**THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST**
**TRANSCRIPT**

# EPISODE 75: MIXED LANGUAGES AND SCRAMBLED EGGS

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast - a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 75: Mixed Languages and Scrambled Eggs. In this episode, we're going to continue our look at the gradual emergence of Middle English from the linguistic rubble left in the wake of the Norman Conquest. English remained fractured and broken and foreign influences continued to come in. So, we'll look at those developments. And we'll see how a merchant's failed attempt to buy some eggs shaped the history of the English language.

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

Also, I have one quick announcement, which is really more of a request. As we start to delve into Middle English, I am already looking forward to Modern English. And one of the key storylines of the Modern English period is the development of Modern English accents and dialects. Now, I've been thinking about the best way to present those dialects in the podcast. And frankly, I am not really eager to imitate them. I mean, this isn't intended to be a comedy podcast. So, after giving it some thought, I've decided that the best option is to turn to you – the listeners. I know that each of you have your own unique accents and dialects. And I hope that you might want to share them with the other podcast listeners.

So, I want to invite you to record yourself and send me audio samples that I can use in future episodes of the podcast. I'll collect them and I'll use them to illustrate the evolution of accents and dialects when we get to the Modern English period. And that will make the podcast more interactive because you the listeners can actually participate in it. If you want to record yourself on your computer, or tablet, or phone, you can send it to me by email as an MP3 file. As always, that address is kevin@historyofenglishpodcast.com.

I have also created another option for you, which you may find easier. If you go to the website – historyofenglishpodcast.com – and then go to the Main Menu, you will see a tab called "Voice Samples." And if you go to that page, you can actually record your voice right there, and it will automatically save it to the database.

Now, if you want to participate, you can recount a personal story or anecdote, but ideally, it would be great if you have a story about your accent or dialect. If there are certain words, or phrases, or pronunciations that are unique or unusual, tell us about those.

If you don't really have a story to tell, you can go to the Voice Samples page of the website. On that page, I have prepared a short paragraph which is really just a brief history of the English language. You can just record that paragraph in your own voice and send it to me. That is actually a good option because that way I will have the same passage in different accents, and that will make for some good comparisons. Of course, you can also do both – leave a story and record the passage.

If you choose to participate, make sure to include your first name and age. And also, be sure to mention where your accent is from. So, for some of you, that might not necessarily be where you reside today.

Lastly, the whole reason for doing this is to have voice samples that I can use in future episodes. So obviously, by sending me your voice, you are giving me permission to use the sample or any portion of it in a future episode of the podcast. So, again, if you want to volunteer, please feel free to do so. And if you have any questions, just send me an email.

So, with that, let's turn to this episode. And this time, we'll continue to look at the gradual transition from Old English to Middle English. But I want to begin this episode in an unusual place. For a long time now, we've been focusing on events in England and Normandy. And that's where the future of the English language was being forged. But the ultimate fate of English was also being determined by events in other places. And one place where those events were taking place was in China.

China was home to many technological innovations. And two of those inventions around the current point in our story had a tremendous impact on the spread of English in later centuries. It took a while for those inventions to reach Western Europe, but by the 12th century those inventions were already in place in China.

The first of those inventions was the mechanical compass using a magnetized needle. Now some primitive compasses had been around for a few centuries, but this new innovation was really the first version of the compass that we know today. It had a small iron needle that was attached to the device, and it floated on water. The needle was magnetized so it always pointed north. And it could be carried around by anyone who was traveling.

The compass was originally used on land by explorers and excavators. And that partially accounts for the name of the device in English. The word ***compass*** was borrowed from Latin, where it was a combination of ***com*** meaning 'together' and ***passus*** meaning a 'step.' ***Passus*** also gave us the word ***pace***. So, the Latin word meant 'to pace out' or 'to measure something in paces.'
Now, the word has an obscure history, but it was later applied to a type of device used in geometry which was used to measure or mark a specific area. It was later applied to this Chinese device with a magnetized needle when it was eventually introduced to Western Europe.

Now again, the device was originally used to mark territory on land, but around the year 1115 – so around the current point in our story – there is a Chinese text that includes the first mention of the compass being used by sailors for navigation at sea. And that was a big deal. Prior to that innovation, it was very difficult to navigate in the open ocean. At night, they could navigate by the stars. But during the daytime, sailors tended to hung the coast so they always had a landmark in sight. It was very difficult to cross an ocean, at least if you wanted to end up in a specific place and then find your way back.

But the invention of the modern compass changed that. It opened the oceans to exploration. And when that technology reached Western Europe, it allowed Europeans to travel in large numbers to the New World. And it brought the English language to North America. All of that future history was dependent on a technology that was invented around the current the point in our story in China.

So, that's the first important innovation that was taking place in China around this time. But there was another innovation that had an even more direct impact on the English language and all other languages for that matter. And that was the invention of moveable type for printing.

For several centuries, China had been using a method of printing called 'block printing.' This technique involved using a block of wood and carving out a picture or words in relief on the block. So, the printer carved out around the image or words so that they were raised and they stuck out from the background. The printer would then roll ink across the image, and press a piece of paper or parchment on top of it. That produced the image on paper. It was an effective technique – many copies could be made from that original block image. The Chinese used this technique for things like playing cards which were starting to spread into Europe around this time. But even though a lot of copies could be made from that original block, the block itself couldn't be altered or changed. So, if it contained text, the text couldn't be altered. You had to do a brand-new block for the new text, and that took a long time.

But in the 11th century, a Chinese peasant named Pi Sheng came up with an innovation. He figured out that he could carve individual Chinese characters on individual pieces of baked clay. And then using those separate pieces, he could string them together to create sentences. And all he had to do to change the sentence, was to remove one or more of the existing characters, and put in a different character in its place. That way he could change the entire text in a few seconds. What he had discovered was moveable type. And it was the forerunner of the modern printing press.

Pi's technology was used in China and Korea for the next few centuries, but there was one problem with it. The Chinese language didn't use an alphabet. It used characters and those characters represented syllables. So, that meant that there were thousands of Chinese characters. And in order for Pi's moveable type to work in Chinese, he had to have thousands of symbols. So, there was a practical limitation on the technology in the east. But Pi's technology spread westward. And it when it finally reached Europe, it encountered the alphabet. And the alphabet only had a handful of letters. So, moveable type was a perfect match for the alphabet.
And in the 1400s, Johann Gutenberg took this technology and combined it with some other technologies to create the printing press. Now, some scholars think that Gutenberg developed the idea of moveable type independently of this existing Chinese method. And frankly, so little is known about Guttenberg's background, that it's almost impossible to say if he borrowed the technology or if he came up with the same idea on his own. But either way, his new printing press really perfected the technique. And it allowed for the mass production of books and pamphlets. Gutenberg's printing press soon spread throughout Europe. And about 30 years later, a man named William Caxton brought the press to England. And in England, the press had a major impact on the English language. Not only it did it expand access to books printed in English, it

also standardized the language. And that's the real point of this brief look into the future.
The Middle English period is really book-ended by two major events – the Norman Conquest and the introduction of the printing press. The language became fractured after the Norman Conquest and it started to become standardized again after the printing press was introduced. English became more standardized in part because Caxton chose to print in one particular dialect – the East Midlands dialect of east-central England. That was the dialect spoken around London and it is the dialect that I've mentioned in the last couple of episodes. Several factors contributed to the rise of that particular dialect, but Caxton's printing press really sealed the deal.

But Caxton didn't make the decision to use that dialect on a whim. He gave it a lot of thought. And he actually wrote about that deliberation. And his writings shed a lot of light on the linguistic problems that were common during the Middle English period. And that's why I'm introducing him at this point in the story, even though he lived a few centuries later. He gave us a real insight into the complicated nature of English before the printing press was introduced.

Caxton actually translated a lot of books into English before he published them. Most of them were translated from Latin. And one of his translations was Virgil's Aeneid. In a Prologue to the translation, Caxton discussed how difficult it was to translate works into English for a wide audience. The English language was so fractured that no single dialect was understood everywhere. So, he had to decide which one could be understood by the most people.

In the Prologue, he recalled that he had been asked to translate some very old books that had been written in Old English. And he actually used the term 'Old English.' He called it "olde englysshe.' He said that the language resembled Dutch more than English. So, he couldn't translate it or even make sense out of it. So, that shows how much the language had changed from the early 1100s to the late 1400s when Caxton lived – so from the beginning of Middle English to the end of Middle English.

Caxton then noted that the language had not just evolved over the preceding centuries, it was still evolving and changing during his lifetime. He said that the English language was so diverse that people in different shires often had problems communicating with each other.

To illustrate this, he recalled a story that he had heard as a child. He said that a group of merchants from the north were making their way down the Thames by boat. When they reached Kent in the southeast, there was no wind, so they docked their boat to buy some food. One of the merchants approached a woman and asked for some eggs. In Caxton's own words, he recalled, 'And specyally he axyed after eggys.'

But the woman had no idea what the man was asking for. She didn't even realize that he was speaking English, she thought he was speaking French. According to Caxon, "... the good wyf answerde that she coude speke no frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry for he also coude speke no frenshe but wold haue hadde egges and she vnderstode hym not." So, the woman had no idea what the men were asking for.

Now to understand why the request was so confusing, we have to keep in mind that ***eggys*** – or ***eggs*** – was a Norse word. I actually mentioned that in the earlier episodes about the Viking influence on English. And in the north, where the merchants came from, this Norse word ***eggs*** had become the standard term. But in the south, in places like Kent, the Old English word was still being used. That word was ***eyren***. So, the woman from Kent didn't understand what the northern merchants wanted. But notice that she didn't even know that they were speaking English.

Caxton continued his story. He recalled that the other traveling merchant realized that the woman didn't understand what they wanted. So, he asked for eggs again, but this time he used the Old English word ***eyren***. In Caxton's words, "And thenne at laste a nother sayd that he wolde haue eyren. Then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstood hym wel."

So, by using the Old English word instead of the Old Norse word, the confusion was resolved, and the men got their eggs. But then Caxon asked the most important question, which word should he use in his translations. He wrote, "Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte egges or eyren?" ('Lo, what should a man in these days now write – eggs or eyren?')
As I noted, Caxton solved the problem by using the East Midlands dialect of London, which he felt was more central and most likely to be understood and accepted throughout the country. And that ensured that the dialect of London would become the basis of Modern English. And that meant that a word like ***eggs*** became the norm because the East Midlands dialect was the dialect of eastern England and that part of England had once been a part of the Danelaw. So, the East Midlands dialect reflected that Norse influence in words like ***eggs*** rather than the native word ***eyren***.

So, as we consider Caxton's story from the end of the Middle English period, I think we can identify a few lessons that will be important to our story as we move forward. First, when we speak of Middle English, we are not talking about one particular type of English. We're really talking about many different Englishes.

Secondly, as the name implies, the Middle English period was really a transitional period between Old English and Modern English. The language changed so much during this period, that the language spoken in the 1100s was quite different from that spoken in the 1400s. But it wasn't always an orderly progression from Point A to Point B. It was a fractured and messy process. During that period, the English language was broken down and mixed with outside influences, and then put back together.

It is funny that Caxton's story involved a request for eggs because, as the old saying goes, you have to crack a few eggs to make an omelet. And that is actually a good analogy for what happened during the Middle English period. Some Old English eggs were being cracked and scrambled. And some outside ingredients like French and Norse were being added to the mix to add flavor. And after those ingredients simmered and blended together, the result was a Modern English omelet. So, we have to think of the Middle English period as the period when the omelet was being made.

And Caxton's story reminds us of something else very important about those added ingredients. Yes, French was very important, but it wasn't the only outside influence. The Norse influence was also there. It had been lingering in the background in places in the east and the north in the old Danelaw regions. And as scribes began to write in their own local dialects, those Norse influences started to pop up in their documents.

As we focus more and more on that East Midlands dialect, we have to keep in mind that that dialect developed in eastern England – in the southern part of the old Danelaw. So, that dialect had a lot of Norse influences in it. And as that dialect became the accepted standard, those Norse influences also passed into Modern English. Had Caxton chosen to use the Southern dialect of Wessex, then Modern English might have had very little Norse influence. But by choosing to go with the East Midlands dialect, it meant that those Norse influences were destined to be a permanent part of the language going forward. So, today, if we want to make an omelet, we do it with Norse ***eggs*** rather than Anglo-Saxon ***eyren***.

And as we turn our attention back to our historical narrative and the entries in the Peterborough Chronicle, we going to see both French and Norse influences popping up in the scribe's entries. So, with that little bit of background, let's return to our story and the changing language of the Peterborough Chronicle.

As I've noted previously, the original Peterborough Chronicle was lost in a fire, but a scribe found an old copy of the Chronicle from somewhere else and he copied it down around the year 1120. Based upon the handwriting, it appears that the same scribe continued to record the annual entries through the year 1131. And as we examine his entries, we see that he was starting to incorporate some of these outside influences. Prior to this period, borrowed words were very rare. But now, they start to appear with much more frequency.

We left off last time with the entry for the year 1123. The king Henry I was in England, having held court at various towns in the eastern part of the country. But after three years in England, Henry headed back across the Channel to Normandy. He had to make that trip because the situation there had started to deteriorate.

Henry had re-united England and Normandy about 17 years earlier, but he did that by defeating his brother Robert in battle. So, he had taken Normandy by force and there were still many in Normandy who contested his right to rule there.

Those challengers included his old enemy – Louis VI, the King of France. Louis resented Henry's power and he was always looking for a way to undermine Henry's reign. France was still heavily fractured in the 1100s, so Louis's territory continued to be limited to a small region around Paris. He couldn't really defeat Henry by himself. So, he often made alliances with other rulers in the region who also opposed Henry. His two favorite allies were Flanders in the north and Anjou in the southwest. Between the three of them, they kept Normandy in check in the east and the west. As we move forward, the more important region is really going to be Anjou in the southwest. The conflict between Anjou and Normandy centered around control of the buffer zone in between called Maine. The relationship between Normandy and Anjou can best be described as 'on again -

off again.' Sort of like a rocky marriage. And I make that analogy because the relationship between Normandy and Anjou was often centered around various marriage alliances between the two regions.

The Count of Anjou was named Fulk. And Henry and Fulk had forged a marriage alliance between their children a couple of years earlier. Henry's son William married Fulk's daughter. But a short time later, young William drowned at sea on a trip back to England. His young wife was not on the ship. So, she survived.

Young William's death left Henry without a legitimate son and therefore without an heir. Henry did have a daughter named Matilda, but she was married to the Holy Roman Emperor in Germany. So, she was out of the picture, at least for now. And England had never been ruled by a queen, so she wasn't a realistic option at this point.

The lack of a successor created a lot of problems for Henry, especially in France. His alliance with Anjou fell apart when his son died and the marriage alliance between the two nations came to an end. Meanwhile, many of the nobles in Normandy started to become restless. Some of them had never really accepted Henry's rule anyway, and now there was no clear successor. So, they started to jockey for position. And Louis – the King of France – saw an opportunity encourage those rebellious nobles.

But the biggest threat to Henry came from within his own family. Henry had defeated his brother Robert about 17 years earlier. And Robert was still lingering his prison, but he had a young son named William who was still roaming around northern France. And William was claiming the right to rule Normandy as his father's successor.

So, Henry had a son named William and he had this nephew named William. This can get a little confusing, so I will try to distinguish them as 'William the son' and 'William the nephew.'
As long as William the son was living, William the nephew was never a serious threat. There was a clear line of succession in place. But when William the son died, that opened the door for William the nephew to step back in and claim the right to rule Normandy in his father's place.
A lot of the barons in Normandy didn't want a protracted war over Henry's succession, so they went ahead and threw their support to William the nephew. Of course, Louis – the French king – wanted to undermine Henry's reign, so he threw his support to William the nephew as well. And even Fulk – the Count of Anjou – tried to get in on the action. He tried to make a new marriage alliance by marrying another one of his daughters to William the nephew. All of this was about to lead to a new round of warfare in France. And in the year 1123, Henry headed back across the Channel to take on his nephew and his neighbors.

Back in Peterborough, the scribe who continued to record the entries in the Peterborough Chronicle noted that Henry spent the remainder of the year in Normandy:

*Then was the king all this year in Normandy.*
*Ða wæs se kyng eall þes geares in Normandie.*

For the following year – 1124 – the scribe begins the entry with the same note: Henry spent the whole year in Normandy. The opening line reads:

*Eall þis gear wes se king Heanri on Normandi.*
*All this year was the King Henry in Normandy.*

Now there is something very interesting about this entry. First of all, it starts to sound a lot like Modern English. Once again – "Eall þis gear wes se king Heanri on Normandi."

This simple line shows several changes from earlier entries. First of all, it was customary to begin each entry of the Chronicle with the phrase 'In this year' or words to that effect. But the words ***this*** and ***year*** both required an inflectional ending in Old English. The scribe's inflectional endings weren't always consistent. In prior years, he wrote ***þyssum geare*** and ***ðises geares***. But a few years earlier he started to drop those endings and just use ***þis gear*** just as we do today. Now, he wasn't always consistent in his usage, but we have clear signs that those endings were disappearing. And a more modern form of English was emerging.

The other thing that is interesting about that line of text is that the scribe refers to 'King Heanri.' ***King*** is spelled K-I-N-G – just like today. And that's another big change. The traditional Old English word was ***cyning*** – a two-syllable word spelled C-Y-N-I-N-G. By this point, that word had been reduced to one syllable. And the /ü/ sound had shifted to an /ee/ sound. So, from ***cyning*** to ***king***, we have the Modern English version of the word.

But remember that the word had always been spelled with a C in Old English. The Anglo-Saxon scribes didn't use the letter K. They always used the letter C for the 'k' sound. But you might remember from that very early episode about the 'history of the letter C' that the sound of the initial letter C changed in a lot of words in Old English. When the C appeared before vowels pronounced in the front of the mouth – so I, or E, or Y – it tended to switch from a 'k' sound to a 'ch' sound in Old English. So it went for /k/ to /ch/. This process is assibilation or palatalization. So, C-I-R-C-E went from /ke-ree-keh/ to /che-ree-che/ – the original version of the word ***church***.

But a word like ***king*** was one of the exceptions to that rule. It was usually spelled C-Y-N-G in late Old English. But the C at the front was still pronounced with a hard 'k' sound. So, when the scribe wrote C-Y-N-G, it looked like it should have been pronounced /chüng/, not /king/. So, the scribe probably looked for a way to spell the word ***king,*** so that it reflected the way the word was pronounced. Remember that there were no dictionaries yet. So, there were traditional spellings, but not really 'correct' and 'incorrect' spellings like we have today. It was only important that words be spelled phonetically like they were pronounced. But here, that initial C created a problem.

As it turned out, the Norman scribes were having the same problem with that initial letter C. In French words, the sound also changed before an E, I and Y. It was pronounced as an 's' sound in French, just like Modern English. And the Norman scribes had solved that problem in French by resurrecting the old Roman letter K from the dustbin. They started to use the letter K instead of

the letter C in those situations where the hard ‘k’ sound was retained before the front vowels – E, I and Y. And that eliminated the confusion and it made the pronunciation much clearer.

Well, now we have evidence that English scribes were starting to adopt that same technique. Two years earlier, in the entry for 1122, the scribe had used the spelling K-I-N-G for the first time. And he continued to use that letter K after that. So, Norman spelling conventions were starting to overtake Anglo-Saxon spelling conventions. And this is more evidence that the scribe was abandoning the old Wessex writing standards.

This also explains why words that begin with a CE, or CI or CY are rarely pronounced with a ‘k’ sound in Modern English. If a word with that spelling came through Middle English, it probably got the letter K at some point. So, words like ***king***, and ***kin, kettle, keep, kill, kind, kitchen***, and many, many more all got a new letter K during that period. And that K was intended to make it clear that those words were pronounced with a hard ‘k’ sound. Again, that spelling ultimately came from the Normans. And we now know that is was starting to happen in English as early as this point in the 1120s.

It is also interesting that the scribe is now routinely referring to Henry as ‘king Henry.’ In traditional Old English, the title came after the name. So, it would have been ‘Henry cyning’ or ‘Henry king.’ But by this point, that title was generally placed before the name, so ‘King Henry’ – just like today.

So that’s a lot to say about nine simple words – “Eall þis gear wes se king Heanri on Normandi.” But if we put all that information together, we can start to see why that sentence sounds and looks so familiar to us today. There were a lot of changes going on, and it was producing a more familiar form of English.

Now, not all sentences are quite this straight-forward. This is still considered an Old English text at this point. So, most of the entries reflect the traditional vocabulary and grammar of Old English. And we get a sense of that traditional language in the next line of the entry, which explains why Henry spent the whole year in Normandy. The scribe wrote that it was because of the great hostility that he had had with King Louis of France, and with the Count of Anjou, and most of all with his own men. Here is the entry in the original Old English:

*“þæt wes for se miccle unfrið þæt he heafde wið se king Loðewis of France. 7 wið se eorl of Angeow. 7 wið his agene men alre mest.”*

So again, very much traditional Old English.

Near the end of the entry, the scribe uses another word for the first time – the word ***oc***, spelled O-C. We don’t have that word today, but it was an Old Norse word for ***but***, as in ‘not this but that.’ And from this point on, the scribe routinely uses that Old Norse word ***oc*** for ‘but.’ So again, this is evidence of that Norse influence in the local dialect around Peterborough.

Now, I should note that the annual entries in the Peterborough Chronicle varied in length. If they were printed out in modern text, they would vary from about a half a page for some years to more than a page in other years. Now, I'm focusing on the changes in the language. So, as you can see, out of a half a page or even a full page of text we might only see changes in an occasional word or phrase. Some annual entries don't really show any changes at all. So again, this scribe still wrote in Old English. But a few outside influences were coming in. And the occasional use of the Norse word ***oc*** for 'but' is an example of those outside influences.

As the year 1124 turned to the year 1125, Henry remained in Normandy. And in fact, he continued to remain in Normandy throughout the year 1125 as well.

Since the Peterborough scribe tended to focus on events in England, he didn't include a lot of information about Normandy. So, for the year 1125, the scribe focused on church business. He noted that the Pope sent an emissary to England in that year. It was a cardinal named 'Iohan of Creme.' The scribe wrote that the cardinal "heold his concilie on Lundene" – 'held his council in London.' That is the first recorded use of the word ***council*** in the English language. It was borrowed from French. But in the very next line, the scribe wrote that the cardinal prescribed the laws that the former Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm had prescribed – "bead þær þa ilce lagas þa ANSELM ærcebiscop hæfde æror beboden."

In that line, the scribe used the word ***lagas***. That's an early version of the word 'laws.' But you might remember that ***law*** is an Old Norse word. The native Old English word was ***domas***. So here, the scribe is once again using a Norse word – ***laws*** – in place of the native word ***domas***. And just as Norse ***eggs*** replaced English ***eyren*** – here we see Norse ***laws*** replacing English ***domas***.

So, in back to back lines of the Chronicle, the scribe records a new French word – ***council*** – and uses a relatively new Norse word – ***laws***. So again, both French and Norse influences are showing up in these entries.

Now, something very important happened in this year of 1125, but it happened far away on the continent, so the Peterborough scribe didn't bother to mention it. No one knew it at the time, but this event was destined to shape the future of both England and Normandy. In that year, the Holy Roman Emperor died. He died of cancer and was laid to rest at the age of 38. So, what does that have to do with England and Normandy?

Well, I noted earlier that Henry had two legitimate children – the son William and a daughter named Matilda. And Matilda was married to the Holy Roman Emperor. So, since that marriage 10 years earlier, she had been 'off the market', so to speak. When young William died, Matilda was away in the Holy Roman Empire. But now, with the death of her husband, she was a widow at the age of 23. Suddenly, she was single again. And that meant she was available if Henry wanted to forge a new marriage alliance. He quickly realized that she might just be the answer to his succession problems.

Henry remained in Normandy for much of the following year – 1126. But by the end of autumn, he had finally put down the rebellions there. So, Henry returned to England. And he didn't come alone. The Peterborough Chronicle notes that Henry was accompanied by his daughter Matilda. And that was no coincidence because Henry had a plan.
At Christmas, Henry held his court at Windsor. He called all of the church officials, and nobles, and military leaders to the court. And he announced that he was designating Matilda as his successor. She would rule England as Queen when he died. And then he made everyone present swear an oath of loyalty to her.

It was a bold move. Since the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had been unified, the country had never been ruled by a queen. It had had some prominent women play an important role, like Alfred the Great's daughter known as the Lady of the Mercians. She had coordinated campaigns against the Vikings. But the country as a whole had never had a female monarch. But now, Henry was intent on making Matilda the first Queen to rule England.

But that was only the first part of his plan. Remember that Henry had tried to forge an alliance with Anjou several years earlier. His son William had married the daughter of Fulk, the Count of Anjou. But that alliance fell apart when young William drowned. Well, as it turned out, Fulk had a son. That son was named Geoffrey. He was the heir to the throne in Anjou and he was in the market for a bride. And as it turned out, Henry's daughter Matilda was in the market for a husband. So, a new marriage alliance was arranged between the Anglo-Norman kingdom and Anjou.

Now, this was a bit of an odd pairing. Geoffrey was only 14 years old. So, he was several years younger than Matilda. And he wasn't even a king or count, he was merely his father's heir in Anjou. Meanwhile, Matilda had been married to the Holy Roman Emperor. She had traveled among the highest courts of Europe. And it appears that she wasn't exactly thrilled with this newly arranged marriage to young Geoffrey.

But by all accounts, Geoffrey was a handsome young man and he often wore a bright yellow broom blossom in his hair or in his hat. Broom is a kind of plant and in Latin it is known as 'planta genista.' So, that gave Geoffrey his nickname – Plantagenet. In June of 1128, Geoffrey Plantagenet married Matilda of England and Normandy. They would eventually have a son named Henry. And Henry will eventually rule England as the first king in a new ruling family – the Plantagenets. The Plantagenets are sometimes called the Angevins. And Angevins meant the people from Anjou. So, that's why I've been focusing on events in Anjou – because Anjou gave England its next ruling family.

But all of that is a little later in our story. Before we can get to Henry II, we have to go through civil war and anarchy because despite Henry's last-ditch effort to secure an orderly succession, it was all destined to fall apart when he died. The fact is that the barons of England weren't really happy at the prospect of Matilda succeeding her father. They didn't like the idea of being ruled by a woman. And they certainly didn't like the idea of being ruled by her new husband from Anjou. The Peterborough scribe records that all the English and French disapproved of this marriage, but

Henry did it anyway to have an alliance with the Count of Anjou and to have help against his nephew William.

For the year 1127, the scribe also notes that Peterborough Abbey got a new abbot – Henry of Poitou. But the scribe notes that he kept his old abbey as well and most of the bishops thought he should have given up his old abbey when he came to Peterborough. But the scribe records that he kept both anyway. He wrote:

*oc he wolde hauen bađe*
*but he would have both*

So, the scribe continued to use the Norse word ***oc*** for 'but.' And he used another Norse word ***bađe*** – the original version of the word ***both***. Yes, ***both*** is a Viking word, and this is apparently the oldest surviving use of the word in English. So, in that short passage of five words – 'but he would have both' – the scribe begins and ends with Norse words.

For the following year – 1128, the Peterborough scribe records that England received a visit from a prominent official – Hugh from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Now you may be saying who is that? Well, Hugh was the co-founder of an order of Christian knights that was designed to protect pilgrims who traveled to the Holy Land. Since their headquarters was the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, they came to be known as the Knights Templar. They later played a very big role in the Crusades and in Medieval European culture and finance.

Again, the co-founder of the Knights Templar was Hugh, and Hugh arrived in England for a visit in the year 1128. When Hugh arrived in England, the scribe wrote that he was received by all good men, 'and all gave him treasures' – "7 ealle him geauen gersume." That word ***gersume*** is a Norse word meaning 'treasure.' So, once again, we see Norse influences in the scribe's writing. In this year, another important event occurred. King Henry's nephew William was killed while fighting in Normandy. So, his main rival in Normandy was now dead. It finally looked like things were coming into place for Henry. His primary challenger was dead in Normandy. He had forged a new marriage alliance with the Count of Anjou. He had named his daughter Matilda as his successor and he had gotten his nobles to swear an oath of loyalty to her. Everything was looking good.

In the year 1129, the Peterborough scribes reports that there was a great meeting of church officials in London. He reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury called upon all the bishops, abbots, monks and canons 'that were in all the cells in England' – "þa wæron on ealle þa cellas on Englaland." So, he uses the word ***cellas*** or ***cells,*** as we have it today. This is the first known use of the word ***cells*** meaning 'rooms' in the English language. It's a French word, and the Peterborough scribe was probably familiar with it since the rooms in the abbey were often referred to as ***cells***. Small monasteries were all also sometimes called ***cells***. So, now we have that word in English.

The entry for 1129 also contains the first known use of the French word ***duke*** in English. Up to that point, the scribe had always referred to local French rulers as earls using the English word, which was actually a Norse word if you remember the history of the word ***earl***. But now, the scribe had finally started to use the more proper French title ***duke***.

That year, the scribe also used the French word ***clerk***. It was one of the first known uses of that word in English. It originally meant a church official, and it came in again in the 1600s directly from Latin as ***cleric***. So, ***clerk*** was the earlier borrowing from French, and ***cleric*** was the later borrowing from Latin.

For the following year – 1130, the Peterborough scribe focused on church business. But for the year 1131, the scribe wrote about a great plague that killed a lot of farm animals. He wrote that so many cattle and pigs died that in a town where there were 10 or 12 plows going 'there was not one left.' He wrote "ne belæf þær noht an" – literally "no be left there not one." This comment is actually a big deal, because it shows a basic change in English grammar. And it has to do with how we express negativity.

Back in Episode 55, I discussed how verbs were made negative in Old English. You might remember that verbs were made negative by putting the word ***ne*** before the verb. So, 'I did not' was literally 'I ne did' or ***Ic ne dyde***. The ***ne*** came first.

But when the Normans arrived, they brought the French construction ***ne pas.*** The words ***ne*** and ***pas*** book-ended the verb. ***Ne*** came before the verb, and ***pas*** came after it. And back in that earlier episode, I noted that Norman influence caused English speakers to start to do the same thing with English verbs. But instead of ***ne pas,*** English uses the words ***ne not***. ***Ne*** remained in front of the verb, just as before, but ***not*** started to be placed after the verb. Of course, over time, the ***ne*** part was eventually dropped at the beginning, and that left us with ***not*** after the verb. So, we went from 'I ne did' – to 'I ne did not' – to simply 'I did not.'

Well, here in this entry for the year 1131, we see the Peterborough scribe using that ***ne not*** construction for the first time. So, to express that no plow was left, he wrote, "ne belæf þær noht an", again: "no be left there not one." And this is one of the first uses of the word ***not*** to make a sentence express negativity.

So, as we can see, the scribe who continued to write these entries was expressing some subtle changes in the language. He was introducing new French and Norse words. And he was showing French influences in his grammar. Not only did he use ***ne not***, but remember from a couple of episodes back that he used the word ***of*** to show possession. These were both developments that show French influence on English grammar. Of course, along the way, inflectional endings were disappearing. All of that points in the direction of Modern English.

But this is still technically considered Old English. That entry for the year 1131 was the last entry written by this particular Peterborough scribe. He had maintained the manuscript since it had been copied from an earlier version. Interestingly, it appears that no regular entries were recorded for

the next 23 years. But at the end of that period – in the year 1154 – another scribe pulled out that dusty old copy of the Peterborough Chronicle. And he decided to fill in the events of those missing years.

The events he recorded indicate why the Chronicle had not been maintained for the prior to two decades. It was because the country had been at war with itself. This final scribe recounts the death of Henry and the power struggle that followed. What he recorded has become known to history as the Anarchy. And when he recorded that history 23 years later, his words didn't show a few French and Norse influences here and there like the earlier scribe. No, his words were very different. The French and Norse influences are everywhere in those final entries. Virtually every sentence shows new developments in the language. His writings were so radically different from those of the first scribe that his entries are considered by many scholars to represent the first examples of Middle English.

So, next time, we'll explore those entries, and we'll also explore the brutal events he described. Until then, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.