords from French started to decline, the number of loanwords directly from Latin and Greek started to increase.

Back in Episode 147, we looked at how the Renaissance influenced that shift. I noted in that episode how some writers in the early 1500s embraced those Latin and Greek loanwords because they considered English to be too rustic and crude to handle the New Learning of the Renaissance.

But by the mid-1500s, there was a sense that those scholars had gone too far. Many technical works had so many Latin and Greek loanwords in them that they were incomprehensible to many English speakers. There was also a belief that scholars used those loanwords to hide their specialized knowledge from the general public. And even in non-technical works, writers often used fancy multi-syllable loanwords derived from Latin and Greek. Those fancy loanwords were derisively called 'inkhorn' terms, which was a reference to the inkpots used by writers who seemed to be enamored with those types of words.

By the mid-1500s, some English scholars were starting to push back. They no longer thought of English as a crude, rustic and unsophisticated language. They thought that English could be every bit the equal of Latin and Greek if used properly. It could express advanced and sophisticated ideas, even if that meant that new words had to be coined from English roots. These writings suggest that scholars in England were gaining confidence in their native language.

This attitude change is apparent is several documents that were published during the brief reign of Henry VIII's young son Edward VI. As we saw last time, Edward inherited the throne in 1547 when he was merely nine years old. And given his age, his uncle the Duke of Somerset effectively ruled England during this period.

In that same year that young Edward inherited the throne, two different books were published by an English physician and traveler named Andrew Boorde. Boorde had a thorough knowledge of medicine, but he also loved to travel. He visited most of the countries in continental Europe, and even made a journey to Jerusalem. He also traveled extensively throughout the British Isles.

Now as a traveling physician, it may not come as a surprise that his two books related to those two interests. One book was a medical book called the Breviary of Health, and the other book was an early travel guide called the First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge. It described the people and culture of the various nations of Europe and the various parts of the British Isles. Both of the books had been written a few years earlier, but they were printed for the first time in 1547, and they provide some interesting insights into the state of English at the time.

Let's look at the medical book first. Again, it was called the Breviary of Health. ***Breviary*** comes from the same root as the word ***brief***, and it was used in the sense of a brief statement or summary, but the book itself was quite extensive in the medical conditions that were covered. The ailments were listed alphabetically, usually by their Latin or Greek name. And for each one, Boorde described the condition and the symptoms, and the best treatments to be used. But he also did something else that was very interesting. He provided a translation of each Latin or Greek medical term into plain English.

I talked about Tudor medicine back in Episode 151, and I noted that medical books in English were very popular at the time because people wanted to be able to diagnose and treat illnesses at home if they could. But trained physicians generally opposed such books in English because that thought that common people would not know what they were doing, and that English medical guides would allow quacks and frauds to take over the profession. Many of those doctors wanted medical guides to be composed in Latin or Greek. But that created a perception that doctors were trying to hide their medical knowledge from the general public. So we can see an early tension here between the use of Latin and Greek on the one hand and the use of English on the other. The classical languages tended to limit those who could access the knowledge, whereas English made it available to everyone.

Well Andrew Boorde composed his medical guide for an ordinary English-speaking audience, and he felt that the technical terms used by physicians could be rendered in English without any problem. So in each case, he began with the technical Latin and Greek names for the ailments, but then he translated or explained them using regular English words. For example, in one passage, he discusses a type of sleep. He writes, "Cataphora is the gréeke worde. In english it is named a dead or a déepe sléepe." In another passage, he describes a type of nausea. He writes, "In gréeke it is named Anastrophae. In English it is named a vomiting or casting vp a mans meate." In another passage about a relatively new contagious disease in England, he writes,

“Valiore minores be the latin words. In English it is named the small pockes the which will breake out first as small pushes, and after that they will be scabbed after a stinking sort.”

In another passage, he writes of a certain condition that “Tvssis is the latin word. In greke it is named Vix. In English it is named a Cough.” In another, he writes, “Svdor is the latin word. In gréeke it is named Hydros. In english it is named sweat.”

In some cases, the original Greek or Latin word has stuck over time. So in one passage, he writes of a conditon where people find it difficut to breathe “Asthma is the gréeke word.. . . Anhelosi or Suspiciosi, or Constrictio anhelitus, be the latin words. In english it is named shortnes of wind.” Of course, in that case, that Greek word ***asthma*** is the common English term today.

In another passage, he discusses a type of mental illness. He writes, “Mania is the greke. In lattin it is named Insania or Furor. In English it is named a madnes or woodnes like a wilde beast, it doth differ from a phrenisey, for a phrenisey is with a feuer, and so is not Mania, this madnes that I do pretend to speake now of.” So here, Boorde uses the Greek word ***mania***, and the Latin words ***furor*** and ***insania*** (or insanity). He also references the Greek word ***frenzy***. All of those words have survived into Modern English. But he defines those terms by using the native English words ***madness*** and ***woodness***. ***Woodness*** isn’t really common anymore, but it was once a common way of referring to a person’s madness or insanity.

Boorde not only referred to medical conditions, he also included discussions about body parts that often gave people problems. In one passage, he includes a discussion about a very specific body part. He writes, “Anus, is the latin word. In gréeke it is Grans. In englishe it is a mans ars, let euery man kéepe that place cleane.” (Sage advice indeed)

So in this medial guide, we can see Andrew Boorde trying to render those technical terms into common English for the ordinary people who were likely to purchase and read the book. But that doesn’t mean Boorde thought English was the equal of Latin and Greek. In fact, even though he embraced the idea of using English beside those classical languages, he wasn’t convinced that English was their equal. He was a bit of a traditionalist in that he thought English was crude and rustic compared to the classical languages. And we know that because he specifically said so in his other book that was printed in the same year as the medical book.

That other book was the traveler’s guide called The First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge. As I noted earlier, Boorde had traveled throughout the British Isles and Europe. So this other book was really a guide to those different regions. In each case, he discussed where the country was located and the culture of the people who lived there. He described the general demeanor of the people in each region, their lifestyle, what they ate, the type of currency they used, and especially important for our purposes, what language they spoke. For many of the countries, he even included a sample dialogue in both English and the local language. He did that for Dutch, German, Greek, Italian, French, Castilian Spanish, Arabic and Hebrew. So, even though the dialogues were relatively short, it shows that Boorde was familiar with a lot of different languages.

Boorde began his guide at home in England. And with respect to his home country, he made the following comment about his native language: "The speche of Englande is a base speche to other noble speches, as Italion, Castylion, and Frenche; howbeit the speche of Englande of late dayes is amended." So Boorde described English as 'base,' especially when compared to Latin-derived languages like Italian, Castilian Spanish and French. That was still a common perception of English, even though as we'll see, it was starting to change.

Boorde also noted that languages other than English were used throughout the British Isles. He mentioned that many people in England spoke French, and he noted that Cornish and Welsh were spoken in the western parts of Britain. He noted that in Ireland, people spoke the native Celtic language, which he called 'Irish.' And in parts of Scotland, he mentioned that people spoke Scots Gaelic, which he called 'trew Scotysshe,' as opposed to the Scots language spoken in the south of Scotland which was derived from Old English.

Boorde then took the reader around the different regions of the British Isles. He began the tour in Cornwall. Cornwall is the region is the far southwestern corner of England, and it includes a peninsula which extends out into the ocean. The geography of the region meant that it was somewhat isolated from the rest of England. And Boorde noted that the native Celtic language of the region called Cornish was still in common use there. He wrote, "In Cornwall is two speches; the one is naughty Englyshe, and the other is Cornyshe speche. And there be many men and women the whiche cannot speake one worde of Englyshe, but all Cornyshe."

So here, Boorde referred to the English spoken in Cornwall as 'naughty English,' by which he presumably meant that it was quite different from the English spoken around London. But more significantly, he noted that many people in Cornwall didn't speak English at all. And that statement is going to turn out to be very important, because the new king and his advisors were about to impose English in the churches of England, and as we'll see, that change was met with fierce resistance in places like Cornwall.

In the same year that Andrew Boorde's books were published and Edward VI became king, a series of rules were issued that were designed to remove Catholic practices and symbols from the Church of England. These rules were called injunctions. They were issued in the king's name, and they marked a new stage of the Protestant Reformation in England. Even though Henry VIII had declared that the Church of England was independent of the Catholic Church in Rome, the churches themselves had largely maintained Catholic practices. All references to the Pope had been removed, but otherwise, Church services remained largely the same – which probably explains why the break with Rome wasn't met with more resistence at the time. But now, with Henry's 9-year son on the throne, the Protestant members of the court and the Church saw an opportunity to get rid of Catholic influences altogether.

Under these new rules, all images of saints and apostles were to be removed from the churches. Statues were destroyed. The ringing of bells, the lighting of candles, and the use of rosaries were all prohibited. In some churches, stained-glass windows that depicted saints and miracles were smashed, or whitewashed, or removed. Elaborate altars were also taken apart and removed.

[*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 190; The Story of Britain, Rebecca Fraser, p. 277; Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 140.*]

It was also during this period that some Protestant officials and worshipers started to abandon the colorful, elaborate clothing and vestments of the early Tudor period, and they started to dress in dark colors, which later became specifically associated with the Puritans. [*SOURCE: The Story of Britain, Rebecca Fraser, p. 276.*]

But one of the most important changes required by the new injunctions concerned the language that was to be used in the Church going forward. Many Church and government officials thought that the services should be rendered in English rather than Latin. So the new rules introduced the use of English within the Church of England. Going forward, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and other prayers were to be read and recited in English. And churches were required to possess a copy of the Bible in English. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 140.*]

All of these changes created serious divisions among the people of England. Some churches resisted the changes, while others embraced them. Fights soon broke out in churches between the two competing factions. And the conflicts only got worse with time. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 199.*]

In the following year – 1548 – another notable text was published. It was a history of England from the reign of Henry IV in 1399 though Henry VIII in the prior year – so it covered the period of the Wars of the Roses through the early Tudor period. It was written by an English historian named Edward Hall, and it was called 'The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke.' But it is more commonly known today as Edward Hall's Chronicles. It's a notable text because it was apparently a major source for William Shakespeare's history plays that cover the same period.

The book is also notable because it provides the first known use of several common words and phrases in English. For example, we find what may be the earliest version of the phrase 'a snake in the grass' to refer to a hidden danger. It occurs in a passage about Henry VI, who was the king who suffered from recurring mental illness. During one of his illnesses, his wife Margaret was effectively in charge of the royal court, and she tried to set a trap for their Yorkist rivals by luring them to a certain location where they would be seized. But as Hall wrote, "the serpent lurked vnder the grasse, & vnder sugered speache." This reference to a serpent lurking under the grass is perhaps the first recorded use of a version of that phrase to mean a hidden danger or suspicious circumstance.

In a later section of the book about the controversial king Richard III, we find the first recorded reference to someone 'throwing down the gauntlet.' 'To throw down the gauntlet' is to issue a challenge to someone. So what is a gauntlet? Well, it's a French term for the glove that knights wore when they were dressed in their medieval armor. When a knight wanted to challenge another knight, he would throw down his glove or gauntlet. Over time, it became common for

any person to challenge another person by throwing down a simple glove. If the person being challenged picked up the glove, it was considered to be an acceptance of the challenge.

Well, again, Edward Hall's history of late medieval England contains the first recorded reference to that phrase. It appears in a discussion about Richard III's coronation. It was a common tradition at the time that when a king was crowned, a specific noble with the title of the King's Champion would ride into Westminster Hall in full armor and would issue a challenge anyone who questioned the king's claim to the throne. Well, Hall described the tradition when Richard III was crowned with the following passage: "At the seconde course came into the hall, sir Robert Democke the kynge his champion, makynge a proclamacion, that whosoeuer woulde saie that kynge Richard was no lawefully kynge, he woulde fighte with hym at the vtteraunce, and threwe downe his gauntlet: and then al the hal cried kynge Richarde." Again, at least according to the Oxford English Dictionary, that's the first recorded use of the phrase 'throw down the gauntlet' in an English document.

Hall's Chronicle also contains the first recorded use of several words in English. As we've seen, this was a period when writers and scholars were borrowing a lot of words from Latin and Greek. So it isn't surprising that we find the first use of a several loanwords from Latin and Greek in this text. Some were taken directly from those sources and some were taken via French.

For example, we find the first use of the word ***obsession***. But the word had a very different meaning back then. ***Obsession*** has the same ultimate root as the word ***siege***, as when troops laid siege to a castle. And that's how the word ***obsession*** was used in this first recorded usage. It occurs in an episode from the reign of Richard III when a castle was taken. Hall writes of the men in the castle, "They whiche were in the castell..sente also to the Earle of Richemonde, to aduertise hym of their sodeine obsession." Over time, the sense of the word ***obsession*** evolved from a miliary siege, to a spiritual siege in which a person is beset by an evil spirit, and then to the modern sense of the word as any idea or image that constantly intrudes upon the mind.

Hall's Chronicle also gives use the first recorded use of the word ***paragon***. It's another word with Greek origins, but in Italian, the word referred to the dark stone that was used to test the quality of gold or silver. A person would rub the gold or silver against the stone or paragon, and the streak that was left on the stone would indicate the quality of the metal. So in that sense, a paragon was the thing by which the quality of something was measured. In Hall's Chronicle, the term was applied to highly revered king Henry V. Hall writes that he was "emongest his predecessors a very Paragon." So Henry V was the king by which other kings were judged. Today, we might use that word in a similar sense like when we refer to someone as a 'paragon of virtue.'

Hall's Chronicle also gives us the first recorded use of words like ***anticipation*** and ***procrastination***. Those are really good examples of the type of fancy multi-syllable words that were being borrowed and coined directly from Latin during this period. They were the type of words that some writers derisively referred to as 'inkhorn' terms – the type of fancy words that writers came up with while dipping the quills in their inkhorns. As it turns out, the words ***anticipation*** and ***procrastination*** survived in English. But many of those inkhorn terms didn't

survive – at least not in common use. For example, Edward Hall also gave us the first recorded use of words like ***collocate*** meaning 'to set in place,' and ***enucleate*** meaning 'to explain or make clear,' and ***facinorous*** meaning 'extremely wicked or immoral,' and ***disprofitable*** meaning 'detrimental,' and ***subsecute*** meaning 'to follow, pursue.' Many works of this period were littered with those types of words, and Hall's Chronicle is no exception.

These types of elaborate Latinate words or inkhorn terms were especially common in academic and technical works. But as I noted, many scholars in England were growing weary of those technical terms. They felt that many of those ideas and concepts could be expressed perfectly well in English.

In the same year that Edward Hall's Chronicle was published, an English botanist named William Turner compiled a list of common plants found in Britain and other parts of Europe. The plants were listed alphabetically by their Latin name, but in each case, Turner also provided the name of the plant in Greek, as well as its common English name. He also provided the names used in French and Dutch. He then provided a short description of each plant. This was very similar to the approach that Andrew Boorde had used in that medical text that I discussed earlier – but rather than listing ailments and body parts, Turner listed plants and herbs.

Turner is sometimes called the 'Father of English Botany,' and this particular work was really the precursor to a much larger three-volume work called the New Herball which was composed over the following couple of decades. It was the first major work of botany composed in English, and that later work also included the names of the plants in English alongside the Latin and Greek names.

Here are some examples from the initial list that Turner composed in the 1548. He wrote, "Abies is called in greke Elate, in english a firre tree." "Allium is called in greke scorodo, in Englishe garlike." "Auena named in greeke Bromos, in englishe Otes." "Fragraria is called in english a strawbery leafe, whose fruite is called in englishe a strawbery." "Hordeum called in greeke Crithe, in englishe Barley." "Porrum is named in greke prason, in englishe a Leke." And here's one that some of you will recognize, "Canabis is called in Englishe Hemp."

Sometimes the name of the plant was the same in all three languages. Turrner wrote: "Aloe is so called in greke, latin & english, It groweth not in Englande but by the sea side & in Ilandes, I haue sene it in gardines in Italy."

Sometimes, Turner wasn't sure what to call the plant in English. In one passage, he wrote, "Buthalmus is lyke Chrysanthemon, but the floure is a greate deele greater. I haue seene it in Italy and in high Germany, but no where in Englande. It may be called in englishe Oxeye." And in another passage, he wrote, "Acanthium is called in greke Acanthion, it is named of some herbaries carduus asininus, I haue not hearde the name of it in englishe, but I thynke it maye be called in englishe otethistle, because the seedes are like vnto rough otes, or gum thistle, or coiten thistle, because it is gummy and the leaues haue in the(m) a thynge lyke cotten, which appeareth when they are broke(n)."

Again, the significance of all of this is that it was really the first attempt to render all of this information in English. It was an attempt to create a botany text that English readers could access without needing to read or understand Latin or Greek. It reflected the idea that English was perfectly capable of handling the material on its own.

Now botanists like William Turner were fascinated by the variety of plants that they encountered, and they were probably comfortable in the countryside surrounded by plants and trees. But in the mid-1500s, the countryside was also the source of a growing economic problem. In fact, in the same year that Turner prepared his list of plants, a commission was established by the English government to deal with what was happening in the countryside. People were being uprooted – and many were being forced into nearby towns and cities. And a major source of the problem was the enclosure of land by wealthy landowners.

In order to explain what was happening, we need to go back and consider what life was like in the countryside for much of the Middle Ages. During that earlier period, a large portion of the land was considered common land. That meant that is was available to any peasant or farmer who had cattle or sheep that needed to graze. So there was equal access. And many poor peasants had such animals – maybe a cow or goat that provided milk and cheese, or sheep that provided wool. They could let those animals graze in the common areas. But all of that started to change in the years after the Black Death. There was suddenly a limited supply of people to work the farms, and the cultivation of crops required a lot of labor. So many farmers shifted away from growing crops, and they focused instead on raising livestock, especially sheep which provided the wool for cloth market across the Channel in Flanders. Raising livestock required a lot less labor because you only needed someone to keep an eye on the flocks or herds. But even that limited amount labor could be reduced even further by building fences to enclose the lands where the livestock grazed. Very often, those fences were built by local landowners on the common land. So that reduced the amount of land available to everyone else. From the late 1300s, through the 1400s, and into the 1500s, this process continued uninterrupted. Large landholders in the countryside gradually converted common land into private pastures, and that left poor peasants with little or no land for their own livestock. Many of those peasants found it nearly impossible to support their family, and many of them headed to nearby towns and cities to find employment there. This contributed greatly to the growth of towns and cities in the early modern period. But it also created major economic problems for peasants and farm workers in the countryside. [*SOURCE: Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 22*.]

During the early 1500s, Thomas More had railed against the enclosure of common lands in his well-known work called Utopia. During that same time period, Henry VIII's chancellor Thomas Wolsey tried to address the problem, but with little success.

As people moved off the farms and into the growing towns and cities, they brought their various accents and dialects with them. Those towns and cities became melting pots where those various types of English started to mix together and produce unique local dialects. [*SOURCE: A Biography of the English Language, C.M. Millward, p. 227.*] But those same factors contributed to hardships in the countryside, and the government of England was increasingly worried about

those disruptions and the potential for revolts in those rural areas where most of the people still lived.

So in 1548, an Enclosure Commission was established to try to remove some of those fences and the enforce some of the existing legislation intended to re-open the common areas. [*SOURCE: This Realm of England: 1399-1688, Lacey Baldwin Smith, p. 156*.] But the commission did very little other than to anger the landholders who felt targeted by the commission and to anger the peasants whose concerns were never really resolved. On top of all of that, the mid-1500s was a period of soaring inflation in England caused in part by the debasing of the coinage. Copper was being added to silver coins making them worth less, and thereby causing sellers to demand more of them for their goods. [*SOURCE: Peter Ackroyd, The Tudors, p. 206.*] It was also period when the overall population of England was exploding. The population nearly doubled over the course of the 1500s. [*SOURCE: Medical Downfall of the Tudors: Sex, Reproduction & Succession, Sylvia Barbara Soberton, p. 3*.] So there was more demand for food and basic necessities, but less land was being cultivated, and no significant increase in food supplies to keep up with the demand. All of that contributed to soaring prices.

So Edward VI's government was increasingly plagued by two different problems. There were economic problems in the countryside where a large portion of the rural population was struggling to survive, and there were those religious divisions caused by the new rules against Catholicism that I mentioned earlier in the episode.

Then in the following year – 1549 – all hell broke loose. And it began it with a book that was designed to keep hell at bay. It was the book known as the Book of Common Prayer. To explain the overall importance of this book, we have to consider the fact many aspects of daily life at the time were regulated by Church rituals. There were morning prayers and evening prayers. Of course, there was the Mass or Holy Communion. There were specific services for special occasions like Lent, Easter, and Christmas. There were also baptisms and confirmations. There were marriage ceremonies. There were prayers for the sick and prayers of the dying. And there were funeral ceremonies when people died. From birth to death, there were religious rituals and ceremonies. But the priests who administered those rituals and ceremonies didn't just improvise their remarks. There were actually specific sermons, and prayers, and procedural remarks to be made in each of those cases.

Much of that wording could be traced back to the guides used in the traditional Latin service. But in England, the forms of service varied a bit from region to region. Most of England used the prayers and readings developed at Salisbury Cathedral in the early Norman period. These readings are known as the Use of Sarum or the Sarum Rite. There was even a handbook for priests and monks to use based on that tradition. But most of the language of those prayers and ceremonies was composed and delivered in Latin.

Now there were some cases where English was used, but it was very limited. For example, the standard wedding ceremony had been a mixture of Latin and English for several centuries. Much of the language of the ceremony was in Latin, but when the bride and groom said their vows, they said them in English. But even then, the English passages were somewhat different from the

language used today. For example, the bride made her vows to "my wedded husband, to have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to be bonny and buxom in bed and at board, till death us do part. . ." So the older vows had that little bit of alliteration – "to be bonny and buxom in bed and at board." But what did that mean?

Well, ***bonny*** is derived from the French word ***bon*** meaning 'good.' And ***buxom*** originally meant 'obedient or gracious.' As we saw in an earlier episode, ***board*** was an old word for a table, and it sometimes referred to the meals served at the table, as in the term 'room and board.' Here, ***board*** was used in the extended sense of the part of the day when meals were served – so daytime. And ***bed*** of course referred to nighttime. So 'to be bonny and buxom in bed and at board' meant 'to be a good and obedient wife throughout the day and at night.'

Of course, that language is no longer common today, but it is notable because it was part of a rare English passage in an otherwise Latin service.

Well, in 1459, the archbishop of Canterbury named Thomas Cranmer compiled an entirely English prayer book to be used for those common ceremonies and rituals. This was the book that became known as the Book of Common Prayer.

It was essentially a handbook for most religious ceremonies in England, and it provided the language to be used by the priests, at least at key moments in the service. It was significant for several reasons. First, it was to be used throughout the country, so it eliminated the regional variations that had existed previously. It was also a Protestant text, so it eliminated any wording or rituals that were specifically associated with Catholicism. And lastly, it was in English – not the Latin which had been used traditionally. So once again, we see this emerging notion that English was the equal of Latin and could even replace Latin in traditional church services.

The Book of Common Prayer was authorized by act of parliament early in 1549. And after the act, the book became the only legal form of worship in England. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 140*.] It has been modified a few times over the years, but it is still in use today. And because of its regular use in common rituals and ceremonies, its language is very familiar to many modern speakers, especially if you grew up in the Christian tradition. For example, the language of the modern marriage ceremony is mostly taken from the book. Of course, the old part about being "bonny and buxom in bed and at board" was omitted, which is why it isn't found in marriage ceremonies anymore. The book also contained the Lord's Prayer in pretty much its modern form. In fact, in the very first episode of the podcast – the introductory episode – I read the Lord's Prayer in Old, Middle and Modern English to illustrate the changes in the language over time. Well, the modern version I read was the version contained in the Book of Common Prayer because it has changed very little since 1549.

Now you might expect that congregations across England loved the new prayer book since it was in English, and you might expect that they fully embraced it. Well, some of them did, but others were vehemently opposed to it. Many Catholics resented the book because it changed the language that they were accustomed to, and also because it removed all rituals and practices associated with Catholicism. Those who opposed the book included the king's Catholic sister

Mary. On the day that the Book of Common Prayer officially became the legal prayer book of England, Mary celebrated traditional Catholic Mass at her chapel in Norfolk in the east of England. By doing so, she made it clear to everyone that she opposed the changes. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 143.*] It was also an open signal that she would oppose the Protestant reforms that had been made if Edward died without children, and she inherited the throne.

Mary wasn't the only person concerned about the prayer book. A lot of people were unhappy that English had replaced Latin in the regular church services. The Latin service had an air of magic and mystery about it, but the English service seemed plain – and even crude – to some people. [*SOURCE: Peter Ackroyd, The Tudors, p. 211.*]

Those sentiments were even stronger among people who didn't speak English at all. Of course, most people in England spoke English, but remember from earlier in the episode that there were still a lot of people in Cornwall who only spoke Cornish. And for them, it was even more of an insult to be forced to use English in Church services. There was also opposition in other parts of the West Country.

As soon as the new prayer book was introduced, the people in one small town (Sampford Courtenay) in Devon asked the local priest to ignore the new requirements and continue to use the traditional Latin services, and he agreed to do so. It was another open violation of the rules. Many people who opposed the new requirements gathered near Exeter. A large portion of them were people from Cornwall who had marched east to Exeter to object to the new English services and the prayer book. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 145.*]

They issued a series of demands, one of which read as follows: "we wil not receyve the newe servye because it is but lyke a Christmas game, but we wyll have oure olde service of Mattens, masse, Evensong and procession in Latten not in English, as it was before. And so we the Cornyshe men (whereof certen of us understande no Englysh) utterly refuse thys newe Englysh."

It is estimated that there were about 2000 rebels in all, and their religious concerns were probably heightened by the economic problems that I mentioned earlier. The rebels besieged the city of Exeter, but were resisted by the local townspeople. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 213.*] The protest soon turned violent, and it erupted into a full-scale rebellion in the region. Historians refer to this event as the 'Western Rising' or 'The Prayer Book Rebellion.'

A few weeks later in late July, troops were sent to the region by the king's uncle Somerset, who was effectively in charge of the country at the time. The troops were able to put down the rebellion – though several hundred people were killed in the process. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 214.*]

So we have a rebellion in western England leading to the deaths of numerous people over the use of a specific language in the Church. And it wasn't a rebellion demanding the use of English; it was a rebellion demanding the use of Latin. And that shows how heated the debate was at the time over which language should be used in those church services.

Now Somerset had been able to put down the Prayer Book Rebellion in the West Country, but that wasn't the only fire that he had to put out. At almost the same time as the rebellion in the west, a separate rebellion broke out in various other parts of the country, especially in the east. This separate rebellion had more to do with the economic conditions at the time, especially the lingering impact of the land enclosures. Many poor farmers and peasants started to pull down fences and hedges. They stole sheep, and they claimed the deer and other wildlife for themselves. Violence broke out in the regions north and east of London. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 145.*] Many of the rebels were organized under the leadership of a man named Robert Kett. They made a camp outside of Norwich in the eastern part of the country. It is estimated that around 16,000 rebels gathered there. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 215.*]

It was actually these various events that led to the first recorded use of a very common phrase in English. The king's uncle Somerset was coming under heavy criticism during this period for his role as Protector of England. As we saw last time, he had invaded Scotland in the first year of his nephew's reign, which required England to leave troops stationed there at great cost. Now there were rebellions in the West Country and sporadic outbreaks of violence elsewhere, especially in the east. A man named William Paget was one of Somerset's allies on the Council that oversaw the royal court while the king was a minor. Paget wrote to Somerset in July expressing his concerns about the situation around the country. He wrote that Somerst should "put no more so many irons in the fire at once as you have had within this twelvemonth." In other words, Somerset had tried to do too much, and he had made mess of things. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Paget's suggestion that Somerset had 'too many irons in the fire' is the first known use of that phrase in an English document, though it had likely been around in the language for some time.

Somerset's government was soon forced to declare marital law, and a force of about 7,500 men was sent to put down that second rebellion in the east. They were sent under the leadership of the Earl of Warwick named John Dudley. Dudley's troops captured the rebel leader Robert Kett, and they brutally put down the rebellion. Kett was later executed for his role in the rebellion. Meanwhile, Dudley returned to London as a bit of a hero for having taken decisive action to defeat the rebels. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 218.*]

By this point, the ruling Council had lost all confidence in Somerset. Late in the year, he was forced to resign, and he was replaced by John Dudley – the man who had put down the rebellion in the east. Dudley took the title of 'lord president of the council,' and he now became the de facto ruler of England in place of Somerset. Dudley also assumed the title of duke of Northumberland, and many historical sources refer to him as 'Northumberland,' but I'll continue to call him Dudley to minimize any confusion. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 226.*]

Now Somerset had faced a slew of economic and political problems, whereas Dudley showed decisiveness and leadership. So, in light of that, many people thought that Somerset couldn't hold a candle to Dudley. And in fact, the phrase 'hold a candle to someone' can be traced back to an English document that appeared around this time in the year 1550. Today, we use that phrase in the negative – 'someone can not hold a candle to someone else' – meaning that the first

person is inferior in some way. But the phrase actually refers to a common activity in the era before electricity. 'To hold a candle to someone' was to assist that person in a dark area by literally holding a candle for them to provide them with light. During the early modern era, buildings were always a little dark inside, and at nighttime, it was dark outside as well. So wealthy people would often have a servant that would hold a candle for them if they needed a little extra light. And even the poor sometimes needed someone to hold a candle for them if their hands were full or occupied. So 'to hold a candle to someone' was to provide basic assistance. But if someone was incompetent or useless, then they weren't even fit to hold a candle to someone. And that's how we got the modern version of the phrase as someone not being able to hold a candle to someone else.

Interestingly, the first known use of that phrase in its literal sense as 'providing assistance' is found in a pamphlet composed in 1550 which was a pointed criticism of the rebellions that just taken place throughout England. It was composed by a printer and writer named Robert Crowley, and it was called 'The Way to Wealth, Wherein is Taught a Remedy for Sedicion.' Crowley was a strong Protestant who had criticized the land enclosures which had caused so many problems for the poor people in the countryside. But he also strongly objected to violence, and looting and stealing. So this pamphlet took aim at both the wealthy landowners for exploiting the poor and the rebels for disobeying the law and the Scriptures.

In an early part of the pamphlet, he included the following passage. I'll read it first in its original early Modern English, and then in contemporary English:

Intendynge therefore to playe the parte of a true Englyshman, and to do all that in me shall ly to plucke thys stincking wede vp by the rote: I shal in thys good busines do as in their euell exercise the dise playars (that gladlye woulde, but haue nothynge to playe for) do. Holde the candle to them that haue wherewyth, and wyll sette lustily to it.

Now in contemporary English:

Intending therefore to play the part of a true Englishman, and to do all that in me shall lie to pick this stinking weed up by the root: I shall in this good business do as the dice players do in their evil exercise; they that would gladly play, but have nothing to play for, do hold the candle to them that have wherewith, and will set lustily to it.

So Crowley is saying that dice players who have nothing to play for will hold a candle so that the others can play, and he is essentially doing the same by shedding light on the problems that plague so many people in England.

Note that he also makes the analogy to picking out weeds by the root. This is an analogy that he expands upon in the following passage. In this next passage, he compares sedition to both a dangerous disease in the body and an unwanted weed or plant in a garden. You have to remove both of them at the source. Here is the passage – again first in early Modern English and then in contemporary English:

Sedition therfore beinge a daungerous disease in the bodie of a commen wealth: muste be cured as the expert Phisicians do vse to cure the daungerous diseases in a naturall bodie. And as the moste substanciall waye in curinge diseases, is by puttinge awaye the causes wherof they grewe: so is it in the pullinge vp of Sedition. For if the cause be once taken awaye, then muste the effecte nedes faile. If the rote be cut of: the braunch must nedes die. The boughes cannot budde, if the tree, haue no sappe.

Now in contemporary English:

Sedition therefore, being a dangerous disease in the body of a common wealth: must be cured as the expert Physicians do to cure the dangerous diseases in a natural body. And, as the most substantial way in curing diseases is by putting away the causes whereof they grew, so is it in the pulling up of Sedition. For if the cause be once taken away, then must the effect necessarily fail. If the root be cut off, the branch must necessarily die. The boughs or branches cannot bud if the tree has no sap.

So earlier in the episode, we saw how Andrew Boorde translated Latin and Greek terms into English in his medical book, and then we saw how William Tuner translated Latin and Greek terms into English in his botany book. Now Robert Crowley pulls from both areas of study to justify his opposition to sedition and rebellion.

Well, in the year after Crowley wrote that pamphlet against sedition, another English scholar was faced with the challenge of explaining complicated Greek and Latin concepts to English readers for the first time. But in this case, the concepts we so novel, that in most cases, there were no existing English terms that he could use. So he was faced with a unique challenge.

The work I'm referring to was a geometry book composed by a Welsh mathematician named Robert Recorde. It was a translation of part of the massive treatise on geometry called Elements by the ancient Greek mathematician named Euclid. It was one of those books that became very popular after the rediscovery of ancient Greek texts, and the invention of the printing press allowed it to be printed and studied by scholars across Europe. It was one of the fundamental texts in the study of advanced geometry, but it was almost always studied in Greek and Latin. But Robert Crowley decided to translate many of the key parts into English. And when it was published in 1551, it was in fact the first textbook on geometry to be composed in English. It was used as a standard textbook in England well into the 1600s.

Now as I noted a moment ago, Recorde was doing something that Andrew Boorde had done with his medical text and William Turner had done with his botany book. He was trying to render classical concepts and terminology in English. But Recorde's challenge was even greater because there were no English terms for many of the ideas and concepts that Euclid had described. So in his translation, Recorde had to decide how to render those concepts in English. He really had two options.

First, he could do what many scholars did and simply retain the Greek and Latin terms. And that's probably what Recorde would have done had he composed his translation a half century earlier when English was considered to be too rustic and crude to render those sophisticated technical concepts. But now, in the mid-1500s, there was a growing sense that English could express those ideas, and could do so as well as Latin and Greek. So in most cases, Recorde decided to render those classical geometry concepts in English. And he did that by coining brand-new terms based on English roots.

He probably didn't realize it at the time, but he was taking an approach that many other English writers would take over the next half century or so. It was the notion that technical terms could be rendered in English by being a little bit creative and creating new English words in place of the fancy Latin and Greek terms. That created two different approaches to rendering technical works in English, and it is the heart of what became known as the inkhorn debate. Either use fancy Greek and Latin words, or replace them with new words formed from English roots.

We can see how Recorde coined new English terms by looking at the words he used for certain basic geometric shapes. English had already borrowed a few words like ***circle*** and ***square*** in prior centuries. But beyond that, the English vocabulary was limited when it came to geometry. The word ***triangle*** had been borrowed in late Middle English, but in advanced geometry, there are different kinds of triangles. For example, a triangle with three equal sides is called an equilateral triangle. And a triangle with two equal sides is called an isosceles triangle. Well, those were technical distinctions using terms that didn't exist in English. So rather than adopting those terms, Recorde called a triangle with three equal sides a 'threlike' triangle, and a triangle with two equal sides a 'tweleke' or 'two-like' triangle. Here's the actual passage that Recorde wrote:

"There is also an other distinction of the names of triangles, according to their sides, whiche other be all equal. . . and that the Greekes doo call Isopleuron, and Latine men aequilaterum: and in english it may be called a threlike triangle, other els two sydes bee equall and the thyrd vnequall, which the Greekes call Isosceles, the Latine men aequicurio, and in english tweyleke may they be called."

So here, we see how Recorde invented his own English terms by combing native words. In this case, he combined the words ***two*** and ***three*** with the native suffix ***like***.

As I noted, English had already borrowed the word ***square*** from French and Latin, but it had not yet borrowed the word ***rectangle***. So to describe a rectangle, Recorde came up with the term ***long square***.

Any figure with four equal side is called a rhombus. If the angles are all 90 degrees or right angles, it's a ***square***. Well, Recorde coined his own term for a figure with four equal sides. He called it a ***likeside***, meaning a figure with four sides that were all alike.

A figure with five sides is commonly known as a ***pentagon*** today, but again, that term was not yet common in English. So Recorde coined his own word. Since a figure with five sides also has five angles, he called it a ***cinkangle*** – using the French word ***cinq*** for 'five' and the word ***angle***.

Similarly, a hexagon has six sides and six angles, so he called it a ***siseangle*** using the French word ***six*** and ***angle***. It isn't clear why used the French words for the numbers instead of 'five-angle' and 'six-angle,' but apparently, he thought those terms would be better understood by his readers than the original Greek terms.

Now specific points are often important in geometry. The word ***point*** is a French and Latin loanword, and it was somewhat common in English by the mid-1500s. Nevertheless, Recorde preferred to use the native English word ***prycke***.

In geometry, an angle of less than 90 degrees is called an ***acute*** angle, and an angle of more than 90 degrees is called an ***obtuse*** angle. Well, instead of using those terms, Recorde called an acute angle a ***sharp*** angle, and he called an obtuse angle a ***blunt*** or ***broad*** angle.

By now, you may have noticed a trend. Even though Robert Recorde made up his own English terms to explain those geometric concepts to English readers, those terms didn't really stick. And that's an important note as we move forward. Even though there was an attempt to put English on equal footing with Latin and Greek, the attempt sometimes failed. In the end, English scholars settled on the traditional terminology in certain fields like geometry. But by the mid-1500s, they didn't have to. There were also English options as English increasingly took a place beside those classical languages and was increasingly seen as a viable alternative.

And speaking to two things of equal value being placed beside each other, that takes us to something else that Robert Recorde gave us.

Six years after composing his translation of Euclid's geometry text, Recorde composed a mathematical text called The Whetstone of Witte. That title basically meant 'The Intelligence Sharpener.' In that book, Recorde introduced the plus symbol and the minus symbol to an English audience. The symbols had been first used in Germany in the late 1400s, but they had not been widely adopted yet. The Whetstone of Witte was the first English text to use those symbols.

But in that same text, Robert Recorde invented another symbol. And unlike some of his terminology, this particular symbol stuck – and we still use it today. That symbol was the equal sign. Before inventing the symbol, he had to write out '...is equal to...' each time he wrote an equation. But the symbol (consisting of two parallel lines) made writing the equations much quicker and easier. But how did he conceive of that particular symbol? Well, he actually explained how. He wrote that "no two things can be more equal than a pair of parallel lines."

So those two lines were equal in every way. They just happened to exist next to each other. And that could also describe the state of English relative to its classical neighbors – Latin and Greek. In the mid-1500s, they were starting to be used side-by-side as equals. English was losing its stigma as a rustic and crude language. More and more writers thought it was capable of expressing even the most sophisticated ideas and concepts.

Next time, we'll see how other scholars in England began to pick up on that idea. They encouraged other writers to replace those fancy Latin and Greek terms with new words coined from English roots. That gave English writers a choice in terminology, which was the essence what became known as the 'inkhorn debate.' So we'll delve a little deeper into that discussion next time.

We'll also wrap up the reign of Edward VI and turn our attention to his older sister Mary who became the first queen to rule England as monarch.

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