

**THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST
TRANSCRIPTS**

**EPISODE 155:
BACK TO BASICS**

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 155: Back to Basics. In this episode, we’re going to explore two parallel trends that emerged in England in the 1550s. Linguistically, several prominent scholars tried to stem the flow of loanwords into English by returning the language to its Anglo-Saxon roots. They argued that speakers should abandon their growing reliance on Latin and Greek words and they should focus more on the native vocabulary of the language. Meanwhile, the government of England was also rolling back the clock. Henry VIII’s daughter Mary became queen, and she was eager to do away with the Protestant reforms that had been adopted during the reigns of her father and brother. She brought back Catholicism, and that meant that Latin came back with it. Along the way, her persecution of Protestants left a brutal legacy and a well-known nickname – Bloody Mary. So this time, we’ll explore these attempts to turn back the clock and go ‘back to basics.’

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](https://www.patreon.com/historyofenglish).

Now this time, we’re going to look at an attempt by certain scholars in Tudor England to push back against the changing nature of English in the 1500s. As we’ve seen in prior episodes, English was borrowing a lot of words from Latin and Greek during this period. And many of those words had technical meanings that meant little or nothing to most English speakers. Even though more and more people could read and write – and had access to books thanks to the printing press – a lot of those people had trouble reading those books because they contained so many loanwords. And this was a time before dictionaries were used. So unless the reader had a good working knowledge of those other languages, it was difficult to make sense out of some of those important works being produced in English. By the mid-1500s, some English scholars had enough, and they started to insist that English speakers and writers forego the fancy loanwords whenever possible, and use common English words in their place.

I concluded the last episode by talking about a popular geometry textbook composed by a Welsh mathematician named Robert Recorde. It was published in 1551 and was mostly an English translation of an ancient Greek work on geometry. Recorde was faced with this same basic dilemma when he composed his version of the book. He had to decide whether to use the original Greek and Latin terms or whether to render those terms using plain and familiar English. In many cases, he chose the latter so that a *rectangle* became a *long square* and an *equilateral* triangle with three equal sides became a *threlike* triangle. Recorde’s choices show that he was sensitive to growing criticism against the use of those technical loanwords. He wanted to make his textbook accessible to the average English reader, or in this case, the average English student.

As I’ve noted before, those technical or fancy loanwords were derisively referred to as ‘inkhorn’ terms at the time. It was a reference to the ink pots used by writers, and the implication was that some writers were using up all of the ink in their inkhorns by writing down those long, fancy loanwords which many English speakers didn’t even understand. A quick review of some of the works composed during this period reveals the kinds of words that were called ‘inkhorn’ terms.

A text from the year 1550 includes the first recorded use of the word *caliginous*, which is a Latin loanword meaning ‘misty, murky or dark.’ During this same period, we find the first use of the word *abalienate*, which is another Latin loanword meaning ‘to estrange or distance oneself from another.’ One of my favorite examples of these types of words actually comes from the following century. It’s the word *honorificabilitudinitas*, a nice 11-syllable word from Latin which meant ‘honorableness’ or ‘having honor.’

Some English writers loved those types of words, and they peppered their books and manuscripts with lots of them. But other scholars hated them because they thought those types of words were pretentious and made the texts unreadable.

Two years after Robert Recorde’s geometry text was published, we have one of the most definitive statements against the use of those types of ‘inkhorn’ terms and in favor of plain English. The work in question was the first complete text on rhetoric composed in the English language. Now rhetoric is the art of using language to persuade and influence others. For centuries, it was considered to be one of the most important skills that a person could possess, especially an educated person who wanted to be a government official, or a member of the clergy, or a lawyer or a teacher. It was one of the most valued skills, and had been for centuries. The ancient Greeks had written extensively about the use of rhetoric – and in fact, the word *rhetoric* is a Greek word. You might also remember that the three basic courses taught in virtually every school in the Middle Ages was called the trivium – which consisted of grammar, logic and rhetoric. That’s how basic and important rhetoric was in medieval and early modern Europe.

But rhetoric was almost always taught in Latin. There had never been a complete and systematic textbook on rhetoric composed in English – that is, until the current point in our story early in the year 1553. This particular text was composed by an English diplomat named Thomas Wilson, and it was called ‘The Arte of Rhetorique.’ Wilson basically took the traditional Latin approach to rhetoric, and he adapted it to an English audience, and the work proved to be very popular. It went through eight editions. [*SOURCE: The History of the English Language, David Burnley, p. 202.*]

Wilson argued that one of the most important features of rhetoric is the ability to communicate clearly and effectively, and he said that the best way to do that in English was to use plain and simple words that everyone could understand. And by extension, that meant that speakers and writers should avoid those fancy ‘inkhorn’ terms whenever possible.

He began with the following passage:

“Emong al other lessons, this should first be learned, that we never affect any straunge ynkehorne termes, but so speake as is commonly received: neither sekyng to be over fine, nor yet livyng over carelesse, usyng our speache as most men do, and ordryng our wittes, as the fewest have doen.”

Wilson then argued that some speakers used so many loanwords in their speech that even their mothers couldn't understand them. Here's the passage:

“Some seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that thei forget altogether their mothers language. And I dare swere this, if some of their mothers were alive, thei were not able to tell, what thei say, and yet these fine Englishe clerkes wil saie thei speake in their mother tongue if a man should charge them for counterfeityng the kynges English.”

Wilson then wrote that some people were impressed by those foreign loanwords – thinking the speaker to be educated and worldly. But then he showed why the excessive use of those words was counterproductive. He included a letter that he said that he received from a man in Lincolnshire who was seeking help in obtaining a vacant benefice, which was an ecclesiastical position. So he was basically looking for Wilson's help to land a job. Now Wilson may have made up the letter to prove his point. It seems like an intentional exaggeration or parody. I'm just going to read the first couple of lines, which is enough to illustrate the point. I'm not going to try to re-create his pronunciation. I'm just going to read the lines as he wrote them with their exaggerated terms. Here it is:

“Pondering, expending, and revoluting with my self your ingent affabilitee, and ingenious capacitee for mundane affaires: I cannot but celebrate and extolle your magnificall dexteritee, above all other. For how could you have adepted suche illustrate prerogative, and dominicall superioritee, if the fecunditee of your ingenie had not been so fertile, and wouderfull prenaunt.”

At the end of the letter, which continues on for several more sentences in the same way, Wilson included the following statement about the writer of the letter:

“What wise man readyng this letter, will not take him for a very Caulfe” – which was a slang term at the time for an idiot or dolt. Wilson then concluded with the following passage:

“Do we not speake, because we would have other to understand us, or is not the tongue geven for this ende, that one might know what another meaneth? And what unlearned man can tell, what half this letter signifieth? Therefore, either we must make a difference of Englishe, and saie some is learned Englishe, and other some is rude Englishe, or the one is courte talke, the other is country speache, or els we must of necessitee, banishe al suche affected Rhetorique, and use altogether one maner of language.”

So in the end, Thomas Wilson's textbook on English rhetoric argued for a return to a plain and simple form of English that could be understood by all speakers. And he argued against the division of English between educated or courtly speech on the one hand and rustic or country speech on the other. In essence, he was arguing that educated speakers should go 'back to basics' and return to the traditional roots of the language.

Well, in the mid-1500s, people felt that way about a lot of things. The reign of Henry VIII had been very turbulent, and a lot of traditions had been thrown out of the window, especially when it

came to religion. England had broken with the Catholic Church in Rome. And as we saw last time, when Henry's young son Edward became king, his advisors pushed even further and outlawed many of the traditional Catholic practices and traditions within the Church itself, including the use of Latin in Mass and other church proceedings. And as we saw last time, a lot of people were not happy about all of those changes. Rebellions had broken out around the country, and even though those rebellions were put down, there was still a lot of unease and restlessness.

Then a few weeks after Thomas Wilson's book on rhetoric was published in 1553, the young king became ill. Over time, he grew weaker and weaker. He was suffering from tuberculosis – commonly known as consumption at the time. He was only 16 years old, so he had never married or had children. And under the terms of his father's Will, and under the Act of Succession passed by Parliament, the crown was to pass to his older sister Mary if he died.

The problem is that Mary was a devout Catholic, and she had already indicated her opposition to many of the Protestant reforms that had been adopted during Edward's reign. Edward and his advisors suspected that she would immediately reverse all of those reforms as soon as she became queen. And she might even use her authority to persecute the reformers themselves.

Of course, Mary's younger sister was Elizabeth, who was a Protestant. But just as many Protestants opposed Mary, many Catholics opposed Elizabeth. As we saw in prior episodes, Henry's messy divorce from Catherine of Aragon had created competing claims of legitimacy between the two sisters. Since the Pope never consented to that annulment, many Catholics considered Henry's second marriage to Anne Boleyn to be illegal, and therefore Anne Boleyn's daughter Elizabeth was illegitimate. Of course, many Protestants argued that Henry had the right to break with Rome and annul his first marriage. So not only was Elizabeth legitimate in their eyes, it also meant that Mary was illegitimate because the annulment of that first marriage meant that the marriage was never valid, and therefore Mary herself was illegitimate. It seemed that neither of Edward's sisters would be fully accepted as queen.

So Edward tried to pull a rabbit out of the hat. And that rabbit was his cousin, Lady Jane Grey. She was the granddaughter of Henry's VIII's sister Mary, and she was a Protestant. She was also married to the son of Edward's closest advisor, John Dudley. I mentioned Dudley in the last episode. He had put down a rebellion in the east of England, and subsequently became the head of the council that was ruling England while Edward was a minor. That made him the de facto ruler of England at the time. And Jane Grey was his daughter-in-law, so he recommended to Edward that she be named as the successor. Technically speaking, she was actually next in line to the throne after Mary and Elizabeth under the terms of Henry VIII's Will, but it was still a big leap to skip over Mary and Elizabeth to get to her. Nevertheless, Edward liked the idea, and he wrote a Will declaring that the throne would pass to Jane if he died without any descendants. Most of Edward's advisors balked at the idea. Edward was still a minor, so it wasn't even clear if he could legally sign a Will. Furthermore the Will violated an existing act of Parliament. But despite the opposition, Edward forced some of the leading government officials to give their consent to the plan on his death bed. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 171.*]

One of the persons who gave his consent was Edward's official tutor and schoolmaster – a prominent scholar named John Cheke. Cheke was also a Cambridge professor and was one of the leading scholars of Greek in England. But he was also an advocate for the use of English, especially plain English. As we'll see later in the episode, he was another scholar during this period who urged writers to resist loanwords and use basic English words in their manuscripts. Well, by this point, Cheke was a member of Edward's Privy Council, and he was also a staunch Protestant who feared that Mary would roll back all of the Protestant reforms that had been implemented. So he went along with the plan to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne. Edward died a short time later on July 6, 1553. His death was kept secret at first, while Jane was brought to London. After arriving in London, she was told that Edward had died, and that he had designated her as his successor. She initially refused the crown, but then reluctantly agreed to go along with the plan. [*SOURCE: The Tudors, Peter Ackroyd, p. 238-40.*]

Her father-in-law Dudley promptly proclaimed her as the new Queen of England. Of course, Edward's sister Mary was having none of it. She wrote to the Privy Council asserting her right to the throne and demanding the council's loyalty. Someone had to write back to her to tell that her cousin Jane was already on the throne. That task was given to John Cheke – Edward's old schoolmaster. He wrote back to Mary informing her that the council had decided to follow Edward's Will and recognize Jane Grey as queen. But the idea of Jane Grey assuming the throne over Mary and Elizabeth went over like a lead balloon. It was too much of a reach. The general public refused to accept her as queen – and that quickly became apparent. Dudley's plan was to seize Mary and bring her to London before she could gather forces to challenge Jane. But he couldn't act fast enough. Several prominent nobles immediately threw their support to Mary – and many common people took up their weapons to defend Mary's claim. The city of Norwich soon proclaimed Mary as the rightful queen. Then Dudley's own forces started to defect to Mary's side as well.

When many of the leading government officials also declared their support for Mary, Dudley saw the writing on the wall and laid down his arms. After just nine days, Lady Jane Grey's attempted reign came to an end, and Mary entered London without any resistance. Dudley was executed for treason a short time later, but otherwise, Mary actually showed a great deal of leniency to the people who had plotted against her. Jane Grey was placed in prison, but not executed – at least not at this point. Edward's old schoolmaster John Cheke was also thrown in the Tower. But a year later, he received a pardon and was released. And as we'll see a little later in the episode, he became another important voice in the movement for a plain and simple form of English that didn't rely on foreign loanwords.

So in July of 1553, Mary Tudor – the eldest daughter of Henry VIII – finally secured the throne. She was 37 years old at the time. And when she was crowned a few weeks later, she became the first woman to rule England as queen. A female monarch was a novel concept in much of Europe, but it wasn't unknown. The most famous example had been Mary's grandmother Isabella of Spain. Isabella was the queen of Castile, and together with her husband Ferdinand, they had ruled much of modern-day Spain in the late 1400s. And I make that point because it is easy to forget that Mary was half Tudor and half Spanish. Her mother, Catherine of Aragon,

was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. And that's an important point because Mary always had a soft spot for her Spanish relatives as we'll see in a moment.

One of Mary's first acts as queen was a royal proclamation [*on August 18*] that basically said her subjects were free to practice their religion as they pleased. Again, these first glimpses we have of Mary suggested that she was going to be an enlightened and tolerant queen – very different from her father. But that's not how things turned out. In reality, what some saw as an act of tolerance was actually the first step in the reintroduction of the old religion. Mary intended to return England to the Catholic fold, and the first step was to allow the return of the Catholic imagery and rituals that had been banned during her brother's reign. Almost immediately, people started to put images of saints and the Virgin Mary back in the places where they had been removed a few years earlier. Altars and crucifixes started to reappear in the churches of London. The traditional Catholic prayers were recited again. And Mass was once again delivered in Latin. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 199.*]

That part about services being conducted in Latin is actually very important for our purposes. We saw last time that during Edward's reign, English had essentially replaced Latin in the Church of England. It was a change that was met with fierce resistance in some places, but now, that change was reversed. English was out, and Latin was back in.

Now obviously, the Protestant Reformation was one of the most important events in the history of England and in the history of Europe, and there were many different aspects of the Reformation that had consequences going forward. But one aspect that often gets overlooked is the linguistic aspect. As we've seen throughout this podcast series, there was a common linguistic tension at work in the Reformation. Catholics favored the traditional approach to Christianity that had been used throughout the Middle Ages, and that included the Latin Bible and Latin church services. But Protestants – even including pre-Protestants like John Wycliffe – favored the use of English. They wanted the Bible in English, and they wanted Church services in English.

Those Protestant reformers had finally gotten their way in Edward's reign with an authorized Bible and a Book of Common Prayer both composed in English and both required throughout the country. Now, under Mary, the clock was turned back, and Latin once again became the norm.

During this period, a London cloth merchant named Henry Machyn maintained a diary, which has survived to this day. Even though it is often described as a diary, it is really more like a chronicle because his entries aren't really personal. They tend to be about what was happening in the country at the time. At any rate, his entries span Mary's reign, and during the first year of her reign, he continually noted that Masses were being conducted in Latin. The first such entry occurred just five days after Mary's proclamation allowing people to worship as they pleased. On August 23, he wrote, "The sam day be gane ye masse at sant Nicholas colabay goodly song in laten" – "The same day began the Mass at St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, goodly sung in Latin."

A month later, he noted the funeral service for John Dudley – the man who had conspired to put his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne. He was executed for treason, and the diary notes that “ther was at ys berial prest & clarkes syngyng in laten . . .” – ‘there was at his burial, priest and clerks singing in Latin . . .’ Three more entries in October and November also include references to Church services being conducted in Latin. But after that year, he doesn’t mention the language of the services at all. So he apparently felt that it was notable at the time that the language of those services had reverted back to Latin. But then, it just became the norm again.

Shortly after Mary’s coronation, her first Parliament met, and it embraced her plan to return England to the Catholic fold. The House of Commons repealed all of the Protestant reforms that had been implemented during Edward’s reign, effectively resetting the clock to the time of Henry VIII’s death. So the Church of England was still technically separated from the Catholic Church in Rome, but Henry’s Church had basically been Catholicism without the Pope. So now, England returned to that state of things. Catholic rituals and ceremonies were no longer just permitted – they were now required. Edward’s Book of Common Prayer in English was thrown out. [SOURCE: *Mary Tudor: England’s First Queen*, Anna Whitelock, p. 200.] Parliament even reversed the annulment which had ended Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon, so now, there was no further question about Mary’s legitimacy. [SOURCE: *This Realm of England: 1399-1688*, Lacey Baldwin Smith, p. 161-2.]

By the end of the year, the Latin Mass had completely replaced the English service required by Book of Common Prayer. In fact, any priest who used English risked the charge of heresy. [SOURCE: *Mary Tudor: England’s First Queen*, Anna Whitelock, p. 214-5.] This is confirmed by a December entry in Henry Machyn’s diary. He wrote: “[This] day was a proclamasyon through london & all england that no man shuld syng no englys sues nor comunion aft ye xx day of desember . . .” – ‘[This] day was a proclamation through London and all England that no man should sing any English service or communion after the twentieth day of December.’

During this same period in late 1553, the royal court was engaged in some very delicate negotiations about a completely different matter. With Mary now on the throne, it was important for her to find a suitable husband.

Up until this point, Mary had shown no interest in getting married, but she needed to produce an heir if she wanted her Catholic policies to be maintained after her death. Otherwise, her younger half-sister Elizabeth would inherit the throne, and Elizabeth was a Protestant, or at least had Protestant sympathies. The problem is that Mary was 37 years old, so she was nearing the end of her child-bearing years. And she had also made it clear that she was not interested in marrying one of her own subjects. But the Habsburg emperor Charles V came forward and proposed his son Philip as a potential husband. And that offer got Mary’s attention.

As I noted earlier, Mary was half-Spanish through her mother Catherine of Aragon. And this is where that connection became so important. The Habsburg Empire was a collection of countries throughout Europe that had been brought together through a series of marriage alliances. It included the Holy Roman Empire (so basically much of modern-day Germany). It also included Flanders and the Low Countries in northern Europe. And it included Spain and the Spanish

territories in the New World. Charles V had inherited all of those regions as the sole heir from those various marriage alliances. Again, those marriage alliances had included the one that happened when his Habsburg father married the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Her name was Joanna, and she was the sister of Catherine of Aragon. You might remember from earlier episodes that Charles had put pressure on the Pope not to grant Henry VIII's annulment from Catherine of Aragon because Catherine was his aunt. Well, now Catherine's daughter Mary was sitting on the English throne. They were related, and they had a close relationship. And the Habsburg Empire and England had traditionally been allies since they had a common enemy in France. So a marriage alliance between the two realms made sense to Charles, and it also seemed to make sense to Mary. But it did not make sense to most of the people in England, especially the nobles.

Under this proposed marriage, Charles's son Philip would become king of England, at least in title. Mary would be his wife, and wives were still expected to honor and obey their husbands. So the marriage arrangement raised fears that Philip would effectively rule England. It was thought that England would become little more than a northern outpost in the massive Habsburg Empire.

The English nobles made their concerns clear to Mary, but she ignored them and proceeded with the marriage anyway. While Mary was eager to move forward with the marriage, Philip was only interested in fulfilling his responsibilities as his father's heir. For him, it was strictly a political arrangement. He was eleven years younger than Mary, and according to some scholars, he was in love with a German noblewoman named Margaretha von Waldeck. She was the daughter of a German count, and by all accounts, she was very beautiful. And at least according to some scholars, she was the inspiration for Snow White. Of course, the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves is one of the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm. But some researchers believe the story was ultimately based on the life of von Waldeck. She supposedly had a difficult relationship with her step-mother, and her father eventually sent her to the court of Philip's aunt in the Netherlands. Supposedly, Philip met her there and fell in love with her, but Philip's father Charles V objected to the relationship because he wanted Philip to marry a more prominent noblewoman like perhaps the new Queen of England. Von Waldeck died the following year at only 21 years of age, and it was suggested that she was poisoned, perhaps to prevent any interference with Philip's marriage plans.

Of course, any connection between von Waldeck and the character of Snow White calls for a lot of speculation and is difficult to prove, but it does show that Philip wasn't really interested in Mary as a romantic partner. And most of the people in England weren't really interested in having him as Mary's partner at all.

As negotiations continued over Philip's role as a future king of England, a group of nobles started to arrange a plot to overthrow Mary and replace her with Elizabeth. They were motivated by opposition to Mary's Catholic policies and her potential marriage to Philip. Government officials discovered the plot early in the following year (1554), but one of the rebel leaders named Thomas Wyatt launched his attack anyway. He was the son of a well-known poet of the period with the same name. And in January, Wyatt gathered his troops and advanced on London

all the way to Southwark across the river from the main part of the city. The government's forces finally stopped his advance and captured him bringing an end to what became known as Wyatt's Rebellion.

The attempted rebellion served as a wake-up call for Mary. And she responded accordingly. Wyatt was executed for treason. In addition, Lady Jane Grey was finally executed because she posed a potential threat to Mary as long as she was alive. Jane Grey's father was a prominent noble, but he had taken part in Wyatt's rebellion, so he was also executed. And even Mary's sister Elizabeth was taken to the Tower of London to be interrogated. There was no hard evidence linking Elizabeth to the rebellion, so she was eventually released. But from this point on, Mary became a much more ruthless monarch.

A few weeks later in the spring, the terms of Mary and Philip's marriage were finally agreed to and approved by Parliament. The terms provided that Philip would receive the title of king after the wedding, but he would not take any active role in the government of England. He could merely offer advice to his wife. So in essence, he would be king in name only. Philip arrived in England in July to meet his future wife for the first time, and the wedding was held a few days later.

Even though Philip was not supposed to take any active part in the government, two days after the wedding, the Privy Council that advised the queen agreed that a summary of all matters of state should be produced in Latin and Spanish from that point forward." [SOURCE: *Mary Tudor: England's First Queen*, Anna Whitelock, p. 265-6.] Philip's Spanish-speaking courtiers also had prominent positions around the English court. And for the first time, we can start to detect some direct Spanish influence on the English language.

Back when I talked about Columbus and his voyages to the New World in the late 1400s, I mentioned quite a few words which passed from the native people of the Caribbean into Spanish and then into English. Well, it was around this point in the mid-1500s – about a half century later – that those words started to appear in English documents for the first time. The words *canoe*, *hammock* and *hurricane* are all recorded in English for the first time around this point in the mid-1550s. *Potato* and *apricot* appear in the next decade, and *mosquito* and *tobacco* appeared a short time later. This was the result of increasing contact between English speakers and Spanish speakers, not only in England, but also along the trading routes in the Mediterranean and the New World.

Remember that Spain was part of the larger Habsburg realm, and it had acquired massive territories in the New World, so it had quickly emerged as a major European power. It was also staunchly Catholic. And all of that helps to explain why the Spanish influence was so feared and resented in England. [SOURCE: *This Realm of England: 1399-1688*, Lacey Baldwin Smith, p. 163.]

Shortly after the marriage of Mary and Philip, England made amends with the Catholic Church in Rome. Reginald Pole was an English Cardinal in Rome, and he returned to England in November as a representative of the Pope to oversee England's return to Catholicism. Once

Cardinal Pole was in England, he set up a commission to investigate accusations of heresy around the country. Heresy basically meant any religious views that were not Catholic.

I mentioned the diary that was maintained by Henry Machyn earlier in the episode. Well, the diary includes an entry from around this time, specifically January 1, 1555. The entry notes what happened to a group of worshipers when they tried to conduct a Protestant service in English. He wrote: “The first day of January were an assembly of men and women in Bow churchyard at night, of a thirty and above. And there they had the English service and prayers and a lectern. And they were taken by the sheriffs and Thomas Ross, their minister. And they were carried to the Counter and other places and Sir Thomas Ross to the Tower” – ‘The first day of January were an assembly of men and women in Bow churchyard at night, of a thirty and above. And there they had the English service and prayers and a lectern. And they were taken by the sheriffs and Thomas Ross, their minister. And they were carried to the Counter and other places and Sir Thomas Ross to the Tower.’

Now, we don’t know what happened to that specific group of people, but we do know what happened to the people who came after them. A few days later, the English government once again authorized the Church to burn heretics at the stake.

Now back when I talked about John Wycliffe and the first English Bible in the late 1300s, I noted that the Church tried to punish his followers known as the Lollards by implementing a law called ‘De heretico comburendo,’ which literally meant ‘on the burning of heretics.’ It allowed the Church to punish anyone found guilty of heresy by burning them at the stake. It was used against Wycliffe’s followers in the 1400s, but it was repealed during the reign of Henry VIII. Well, now it was brought back.

In January of 1555, the law was revived, and a few weeks later, a London minister named John Rogers became the first person to be burned for heresy during Mary’s reign. I actually mentioned Rogers in an earlier episode about William Tyndale and his English translation of the Bible. Rogers was an associate of Tyndale, and he is believed to have been the person who was largely responsible for the Bible known as the Matthew Bible, which was one of the first Bibles to be authorized in English. Well, Rogers was burned at the stake for heresy in February of 1555, and his execution was only the beginning.

But it wasn’t just Church officials who were executed for heresy. Over the next three years, nearly 300 people were burned at the stake under the charge of heresy. About two-thirds of them were common people – housewives, millers, shoemakers, cloth workers, and many other ordinary people who denied some aspect of the Catholic faith. There were several cases where people were apparently accused of heresy in an attempt to settle a personal grievance. If you wanted to get back at someone, just accuse them of heresy and watch them burn.

Now to be fair, England wasn’t the only place where accused heretics were being burned at the stake. It was a punishment that was being used throughout much of Europe. But no other country burned as many people as England during Mary’s reign. In fact, the death rate in England was triple that of France and Spain. [*SOURCE: This Realm of England: 1399-1688, Lacey Baldwin*

Smith, p. 165.] On average, a person was burned at the stake in England about every three days for the next three years. And that's how Mary acquired the nickname 'Bloody Mary.' Of course, 'bloody' implies a different type of execution like beheading. So the nickname is a little misleading. Maybe she should have been known as 'Burning Mary.'

Regardless of the nickname, Mary's reputation was forever tarnished by those executions. People were horrified at the spectacle that was unleashed during Mary's reign. The people who were executed became martyrs, and the brutality of the punishment actually drove a lot of people away from the Catholic Church. The executions were also equated with the brutality of the Spanish Inquisition, which only caused more resentment at the time about the Spanish influence in the English court. [*SOURCE: Story of Britain, Rebecca Fraser, p. 281-3.*]

Now during this same time period in 1555, Mary showed signs of being pregnant. Her belly became swollen, and she thought she felt a baby move. She convinced herself – and those around her – that she was pregnant. Everyone in England awaited the birth of Mary's heir. But more than nine months passed, and a baby never came. It was a false pregnancy – a condition which her mother had also experienced. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 273.*] And it was a condition that would return a couple of years later.

Around the same time that Mary accepted the fact that she wasn't really pregnant, her husband Philip left England to return to the continent. By this point, Mary had fallen in love with Philip, but the feeling wasn't mutual. Philip would return to England only one more time before Mary died, even ignoring letters from Mary asking him to return.

During this time, Mary became increasingly isolated and depressed – and according to some accounts, she became paranoid – rarely leaving the confines of the royal court and barely sleeping at all. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 303-4.*]

And she may have been somewhat justified in that concern because another plot to overthrow her was uncovered in the following year – 1556. This plot was hatched in France by another member of the Dudley family named Henry Dudley. Again, the idea was to depose Mary and replace her with her sister Elizabeth. The plot was uncovered and some of the conspirators in England were executed, but Dudley remained in exile in France. He later returned to England when Elizabeth became queen and received protection and an annuity from her. Again, Elizabeth was never implicated in the plot, but we get a sense during this period that she would have been perfectly happy to assume the throne if any of these plots had been successful.

Now again, by this point Philip was back on the continent dealing with matters there. And around this same time, his father Charles V began dividing the massive Habsburg realm between his Philip and Charles' brother Ferdinand. Charles abdicated the throne and retired to a monastery to live out his final days. His brother Ferdinand received the lands of the Holy Roman Empire in central Europe, whereas Philip received Flanders and the other parts of the Low Countries, which were increasingly known as the Netherlands. A few months later, Philip also received Spain and the Spanish territories in the New World. Philip now officially became the King of Spain, and technically Mary became the queen of Spain. But each spouse ruled over his or her respective

realm. Mary was never crowned in Spain, and Philip was never crowned in England. I should note that Philip did put pressure on Mary to be crowned in England after this point, but there was too much opposition within England, so Mary never agreed to it. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 291-2.*]

Now I should make a quick note about Philip's uncle Ferdinand who inherited the lands of Holy Roman Empire when the Habsburg realm was divided. Ferdinand was already the King of Hungary at that point, so his new realm included a large portion of central Europe. With such a vast territory, nobles of the region often had to travel great distances. And as it turns out, a popular type of carriage was being built in the Hungarian city of Kocs. It was larger and heavier than the traditional carriage, and that meant that it provided a smoother ride over the unpaved roads of the time. And it soon became popular throughout Europe – especially among the wealthy who could afford it.

In Hungary, it was called a Kocsi szeker – literally a 'Kocsi carriage' or a 'carriage made in Kocs.' As the name passed through those other European languages, it was shortened to just *kocsi*, and then within French, it became *coche*. And that's how the word passed into English at the current point in our story in the year 1556. Of course, today we can use the word by itself to mean a type of horse-drawn carriage, but we also use it in the common term *stagecoach*.

The word *coach* made its first recorded appearance in English around this time in a letter from an English diplomat named Sir Philip Hoby. Hoby had been the English ambassador to the Holy Roman Empire and Flanders, and he was very familiar with this popular type of carriage. In July of 1556, he sent a letter to his friend William Cecil inviting Cecil to his home in Bisham. Now if you know the history of this period, you'll know that William Cecil soon became the chief advisor to Elizabeth when she became queen. But for now, he was a member of Parliament and a close friend of Philip Hoby. At the time, Cecil's wife was pregnant, so in his letter, Hoby offered to send one of the new carriages to make the journey easier. He wrote, "Peradventure my Lady staieth you, who you will saie cannot ride; thereto will I provide this remedy, to sende her my coche, bicause she shall have the lesse travaile thither, and you no excuse to make." [*Letter dated July 1, 1556*] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, that's the first recorded use of the word *coach* in the English language.

Of course, a *coach* was something that carried you from one place to another. That sense of transportation is still found in the term *coach* when it's used in regard to air travel. If you fly *coach*, you are flying economy or tourist class. But in the 1800s, the term was extended to certain types of people. If a person helped you along in your studies, and guided you along the way, they were said to be a type of 'coach.' And that gave us the modern sense of the word *coach* as a teacher or leader, especially in sports. But all of those senses of the word *coach* ultimately go back to the town of Kocs in Hungary, and the special type of carriage that was made there in the 1500s.

A few months later, in March of 1557, Philip made his way back to England for the second time. But it was strictly a business trip. Philip was at war with France, and he needed money and troops. Mary agreed to ask England's Privy Council to declare war against France, but the

council had no interest in fighting in Philip's war. It did agree to give him some money and some naval support, but that was it. Mary was furious at the council's refusal to declare war on France. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 313.*]

But a month later, things changed. In April, there was another attempt to overthrow Mary. This time, the plot was hatched by an English exile named Thomas Stafford. With French help, he landed in Yorkshire with two French ships and small group of men. He and his men seized a castle at Scarborough, but the government forces quickly recovered it. Stafford was captured and executed a short time later. The rebellion fizzled, but the French involvement was enough for England to formally declare war against France in June of 1557. [*SOURCE: Mary Tudor: England's First Queen, Anna Whitelock, p. 315.*] Philip left a few weeks later to pursue the war. And that would be the last time that he and Mary would see each other, but it wouldn't be the last time that England had to deal with Philip.

Shortly after Philip headed back to the continent, we have another entry in that diary that was being maintained by that London merchant named Henry Machyn. In an entry dated September 13, 1557, he wrote, "The xiiij day of september ded ser john cheyke sum tyme skollmaster vnto kyng edward ye vjth tyll he died."

This entry was a reference to the death of John Cheke – the man had been King Edward's tutor and had supported Lady Jane Grey when she was put forth as queen after Edward's death. Earlier in the episode, I mentioned that he was a prominent scholar at the time, and he was pardoned after his involvement in the plot to place Jane Grey on the throne. I also noted that he was another scholar who advocated for a return a simpler form of English without so many loanwords.

Just a few days before he died, he had written a letter to a friend and former student named Thomas Hoby. Hoby had translated an Italian text called 'Il Cortegiano' or 'The Book of the Courtier' into English. The English translation would go on to become very popular in the Elizabethan period when it was published, but for now, Hoby just wanted Cheke's feedback about the translation. Cheke's reply letter that he wrote a few days before his death still survives. In it, he expressed his strong opposition to the use of Latin and Greek loanwords, even though Cheke himself was one of the leading Greek scholars in England.

He wrote, "I am of this opinion that our own tung shold be written cleane and pure, vnmixt and vnmangeled with borowing of other tungen, wherein if we take not heed by tijm, euer borrowing and neuer payeng, she shall fain to keep her house as bankrupt." Of course, this is a play on the word *borrow* in the linguistic sense of the term. Just like in financial matters, if you are constantly borrowing and never pay it back, you end up in so much debt that you become bankrupt. And that's what Cheke felt was happening to the English language. It was becoming so indebted to Latin, and Greek and French that it was losing its own identity.

He went on to write, "if . . . the mould of our own tung could serue vs to fascion a woord of our own, or if the old denisoned wordes could content and ease this neede we wold not boldly venture of vnknownen words." In other words, people could avoid the use of fancy or technical

loanwords by either coining new words using English roots or by using old loanwords that had become so common over time that people just thought of them as English words.

We even see examples of Cheke's approach in those passages. For example, he uses the native English word *tongue* instead of the loanword *language*. Again this is basically the same approach used by Andrew Boorde in his geometry text that we looked at last time, and the same ideas expressed by Thomas Wilson in his rhetoric text that we looked at earlier in the episode.

But Cheke applied his ideas to something that might have gotten him into trouble if he had made it public during Mary's reign. In his spare time, he had started to translate the Bible into English using this same approach. So he wasn't just preparing an English translation like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale had done. He was actually trying to prepare a 'pure' English version with as few loanwords from Latin and Greek as possible. You might remember that Wycliffe's original English translation relied very heavily on Latin loanwords. He tried to avoid attacks from the Church by using the wording of the Latin Vulgate Bible when there was any question about the translation of a particular word. Tyndale had used a more basic and readable form of English, which ultimately became the basis of the King James Bible. But Cheke wasn't happy with either approach. He tried to produce a translation in the most basic and pure form of English that had been attempted since the Anglo-Saxon period. But, in the end, he only managed to translate the Book of Matthew and the first chapter of Mark.

The translation was made in his own very distinctive handwriting, which is why scholars know that he was the author. After his death, the translation ended up in the hands of Matthew Parker who became the Archbishop of Canterbury during Elizabeth's reign. And Parker later bequeathed it to Cambridge University, which is where it had been maintained ever since.

The translation is somewhat obscure and didn't really have any impact on later translations of the Bible. But it is a curious relic from a time in the 1500s and early 1600s when some English scholars were trying to roll back the clock and return to the English of their ancestors.

To get a sense of how Cheke translated the Book of Matthew, let's look at a few examples. The first verse of the first chapter of the book includes the following line in William Tyndale's translation: "This is the boke of the generacion of Iesus Christ the sonne of Daudid the sonne also of Abraham." But Cheke translated the same line as "This is ye booke of Jesu Christes stock who cam of Daudid, and also of Abraham." So he replaced the Latin and French word *generation* with the Old English word *stock*.

In Tyndale's translation, a passage in Chapter 4 about Jesus healing the sick referred to "those which were lunatyke and those that had the palsie." Well, *lunatic* was a French and Latin loanword derived from the Latin word *luna* meaning 'moon.' Of course, we also have that root in the word *lunar* for things associated with the moon. The word *lunatic* was based on an old idea that changes in the moon cycle affected people's sanity and state of mind. Well, Cheke didn't like the word *lunatic* in that passage, so he referred to those that were "moond." So he simply substituted the Old English root word *moon* for the Latin root word *luna*, and those that were "lunatyke" became those that were "moond."

A reference in Chapter 7 to the French word *miracles* was changed to the Germanic phrase *mighty things*. In the next verse, the Latin and French term *iniquity* became the more basic Germanic word *unlawfulness*. In Chapter 8, Tyndale made reference to a Roman *centurion*. The term is obviously related to the word *century*, and is derived from the Roman word *centum* meaning ‘a hundred’ because a centurion originally meant the head of a centuria or a group of one hundred foot soldiers. Well, Cheke didn’t like the use of the Latin word *centurion*, so he changed it *hundereder*. Again, he replaced the Latin root word with the English equivalent.

In later passages, Tyndale’s *treasure* became Cheke’s *stoor hous*. Tyndale’s *blasphemye* became Cheke’s *ill wordes*. Tyndale’s use of the Latin and French word *eternal* was replaced with the word *everlasting* based on the Old English roots *ever* and *last*. *Perisshe* became *goo awai*. *Baptism* became *washing*. *Prophet* became *foresayer*. *Crucified* became *crossed*. And *resurrection* became *uprising* and *gainrising*. You get the idea.

Again, this approach was not applied consistently. Sometimes, Cheke kept the Latin or Greek or French terms, and sometimes the substitutions were made in one verse but not another. But Cheke never finished his translation, and it’s possible that he might have made further revisions if he had chosen to pursue the project all the way to completion.

Now Cheke’s Bible translation, and Andrew Boorde’s geometry text that we looked at last time, and Thomas Wilson’s rhetoric guide which we explored earlier in this episode were all composed in the 1550s – and they all represent a last-ditch effort to return English to its roots by reducing the Latin and Greek influence on the language. And it didn’t end with them. In the 1570s, a priest named Ralph Lever composed an important text on logic in English. And he took largely the same approach. He titled it “The arte of reason, rightly termed, witcraft teaching a perfect way to argue and dispute.” So even in the title, he coined the term *witcraft* – ‘the craft of using one’s wit’ – as a substitution for the Latin and French word *reason*.

In the text, he routinely coined new words based on English roots to replace loanwords. For example, in place of the Greek word *synonym*, he used the term ‘lykemeaning words.’ He wrote, “Lykemeanyng wordes are one in meaning, and diuers in sound as rich, welthie: colour, hue . . .” Similarly, words with the same pronunciation, but different meanings were called ‘lykesounding words’ – not homonyms or homophones.

In Lever’s text, a *conclusion* was an *endsay* – ‘what you say at the end.’ A *premise* was a *foresay* – ‘what you say before.’ If a proposition was conditional, it was an *ifsay* – ‘what you say if something is true.’ A *contradiction* was a *gainsay* – combining the words *say* and the word *gain* which we have in the word *against*. So a *gainsay* was something said against something else. An *affirmation* was a *yeasay*, and a *negation* was a *naysay*. Interestingly, that word *naysay* is the only word coined by Lever that has survived into the English we speak today – and there is some evidence that the modern version of *naysay* actually developed at a later date independently of Lever’s usage.

Other writers also took up this mantle. The great Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser wrote most of his works in the last couple of decades of the 1500s. He also championed plain English words.

So we have this prominent line of thought in the second half of the 1500s that English needed to get back to its roots – literally its ‘roots’ – its basic Old English and Germanic root words. That was what was needed to maintain it as a distinct language – and to avoid it becoming a mixture of different languages – what Edmund Spenser once called “hodgepodge of all other speeches.”

But those sentiments were not shared by everyone. A writer named George Pettie embraced loanwords because he thought it gave the language diversity. And just as importantly, he felt that it was an inevitable change that couldn’t be reversed. So it was better to just embrace the change. In the Preface to a text he composed in the 1580s [‘The ciuile conuersation of M. Steeuen Guazzo’ (1581)], he took a shot at writers like John Cheke who had argued that English had borrowed so many words that it had become bankrupt. He pointed out the hypocrisy of those who demanded ‘plain’ English when the word *plain* is itself a loanword. He wrote, “Wherefore I marueile how our english tongue hath crack it [its] credite, that it may not borrow of the Latine as well as other tongues: and if it haue broken, it is but of late, for it is not vnknownen to all men how many woordes we haue fetcht from thence within these fewe yeeres, which if they should be all counted inkpot termes, I know not how we should speake any thing without blacking our mouthes with inke: for what woord can be more plaine then this word ‘plaine,’ and yet what can come more neere to the Latine?”

This debate was fundamentally a debate over the nature of the English vocabulary. Should it be more Germanic – or more Latinate? Should it return to its roots – or embrace the changes that were taking place?

In the end, it’s fair to say that the purists lost the debate. Most of their attempts to coin new words on Old English roots sound weird and funny to us today because they were never really embraced by other speakers and writers. We use Latin and Greek loanwords today, and they seem as if they were always part of the language. So in that sense, it’s easy to look at writers like Thomas Wilson, and John Cheke, and Ralph Lever and see them as Don Quixote tilting at windmills – or as the Danish king Cnut sitting on the edge of the sea trying to hold back the incoming tide. The English language had changed – and the changes were going to continue. Those who tried to roll back the clock were fighting a losing battle.

But that’s not to say that they had no impact at all. Even though a lot of those Latin and Greek loanwords survived, the fact is that a lot of them also disappeared. Maybe there were so many that it was inevitable that some of them would fall by the wayside over time. But it’s also possible that people sensed that English was becoming difficult to understand with so many loanwords in its vocabulary. So there was a process by which a lot of those words fell out of use and aren’t really found in works after the Elizabethan period.

According to the British linguist David Crystal, about a third of the new loanwords that appeared in the 1500s and 1600s disappeared after that point. [*SOURCE: David Crystal, The Stories of English, p. 293.*] That included words like *cohibit* meaning ‘to restrain,’ and *suppeditate*

meaning ‘to supply,’ and **adminiculation** meaning ‘to aid.’ For some reason, words like **transmit** and **remit** survived in the language, but the related word **demit** meaning ‘to dismiss’ disappeared. [SOURCE: *The Story of English*, Philip Gooden, p. 76.]

And though the debate over loanwords was at its height in the second half of the 1500s, it never completely went away. William Shakespeare benefitted greatly from the richness and variety of that new English vocabulary, but even he sometimes poked fun at the excessive use of fancy loanwords in his plays.

And in the late 1800s, an English priest and poet named William Barnes tried to revive the old inkhorn debate by insisting that foreign words be replaced with new words coined on Old English roots. He called the English of his period ‘Englandish’ instead of English. [SOURCE: *Plain English: A Wealth of Words*, Bryan Evans, p. 32.]

Barnes approach was to break down a loanword into its basic elements, and then reconstruct the word using Old English roots. So the Greek word **anachronism** could be broken down into its various parts – the negative prefix **an-**, the root **chronos** meaning ‘time,’ and the suffix **-ism**. Those elements could be replaced with the Old English prefix **mis-**, the Old English word **time**, and the Old English suffix **-ing** – thereby producing the word **mistiming** as an alternative to **anachronism**. He coined lots of words on that model. [SOURCE: *Plain English: A Wealth of Words*, Bryan Evans, p. 32.]

He called a synonym a **namesame**. A noun was a **name-word**. A verb was a **time word**. An accent was a **word-strain**. Needless to say, he didn’t have much success with those new terms. [SOURCE: *Plain English: A Wealth of Words*, Bryan Evans, p. 28.]

He also revived old words that had largely fallen out of use – or had become antiquated – like **chapman** for merchant, and **gleeman** for musician, and **leechcraft** for medicine. He also loved to use older compound words based on Old English roots like **quick-witted**, and **wrong-headed** and **like-minded**. [SOURCE: *Plain English: A Wealth of Words*, Bryan Evans, p. 32.]

Through this process some of these words have actually found acceptance in modern contemporary English. The word **highlight** was coined in the 1600s on Old English roots, and it has now taken a place beside the word **emphasize** with its Greek roots. So you might ‘emphasize’ something with Greek roots or ‘highlight’ it with English roots. Similarly, the Latin and French word **precursor** has a rival in the term **forerunner** based on Old English roots. **Forerunner** appeared in late Middle English and is now routinely used alongside the word **precursor**. And if you need help with a project, you can consult a **manual** – derived from Latin and French – or a **handbook** based on Old English roots. [SOURCE: *Plain English: A Wealth of Words*, Bryan Evans, p. 33.]

But these are rare exceptions. For the most part, English has embraced loanwords over the centuries, so much so that it’s difficult to identify them today without an etymology dictionary. They have become fully ingrained in the modern language.

Next time, we'll continue our look at the history of English. There may have been attempts to turn back the clock during Mary's reign, but time marches on. And Mary's time was quickly coming to an end. In the next episode, we'll look at Mary's death in 1558, which ushered in one of the great periods in English history – the Elizabethan period under Mary's sister Elizabeth. This is a very important period for our story because we start to find extensive writings about the nature of English at the time – its pronunciation, its spelling and its usage. We also get the plays and poetry of William Shakespeare during the period. And we get the first English attempts to colonize the New World. So there's a lot to cover during the very important and very long reign of Elizabeth I. And we'll begin our look that period next time.

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