THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 177: DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

Presented by Kevin W. Stroud

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – a podcast about the history of the English language. This is Episode 177: Dressed for Success. This time, we're going to conclude our look at the 1500s. As we take the story into a new century, we find ourselves nearing the end of the Elizabethan period. But William Shakespeare was just starting to hit his stride. In fact, we're entering into the period of his great tragedies. This time, we'll look at a couple of plays he composed about successful military leaders, specifically, Henry V of England and Julius Caesar. A close look at these plays reveals that Elizabethan actors weren't really concerned about historical accuracy when it came to costumes and clothing. From the text of the plays and from other information available to scholars, it is clear that the characters often dressed like contemporary Elizabethans, even if the plays were set in ancient Rome or Greece. So this time, we'll also look at what writers of the period had to say about Elizabethan clothing – both costumes worn on the stage and regular clothing worn on the streets. We'll also examine the connection between clothing and language, and we'll see how clothing terms were often appropriated to refer to certain types of speech.

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.

Also, I want to give a quick plug to a couple of projects that I think you might find interesting. Many years ago, I did an interview with a podcast called Silly Linguistics. I don't think the episode is still available as a podcast, but it is available on YouTube. At any rate, Silly Linguistics is still going strong, and they do a magazine each month that covers topics related to linguistics, etymology, and the type of stuff I discuss here. So I wanted to mention that.

Also, while I'm discussing projects from the past, several years ago I did an episode of a podcast called Ten American Presidents which focused on the accents and speech of various presidents. Well, Roifield Brown is the man behind that podcast, and many others as well. And he has a new podcast series out about the struggles of dealing with a close family member who has been diagnosed with dementia – in this case Roifield's father. It's a heartfelt series called 'In Glen's Steps: A Journey with Dementia.' And I wanted to give that podcast a quick plug as well since Roifeld has contributed so much to independent history podcasting over the years.

So with that, let's turn our attention to the History of English. And we find ourselves at an important point as we mark the turning of a century. In this episode, we'll advance the story from the 1500s into the 1600s. The Elizabethan era is about to come to an end, and English expansion around the world is about to begin.

For our purposes, the year 1599 is notable because that was the year that the Globe theatre was built. I discussed the events leading to the construction of the theatre in the last episode, but the playhouse was finally completed in May of that year.

The new Globe was located just down the street from another popular playhouse called the Rose. I've mentioned the Rose many times in the podcast because its owner, Philip Henslowe, maintained detailed records about the business operations of the Rose, and many of those records have survived. So modern scholars actually know a lot more about the Rose than the Globe.

In the last episode, I described the excavation of the site where the Rose once stood. Shortly after that excavation began in 1989, researchers located the site where the original Globe theater had existed, and they began an excavation of the Globe site later in that same year.

Those excavations confirmed that both venues were open-air playhouses. But each venue DID contain a roof over the stage itself. In the case of the Rose, it appears that Henslowe had renovated the venue a few years earlier to add a roof over of the stage. And in the case of the new Globe, the stage had a roof from the outset.

So why did both of those open-air venues contain a roof over the stage? Well, obviously, London was often rainy, so the roof helped to protect the actors, but it wasn't really the actors who were being protected. It is more likely that the roof was intended to protect the costumes that the actors wore.

Since many of the characters featured in Elizabethan plays were kings, queens and other members of the nobility, the acting companies needed a variety of extravagant and fancy costumes, many of which were made of expensive fabrics like silk and velvet, and trimmed with gold or lace. Those types of garments were incredibly expensive at the time, usually possessed only by the nobility themselves, so it was difficult for acting companies to acquire that type of clothing. As a result, costumes were some of the most valuable and prized assets that an acting company possessed.

The acquisition of costumes was complicated by the fact that people had limited options when it came to clothing. People wore the specific clothing associated with their occupation or their status in society. And that wasn't just because of custom or tradition. In many cases, it was required by law. In earlier episodes, I talked about the laws that regulated what people could wear based on their class or status in society. Those laws were called sumptuary laws. They had been around since the Middle Ages, and they were still in effect during the Elizabethan period. Sometimes, when prominent members of the nobility died, they would leave their fancy attire to their servants. But the servants weren't allowed to wear such garments, so in some cases, the servants would sell the clothing to the acting companies to be used as costumes. In a case like that, the acting company might luck out and get a good deal on a piece of clothing, but in most cases, the costumes were incredibly expensive.

Philip Henslowe's business records for the Rose contain long lists of costumes, apparel and props that were used in the performance of plays. The records reveal that he sometimes paid more for a specific costume than he paid for an entire play. [*SOURCE: History of the Theatre, Oscar G. Brockett, p. 177.*] His son-in-law was a prominent actor named Edward Alleyn, and the records show that he purchased a velvet cloak and the amount he paid for it was the equivalent of a schoolmaster's salary for an entire year. [*SOURCE: Shakespeare: The Evidence, Ian Wilson, p. 75-6*]

The costumes were so valuable that they had to be protected at all costs. That was probably why a roof was added over the stage. In fact, Henslowe was so protective of his costumes that he penalized actors if they lost or damaged the garments. One of his actors was named Robert Dawes, and a contract between Dawes and Henslowe survives. The contract penalized the actor if he left the theater while wearing any part of a costume. The penalty was 40 pounds – which was an incredibly large sum at the time. [*SOURCE: Shakespeare: The Evidence, Ian Wilson, p. 74-5*.] Again, the restriction was intended to prevent the loss of the garments or damage to the garments through normal wear and tear.

Henslowe's desire to protect his investment in costumes makes sense if we think about the nature of the Elizabethan theater. The surviving evidence suggests that most plays performed during this period didn't have a lot of scenery. There were probably a few basic pieces, but overall, the scenery and props would have been sparse. That meant the costumes really stood out. The garments worn by the actors would have been one of the most visual components of a play. And that was why theater owners and acting companies were willing to invest so heavily in them.

The surviving evidence also suggests that actors wore contemporary clothing even if the play was set in ancient Rome or Greece or in some other part of the world. So in a play like Julius Caesar, which we'll look at a little later in this episode, the Roman officials would have been dressed in Elizabethan clothing.

Of course, most of the actors would have played multiple parts in a play, so they needed to change outfits over the course of the play. And much like today, the dressing room for the theater was typically located behind the stage. But it wasn't called a ***dressing room*** at the time. It was called a ***tiring room***. The term ***tiring room*** was derived from the word ***attire***. In Middle English, ***attire*** was often used as a verb. 'To attire' was to dress or adorn. And sometimes, the verb was shortened to just ***tire***. So a 'tiring room' was a room where people attired, or put on their attire.

Now today, we would refer to the outfits worn by performers as ***costumes***, but that term wasn't common during the Elizabethan period. In fact, the word ***costume*** isn't found in an English document until the latter part of the following century. Believe it or not, ***costume*** is really just a variation of the word ***custom***. And this points to a link between custom and clothing that can be found in several common words in English. That's because clothing and clothing styles are often a product of custom and tradition.

So if we consider the word ***custom***, it originally referred to the manner or style of a particular period. And of course, that included a customary style of dress worn at a particular time or in a particular profession. And by the mid-1700s, the word ***custom*** had evolved into the distinct word ***costume*** to refer to a specific style of dress.

If the evolution of that word seems a little surprising, consider the word ***habit***, which has much the same history, but in reverse. The word ***habit*** originally referred to clothing or apparel. It was common in the Middle Ages for people to put on their ***habit*** in the morning or to wear a specific ***habit*** for a specific occasion. That's how the word started to acquire a more specific sense as the clothing worn for a specific purpose, so for example, a woman's riding outfit was called a 'riding

habit.' That sense of the word ***habit*** as clothing worn for a specific purpose survives when we refer to a nun's ***habit***.

During the 1500s, the word ***habit*** was sometimes used to refer to person's general appearance, and then to a person's general demeanor, and then to a person's general behavior, and then to a person's behavior that is repetitive or recurring. And by the current point in our story in the late 1500s, the word ***habit*** had started to acquire its modern sense as 'a tendency to act in a certain way.' In fact, Shakespeare used the word in that modern way in some of his plays. So ***habit*** evolved from a type of clothing to a type of customary behavior, while ***custom*** became ***costume*** by evolving in the opposite direction – from a type of customary behavior to a type of clothing.

There's actually another common word that shows this same type of connection, and that's the word ***garb***. It was a brand new word in English in the 1590s having been borrowed from French. But at the time, it simply meant a particular manner, or style or custom. So for example, if a person acted or behaved in a way that was associated with someone from Italy, you might refer to that's person demeanor or behavior as his or her 'Italian garb.' As we'll see, Shakespeare used the word ***garb*** in some of his plays, but it was always in this original sense as a term meaning 'custom, or habit or general demeanor or behavior.' It was really during the course of the 1600s that the word ***garb*** acquired its more modern sense as clothing. So for example, when referring to a person's Italian ***garb***, it originally referred to the general demeanor of someone from Italy. But by the late 1600s, if you referred to a person's Italian ***garb***, you were probably referring to a general style of dress associated with Italy.

The main point here is that there was a strong association between a person's clothing and the customs of society. A person's clothing often reflected that person's social class, occupation or place of origin. And those associations were so strong that the meaning of words like ***habit***, ***garb***, ***custom*** and ***costume*** were extended over time to account for those connections.

Now speaking of costumes, one of the remarkable documents that survives from Philip Henslowe's records in list of costumes and other items used in the performance of plays. The list was an inventory of the property belonging to the acting company that normally performed at the Rose. That company was called the Lord Admiral's Men, and the inventory was prepared in March of 1598. In the list, we find clothing terms that aren't really used today, or if they are used, they're not very common.

For example, the list includes reference to numerous 'dublets.' A ***doublet*** referred to the snug-fitting garment that was worn by men on the upper part of the body. Some of them had sleeves, and some didn't. It was a very common item of clothing at the time, and was really the precursor of the modern jacket. A similar garment worn by women on the upper part of their body over their dress or blouse was called a ***bodice***. Again, the word appeared in the late 1500s and is actually a variation of the term ***bodies*** – the plural form of ***body***. Another body term extended to clothing was the ***stomacher*** – an ornamental covering for the chest worn under the lacing of the bodice. Again, it's another term that became common in the 1500s.

Henslowe's costume list also includes a reference to a '***Spanerd gyrcken***.' A ***jerkin*** was basically a type of doublet worn on the upper body.

The list also contains several references to '***hosse***,' which was the common garment worn on the legs. Both men and women had worn hose since the Middle Ages, but women's hose often covered only the lower parts of the legs since women tended to wear dresses. For men, the hose usually covered the entire lower part of the body reaching up to and often attached to the doublet. In fact, the term '***doublet and hose***' was a common way of referring to the standard male attire at the time, and it's a term that pops up several times in Shakespeare's plays.

The list also includes references to various '***gownes***,' '***coates***,' and '***capes'*** that were worn over the '***doublet and hose***.'

Now speaking of hose, the fashions for men's legs changed in the early modern period. The traditional hose worn over the legs started to be divided between hose worn on the lower parts of the legs called ***nether-stocks*** or ***nether-stockings*** and the garment worn on the upper parts of the legs, which was the precursor of our modern trousers.

For example, Henslowe's list includes a reference to '***Venesyons***,' which were a type of baggy hose or trousers commonly worn in Venice. And we also find references to '***strocers***,' which was another garment worn on the legs. ***Strossers*** was one of many variations of the word ***trousers***. And this also raises an interesting question. If the garment worn over the legs is one item of clothing, why do we always refer to it with a plural term. Whether you call them ***trousers***, or ***pants***, or ***breeches***, or ***drawers*** – the term is almost always plural in Modern English. But that wasn't always the case, and it appears that the change generally occurred during the Elizabethan period.

The common Old English word for trousers was ***brec***, which sounds singular since it doesn't end in 's', but it was actually a plural term in Old English. In Middle English, the vowel was lengthened from ***brec*** to ***breech***. By that point, the 's' was somewhat standard for plural nouns, and since ***breech*** didn't end in 's', it was usually treated as a singular noun. So a person wore a ***breech*** on their legs. It was really in second half of the 1500s that it became common to refer to the garment in the plural as ***breeches***. And of course, we still have that term today. Some people pronounce the word as 'britches' with a slightly different vowel, but it's the same word

It isn't really clear why the word evolved from a singular term to a plural term over the course of the 1500s, but the best guess is that breeches were thought of in the same way as socks, or hose, or stockings. In those cases, a separate item of clothing was worn on each leg, so they were usually referred to as pairs. Even though a breech was connected at the top and was a single item of clothing, it also covered the legs, so it was also referred to in the same way. And it became common to refer to 'a pair of breeches.'

Around this same time in the late 1500s, the term ***galligaskin*** appeared. It referred to a type of wide breeches that were popular at the time. The word is based on a French word, though the form was altered considerably in English. At any rate, during the late 1500s and 1600s, the word

was rendered both ways, as singular ***galligaskin*** and plural ***galligaskins***. That reflects how some people still thought of that type of garment as a single item of clothing, while others thought of it as a pair of garments attached at the top.

Another common term at the time for wide trousers or baggy beeches was ***slops***. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term was usually rendered in the plural as ***slops*** when referring to the entire garment, but there are many references to an individual leg of the garment begin referred to in the singular as a ***slop***. So again, that reinforces the idea that each leg was treated as a separate item, at least linguistically.

During this same time period in the late 1500s, other words started to appear for garments worn on the legs. The verb ***draw*** had been around for centuries to refer to act of pulling something. To pull a pen or marker across a page was to 'draw' it across the page, and that gave us the modern sense of the word ***draw*** as in 'to draw a picture.' If you pulled out a storage compartment from a dresser or cabinet, it was called a ***drawer*** – literally 'something pulled out.' And that gave us the word ***drawer*** as in a 'chest of drawers.'

And in the same way, since people pulled breeches up over their legs, they also became known as ***drawers***. And that sense of the word ***drawers*** as an article of clothing is first recorded in English in the late 1500s. Today, it's a term mostly associated with colloquial speech, and some people in the US pronounce it as 'droors.' But again, it goes back to the Elizabethan period.

English also acquired a new term for a similar article of clothing worn in Ireland and Scotland. That was the word ***trews***, usually spelled 't-r-e-w-s.' It referred to a common type of breeches worn in the Celtic regions of the British Isles. The pants were tight-fitting and usually had a tartan design associated with the Scottish highlands. ***Trews*** was a plural term, and it probably entered English in the late 1400s. That early date would explain how the pronunciation changed over time because the word ***trews*** was almost certainly altered by the Great Vowel Shift. By the late 1500s, the word was commonly pronounced as ***trouse*** (/trohs/) on its way to becoming ***trouse*** (/trowse/). Interestingly, that version of the word was singular, so you would refer to a person's ***trouse*** ('t-r-o-u-s-e') as a single item of clothing. But again, that notion that it should really be considered a pair of leg coverings soon kicked back in, and by the end of the 1500s, it was being referred to again in the plural, initially as ***trossers***, before eventually evolving into our modern word ***trousers*** (/trowzers). So ***trousers*** is ultimately a Celtic term, and at one time, it was just one of many different terms for the item of clothing worn on the legs. But it has outlived most of the other terms.

As I noted, trousers were sometimes call ***trossers*** in the Elizabethan period, and if we go back and look at that costume inventory for the Lord Admiral's Men, we can see that it also used that term ***trossers***. And in addition to ***trossers***, it also used the term ***strossers*** which I mentioned earlier. It appears that ***strossers*** is just a variation of ***trossers***. So some people would have called them ***trossers***, some would have called then ***strossers***, some would have called them ***trousers***, and some would have probably used the original Celtic word ***trews***.

I should note that the Henslowe's costume inventory is the first known document to use ***strossers*** as a it was probably in common use at the time. That's because it soon popped up in one of William Shakespeare's plays called Henry V. Interestingly, Henslowe's costume list includes references to a "Harry V doublet" and a "Harry V velvet gown." Those items appear to refer to costumes worn during a performance of Henry V, but remember that this inventory was prepared for the Lord Admiral's Men. That wasn't Shakespeare's acting company. His company was the Lord Chamberlain's Men. So most scholars think that the Harry V play referenced in the costume list was a separate play performed by the Lord Admiral's Men at the Rose. The list pre-dates Shakespeare's version of Henry V. And in fact, there are references to plays about Henry V going all the way back to the 1580s in the early days of the Elizabethan theater.

Henry V would have been a popular subject for playwrights of the period because he was one of England most revered kings, primarily for his many victories over the French during the Hundred Years War. And had he not died of dysentery at a relatively young age, Henry V would have probably been the King of both England and France. An agreement to that effect was in place when he died.

Shakespeare apparently composed his play about Henry V at some point in late 1598 or early 1599. For reasons that we'll look at in a moment, it is generally agreed that it was one of the first play, perhaps the very first play, performed at the new-constructed Globe when it opened in May of 1599.

Shakespeare's version of Henry V was the culmination of a cycle of history plays that he had been working on over the prior few years. It began with Richard II, and it continued with the two parts of Henry IV. We looked at Henry IV in the last episode, and we saw that much of the story focused on the king's son, Prince Hal, and his buddy Falstaff. Well, Prince Hal finally became king when his father Henry IV died, and he thereupon became Henry V. So this is where Shakespeare's final play in the sequence picks up.

As I noted, scholars are confident that Shakespeare's version of Henry V was completed and performed in 1599 for a few reasons. First, it wasn't mentioned in that list of Shakespeare's plays compiled by Francis Meres in the prior year – 1598. So it apparently didn't exist at that point. But a quarto version of the play was published in 1600. So the play must have been completed sometime between those two points and that leaves 1599 – the year that the Globe opened. And in fact, the opening lines of Henry V appear to make reference to the newly constructed playhouse.

Henry V had several miliary victories during his relatively short reign, but the most famous was his defeat of the French at Agincourt, which is considered to be one of the greatest military victories in English history. That victory is prominently featured in Shakespeare's play, but the opening Chorus or Prologue questions whether it is possible to present to such a massive battle on such a small stage. The opening lines read in part as follows:

But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraisèd spirits that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

Within that passage, the speaker refers to the playhouse as this "unworthy scaffold" and "this wooden O." Most scholars agree that those references are to the newly built Globe. The 'wooden O' refers to the fact that the Globe was circular in shape, though the modern excavation at the site revealed that it actually has twenty distinct sides. [*SOURCE: The Friendly Shakespeare, Norrie Epstein, p. 52.*] It was very difficult to construct an actual circle with the wood and lumber that had been transported from the old playhouse in the northern part of the city. But with its twenty sides, the Globe would have appeared to be circular from the outside.

Now this particular play is a little bit unusual compared to Shakespeare's other history plays. It's really the only play about the kings of England where someone isn't trying to claim the crown or defend it from someone else. Instead, the focus is on Henry's battles against the French, and it contains some of Shakespeare's most patriotic passages and scenes.

The first two acts of the play focus on Henry's decision to invade France because he thinks he is the rightful heir to the French throne. At the beginning of Act 3, the English forces attack the walled city of Harfleur. The scene opens with Henry inspiring his troops by uttering the famous line, "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more, . . ." He concludes the speech with another well-known patriotic line: "Follow your spirit, and upon this charge Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!"

We are then introduced to the captains of Henry's forces. His army includes troops from Wales, Ireland and Scotland. This gives Shakespeare an opportunity to play around with regional accents as each captain speaks in the local dialect of his respective region.

We're then introduced to Princess Katherine – the daughter of the French king. She is ultimately an important figure in the story because she eventually marries Henry as part of a truce to end the war. But the scene in which Shakespeare introduces her is fascinating because it is composed almost entirely in French. Of course, Katherine would have spoken French, and that's the idea behind the scene. Princess Katherine is trying to learn how to speak English in the scene. She is speaking with her lady-in-waiting, who is older than her and has some knowledge of English. So the princess asks her what certain parts of the body are called in English.

She learns several English words like ***hand***, ***fingers***, ***arm***, ***neck***, ***elbow*** and ***chin***. But this entire scene is designed to set up a dirty joke – at least for those who understood French. The scene concludes with the princess asking what the English words are for "le pied" and "la robe" – ***pied*** and ***robe***. The lady-in-waiting says that the English words are ***foot*** and ***cown*** – which was her pronunciation of the word ***gown***. The princess is shocked by the answer, and in French she says

that those words are vulgar and she would never utter them in front of the lords of France. She has equated ***foot*** with the French word ***foutre***, which is a vulgar French term for sex – similar to our own 'f-word.' And she equated ***cown*** with the French word ***con***, which is a vulgar French term that can refer to female genitalia – similar to our own 'c-word.' The entire scene is really set up for this punch line at the end, but none of it makes sense if you don't speak French. Certainly, this scene was designed to appeal to the portion of the audience who spoke French, which would have been a minority, but still a significant number in the late 1500s. It's a reminder that French was still held in high regard among the literate classes of England, and even Shakespeare could compose an entire scene in French and have it appeal to a certain portion of the audience at the Globe.

It's also interesting that the scene focuses on English words for body parts, but it concludes with the French word ***robe*** and the English word ***gown***. Interestingly, both of those words are French loanwords, and both were common in English by the late 1500s. But this takes us back to our theme of Elizabethan clothing, and in fact, it is shortly after this scene where we find the French king's heir called the 'dauphin' using that slang term ***strossers*** that I mentioned earlier in the episode. Remember that that was a variation of the word ***trousers***. In a scene where the French heir speaks with his constable as they prepare for a battle with the English, the prince says that his horse is like his mistress. This gives Shakespeare another opportunity for some naughty word play as the characters joke about 'riding' their mistresses. The prince says that the constable must have rode one that was old and gentle, so that he could ride her in his ***strossers***. Here, Shakespeare has the French characters speak in English, and even use a bit of English slang, to ensure that the audience understood the word play and the intended joke.

Act 4 takes us up to the Battle of Agincourt, and it features not only the most well-known passage from the play, but also one of the most well known speeches in all of Shakespeare's works. It is commonly known as the St. Crispin's Day speech because the battle was fought on a holiday known as St. Crispin's Day. In the scene, King Henry delivers a very patriotic and rousing speech to his men, and it contains many references which linger in the language to this day – like Henry's reference to his men as a "band of brothers."

When I talked about Henry V and the Battle of Agincourt back in Episode 134, I played an except of the speech from the film version of the play featuring Laurence Olivier. And since it is probably the most well-known passage from the play, I thought I would play it again for you. Here it is:

This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,

But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names.
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Not only does that speech give us the phrase "band of brothers," it also contains the term "household words." Henry says, "Then shall our names, Familiar in his mouth as household words . . . Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered." Now many sources cite this passage as the first recorded use of that term 'household words.' It's often considered a Shakespearean term. But like many words and phrases attributed to him over the years, it appears that he didn't actually coin it. The Oxford English Dictionary now cites an earlier reference from the 1570s about twenty-five years earlier. But the overall popularity of the term may have been influenced by this passage in Henry V.

There is also another interesting part of that passage that I want to highlight. It's the part where Henry says that anyone surviving the battle will live with the pride of such a great victory for the rest of his life. The passage reads:

He that outlives this day and comes safe home
Will stand a tiptoe when this day is named
And *rouse him* at the name of Crispian.

Now something about that passage might hit your hear a little wrong. It's the last part where Henry says "And rouse him at the name of Crispian." But rouse who? Well, he will rouse *himself*. He that survives the battle will rouse *himself* at the name of Crisipian. Today, we would tend use the word ***himself*** in that situation rather than ***him*** because it makes it clear that the subject and the object of the sentence are the same person. If we say "He will arouse him," it makes it sound like ***him*** is referring to someone else. But, as this passage makes clear, you could say it either way during the Elizabethan period. So let me digress for a moment and explain this grammatical development.

This development concerns pronoun forms that end in '-self' like ***myself***, ***yourself***, ***himself***, ***herself***, ***themselves*** and so on. The technical term for those pronouns is 'reflexive pronouns.' And they are called that because they 'reflect' back on the subject of the sentence. In other words, when we have a sentence with a subject and an object, and the subject and the object are the same person, or same place, or same thing, the object form normally ends in '-self' to make it clear that it is referring back to the same person, place or thing as the subject. So if that sounds very technical, let me illustrate it with a simple example.

If I want to say, "Sally saw you," or "Sally saw him," or "Sally saw them," I would use those simple pronoun forms – ***you***, ***him***, and ***them***. Those are the objects of the sentence and they are all different from Sally. Sally was looking at other people. But if Sally was looking in the mirror, I would say, "Sally saw herself." That makes it clear that she was looking at her own reflection. That's why we use those reflexive pronoun forms ending in '-self' in that situation – to make it clear that the subject and the object of the sentence are the same.

But prior to the 1500s, people didn't really use a pronoun form ending in '-self'.' In the 1300s or early 1400s, I would have said "Sally saw her" even if she was looking at herself in the mirror. The use of the forms ending in '-self' didn't really emerge until the late 1400s. They became more and more common over the course of the 1500s, but even in the late 1500s during the time of Shakespeare, people could use either form and express the sentence either way. So the modern reflexive pronoun forms ending in '-self' weren't standard yet. That's why Shakespeare could say "He that survives the battle will rouse *him* at the name of Crispian," rather than "He will rouse *himself* at the name of Crispian."

Now Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech precedes the Battle of Agincourt, which as I noted earlier was a great English victory and is really the high point of the play. The battle concludes Act 4 of the play.

Act 5 begins with a brief chorus or prologue which provides some additional insight into the date of the play. The passage refers to the triumphant return of Henry and the English forces after the victory at Agincourt. In the passage, Shakespeare alludes to Henry being welcomed home like a conquering Julius Caesar. Caesar was the subject of Shakespeare's next play, and he may have been composing that play at the time that he was wrapping up this play.

The passage also alludes to an English expedition to Ireland which is also important in its own respects. Here is the relevant passage:

But now behold,
In the quick forge and workinghouse of thought,
How London doth pour out her citizens.
The Mayor and all his brethren in best sort,
Like to the senators of th' antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
Go forth and fetch their conqu'ring Caesar in—
As, by a lower but by loving likelihood

Were now the general of our gracious empress,
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him! Much more, and much more
cause, Did they this Harry.

So again, we have a reference comparing Henry to a conquering Caesar. And then the passage compares the excitement of the masses to the anticipated excitement that will fill the city of London when the leader of the Irish expedition returns home "bringing rebellion broached on his sword." This is a very rare case where Shakespeare referred to a contemporary event, and it helps us to determine when the play was composed and first performed. So let me explain what was going on with that military campaign that was occurring in Ireland while this play was being composed.

For a couple of decades, the English had been trying to colonize Ireland by establishing plantations there with English settlers, but the effort had met with little success due to Irish opposition. The English had only been able to establish a few plantations outside of the traditional English base in Dublin. In the prior year – 1598 – Irish rebels had ambushed and wiped out an English force in Ireland, and it nearly brought an end to English efforts to colonize the island. That was unacceptable to Queen Elizabeth because she and her advisors feared that Spain would use Ireland as a base to attack England. So in the spring of 1599, around the same time that the Globe was completed, she sent a military expedition to Ireland to put down the rebellion there.

The expedition was led by the Earl of Essex, who I mentioned back in Episode 174. He was a prominent member of Elizabeth's court, and a few years earlier, he had helped to lead an expedition to Spain to raid the Spanish port at Cadiz. The Spanish expedition was successful, but the sailors divided the spoils between them before they got back to England, so Elizabeth received very little from the effort. She was upset with Essex, and in fact, the entire relationship between Essex and Elizabeth ran hot and cold during this period. His decision to lead the new campaign in Ireland was partially an effort to get back in her good graces.

In the passage I read a moment ago, Shakespeare says that Henry V was welcomed home after his victory at Agincourt in the same way that Londoners will soon welcome Essex home after his expedition in Ireland. That expedition had left England in late March, and the campaign appeared to be going well through the spring. So the optimism expressed in this passage would have had to have been composed sometime during the spring, which again was the same time when the Globe opened to the public. So all of this information appears to confirm that this play was completed and performed for the first time shortly after the theater opened.

But soon after that, the Irish expedition started to fall apart. After losing many men due to skirmishes and disease, Essex made a truce with rebel leader in Ireland over Elizabeth's objection. She did not want a truce, which she considered to be same as defeat. Essex then skulked back to England in September to justify his actions to the queen, but she promptly put him under house arrest. Now I'll leave the story there for now, but this is an important development because Essex

was later involved in an effort to depose Elizabeth, and he was executed for treason as a result. And his attempted coup actually involved Shakespeare's acting company through a strange development, but I'll explain those events in the next episode.

Now returning to the play about Henry V, the final act of the play is set about three years after Agincourt. Henry has returned to France for a second invasion of the country. The act opens with a brief conflict between a soldier in the English army named Pistol and the captain of the Welsh forces named Fluellen. The two men have a personal dispute going back to an earlier scene leading up to the Battle of Agincourt. The Welsh captain Fluellen wears a leek in his hat in accordance with a Welsh tradition. As the two men spar, Fluellen makes Pistol eat the leek, and Pistol storms away. A separate captain named Gower stands nearby and taunts the hot-headed Pistol. He condemns Pistol for his verbal assault on the Welsh captain and says Pistol deserved his comeuppance. Gower says of the Welsh captain, "You thought because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel."

Now that's an interesting turn of phrase – 'Fluellen could not speak English in his native Welsh garb.' What did that mean? Did it mean that the Welshman could not speak English while wearing his Welsh clothing? Well, no. Remember from earlier in the episode that the word ***garb*** was one of those words along with ***habit*** and ***custom*** and ***costume*** that had broader meanings referring to tradition, habit, custom or a way of doing things. And as I noted earlier, the word ***garb*** also came into English with that specific meaning. It didn't come to refer to a particular style of clothing until after Shakespeare's lifetime. So when Shakespeare wrote that Fluellen couldn't speak English in his 'native garb,' it meant that he could not speak English since his normal or customary manner of speech was Welsh. But this is a good example of that earlier sense of the word ***garb*** before it came to refer to clothing or a particular style of dress.

The play concludes with the English and French nobles agreeing to a peace treaty that will allow Henry to become the French king after the death of the current French king who was old and mad at the time. Meanwhile, Henry pursues the French princess Katherine. Katherine doesn't speak English, but Henry says he isn't really a master of English either. He can't write her poetry, but he can offer her strength and his love. He says to her, "If I could win a lady at leapfrog or by vaulting into my saddle with my armor on my back . . . I should quickly leap into wife." And I mention that line because it contains the first known reference to ***leapfrog*** – the game played by children.

It is then agreed between the parties to the treaty that Henry will marry Katherine, and the play ends with a planned wedding between the two, and with Henry set to unite the realms of England and France by becoming the French king when Katherine's father dies.

It is interesting that Shakespeare ends the story there on a positive note with Henry in all of his glory. As I noted earlier, things didn't turn as planned at the time of that treaty. Henry did marry Katherine, but he soon returned to France to deal with another uprising. While there, he died of dysentery before the elderly French king died. So Henry never became king of France. Meanwhile, the English throne passed to the infant son of Henry and Katherine. His name was also Henry, and he became Henry VI. His troubled reign led to the loss of the English gains in France and ultimately led to the Wars of the Roses. Remember that Shakespeare had told the story of that

Henry about a decade earlier in the first series of history plays that he composed. So his play about Henry V completed the cycle and brought the story back to the beginning where he began his career. In fact, Henry V was also one of Shakespeare's last history plays about English kings. The only other play about an English king that he composed was one of final plays called Henry VIII.

As we've seen, scholars are confident that Henry V was one of the first plays, and perhaps the very first play, presented at the newly-opened Globe theatre in the spring of 1599. Well over the following weeks, a Swiss-born physician named Thomas Platter visited London. And that visit is important to scholars because he kept a journal of his travels. And during his time in London, he visited the Globe and attended a play there. And his account is important because it provides a rare first-hand account by someone who actually saw a performance by Shakespeare's acting company at the Globe.

Platter was completing his education in London at the time. He not only commented on his visit to the Globe. He also talked more generally about English society - including the way people dressed at the time. During this period, preachers condemned people who went into debt to buy fancy clothes. Remember that the both the laws and tradition restricted what people of different classes could wear. But those rules and traditions were apparently being ignored by many people. Regular working-class people were spending their money on clothing they could barely afford in order to dress above their ordinary station. And Thomas Platter's journal confirms that. He wrote, "Now the women-folk of England, who have mostly blue-grey eyes and are fair and pretty, have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes . . ." By the way, ***gorgeous*** could simply mean 'brightly colored' at the time.

He then added, "They lay great store by ruffs and starch them blue, so that their complexion shall appear the whiter, and some may well wear velvet for the street, quite common with them who cannot afford a crust of bread at home I have been told." (End-quote) [*SOURCE: The Bedside, Bathtub & Armchair Companion to Shakespeare, Dick Riley and Pam McAllister, p. 221.*] By the way, Platter wrote in German, so that's an English translation.

Now that passage is interesting in that it shows the importance of fashion of Elizabethan England and the fact that people wanted to dress and look nice even if they dressed above their class or normal position in life. And some people spent all of their money doing so. What's also interesting is the specific reference to ruffs, which were the large disk-like collars that people wore at the time. In fact, if there is one thing we probably associate with Elizabethan fashion, it's those enormous ruffled and frilly collars. As I mentioned, they were called ruffs. Those worn by nobles were often adorned with lace and decorated with gold, but as Platter's journal attests, those fancy collars were worn by almost everyone – men and women – and commoners as well as aristocrats.

Those fancy ruffs really began as parts of men's shirts. In fact, the earliest usage of the word ***ruff*** from the early 1500s was to a frill around the wrist of a shirt. In fact, the decorative bands around the bottom of the sleeves were sometimes called ***handcuffs***. That term is first recorded by John Florio, who I mentioned in the last episode. Remember that he composed a large Italian-English

dictionary which contains the first known use of many words in English. Well, in a separate book he wrote that contained dialogues in English and Italian, he used the word ***handcuffs*** for the first time in a surviving document. So it was apparently a relatively new term in the 1590s. It wasn't until the middle of the following century that the term came to apply to physical restraints worn around the wrists.

During this period, sleeves were often detachable. And in fact, they became so large and bulky in the 1500s that people would sometimes tuck items into them since pockets were still relatively small and rare. So it isn't surprising that people started to refer to someone 'having something up their sleeve' in the late 1500s. It meant to 'have something in reserve' or 'to have a surprise planned.'

Well, over time, the word ***ruff*** was extended from the fancy decorative frills at the end of the sleeves to the decorative frills around the collar of a shirt or around the collar of a gown or dress. At first, they were relatively modest, but starch was introduced from the Netherlands in the late 1500s. And that allowed the ruffs to be made firmer and thus larger. By the end of the 1500s, they were supported with wires and metal rods, which allowed them to become even larger and wider.

They were initially a sign of opulence and high standing, but lower classes soon found that they could emulate those in higher standing by wearing ruffs themselves. And by the end of the Elizabethan period, they were all the fashion, as Thomas Platter pointed out in his journal.

A similar type of elaborate collar was called a ***piccadill***. It tended to be thinner and open on the front, but it could be just as large and elaborate as a ruff. The word ***piccadill*** was probably in use around the current point in our story at the turn of the century because it is first recorded in English in the first decade of the 1600s. Supposedly, a tailor made piccadills at his shop in London to satisfy the demand for them. And within a few years, the house where the shop was located became known as Piccadilly Hall, and the street in front of the shop became known as Piccadilly. Piccadilly extended to a major junction nearby which became known as Piccadilly Circus. So that well-known London landmark is ultimately named for those fancy collars worn in Elizabethan England. [*SOURCE: Fashion in the Time of William Shakespeare, Sarah Jane Downing, p. 51.*]

Again, Thomas Platter's journal confirms that those types of fancy collars were worn by even the common people of London in the late 1500s. But as I noted earlier, the most interesting part of his journal occurred in September of 1599. Platter wrote, "On September 21st after lunch, about two o'clock, I and my party crossed the water, and there in the house with the thatched roof witnessed an excellent performance of the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar with a cast of some fifteen people; when the play was over they danced marvelously and gracefully together as is their wont, two dressed as men and two as women." [*SOURCE: Shakespeare: The Evidence, Ian Wilson, p. 260*] This is the earliest known account of any production at the Globe, and it confirms that Shakespeare's tragedy about Julius Caesar was being presented there in September.

Platter then described what he saw inside of the Globe. He wrote, ". . . And during the performance food and drink are carried round the audience, so that for what one cares to pay one may also have refreshment. The actors are most expensively and elaborately costumed because it is the custom in England that when men of high rank die, they bequeath their finest apparel to their servants, which it is unseemly for them to wear, so they offer them then for sale for a small sum to the actors."

This passage is interesting because it confirms that the acting companies sometimes obtained their costumes from the servants of deceased aristocrats. But it's also interesting because Platter appears to confirm that the actors were dressed in Elizabethan clothing, even though they were presenting a play about Julius Caesar set in ancient Rome. No one was bothered by that, and many in the audience probably didn't even realize that Roman clothing would have been very different. [*SOURCES: Globe: Life in Shakespeare's London, Catharine Arnold, p. 194 and Shakespeare & Co., Stanley Wells, p. 18.*]

So let's turn our attention to Shakespeare's play about Julius Caesar, which Platter saw at the Globe in the latter part of 1599.

And before we look at the opening scene, we probably need do a quick review of the historical events leading up to the beginning of the play. Julius Caesar had been an aspiring politician in Rome and had conquered Gaul, which is modern-day France. Despite his military success, his political rivals back in Rome were alarmed by his rise to power, and they ordered him to return to Rome without his troops since his commission had expired. But Caesar ignored the order and when he reached the Rubicon River, which marked the official Roman border at the time, he crossed it with his forces, thereby triggering a civil war. This is where we get the modern phrase 'to cross the Rubicon' meaning to take a crucial action from which there is no return. Caesar defeated his political and miliary rivals over the following months, and after a victory against a rival Roman force in Spain, he returned to Rome having vanquished his enemies.

Caesar had a great deal of support among the common people, but he still had opponents within the government itself. After a major military victory, it was common for the winning general to return to Rome in a great procession and the day was considered to be a holiday. And that's the opening scene of Shakespeare's play. A crowd has gathered to welcome Caesar and his troops back to Rome, but his victory wasn't over a foreign enemy. It was actually against a domestic rival. So Caesar's opponents are not happy with the celebration. And that includes a couple of Roman officers named Flavius and Marullus. The play opens with them confronting a carpenter and a cobbler celebrating on the streets.

Flavius says, "Hence! Home, you idle creatures get you home: Is this a holiday? What, know you not, Being mechanical, you ought not walk Upon a laboring day without the sign Of your profession?"

Now the key part of that passage is the final part where Flavius criticizes the two workers for not wearing what he calls the 'signs of their profession' on a work day. This is another Elizabethan feature incorporated into this play. Remember that English law restricted what people could wear

based on their profession or based on their class. If it was a work day – so not a Sunday or a holiday – the workers were required to wear the clothing associated with their occupation. But here, in this opening scene, the workers are not wearing their work clothes because they consider Caesar's return to be a holiday. Of course, Flavius doesn't consider it a holiday because he isn't a supporter of Caesar, so he chastises the workers for not dressing appropriately. But again, this clothing restriction wasn't really a feature of ancient Rome. So Shakespeare opens this play by incorporating a common Elizabethan clothing convention.

One of the workers being chastised by Flavius is a cobbler. He says, "I am indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes: when they are in great danger, I recover them." Of course, that was an important profession in Elizabethan England, and there were many types of shoes and boots.

In terms of language, one of the most interesting pieces of footwear from this period was a rustic shoe that was common in Ireland and Scotland. It was called a ***brogue***, and Shakespeare even made reference to the brogue in one of his later plays called Cymbeline. The word is still around today, and it also survives as the word ***brogan*** in some English dialects. But the reason why the brogue is so interesting is because the name of that particular shoe is the source of the word ***brogue*** as in a distinctive accent or manner of speech. In fact, it's a term usually associated with Irish or Scottish accents, which reflects the origin of the shoe. And in this word, we find an interesting connection between clothing and speech, and also the connection between custom and speech since ***brogue*** is derived from the customary shoes worn by common laborers.

Since a brogue was a common type of work shoe or work boot, many workers in Scotland wore them. It was so closely associated with those common laborers that the workers themselves were sometimes called ***brogues***. As is often the case, those laborers tended to speak with an accent that was a little different and little broader than the standard educated accent of the region. So their particular style of speech also came to be known as a ***brogue***. And that gave us the modern sense of the word ***brogue*** today. So if someone speaks with a brogue, it is ultimately a reference to a type of work shoe or boot.

We see a similar development with the term ***hobnail***. It referred to a type of short nail with a large wide head that was commonly used to protect the soles of heavy shoes and boots. The word is first recorded in Shakespeare's early history play about Henry VI. But over time, the term came to be associated with the common workers who wore hobnailed shoes, and from there, it acquired a broader sense as sense as a rural or rustic person.

A specific type of knee-high boot was called a ***buskin***. That's another term that appeared in the 1500s. The word can be traced back to a type of boot worn by actors in ancient Greece who performed tragedies on the stage in Athens. Those who performed comedies typically wore socks. So the term '***sock and buskin***' became a common way of referring to comedy and tragedy. In later centuries, the dramatic arts or the acting profession itself was sometimes called '***sock and buskin***.' Again, it was reference to foot coverings.

Now returning to the play about Julius Caesar, the next scene presents the Roman general arriving in Rome to the gathered throngs. The scene shifts to a festival attended by Caesar and other Roman officials where a voice calls out from the crowd. It's a soothsayer who provides the Roman leader with the now-famous warning, "Beware the Ides of March." The Ides of March meant March 15th. ***Ides*** is a Latin term, but it had been around in English since the Old English period when the Roman calendar was first adopted. By the way, ***Ides*** didn't necessarily mean the 15th. It really depended on the month. For March, May, July and October, it fell on the 15th, but for all of the other months, it actually fell on the 13th. So the 'Ides of January' would have been January 13th. But since the soothsayer is warning about the 'Ides of March,' the key date was the 15th.

Despite the warning, Caesar ignores it and calls the soothsayer a 'dreamer.' After Caesar moves along, two men stay behind. They are Brutus, who is a close ally of Caesar, and Cassius, who fears Caesar's rise to power. At this point, Caesar has amassed tremendous power, but he has not been formally declared a king. However, Cassius fears that Caesar will soon claim that title. So Cassius begins to formulate a plan to bring an end to Caesar's rule. He flatters Brutus in an attempt to bring him over to his side. Cassius says of Caesar, ". . .it doth amaze me, A man of such a feeble temper should So get the start of the majestic world . . ." According to the Oxford English Dictionary, that is the first recorded use of the word ***majestic*** in the English language. But the word can also be found in the works of other writers a short time later, suggesting that the word wasn't actually coined by Shakespeare.

Cassius says that Caesar has become a political giant, but there are ways to deal with such problems. He says, "Men at some time are masters of their fates." Now that is a Shakespearean phrase, and today, when we say that someone is the 'master of his or her fate,' is comes from that passage.

Now as this conversation is occurring, a Roman senator named Casca is standing nearby. He reports that Mark Antony had just offered Caesar a crown – three times in fact. But each time, Caesar refused it in front of the gathered crowd, apparently thinking that his supporters would stand up and demand that he take it. But instead, the people cheered his decision to refuse it. Casca says that Caesar was angry that the people didn't insist that he take the crown. He says that Caesar fell to the ground foaming at the mouth, adding, ". . . before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he pluck'd ope(n) his doublet, and offered them his throat to cut." Now this is interesting in that Casca says that Caesar 'opened his doublet.' As I noted earlier in the episode, a doublet was a garment worn on the upper part of the body in Elizabethan England, essentially the precursor of the modern jacket. But it wasn't an item of clothing worn in ancient Rome. So again, we see how Elizabethan fashions were incorporated into the story.

Casca is then asked if Cicero said anything when Caesar was offered the crown. Cicero was a politician and Rome's most highly regarded orator. Casca says that Cicero spoke, but Casca didn't understand what he said because Cicero spoke in Greek. Casca says, "it was Greek to me." Now this line is probably why people still say "it was Greek to me" when they don't understand

something that was said. In fact, it is often attributed to Shakespeare, but it had actually been around for centuries.

In ancient Rome, when the story of Julius Caesar was set, many people spoke Greek because the Romans were highly influenced by Greek culture. It was similar to the way many people spoke French throughout the Middle English period. But the use of Greek declined in the Middle Ages after the fall of the empire in the west. Greek then became restricted to only the most educated and literate people. As scribes copied old manuscripts composed in Latin and Greek, they increasingly had a problem reading the Greek parts. The scribe would sometimes make a note in Latin – "Graecum est; non legitur," which meant, 'This is Greek: it can't be read.' The text would then be handed off to a scribe who could read Greek to copy that part. But that's how the Latin idiom 'It is Greek to me' emerged as a way referring to something that couldn't be read or understood.

Shakespeare was certainly one of the earliest writers to use an English version of the idiom, but it appeared in other documents around the same time, so it isn't really Shakespearean. But his use of the phrase here in Julius Caesar probably helped to popularize the phrase. In this particular play, the line is apparently intended as a joke since Casca uses it literally. After saying that Cicero spoke in Greek, Casca says that he didn't understand Cicero because "It was Greek to me," so the line was true both literally and figuratively.

After overhearing the conversation among the various Roman officials about Caesar's ambitions, Brutus has started to be persuaded that Caesar's ambitions need to be thwarted. He agrees to speak with Cassius again about the matter the next day.

Brutus is soon convinced to join the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar. They agree to stab Caesar, but Brutus says that they must not be perceived as butchers. They need to leave Caesar's body in a state for the gods to view. He says, "Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully; Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods, Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds." And that's another important line from the play because it is where the get the phrase "a dish fit for the gods." Today, it's used to mean a delicious or high caliber meal, but it's ultimately a Shakespearean phrase and was first used in reference to the conspiracy to murder Caesar.

The scene then shifts to the morning of March 15th – the Ides of March. Caesar's wife tries to convince him to say home because of the soothsayer's prophesy. Caesar initially dismisses her concerns, and in doing so, he utters another well-known Shakespearean passage. "Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste death but once." However, his wife eventually convinces him to remain at home, but then, one of the conspirators arrives and convinces him to go to the senate where he will be formally offered the crown and made the king of Rome.

Caesar leaves, but as soon as he arrives at the Roman Senate, the conspirators gather around him and stab him. At first, Caesar tries to fight back against the assassins, but when his friend and ally Brutus stabs him, Caesar stops. He then utters the famous line, "Et tu, Brute?" – literally 'And you Brutus?" Caesar's last words are "Then fall, Caesar." In other words, "I am dead."

With Caesar's death, his loyal lieutenant Marc Antony knows that he is likely a target as well. He approaches the conspirators feigning friendship and asking why they had chosen to murder Caesar. Antony doesn't argue with them, and merely asks to speak at the funeral. Antony is then left alone with Caesar's body. He predicts that the murder will be avenged and lead to civil war. He says that Caesar's spirit will "Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war." That passage gives us the term 'dogs of war,' which still survives to this day.

At Caesar's funeral, the conspirator Brutus speaks first and says that the murder was for the greater good of Rome because of Caesar's dangerous ambitions. He says, "Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more." But then, it is Marc Antony's turn to speak to the crowd. And his speech is one of the most famous passages in all of the Shakespeare canon. Antony has been told not to criticize the conspirators, so he chooses his words carefully to abide by that demand, but the way in which he frames his speech and the way that he repeats the line "Brutus is an honourable man" in an increasingly ironic way soon turns the crowd against the conspirators. Here is a great rendering of the speech by the actor Damian Lewis:

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest
For Brutus is an honorable man;
So are they all, all honorable men),
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me,
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And sure he is an honorable man.

The speech continues on in this manner, and as I noted, it has the effect of turning the crown against the conspirators – and presenting the murder of Caesar an unjust act.

I should note the line in that passage where Antony says that "Ambition should be made of sterner stuff." That line is the first known use of the phrase 'made of sterner stuff' to refer to someone or something that is very strong or determined. It appears to be a phrase coined by Shakespeare. So if you refer to someone being 'made of sterner stuff,' it ultimately comes from this passage.

Marc Antony has riled up the crowd, but now, the speech comes to a climax when he pulls out the robe that Caesar was wearing when he was murdered. This was an effective way to use clothing and costumes to tell the story. Antony points to the cuts in the bloody robe. He lingers on the cut made by Caesar's friend Brutus, and he says, ". . . Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel. Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him! This was the most unkindest cut of all." He then pulls the robe away to reveals Ceasar's body riddled with stab wounds. It sends the crown into a frenzy as they demand retribution against the conspirators.

Now the passage I just mentioned is notable because Antony refers to Brutus's gash as "the most unkindest cut of all." It's the type of phrase that would have English teachers grabbing their red markers today because you're not supposed to use the word ***most*** and the suffix 'e-s-t' together to express a superlative. You should use one or the other, depending on the word. But that wasn't really a rule in the Elizabethan period. You could put both together for emphasis. Another example from Shakespeare came from Part 2 of his play about Henry IV which we looked at last time. In that play, he referred to "the calmest and most stillest night."

The same was true for comparatives where we use either the word ***more*** or the 'e-r' suffix to compare one thing to another. Today, we might refer to someone who is ***more lovely*** or ***lovelier*** than someone else. But we aren't supposed to use both of those forms together. We aren't supposed to say that someone is '***more lovelier***' that someone else. But again, you could say something like that in the Elizabethan period. And Shakespeare occasionally combines those forms in that way. For example, in Hamlet – which we'll look at next time – he used the phrase 'more nearer.' So as we encounter these grammatical forms in Shakespeare's plays, we have to remember that the modern rules of grammar hadn't been formalized yet, and those grammatical forms weren't considered wrong at the time.

Now, with the crowd turned against the conspirators, Brutus and Cassius are forced to flee Rome. With Caesar's death, his grand-nephew Octavius arrives to inherit his mantle. He and Marc Antony form an uneasy alliance, and in the remaining part of the play, they pursue and defeat Brutus and Cassius, with both of the conspirators committing suicide when faced with miliary defeat. That brings an end to this play about Julius Caesar.

Again, that was the play that Thomas Platter saw on the stage at the Globe in September of 1599. And that really takes us not only to the end of 1599, but also to the end of the 1500s as a century. As we move into the 1600s, we find another interesting development as it relates to the overall theme of this episode.

As the new century began in the year 1600, an English clergyman named William Lee entered in a business agreement with an aristocrat named George Brooke. Lee was a bit of an inventor, and he had created a new machine and needed an investor. Brooke had agreed to lend the money to produce the machines in exchange for a cut of the profits. But what was the machine? Well, it was an industrial knitting machine known today as a 'stocking frame knitting machine.' It was one of the first pieces of industrial equipment to ever be produced. Many scholars consider it to be the very first piece of industrial machinery. And even though the industrial revolution was still a couple of centuries away, this was a landmark development in the move toward a society where machines did the work that was once done by hand. In fact, it was that very concern that caused Queen Elizabeth to refuse Lee a patent for his invention. She was concerned that it would put too many people out of work.

Lee's knitting machine featured a series of needles and hooks that opened and closed at certain stages to mimic the work typically done by people who knitted by hand. Certain aspects of Lee's design are still used today. [*SOURCE: The Chronology of Words and Phrases, Linda and Roger Flavel, p. 135.*]

Of course, England and the British Isles had been producing a variety of wool and linen fabrics by hand for centuries. On the island of Jersey in the Channel Islands, a type of fine woolen fabric was produced. It was popular in stockings which were sometimes called Jersey stockings. The word ***Jersey*** in reference to this particular type of cloth appeared in the late 1500s, and by the 1800s, it was being applied to a type of tunic made with the cloth. The word survives today as a type of shirt, usually the type of shirt worn by athletes or used in athletic contests. So you might wear your favorite team's ***jersey***. Again, the word goes back to a kind of fabric produced in the Elizabethan period.

A type of coarse linen cloth was called ***buckram***. A thick, coarse fabric made from cotton and flax was called ***fustian***. That word ***fustian*** is interesting because it has a specific connection to language and the way people spoke. Many people equated that thick fustian fabric to the inflated and lofty language that some people used at the time. And that type of elevated speech became known as ***fustian*** after the name of the cloth.

That same type of linguistic development can also be found in another term. During the 1500s, cotton stuffing was used in a lot of clothing, and it was commonly referred to as ***bombast***. The idea that ***bombast*** referred to something stuffed or bloated was soon extended to certain types of speech. Much like the word ***fustian***, it came to refer to language that was inflated, bloated or excessive. This sense emerged in the late 1500s, and the word ***bombast*** is still used in that way today. If someone is ***bombastic***, they tend to use excessive or pompous language. Again, it all goes back to the stuffing used in clothing and other items in the late 1500s.

Earlier I noted that the people of this period loved to dress up, and they were willing to spend a lot of money on clothing that was normally worn by the higher classes. They loved colorful clothing, and they had color terms that we don't normally use today. Clothing that had a certain greenish-yellow hue was sometimes described as being '***goose-turd green***.' A light red color was sometimes called '***lusty gallant***.' A rose color was occasionally referred to as '***maiden's blush***.'

Archers often dressed in a green color that was called '***Lincoln green***.' All of those color terms were first recorded in the 1500s.

Now throughout this episode, I have referred to the clothing that people wore in the Elizabethan period, but before I wrap things up, I should note that the word ***wore***, as in the past tense of ***wear***, was brand-new during this same period of time. Prior to the late 1500s, you would have said that someone ***weared*** some article of clothing in the past. And had that form of the word survived, we would probably say that the person ***weared*** that item of clothing today. But of course, we don't normally say that. We say that someone ***wore*** that item.

In linguistic terms, what happened is that the weak verb ***wear*** became a strong verb in Early Modern English. Now I talked about the distinction between weak and strong verbs way back in Episode 56, and I'll refer you back to that episode if you want a more detailed explanation about the difference. But in general, a weak verb is a verb which has a past tense form that ends in 'e-d.' Of course, those are most English verbs today. It's what happens when ***jump*** becomes ***jumped***, or ***walk*** becomes ***walked***, or ***play*** becomes ***played***.

But then we also have a small group of verbs where the past tense is formed through an internal vowel change or some other alteration of the word. It's what happens when ***run*** becomes ***ran***, ***sing*** becomes ***sang***, and ***think*** becomes ***thought***. Those are called strong verbs. And most of them are very old verbs that go back to the period before Old English. They have always been irregular and they continue to be irregular in Modern English. In fact, many modern linguists prefer to use terms like 'regular' and 'irregular' to describe these differences, rather than the terms 'strong' and 'weak.'

Well, many verbs that were once strong verbs have become weak verbs over the centuries. In other words, in the distant past, their past tense forms relied on a specific vowel change, but today, they just take the 'e-d' at the end. That's what happened with verbs like '***to help***' and '***to snow***.' At one time, the past tense form of ***help*** was ***holp***, and the past tense form of ***snow*** was ***snew***. So instead of saying, "After it snowed, Tom helped me shovel the walkway," people would have said something more akin to "After it snew, Tom holp me shovel the walkway."

We can imagine how many of those strong verbs became weak because it was easy to just stick an 'e-d' on the end like most of the other verbs. And in fact, if you have small children, you will know that they usually treat all verbs as weak verbs at first, before they learn which ones have alternate forms. So they'll say ***runned*** instead of ***ran***, and ***singed*** instead of ***sang***, and ***freezed*** instead of ***froze***. But eventually, they work out which verbs have different past tense forms. So it easy to see how some people would just used the 'e-d' form as a default, and some strong verbs would therefore become weak over time.

But interestingly, sometimes the change happened in the opposite direction. A weak verb that formed the past tense with 'e-d' gradually became strong and adopted a vowel change in the middle. That's what happened when ***digged*** became ***dug***, and ***sticked*** became ***stuck***, and ***catched*** became ***caught***. And as I noted a moment ago, ***weared*** became ***wore***.

It seems unusual that a standard, simple weak verb would suddenly become strong, but it appears that that usually happened by analogy. For example, the verb ***ring*** was once a weak verb. The past tense form was ***ringed***. But since people said 'sing-sang-sung,' it made sense to say 'ring-rang-rung.' And ***ring*** adopted that strong form over time.

And it appears that the same thing happened with the verb ***wear***. The past tense of ***tear*** was ***tore***, and ***swear*** was ***swore***, and ***bear*** (as in to bear a child) was ***bore***. So it made sense that the past tense of ***wear*** would be ***wore***. And ***wore*** is recorded for the first time in the late 1500s.

Now having talked a little bit about past tense verbs, I think it's time to refer to this episode in the past tense by bringing it to an end. I hope the length of the episode didn't 'wear' you out.

Having completed our look at the 1500s, we can now turn our attention to developments in the 1600s. Next time, we'll look at the final years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. And we'll also look at one of Shakespeare's most popular plays – the well-known tragedy of Hamlet. It may be the most quoted play in the entire Shakespeare canon. We'll also explore some other interesting developments that shaped English in the early 1600s.

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