

RENAISSANCE

The periodization is different. In England we consider the *Renaissance period*, the years from 1500 to 1640. Only in 1840 that period (1500-1640) started to be considered and called *Renaissance*. No one at the time would have used this word.

The first record usage in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1840 in inverted commas as a French term "That heaviest and least graceful of all possible styles, the renaissance as the French choose to term it". It becomes a standard description in the 20th century

It means the 'rebirth' of the classical learning that were lost during the Dark Ages, thanks to humanist learning that studied texts with a special attention to the **human element** and **human experiences**.

The classical had been partly lost during the Middle Ages. It's for this that we talk about 're-birth'

Renaissance it's a problematic word. So, some critics prefer to refer to this period as the *Early Modern Period*. This is due because:

- Nobody in 1500-1640 thought to be in the *Renaissance Period*
- *Renaissance* is used to refer to an experience of a very small amount of people
- Calling it *Early modern period* make the connection between that years and our years stronger. The end of the *Early modern period* signs the begins of our period, the *Contemporary Age*.
- Renaissance only describes the experience of the educated elite engaged

History and Religion

Religion was very important in that period and it was connected to the politics.

1500-1600

The most important event was the **Reform**. It was an attempt to reform Roman Catholic Church but ultimately gave rise to the very different form of Protestantism.

Catholic church was excessively corrupt.

English Reformation has two principle causes:

1. **Henry VIII** was married with **Catherine of Aragon**- it was important to create a political diplomacy with Spain.
He had a daughter but he hardly wanted a **son** for dynastic reasons. His wife apparently wasn't able to give him a male.
Henry VIII fell in love with **Anne Boleyn**, the daughter of an obscure Kentish knight.
2. **Martin Luther** with his 95 thesis in 1517, which made for Henry VII to dispute the Pope's authority

Why Henry VIII wanted a son?

His father, **Henry VII** – who was the 1st Tudor, took the crown not by succession but thanks to a war. He fought the **war of the roses** and killed the king **Richard III** in 1485 at Bosworth.

This was also called **Yorkist-Lancaster** because it was a dynastic conflict: the opposition of the house of York to the one of the Lancaster.

Henry VIII felt that his position was precarious and he needed a male heir in order to secure his dynasty, he was worried that make her daughter a queen was unsure because people could start a war for the throne as his father, Henry VII did.

He thought that a son, a king was much more stable. He wanted a strong descent (discendenza).

He married Catherine of Aragon, a dynastically magnificent match because she was the daughter of Ferdinand Aragon and Isabella of Castile, who gave him a daughter, Mary. She could theoretically become a queen regnant, but Henry still wanted a son.

Henry VIII didn't have a son. He fell in love with **Anne Boleyn** and wanted a son with her. He decided to divorce, but it wasn't easy. Henry had to find a good reason to end the marriage. He found it – he told that his first wife, Catherine was his sister-in-law. People considered this marriage as an incest. He asked to the Pope to annul the marriage so he could stay with Anna.

The Pope didn't accept because he didn't want to take a position that was the opposite of the previous Pope. In the same years **Martin Luther** challenged the Pope.

On 31 October 1517 ML had nailed 95 theses questioning the doctrines and authority of the Catholic Church in Wittenberg.

Initially he wanted to reform and purify the Catholic Church, but he actually started the Reformation and gave rise to Protestantism

Protestantism was immediately very successful and made many converts, including Anne Boleyn who was one of the earliest to convert, an unusually educated and intellectual woman for her time.

Protestantism also provided Henry VIII with a framework of ideas with which to challenge the authority of the Pope

At that point, Henry VIII decided that if the Pope didn't annul his first marriage, he would have found his own church. This is the birth of the **Church of England**.

Moreover, Catherine was the daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, and her nephew was the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who probably put pressure on the pope because he did not want his aunt to be disgraced by a divorce.

In 1533 the king nominated Thomas Cranmer as the **Archbishop of Canterbury**, who is the most important spiritual authority in the Anglican Church.

Cranmer declared Henry's marriage to Catherine invalid and married Henry to the pregnant Anne Boleyn in 1533. She ironically gave birth to a daughter, the future Elizabeth I.

The Pope excommunicate both Henry VIII and Cranmer but they didn't care of it. He would also excommunicate Elizabeth in 1570.

In **1534** English parliament passed the **Act of Supremacy**.

Henry VIII was considered with this Act, **The supreme governor of the church of England**.

Even if he separated the church, he was still a catholic (the first protestant king was his son)

Possibly Henry, who wasn't a stupid man, feared that Charles V might make war on him, so he ordered the closure of all England's abbeys and monasteries, thereby causing a massive redistribution of wealth

1. He gave some of the confiscated land to knights and nobles in order to cement their loyalty
2. He invested a lot of money on ships and created the British navy, because he feared a potential invasion from either France and Spain

Henry VIII died in 1547.

He had 6 wife: 2 divorce, 2 beheaded, 1 died, 1 survive.

Edward 6, 1547-1553

At the death of Henry VIII, became king his and Jane Seymour's son, Edward 6. He was the first protestant king He was just a little baby and died soon, he was 16 years old.

Mary I, 1553-1558

At the death of Edward 6, became queen Mary I.

She was **catholic** so she decided to kill protestant. Due to this she was called '*Bloody Mary*'
After 5 years she died too, in 1558.
She wasn't loved by English.

Elizabeth I, 1558-1603

At the death of Mary I, became queen Elizabeth I.

She was the daughter of Anna Boleyn and she was **protestant** so England became protestant again. The transition between from catholic to protestant wasn't easy.

Many people were worried because she was a woman and because they didn't appreciate the previous queen, Mary I. Due to:

- She had to suppress a rebellion that intended to put her cousin, Lady Jane Grey on the throne
- She had reverted to Catholicism and was married to king Philip II of Spain
- She had not borne children

The parliament wanted from the first day that she got married. A man could properly guide her, and she could produce heirs. She always denied it. She never got married.

Even if she was called as the '*Virgin Queen*', the truth is that she had a lot of lovers but no one became his husband.

She let the suitors believe that perhaps she got married but her intention was very different. She played hard to get (faceva la difficile)

*In that period there were three states for woman: married, widow, about-to-be-married

She ruled alone with the help of her Privy Council, headed by **William Cecil**. Maybe he was also one of Mary's lovers.

She benefited from the Reformation, she filled the psychological and cultural gap produced by the disappearance of the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary and the saints.

She was very unconventional, an unmarried queen, she used this as her strength.

They developed a sort of cult around Elizabeth, creating a mythological personae

She had been a queen for almost 50 years and she always kept her image in portraits **semper eadem**, always the same independently of her age (viene sempre ritratta con lo stesso viso giovane. Non ci sono ritratti di lei invecchiata, con le rughe)

She was connected to **Mary queen of Scots**.

Elizabeth wasn't the only queen in Britain, at that moment England and Scotland were still separated.

In England there were Elizabeth, in Scotland Mary Stuart. She was King James V's only daughter and she ascended the throne in 1542 when she was a week old.

Her throne were commanded by other people.

She was sent to France so she could get marry with the son of the French king.

It was very important from a diplomatic point of view.

Later her husband became king and Mary became **queen of French but also of Scotland**.

When her husband died, she decided to come back to Scotland but there were a lot of problems:

- Scotland was protestant while Mary Stuart was catholic
- Mary Stuart knew French but even if she was queen of Scots she didn't know Scottish or English
- Nobody liked her

She married her cousin, Henry Lord Danley and she gave birth to **James 6 of Scotland**.

Shortly afterwards, her husband died in mysterious circumstances.

Mary immediately married the chief suspect, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell.

Scots rebelled and Mary was sent in prison but she escaped and went to England to ask help to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth had to face a difficult situation. She didn't know what to do. She was protestant so she didn't like Mary because she was catholic. At the same time she had to help her but she didn't want to start a war because she had offended the Scots. As a queen she wanted to show the importance of respecting other queen's rights. At the end she decided to **imprison Mary Stuart in England for 19 years.**

This created also **problems with France** because Mary was still queen of France, but also with **Spain** that was strongly catholic – Philip II was enraged at England's imprisonment of a Catholic queen, especially after what had happened to his great-aunt Catherine of Aragon.

An atmosphere of paranoia about domestic security developed in England.

The problem was also with the regency of Netherlands. They were catholic so Filippo of Spain wanted this place. English wanted to convert Netherlands to Protestantism.

The problems between Spain and England were due also to the fact that English were stealing money, gold and resources from the New World to Spain.

The first English intelligence service was developed (Edmund Spenser and Christopher Marlowe apparently worked for it)

When Elizabeth I in 1587 decided to execute Mary I Stuart, Filippo of Spain decided that this was a good reason to start a fight between the two countries.

Philip II seized the opportunity to send the '**Invincible' Armada** of ships against England in summer 1588, b/c he wanted to overthrow Elizabeth in order to prevent the English from interfering in the Spanish Netherlands and from intercepting Spanish ships coming back from the New World

However, Philip's plans miscarried:

1. because of his own mismanagement of the campaign
2. because of the defensive efforts of the English and Dutch prevailed. The Dutch together with English proved to be much stronger than everyone thought they could be
3. because of the Spanish Armada was dispersed by the storm (which the English interpreted as 'God's wind')

Philip II of Spain also ruled the Low Countries through regents, which became increasingly difficult after Protestantism began to spread there, and Philip had to repress rebellions

The Dutch appealed to Elizabeth, as a fellow Protestant, and she decided to support the rebels (Sir Philip Sidney dies fighting there)

Another problem for England was **Ireland.**

This place was catholic and English were frightened that Irish could stay with France and Spain

Elizabeth invested a lot of money and created a lot of campaigns to defeat Ireland

Elizabeth was helped by **Robert Devreux**, 2nd Earl of Sussex to fight against the rebellious Irish. He failed and he was very ashamed. He decided to return in England and meet Elizabeth to apologize with her, the two had a strong relation probably they were lovers.

Apparently, he he presented himself in her bedchamber one morning, before she was properly wiggged or gowned

After all this, he was put under house arrest and fell from the queen's favour

Utterly desperate, in 1601 he decided to lead the only armed rebellion of Elizabeth's reign

It was a miserable failure, and Essex was executed for treason

Then he decided to organize an anti-monarchic rebellion and was executed.

Elizabeth died in 1603 without heirs (eredi)

Elizabeth I was succeeded by **James VI of Scotland**, the son of Mary I Stuart.
James VI of Scotland decided to unify England, Ireland, Scotland – **the British Empire**.
When he unified Scotland and England became **James I of England**.

People were excited about this new king. He was married with a Danish woman, he had several children: one daughter and two sons so the succession shouldn't be a problem.

His two major projects were:

- Unify England, Scotland, Ireland > British Empire
- Be a *rex pacificus*, so he wanted to finish all the hostility with the foreign countries.

He signed a treaty with Spain, the enemy of Britain, in 1604 that made him very unpopular.

Initially, it seemed that James might be a tolerant king towards Catholics

However, two things happened:

1. There were two combined Catholic plots, one to kidnap James and hold him in the Tower of London until he agreed to be more tolerant towards Catholics; the other to remove James and his family and supplant them with his cousin Arbella Stuart
2. He discovered that his wife, Queen Anne, had been secretly sent a rosary from the pope

James ordered all Catholic priests to leave the country and revived the collection of fines for recusancy (i.e. refusal to attend services of the Church of England)

If I was Catholic I could live in England but I had to go to the Protestant church even if in my own house I could be Catholic but I couldn't be in front of the others. I had to maintain my religion secret.

The heightened tensions between Protestants and Catholics lay the ground for the Gunpowder Plot (1605)

The Gunpowder Plot

In 1604 a number of disgruntled Catholics, such as Robert Catesby the conspirator, decided to rent a small house near the Parliament. Then they rented a cellar, right by the Houses of Parliament, installing Guy Fawkes as caretaker, under the alias of John Johnson.

The cellar lay directly underneath the House of Lords, and over time 36 barrels of gunpowder were moved in, enough to blow everything and everyone in the vicinity sky high, if ignited.

According to recent studies, the explosion could have caused total destruction up to a radius of 40 m, thereby destroying the old palace of Westminster and Westminster Hall, the Abbey and surrounding streets

In 1605, October, the plan was that Guy Fawkes had to start the fire and then had to escape to the continental Europe in order to ask help from other foreign countries.

At the same time the others had to kidnap Elizabeth, James' daughter.

The plan failed because one member of the parliament received a letter in which warning him to avoid the opening of Parliament on 5th November. He decided to spread the voice.

He took the letter to the Secretary of State, who decided the best results would be achieved by striking at the last minute

On the night of 4th November, the Secretary of State ordered Westminster to be searched

The first search spotted a suspiciously large amount of firewood in a certain cellar

The second, at around midnight, found Fawkes

Fawkes was immediately arrested; the others were caught in the next few weeks

Guy Fawkes was tortured for two full days in the Tower before confessing

The plotters were charged with high treason, which carried a terrible punishment: they were to be hanged, drawn and quartered

This means that they would be drawn through the streets, hanged until halfdead, upon which their genitals would be cut off and burned in front of them. Still alive, their bowels and heart would be removed. Finally they would be decapitated and dismembered; their body parts would be publicly displayed, eaten by the birds as they decomposed

The Gunpowder Plot influenced a number of early modern English plays, e.g. William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1606) and *Catiline His Conspiracy* (1611), Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *The Woman Hater* (1606) and *Cupid's Revenge* (1607-08)

The Gunpowder Plot ultimately resulted in a worsened situation for Catholics, as James obviously enforced new laws against them

In general, James was not a very popular king

He was probably homosexual, but this was not a problem per se

The issue was that he was especially susceptible to male favourites, which gave rise to several scandals at court

Unlike Elizabeth, he did not like public displays and progresses: on one occasion, when told by a courtier that the public wanted to see him, he replied 'God's wounds! I will pull down my breeches and they shall see my arse!'

He spent too much time hunting

He spent a lot of money in lavish entertainments at court

He was not very close to his son Henry, who was instead very popular

He died in 1625

He had two sons. People wanted as a king Henry who was a soldier, protestant, wanted to make Europe all protestant but he died before to be king.

So, James I was succeeded by his other son: Charles I

Charles I

He was a weak man. All the decisions were taken by his wife, Henrietta Maria who was a catholic.

Nobody liked them.

They thought that the parliament had no value. He asked to the parliament money but they denied it so Charles I decided to shut down the Parliament for 11 years. This period is called '*Eleven years tyranny*' and it happened in 1642

1642: **Civil war** (closure of the theatres); 1649 Charles I was decapitated.

RELIGION

Religion was very important in Early Modern Period in England. It was almost impossible to be an atheist. 'Atheist' was an insult too extreme and too ludicrous to be taken seriously

Apart from some exception, basically everyone was a Christian. Christianity had been the dominant religion in England since St Augustine, the apostle of England, arrived in Kent in 597 CE (Christian Era).

When Christianity split people had to choose between: **Catholicism** and **Protestantism**.

People were faced with a difficult choice between the various confessions into which Christianity had split as a result of the Reformation

- Personal preference
- Government policy, ultimately determined by the monarch's personal preference

After the Reformation people became protestant while catholic were persecuted and sometimes even martyred. Nonetheless, many people continued to adhere to Catholicism (albeit often secretly)

Very few people, except perhaps radical Puritans, abandoned entirely all the beliefs and practices associated with Catholicism

What was the most important differences between Catholicism and Protestantism?

The two differences which are extremely important are:

1. Relationship between human beings and God

- Catholicism: there are **priests**, whose function is to mediate between you and God. So people are not encouraged to read the Bible on their own.
- Protestantism: each person is encouraged to read on their own the Bible, so they have a **personal interpretation**. This means that everyone needs their own copy of the Bible so this was an important stimulus in printing. Reading became necessary for approaching to God and the Bible.

2. What happens after the death, the fate of the soul after death

- Catholicism: when you died you can go: **hell, heaven, purgatory**. You can pray and celebrate masses (messe) for people who are dead to help them to go from Purgatory to Heaven
- Protestant: there's no purgatory. You are saved or damned. There is no the third way
Due to this ghosts don't exist

Other differences:

- Marriage and celibacy (monks and nuns; virginity before marriage)
- Remarriage of widows (marriage as a fundamental part of a well-ordered society)
- Cycles of feast and fast (e.g. eating only fish rather than meat on Fridays)

Catholicism	Protestantism
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<p>The priest is needed as a mediator between the word of God and the lay person</p> <p>Translations of the Bible from Latin and private study of the Bible were discouraged</p> <p>Hence, the word of God = what the priest said</p>	<p>Individual communication with God and personal study of the Bible encouraged</p> <p>Every human being is her/his own priest (though it was believed women needed help, and some even said they should confess their sins to their husbands)</p> <p>This was a major stimulus to literacy and printing (but also alarming b/c it placed much more responsibility on the individual)</p> <p>Protestantism also downplayed the intercessory role of compassionate figures such as the Virgin Mary and the saints → iconoclasm</p>
<p>Between hell and heaven there is purgatory</p> <p>Saying prayers and celebrating masses for deceased loved ones and lighting candles for their souls' benefit would help them progress to heaven</p>	<p>There are only heaven and hell</p> <p>You were either saved or damned</p> <p>This was not easily accepted by everyone → many people kept saying prayers for the dead, b/c they felt comforted at the idea, especially in rural areas and far from London (in the north)</p> <p>E.g. Shakespeare's Hamlet (1600-01)</p>

Theoretical Position

There were:

- **Lutherans**
- **Puritanism:** are people that consider themselves as people that are purer than others
'Puritans' are self-identified as those who want to be, or believe they are, 'purer' in their religious observance than their fellow Protestants
They avoid all forms of **ceremony** → it can corrupts yourself.
They dislike the use of music, they do not celebrate Christmas
They do not allow the exchange of wedding rings as an unnecessary physical manifestations of a spiritual union.
They dislike the authorities, the clergy, bishop (which opened the way in their mind to start disputing the king's authority). Puritans were also oppositional figures, b/c the Church of England had dismissed them as extremists
They played a crucial role in the growing challenge to Stuart rule culminating in Charles I's beheading in 1649
- **Calvinism** – that was the most important
John Calvin (1509-64) was an exiled French Protestant living in Geneva, Switzerland. He elaborated the concept of **predestination** → your destiny is chosen by God before your birth. So the election or damnation had been predestined by God before the individual had even been born