

# Povijesni kontekst razvoja ranog modernog engleskog jezika

---

**Međeši, Iva**

**Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad**

**2024**

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **University of Pula / Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:137:766721>

*Rights / Prava:* [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2024-10-31**



*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[Digital Repository Juraj Dobrila University of Pula](#)



Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli  
Filozofski fakultet

**IVA MEDEŠI**

**HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH**

Završni rad

Pula, 2024. godine

Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli  
Filozofski fakultet

**IVA MEDEŠI**

**HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH**

Završni rad

**JMBAG 01303387850, redoviti student**

**Studijski smjer: Preddiplomski dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij; Engleski jezik  
i književnost;**

**Preddiplomski dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij; Povijest**

**Predmet: Engleski jezik u vremenu i prostoru**

**Znanstveno područje: Humanističke znanosti**

**Znanstveno polje: Filologija**

**Znanstvena grana: Anglistika**

**Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Robert Kurelić**

**Komentor: prof. dr. sc. Renata Šamo**

Pula, 2024. godine



## IZJAVA O AKADEMSKOJ ČESTITOSTI

Ja, dolje potpisana Iva Međeši, kandidat za prvostupnika Engleskog jezika i književnosti i Povijesti ovime izjavljujem da je ovaj Završni rad rezultat isključivo mogega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na objavljenu literaturu kao što to pokazuju korištene bilješke i bibliografija. Izjavljujem da niti jedan dio Završnog rada nije napisan na nedozvoljen način, odnosno da je prepisan iz kojega necitiranog rada, te da ikoji dio rada krši bilo čija autorska prava. Izjavljujem, također, da nijedan dio rada nije iskorišten za koji drugi rad pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj ili radnoj ustanovi.

Student

Iva Međeši

U Puli, 2024. godine



## IZJAVA O KORIŠTENJU AUTORSKOGA DJELA

Ja, Iva Međeši, dajem odobrenje Sveučilištu Jurja Dobrile u Puli, nositelju prava korištenja, da moj završni rad pod nazivom „ Historic Context of the Development of Early Modern English“ upotrijebi da tako navedeno autorsko djelo objavi u javnoj internetskoj bazi Sveučilišne knjižnice Sveučilišta Jurja Dobrile u Puli te preslika u javnu internetsku bazu završnih radova Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice (stavljanje na raspolaganje javnosti), sve u skladu sa Zakonom o autorskom pravu i drugim srodnim pravima i dobrom akademskom praksom, a radi promicanja otvorenoga, slobodnoga pristupa znanstvenim informacijama.

Za korištenje autorskog djela na gore navedeni način ne potražujem naknadu.

Potpis

Iva Međeši

U Puli, 2024. godine

# CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2.	WARS OF THE ROSES .....	3
2.1.	Hundred Years' War and the Beginning of the Wars of the Roses.....	3
2.2.	Historic Overview of the Wars of the Roses .....	5
3.	HOUSE OF TUDOR .....	8
3.1.	Henry VIII.....	9
3.1.1.	Henry VIII and Protestantism.....	9
3.1.2.	Henry VIII and the Church of England .....	11
3.2.	Elizabeth's Ascent to the Throne .....	14
3.2.1.	Elizabeth I and Trade .....	16
3.2.2.	Trading Companies and the English Vocabulary.....	19
3.3.	English Renaissance .....	20
3.3.1.	Religion and Culture.....	21
3.3.2.	Elizabethan Theatre.....	22
4.	DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH .....	24
4.1.	Latin Influence on English.....	25
4.2.	Influence of the Romance Languages on English.....	26
5.	WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE .....	28
5.1.	Shakespeare's Vocabulary .....	29
5.2.	Usage of Shakespeare's Vocabulary .....	30
6.	CONCLUSION.....	32
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	33
	ABSTRACT.....	37
	SADRŽAJ.....	38

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of a unified English identity began to take shape during the Hundred Years' War. Although the war started as a dynastic struggle, the length and ferocity of the war had a profound impact on the participants. The need for dedicated, motivated soldiers forced the kings of England to tap into and bolster a sense of national pride, to exploit and channel the fear and hatred of the other in order to compensate for the chronic shortage of available manpower as well as the logistical hurdles in ferrying large numbers of men and supplies across the English Channel. Instead of quantity, the King of England was forced to focus on quality bolstered by high moral. The result was the awakening of English pride and nationalism, reciprocated by their enemies in France. In a sense, the war forged both nations into cohesive, self-aware communities.

However, the end of the war on the continent ushered in the outbreak of a new war, this time on English soil. On account of social and political upheavals that ensued following the defeat in France and the mental disability of King Henry VI, the rival branches of the Plantagenet dynasty waged what would become known in 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography as the Wars of the Roses, named after the Yorkist white and the Lancastrian red roses which they adopted as their heraldic symbols. These wars between brothers and cousins would decimate the English nobility over the three decades they were waged in (1454-1487) but, miraculously, spared the middle class and the peasantry, the "common folk" who watched from the sidelines. The end of the war brought peace for the first time in over 150 years. The Tudors, a third branch with the weakest claim, managed to unite the houses and ascend the throne, and a single dynasty ruled for the next hundred years.

This thesis aims to show the changing political, economic, and religious climate in England in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the changes it wrought on the English language, focusing predominantly on the growth of the vocabulary. It will be explored through three sources: the growing number of prosperous trading companies, the English Renaissance, and the works of William Shakespeare.

The reign of Henry VIII was a tumultuous period in British history. Despite being named *Fidei Defensor* (the Defender of the Faith) by the Pope, for his firm devotion to Catholicism and an even fiercer persecution of protestants in England, Henry VIII

ultimately split from the Roman Catholic Church. He came to this drastic decision because, despite his many pleas, Pope Clement VII refused to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, his late brother Arthur's widow and, more importantly, the aunt of the most powerful European monarch at the time, the King of Spain and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V. Because of Clement VII's fear of the ire of Emperor, the Church of England was founded, and England became Protestant practically overnight. After much turmoil following Henry VIII's death, peace was again established with the crowning of Elizabeth I as Queen of England. She fought the Spanish under Charles' son Phillip II, expanded the nascent British Empire, and issued charters which established many trading companies.

These companies would later exert a profound influence on the English vocabulary. Companies that shall be mentioned in this thesis are the Muscovy Company (1555), the Eastland Company (1581), the Levant Company (1581), and the East India Company (1600). This thesis aims to prove that many words from languages such as Russian, Hindu, Urdu, and many more entered English vocabulary thanks to these trading companies.

Two more sources greatly contributed to the development of the English vocabulary in this period. One is the so-called English Renaissance which reached its zenith during the reign of Elizabeth I who is remembered as a great patron of the arts. The second and, arguably, the most well-known and possibly the most influential in this regard is the world-famous playwright and poet, William Shakespeare.



## 2. WARS OF THE ROSES

The Wars of the Roses were a series of dynastic conflicts after the final English defeat in the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453). These conflicts took place from 1455 until 1487. The aftermath of the Hundred Years' War and the loss of English-occupied France, in addition to the incompetence of the new king, Henry VI, who had mental health problems, and his government, were among of the main reasons for the outbreak of these conflicts. Richard, the Duke of York, called for reform of the royal council, and the two factions in this war emerged, York and Lancaster.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1. Hundred Years' War and the Beginning of the Wars of the Roses

To discuss the Wars of the Roses, one must first examine the Hundred Years' War. In summary, the Hundred Years' War was a series of intermittent conflicts between the Kingdoms of England and France from 1337 until 1453. The root cause of these conflicts is complex and hard to define with precision because historians struggle to define when it first began. Most historians take the Norman conquest of England in 1066 after the Battle of Hastings as the beginning of the period of constant tensions between France and England.<sup>2</sup> The Norman nobility became the ruling class of England while keeping their possessions in France. In subsequent years, the kings of England acquired by marriage and inheritance even more power and land in France, rivalling if not dwarfing their nominal overlord for their French possessions, the King of France. Edward III's mother, Isabella, was a daughter of the French king, Phillip IV of France. After his death, his son, Charles IV, claimed the throne. Since he had no living sons, the French aristocracy proclaimed Charles' cousin, Phillip VI of Valois, the King of France. However, Edward III, the nephew of a former French king, believed that he had more rights to the French throne and claimed this right in 1328. This event began a series of heated discussions, which led to Edward III's declaration of war on Philip VI in 1337. The War ended with the English losing most of their French possessions except Calais.

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses: 1455-1485* (Osprey Publishing, 2003), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years' War: 1337-1457* (Osprey, 2002.), 20-23.

The seed of the future Wars of the Roses was planted in Edward's time. He was succeeded by Richard II, the son of his eldest son, the (in)famous Edward the Black Prince, whereas his other sons went to found their own branches that would later become York and Lancaster.

Henry IV of Lancaster overthrew Richard II in 1399, securing the crown for his branch of the Plantagenet family. His son, Henry V inflicted a decisive defeat on the French at Agincourt in 1415 which bolstered English morale and enabled him to reclaim much of the possessions lost by John Lackland by 1419. With the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, Henry V was officially declared a successor to the French throne after the death of Charles VI.<sup>3</sup>

The Lancastrian hold on the throne was shaken after the untimely death of King Henry V. His death left Henry VI, an infant, as a king. Although Henry VI was crowned king of England and France, this so-called victory was short-lived. The death of Henry V sparked a struggle within the regency council, pitting the various factions against each other in a battle for control over the incapacitated king. This was beneficial for the French because the English were more focused on their internal conflicts than on the war with France. At this point, England started losing on the battlefield culminating with the disastrous defeat in the Battle of Castillon, near Libourne, in 1453. England lost its last great domain in France, Gascony or English Aquitaine, and consequently, the Hundred Years' War.<sup>4</sup>

The social aspect of the Hundred Years' War should not be forgotten. It is important to note that a sense of national identity began developing during the Hundred Years' War, especially among English soldiers. The English introduced standard uniforms which had St. George's cross on them. One of the unintended consequences of the Hundred Years' War was the creation of an English-speaking nation and the national unity of the English people. Susan Crane argues that identity is both a material and a conceptual construct, but the focus of this paper will be more on the latter.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> John A. Wagner, "Treaty of Troyes (1420)," in *Encyclopaedia of the Hundred Years War* (Greenwood Press, 2006), 302-303.

<sup>4</sup> Curry, *The Hundred Years' War*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 1.

French language had a long-standing tradition in England. It was the official language in Norman (Norman French) and Angevin England (Anglo-Norman French) since 1066. It remained the official language of the English court until the very end of the Hundred Years' War. This changed because of the growing sense of an English identity, as well as the desire to resist and remove any traces of French influence from their court and country.<sup>6</sup> However, even before the end of the War, there are some examples of English prevailing over French in England. For example, Henry IV was the first English king who used English as his language of choice. In 1362, through Pleading in English Act, the English Parliament legalised the usage of English in judicial courts, which led to the standardization of the language.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.2. Historic Overview of the Wars of the Roses**

After the Hundred Years' War, as noted earlier, there was trouble regarding the regency for the infant king Henry VI. When he reached adulthood, he married Margaret of Anjou, one of the main female protagonists in the Wars of the Roses. On the one side, there were Henry VI and his wife Margaret, who were both leaders of the Lancastrian faction. Opposed to them were Yorkist supporters led by Richard, the Duke of York whose two sons would later ascend the throne as Edward IV and Richard III.

The aftermath of the Hundred Years' War left England in turmoil. The people blamed the king and his supporters for the economic collapse of the country, as well as for the loss of Normandy and other former English domains in France.<sup>8</sup> All of this led to the strengthening of Richard, the Duke of York, and his belief in the need for reform. In 1453, an opportunity presented itself when Henry VI suffered a bout of insanity after receiving news of the disastrous defeat at Castillon. That is when Richard began to assert his claim to the throne by challenging Henry VI's authority and having himself named Protector of the Realm. The first battle between the opposing sides was on 22 April 1455 at St Albans. This marked the beginning of armed conflicts between the two factions. After this, a series of battles occurred over the next few years, and some of the most important ones include the Battle of Blore Heath in 1459, the Battle

---

<sup>6</sup> Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Elly Van Geldern, *A History of the English Language* (John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), 112.

<sup>8</sup> Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 10.

of Northampton in 1460, and the Battle of Wakefield the same year where Duke Richard lost his life.<sup>9</sup> However, his son, Edward IV, took up his father's ambition and succeeded in ascending to the throne after the Battle of Towton in 1461.

During Edward IV's reign (1461-1470), the government's main task was to subdue or destroy any vestiges of Lancastrian support in the Kingdom. It seemed like the goal was fulfilled when Edward IV managed to capture Henry VI and imprison him in the Tower. However, Edward IV did not count on Margaret of Anjou making a deal with his former ally, Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. Commonly referred to as the "Kingmaker," Warwick was one of the wealthiest and the most important figures in the Wars of the Roses. Michael Hicks explains his influence with the famous joke by the Calais garrison: "(...) there were two rulers in England, one being Warwick, and the other whose name they had forgotten."<sup>10</sup> This goes to show that many things could have developed differently if it were not for the Earl of Warwick and his intrigues. He vehemently opposed Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, and even briefly reaffirmed Henry VI as the ruler of England in 1470. However, the Lancastrian reign was swiftly cut short at the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. Earl of Warwick was killed in the battle of Barnet, and the last Lancastrian, Henry's son Edward, the Prince of Wales, was murdered in the aftermath of Tewkesbury by King Edward's men. Henry VI was once again captured and died in captivity in the Tower of London seventeen days after Tewkesbury.<sup>11</sup>

Edward IV reclaimed the throne and ruled until his death in 1483. His successor was his son, Edward V. This would mean that the Yorkist dynasty was secure, but he was usurped by his uncle, Richard III just several weeks into his reign.<sup>12</sup>

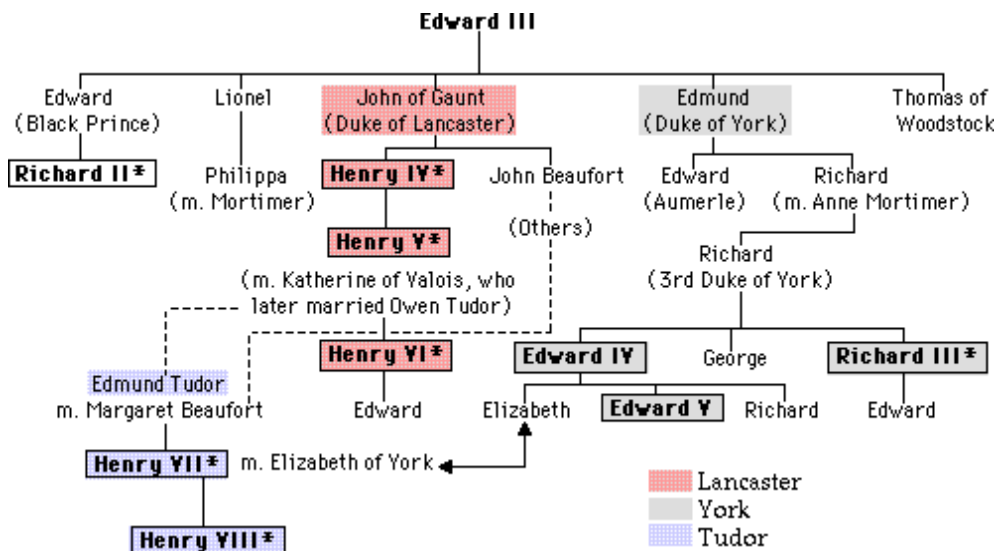
---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 10-16.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 29.



Picture 1 shows the family tree of both Lancastrians and Yorkists<sup>13</sup>

Richard III's rule was marked with many deaths and power shifts, but eventually, he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 against Henry Tudor. This battle and the rise of Henry VII Tudor ended the Wars of Roses.

<sup>13</sup> "The Monarchs of Histories," accessed August 28, 2024, <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/history/the%20histories/kings1.HTML>.

### 3. HOUSE OF TUDOR

It is often said that Henry VII united the two roses because he was a descendant of the Lancastrian dynasty and married Elizabeth of York, a daughter of Edward IV. His ascent to the throne began the Age of the Tudors.

The Tudors began with Owen Tudor, a Welshman in service to Henry V who later married his widow and whose son Edmund married Margaret Beaufort, great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt. Henry VII was their son and the first Tudor king. The reign of the Tudor dynasty ended with the death of Queen Elizabeth I. After Elizabeth I, the English throne was claimed by James VI of Scotland, later known as James I of England.

The Tudor dynasty gave five kings of England:

Henry VII (r. 1485-1509)

Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547)

Edward VI (r. 1547-1553)

Mary I (r. 1553-1558)

Elizabeth I (r. 1558 – 1603).

There was also a nine-day monarchy of Lady Jane Grey, a granddaughter of Henry VII, between the reigns of Edward VI and the Queen Mary but she is often omitted from the list of Tudor monarchs because of the brevity of her reign. The rest of this chapter will discuss the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, during which some of the most pivotal changes occurred. These changes will be discussed later. Most of these were initiated by Henry VIII, and his daughter, either reinstated them after Mary's reign or improved on them. The section on Henry VIII will consider his life, emphasising his break with the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Elizabeth's chapter will discuss her ascent and consolidation of power, as well as the formation of the new trading companies which exerted such a great deal of influence on the English vocabulary.

### 3.1. Henry VIII

In English and European collective memory Henry VIII is most (in)famous for his six marriages, followed by his break with Rome. To understand why he initiated the English Reformation, it is crucial to understand his background and the political and religious situation in his childhood.

Henry VIII was born as the third child and the second son of King Henry VII and his wife, Elizabeth of York. His older brother, Arthur, was raised and prepared to succeed their father. At age three, Arthur was betrothed to Catherine of Aragon, a daughter of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. The political purpose of this marriage was to forge an Anglo-Spanish alliance against France and Scotland. Spain was then on its way to becoming the preeminent political, military, and economic power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This fact led to the commercial agreement of Medina del Campo in 1489, and ten years later, Catherine and Arthur were married by proxy.<sup>14</sup> This union was short-lived because of Arthur's untimely death in 1501, just two years into his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. However, to maintain the alliance with the Spanish, Henry VII forced his son and heir, Henry VIII, to marry his brother's widow. A papal dispensation was required to achieve this new union, for which the English court argued that Arthur and Catherine had never consummated their marriage, thus making it void. This will be later brought into question when Henry demands the annulment of his marriage with Catherine to marry Anne Boleyn.

#### 3.1.1. Henry VIII and Protestantism

During Henry's childhood, new religious ideas were spreading throughout the European continent. A German monk, Martin Luther, nailed his famous Ninety-Five Theses, condoning the selling of indulgences, onto the church doors in Wittenburg in

---

<sup>14</sup> The Agreement of Medina del Campo was renegotiated in 1496 with new amendments from Henry VII. This document was supposed to guarantee the mutual reduction of tariffs, but it was never fully accepted by either side. This was because the two powers could not agree on how to proceed with their politics regarding the French. The commercial aspect was the mutual reduction of tariffs but the marriage was later renegotiated. However, this agreement served as the basis for establishing the Anglo-Spanish union which culminated with the marriage of Catherine and Arthur, and later his brother, Henry VIII.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Treaty of Medina del Campo." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Medina-del-Campo>.

1517.<sup>15</sup> This marked the beginning of the religious reforms known as the Protestant Reformation. Luther invited people to debate the money-gathering practices in which the Church was engaged. He believed that salvation could only be reached through faith (lat. sola fide) and that there was no need for the involvement of the highest members of the clergy.<sup>16</sup>

The Ninety-Five Thesis began spreading throughout the Holy Roman Empire, and later, across Europe, thanks to the invention of the printing press. Luther strongly advocated for the translation of the Bible into European vernacular languages. The Bible was written and distributed only in Latin. All clergymen, all scholars, and many administrators and nobles were proficient in Latin, but the masses, the majority of believers in other words, were not proficient in Latin and learned liturgy verbatim. To make religion more accessible to everyone, Luther argued that every person should be able to read the Bible in the language he/she understood and spoke. This consequently led to the first full translations of the Bible into German, completed in 1534.

Naturally, the Church and the Pope were not satisfied with the impact that Luther's teaching had on the people. In July 1520, Pope Leo X issued a public decree in which he condoned Luther's teaching as heretical and gave him 120 days to recant, which Luther refused. His refusal made Pope Leo X excommunicate Luther from the Catholic Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1521. To prove that he supported the Roman Catholic Church, King Henry VIII wrote and published *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* in the summer of 1521. This assertion of the seven sacraments was a response to Luther's proclamation according to which there were only two sacraments. Pope Leo X granted Henry VIII the title of *Fidei Defensor* to strengthen their relationship and to thank Henry VIII for fighting on the Pope's side.<sup>17</sup> Later, when Henry VIII broke with the papacy, he was deprived of this title.

---

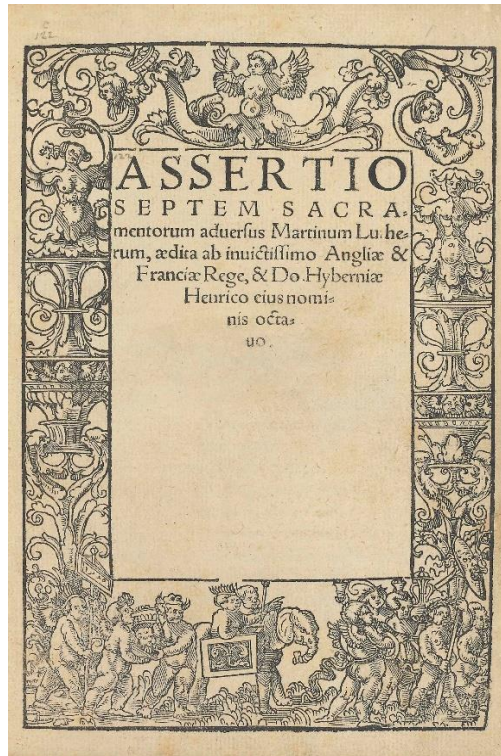
<sup>15</sup> Indulgences, or selling pardon for sins, was a practice in which the member of the Church, such as a priest or prior, would sell the forgiveness of someone's sins to get their souls into purgatory. This practice was widespread because of the belief in purgatory and fear of punishment which was widespread amongst the people.

Jennifer Speake and Thomas Goddard Bergin, "Indulgences," *Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (Facts on File, 2004), 252-253.

<sup>16</sup> Speake and Bergin, "Luther, Martin," *Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance*, 290-291.

<sup>17</sup> Speake and Bergin, "Henry VIII," *Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance*, 235-236.





Picture 2 shows the front page of Henry VII's work *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum*<sup>18</sup>

### 3.1.2. Henry VIII and the Church of England

The marriage between Henry and Catherine of Aragon, produced one child, the future Queen Mary I of England. Several of Catherine's pregnancies ended in stillbirth, and with no male heir in sight, Henry VIII grew disillusioned with his wife and marriage. Sometime in 1525, Henry became enamoured with Anne Boleyn, Catherine's highborn lady-in-waiting whose sister Mary, also a member of the Queen's household, he had an affair with in earlier years. They began an intense relationship that culminated in something that would later be known as "the King's Great Matter."<sup>19</sup> Henry instructed his chancellor, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, to secure an annulment of his marriage from Pope Clement VII. Wolsey argued in 1527 that their marriage disobeyed the instructions from the book of Leviticus, saying:

<sup>18</sup> Christie's.com, *HENRY VIII (King of England). Assertio septum sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum*. Antwerp: Michael Hillenius, 1522, accessed August 21, 2024, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5814485>.

<sup>19</sup> The term "King's Great Matter" refers in literature on two things. First one is Henry's desire to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boylen. The second one is his desire to produce a male heir, which was one of the reasons why he believed his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was cursed.

“If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing...they shall be childless.”<sup>20</sup>

With this, Wolsey intended to show how Catherine's marriage to Henry was doomed and cursed from the start because she had already been married to his brother, Arthur. Catherine, on the other hand, claimed that her marriage with Arthur was never consummated and that was the primary reason why she thought this could not apply to her case. Furthermore, Catherine appealed to her nephew, Emperor Charles V, for help in this matter. The Emperor, whose armies had sacked Rome in May 1527 and held the Pope imprisoned for almost a year, likely pressured his hostage not to approve the annulment. Although it was common for popes to grant annulments in these matters, because of the timing and the political situation, he disregarded Henry's wishes.

The revolution was imminent. After Wolsey failed to provide Henry with the marriage annulment, Thomas Cromwell became Henry's principal advisor and the principal champion of the Reformation. He urged Henry to separate the English Church from Rome and proclaim himself both the spiritual and political leader of England. The Parliament, on Henry's insistence, passed several acts in order to separate the Church of England from Rome and for the King to become the Supreme Head of the Church of England.<sup>21</sup>

Henry led the Church of England similarly to the way in which the Roman Catholic Church was led. He, seeking additional revenue, capitalized on the growing discontent with monastic privileges to seize the assets of these religious institutions. Under the guidance of Thomas Cromwell, the suppression of the monastic orders became a pivotal moment in the advancement of Protestantism. In 1536, Parliament passed the Suppression of Religious Houses Act, which initially targeted smaller abbeys, leaving larger houses mostly untouched. Within a few months, approximately one-third of monastic properties had been confiscated. Henry's destruction of the monastic communities had a profound impact on his Catholic subjects and left lasting scars. The dissolution led to the loss of numerous ecclesiastical artifacts, buildings,

---

<sup>20</sup> Leviticus 20:21.

<sup>21</sup>John Guy, *The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 50.

manuscripts, and paintings, many of which were destroyed or fell into neglect, leaving a permanent mark on England's religious and cultural landscape.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most important innovations, however, was the translation of the Bible. The Great Bible, called like this due to its size, was the first national Bible in the English language. Cromwell wanted to ensure that every man and woman in England could understand the Word of God, so he translated the Bible into English and forced the clergymen to read it during services. An official English Bible in Miles Coverdale's translation was published in 1535.<sup>23</sup> This was a pivotal step towards the affirmation of the identity of the English people.<sup>24</sup> The Great Bible paved the way for a more important subsequent edition, the King James' Bible, which is still used today.



Picture 3 shows the illustrations of the front page of *The Great Bible*<sup>25</sup>

Henry went on to marry Anne Boleyn, but she, too, produced only a single female heir, Elizabeth in 1533. Henry was hoping for a male heir for two reasons. One being so he can finally secure his line of succession. The second one was that having a son would be a sign of God's approval of the controversial marriage between Anne and Henry, as well as of his recent policy towards the pope.<sup>26</sup> Since this did not happen, after three years of marriage, Henry had her beheaded on charges of alleged adultery

---

<sup>22</sup>Speake and Bergin, "Dissolution of monasteries," *Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance*, 143.

<sup>23</sup> Guy, *The Tudors*, 26.

<sup>24</sup> "Analysis of Henry VIII's personal Bible sheds new light on Britain's past." Queen Mary's University of London. Visited on August 27, 2024. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2020/hss/analysis-of-henry-viii-s-personal-bible-sheds-new-light-on-britains-past.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Ian McKee, *Title Page of St John's College Great Bible*, accessed August 18, 2024, [https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special\\_collections/early\\_books/gbible.htm](https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/early_books/gbible.htm).

<sup>26</sup> Susan Doron, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 13.

in 1536. Henry then married another lady-in-waiting, Jane Seymour, the only wife who gave him a male heir, future King Edward VI. She died a few days after giving birth, possibly from infection. Henry married three more times, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and finally, Catherine Parr. After his death in 1547, his only son, Edward VI, ascended to the throne.

Edward's England veered further away from Catholicism and towards Protestantism. Some new practices were introduced, such as marriage of clergy, which was allowed but, unfortunately, more Roman Catholic practices such as statues and stained glass were destroyed. In January 1549, the Act of Uniformity was approved, and The Book of Common Prayer, which had been composed mainly by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer was introduced in England. It was the official liturgy of Edward VI's Protestant Church. It was in English, and it replaced the Catholic Mass that the English people were used to celebrating. Edward lived a very short life, dying at the age of fifteen from tuberculosis. Before his death, he left the throne to his cousin, the protestant Lady Jane Grey, who was married to a protestant Englishman. Edward claimed that neither of his stepsisters had the claim to the throne since both of them were Henry's bastard daughters. Moreover, Edward did not want Mary to become his successor because she openly defied his Protestant rules.<sup>27</sup> Despite Lady Jane being proclaimed as Queen, she ruled for only nine days. Mary captured and imprisoned Lady Jane Grey in the Tower of London, where she was executed on February 12, 1554.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.2. Elizabeth's Ascent to the Throne**

After the death of Edward VI in 1553, and deposition of Lady Jane Grey, Queen Mary I ascended to the throne. Her rule was short-lived but impactful. Since Mary was a Catholic, unlike her brother and father before her, she reintroduced Catholicism in England. To establish Catholicism as the main religion, Mary persecuted many Protestants, which later earned her the nickname "Bloody Mary." She did not have any children, which is why she was succeeded by her stepsister.

---

<sup>27</sup> Doron, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Guy, *The Tudors*, 51.

Elizabeth I ascended to the throne in 1558 and restored the Church of England her father, Henry VIII, had founded. The Parliament passed and approved the Act of Supremacy in 1559, which revived the antipapal statutes of Henry VIII. In it, Elizabeth I was declared the Supreme Governor of the Church. Although there was a change in the primary religion, Elizabeth I never aimed to prosecute Catholics and wanted to achieve religious tolerance in her realm.<sup>29</sup> She strongly believed that religion was a personal choice and that no one should be persecuted for their beliefs. Although some Catholics were persecuted, it was solely to establish Elizabeth's right to the throne. She reduced the size of the Privy Council in order to remove some of the Catholic members and thus slowly tried to change the government from within. Most of her subjects accepted the reintroduction of Protestantism simply because they were exhausted from all the wars and struggles they had suffered in the past. This certainly saved England from religious wars like the one that plagued France in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

Despite many struggles, the Elizabethan period was mostly perceived as a time of peace and prosperity. She was a well-educated ruler who spoke seven languages and was a huge patron of the arts. For this reason, her image was often invoked in painting and literature, which promoted her imagery of the "Virgin Queen." Elizabeth had no heirs, and, due to this, she was succeeded by her cousin, King James VI of Scotland, who became known as King James I after the union of Scottish and English crowns in 1603.

Some scholars argue that Elizabeth I never married because she wanted to make sure England's independence from foreign rule.<sup>31</sup> For example, her predecessor, Queen Mary, married a foreigner, her cousin Prince Phillip II of Spain, an ardent Catholic who wholeheartedly supported Mary's attempt to restore Catholicism as state religion and to prosecute Protestants. However, after Mary's death, and the restoration of Protestantism in England, Phillip II believed that it was his duty to bring back

---

<sup>29</sup> Doron, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, 153.

<sup>30</sup> *French Wars of Religion* were a series of eight wars where Protestants and Catholics fought for the dominant religion in France. Unlike England, France was damaged by religious wars because it did not have a strong leader to make a decision and proclaim one religion as the dominant one. Finally, they reached religious tolerance in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. These wars prove how important it was to have a strong leader on the throne during times of change like England had in Elizabeth I.

Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 195-198.

<sup>31</sup> Doron, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, 38-39.

Catholicism in England, just like his wife started. This resulted in a series of conflicts between England and Spain, which culminated in the battle between the English navy and the Spanish Armada in 1588. England won this battle and proved itself as the leading naval power of the time. Emboldened by this victory, England started to explore, and subsequently trade, with the rest of the world.

### **3.2.1. Elizabeth I and Trade**

During Elizabeth's reign, England became with a renowned global power. English explorers, merchants, and colonists were dispatched as far as Africa, Asia, and the "New World," which most geographers called America by the mid sixteenth century. The rapid spread of English influence across the globe also provided the English language with international prestige. Consequently, English literature began to thrive under these new circumstances.

It is important to note that trading and exploring the Americas would not have been possible without advances in navigation and shipbuilding in the preceding era known as the Age of Exploration. Tools such as the astrolabe, backstaff, and magnetic compass were used as navigational instruments for seafarers.<sup>32</sup> When it comes to the development of shipbuilding, progress was made with ships such as caravels, carracks and galleons. During Elizabeth's reign, English galleons played a crucial role since they went through a significant revolution in ship design.

These ships were characterized by their sleek hulls, lower profiles, and a reduction in the towering superstructures that had previously made ships top-heavy and less stable. Elizabethan galleons had a more streamlined design compared to earlier Tudor ships. This design made them faster and more agile, essential for both exploration and naval battles. The galleons had a lower, elongated hull which improved their sailing performance and handling. Their manoeuvrability allowed English commanders to employ "line of battle" tactics, where ships would form a line and

---

<sup>32</sup> Astrolabe was a form of celestial navigation device because it used celestial bodies to take measurements and determine a ship's position. Backstaff was used to measure altitude by looking at the shadow of the sun. The most famous version of it was invented by an Englishman John Davis in 1594 and this device is also known as the "Davis quadrant."  
Becky Little, *7 Ships and Navigational Tools Used in the Age of Exploration*. Visited on September 2, 2024. <https://www.history.com/news/navigational-tools-ships-age-exploration>.

engage the enemy with their broadsides, a technique effectively used against the Spanish Armada in 1588.<sup>33</sup>

Elizabeth I could be considered a patron of long voyages and explorations. There were four reasons behind her desire to promote the exploration of the New World: naval power, empire building, weakening of Spain, and trade.<sup>34</sup> As Carole Levin states:

“Elizabeth began her reign emphasizing the theme of national unity. (...) She wanted to be Queen of an independent England, to encourage old industries to grow and to develop new industries so the country would no longer be so dependent on imports from abroad, and to encourage trade. She wanted to be Queen of a strong England that could stay at peace and not feel threatened by the great Catholic powers on the Continent, France and Spain.”<sup>35</sup>

English seapower under Elizabeth and the victory over the fabled Spanish Armada were even more significant because Phillip II's Spain controlled the majority of the New World. Elizabeth I wanted to expand her Empire to showcase the importance and greatness of England. To do so, she supported English privateers, private individuals commissioned by the Crown to engage in quasi-military activities, to raid and pillage enemy vessels and settlements. Though technically in state service, although such support was sometimes kept a secret, they were considered common pirates by the targets of their activities, usually the Spanish.<sup>36</sup> The most famous such privateer was Francis Drake.

Francis Drake was the first Englishman to reach the Pacific Ocean and the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world. He ravaged the Spanish colonies in Chile and Peru, and with all the gold and treasures he had taken away from the people, he finally returned to England in 1580.<sup>37</sup> Eight years later, he played an important role in the destruction of the Spanish Armada. Despite their loss, the English were afraid that the

---

<sup>33</sup> Angus Konstam, *Tudor's warships (2): Elizabeth I's Navy* (Osprey Publishing, 2008), 13-22.

<sup>34</sup>“Queen Elizabeth I and the wider world.” BBC. Visited on August 30, 2024.

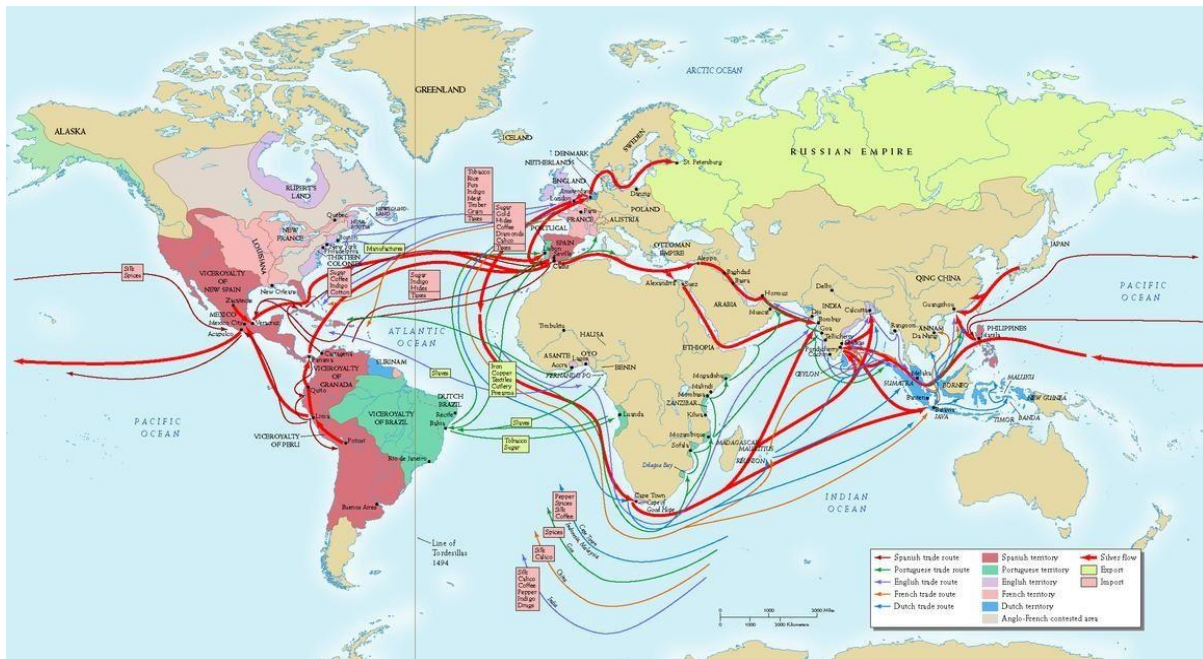
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zstdhv4/revision/1>.

<sup>35</sup> Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Palgrave, 2002), 14.

<sup>36</sup> Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, 58.

<sup>37</sup> Doron, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, 157.

Spanish Armada would rise again and financed the raids of Spanish ports and the disruption of the flow of spices from the New World.<sup>38</sup>



Picture 4 shows the trading routes of the most powerful countries in 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>

After the Spanish threat of conquest had subsided, England could finally focus on the expansion of the Empire and the development of trading companies. These would often pave the way for colonial expansion, allowing England to claim land in the New World, Asia, and Africa. This also meant the spread of cultural and political influence of England onto other parts of the world. Some of the most important trading companies at that time were the Muscovy Company (1555), the Eastland Company (1581), the Levant Company (1581), and the East India Company (1600). It is important to note that the spread of the influence was not one-sided, but rather went both ways. The first two companies provided trade with the European countries, but because of the rise of Spain, it was important to establish trade in the East, which was possible when the latter two companies were founded. In the next chapter, the focus will be on how the countries with which England (had) traded influenced the English vocabulary.

<sup>38</sup> Konstam, *Tudor's Warships* (2), 34.

<sup>39</sup> "European Trade Routes of the 16th Century," accessed August 17, 2024, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/378513543654400766/>.



### 3.2.2. Trading Companies and the English Vocabulary

The Muscovy Company was formed in 1555 by Sebastian Cabot. This company had a monopoly on the Anglo-Russian trade and its original aim was to exploit the trade links with Moscow that Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor had forged. It should be noted that monopolies were not granted to regulate trade or to encourage any foreign power in England, but rather to raise money for the country.<sup>40</sup> Their business activity greatly contributed to the demise of the Hanseatic League's monopoly on trade in the Baltic region.<sup>41</sup> The Muscovy Company continued to search for viable sea routes to the East but, when they proved too hazardous, began to explore overland routes with the blessing of Tsar Ivan the Terrible of Russia. Through the activities of the Muscovy Company, Russian loanwords such as *rouble*, *Tsar*, *steppe*, *mammoth*, *ukase* and *suslik* found their way into the English language.<sup>42</sup>

The Eastland Company was founded in 1579 for trade with the Baltic region, specifically with countries like Poland or Prussia, and with the Scandinavian nations. Its primary focus was related to the export of the English woollen cloth and the import of timber and tar. When it comes to the influence on English vocabulary development, the focus will be Polish and German speaking territories. Scandinavian influence on English dates back to the Viking Age, and it is difficult to determine which words might have found their way into English through the Eastland Company. Some of the most important loanwords belong to the field of mineralogy and have remained in use to this day. Some of the borrowings from this period include words, such as *landgrave*, *lobby*, *carouse*, *hamster*, *sauerkraut*, *plunder*, *zinc*, *bismuth*, *cobalt*, and more.<sup>43</sup>

The Levant Company was established in 1581 and played a crucial role in the diplomatic relations between England and the Ottoman Empire. The Company was granted exclusive rights to trade with the Ottoman Empire, which included modern-day Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and parts of Greece and the Balkans. England needed to find alternative trade routes and partners to avoid its reliance on the

---

<sup>40</sup> Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, 106.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick H. Gareau, "A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE." *Il Politico* 47, no. 1 (1982): 97–114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43099143>.

<sup>42</sup> Terttu Nevalainen, "Early Modern English lexis and semantics," In *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume III: 1476-1776*, edited by Roger Lass (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 375.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 375.

Spanish-controlled territories and trade routes. Because of the union with Portugal in 1580, Spain acquired even more land and influence, and England had to find a way how bypass them.<sup>44</sup> The Levant Company was the answer to this predicament, enabling English merchants to directly access valuable Eastern goods such as spices, silk, and cotton. Many words of Persian or Arabic origin were incorporated into English this time. They did not do so directly, however, instead they first passed through Turkish before being adopted by English. Among words of Persian origin one finds: *janizary*, *horde*, *vizier*, *caftan*, *jackal*, *sherbet*, *yogurt*, and *pasha*.<sup>45</sup> Arabic words that entered English in the sixteenth and seventeenth century include, for instance, *sheik*, *hashish*, *ramadan*, *henna*, *arrack*, *fakir*, *imam*, *Moslem*, *mohair*, *Koran*, *harem*, *Allah*.<sup>46</sup>

The last company to be discussed can be considered the jewel in the crown of English trade: the East India Company. Formed in 1600 by merchants, mariners, explorers, and politicians, the East India Company explored the routes to the Far East and established trading relations with them. As with the Levant Company, the goal here too was to bypass Spanish influence. Since there are so many languages on the Indian subcontinent, their influence on English was enormous, especially from languages such as Hindu, Urdu, and Tamil. Some of the loanwords that entered English at that time are *typhoon*, *curry*, *coolie*, *toddy*, *nabob*, *rupee*, *guru*, *pariah*, *tyre/tyer*, *sahib*, *cot*, *pundit*, *bungalow*, *dungaree*, *tom-tom*, *maharaja*, *pukka* and *mongoose*.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.3. English Renaissance

The Elizabethan Age goes hand in hand with the era of cultural revival known as the English Renaissance. The development of English literature coincides with the age of Tudors, although we can consider the peak of the Renaissance to have been reached during Queen Elizabeth's time. This also encompass the reign of the first king of the Stuart dynasty, James I, since the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I correspond with the life and work of one of the greatest English writers, William Shakespeare.

The term *renaissance* was retroactively given to this period of the flourishing of literature by 19<sup>th</sup>-century thinkers. It comes from a French word, meaning "rebirth" and

---

<sup>44</sup> Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, 112.

<sup>45</sup> Nevalainen, "Early Modern English lexis and semantics," 375.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 376.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

refers to the renewed interest in antique influences of authors such as Seneca and others. Although many of the genres from ancient Rome and Greece were rediscovered in England, some were forced to change and adapt, and this could be seen in Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and Thomas Preston's *Cambises, King of Persia*.<sup>48</sup> *Ralph Roister Doister* is the first English comedy, and it combines the traditional trickster villain often seen in morality plays with a fool, who frequently serves as a comic relief to relieve its audience from the tension on the stage.<sup>49</sup> *Cambises* is a great example of the transition from morality plays to historical dramas. Unlike ancient Greece and Rome, during the English Renaissance, there is no clear distinction among comedies, tragedies, historical plays, and romances, and Preston's *Cambises* is a good example of this.<sup>50</sup>

### 3.3.1. Religion and Culture

Religion influenced the theatre heavily, thus, the change in religion in England played a significant role in the development of theatre and the English Renaissance in general. Before the English Reformation, many plays showed the lives of saints. This changed as morality plays were starting to be used as forms of Protestant propaganda.<sup>51</sup> The founder of this genre switch was John Bale in the 1530s. Many styles of writing, which would later become very famous, started as experiments. For example, unrhymed iambic pentameter, one of the mostly used forms in the English poetry, started as a one-off experiment, specifically, a translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* by the Earl of Surrey.<sup>52</sup>

Some of the greatest writers of this period, however, like Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson, found their home in the very first permanent

---

<sup>48</sup> Often in literature, Thomas Preston's most famous work is simply listed as *Cambises* or *Cambises, King of Persia*. This is to simplify the whole title which is *A lamentable tragedy mixed full of pleafant mirth, conteyning the life of CAMBISES King of PERCIA, from the beginning of his kingdome vnto his death, his one good deed of execution, after that many wicked deeds and tirannous murders, committed by and through him, and laft of all, his odious death by Gods Iultice appointed, Doon in Iuch order as foloweth. By Thomas Preston.*

<sup>49</sup> Jill Levenson, "Comedy," In *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance drama*, edited by A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 258.

<sup>50</sup> Robert N. Watson, "Tragedy," In *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance drama*, 303

<sup>51</sup> Michael Hattaway, *Renaissance and Reformations: An Introduction to Early Modern English Literature* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 7.

<sup>52</sup> PoetryFoundation, "An Introduction to the English Renaissance," Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/154826/an-introduction-to-the-english-renaissance>.

public theatres, such as the Rose, the Swan, and the Globe. Before the opening of the first indoor theatre by James Burbage in 1576, named simply The Theatre, playing companies would perform in outdoor places like public squares and gardens. These performances were often met with public criticism, especially from the members of the growing Puritan movement.<sup>53</sup> Since many plays were moving forward from the traditional morality plays and were free from religious themes, the Puritans found them morally decadent and would often prevent the troupes from performing in public spaces.<sup>54</sup> This led to the need to secure a space for actors to perform their plays without disruptions. Some even argue that the English Renaissance ended as soon as the Puritans stopped criticising the arts, which just proves the importance of the religious differences in England and how they influenced the arts.

### 3.3.2. Elizabethan Theatre

From 1587 until 1598, there was a boom in opening public theatres. Each was a large public playhouse constructed as an arena, that is, an open space with an open rooftop. This meant that their plays were performed during daylight, so the actors could use natural light for their staging.

Actors would be part of a playing company which, in early modern England, would carry the name of its patron. Some of these include the Earl of Oxford's Men, Sussex's Men, and Lord Chamberlain's Men. One of the most famous members of the latter was William Shakespeare. Another example of how the theatre was under the sponsorship of the Crown refers to the fact that, in 1603, Lord Chamberlain's Men started to be known as King's Men.

Since their plays were performed in the buildings owned by the company members, it was necessary to attract audiences to see them. This means that there were usually five or six different plays every week in any given theatre. Every two

---

<sup>53</sup> The Puritan movement refers to a faction within the Church of England during the Elizabethan era, characterized by their desire for further reform beyond what had been achieved during the Reformation. Puritans sought to purify the church of remnants of Catholic practices and promote a more rigorous, Bible-centred form of worship and governance.

Rosamund Oates, "Puritans and the 'Monarchical Republic': Conformity and Conflict in the Elizabethan Church," *The English Historical Review* 127, no. 527 (2012): 819–43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23272688>.

<sup>54</sup> George L. Mosse, "Puritanism and Reason of State in Old and New England," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1952). Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1925237>, 75.

weeks or so, a new play would enter the repertoire. These plays would often include many fight scenes and portray a plenty of violence, simply because this approach was considered a crowd-pleaser, and one of the best ways to indulge the audience.

Women could not enter the company, thus, all the actors were men. If there was a female role to be played, it would have been given to a prepubescent boy because of his high-pitched and more feminine-like voice. Since the companies did not have many actors, one actor would often play different roles in a play. One of the main characters would remain on stage performing a lengthy soliloquy to allow other actors to go backstage and change their appearance for a new character. This is why we can find long speeches in some of the most famous plays of the English Renaissance, including Hamlet's speech from Shakespeare's famous play:

„To be, or not to be, that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep (...).”<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>PoetryFoundation, “To be or not to be,” Visited on August 14, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/56965/speech-to-be-or-not-to-be-that-is-the-question>.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

The English language has gone through many different stages of change in its history. Generally, we can categorise its development into the forms of: Old English from 450 AD until 1100 AD, Middle English from 1100 AD until 1500 AD, and Modern English from 1500 AD to the present day. Although the year 1500 is traditionally considered the beginning of Early Modern English, most historians prefer the year 1476 because of one very significant innovation.

When Caxton introduced the printing press in England, he sparked widespread interest in reading and education. His introduction of Guttenberg's innovation to the English people made books and reading materials accessible to a much broader audience. Baugh and Cable explained this as: "a powerful force ... for promoting a standard, uniform language, and the means were now available for spreading that language throughout the territory in which it was understood."<sup>56</sup> Another contribution of the printing press is the ability to consistently replicate linguistic forms in texts, which was previously impossible. This development created a need for 'standard' English, as it became crucial for readers to comprehend written material uniformly.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, a desire to standardize the English language emerged, reaching its peak in the 18th century with the creation of the first English prescriptive grammars and dictionaries.

Language is constantly evolving, and this process is very natural. The factors driving language change can be categorized into two groups: internal and external. Internal factors arise within the language itself, particularly in its structure or vocabulary (words). However, this thesis focuses more on the external factors of language change.<sup>58</sup> Even today, language continues to evolve due to a variety of new developments and discoveries.

---

<sup>56</sup> Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English language (5th ed.)* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1993), 187.

<sup>57</sup> Roger Lass, "Introduction," In *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume III: 1476-1776*, edited by Roger Lass (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Nađa Muhić, "Shakespeare's Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English," (Master's Thesis, University of Sarajevo, 2021), 11.

The development of Early Modern English is closely intertwined with the English Renaissance. Considering the political, religious, and economic changes in England during the Tudors, it is clear why certain shift occurred in the English vocabulary.

Latin and Romance languages strongly influenced the Early Modern English vocabulary. Although this period of English history is marked by efforts to establish a distinct English identity, the influence of other languages demonstrates how difficult, if not impossible, is to escape past linguistic influences.

#### 4.1. Latin Influence on English

Since the English Renaissance drew inspiration from Ancient Greece and Rome, so too did the English language. During this period, many words from Greek and Latin entered English, greatly affecting its lexicon. This also led to new coinages, resulting from the use of Greek and Latin morphemes, such as *re-*, *in-*, *trans-*, *super-*, *inter-*, etc. However, many words, known as inhorn terms, did not survive the Renaissance era. Nađa Muhić explains this phenomenon as follows:

“Many new classical words deliberately introduced into the language were considered pretentious or unnecessary. They are known as inhorn terms. As stated, Latin words (such as street, bishop, money, mile, etc.) were adopted even before the Renaissance era or Old and Middle English. Yet, there were also a lot of words that did not survive in Modern English such as administration ‘aid’, anacephalize ‘to summarize’, eximious ‘excellent’, illecebrous ‘alluring’, intent, ‘immense’ and honorificabilitudinitatibus (...) Therefore, this was one of the reasons why poets and scholars used Latin words, whether it was for the innovative ideas or fun, or simply for practical things.”<sup>59</sup>

As English speakers were unfamiliar with the Latin grammatical system, they adapted most Latin words to fit the English grammatical structure. Latin endings for nouns and verbs were frequently ignored, and Latin verb words like *audio*, *audit*, and *video*, became nouns in English. This is why it is said that Latin influenced English vocabulary but not its grammar.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Muhić, “Shakespeare’s Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English,” 22.

<sup>60</sup> Van Geldern, *A History of the English Language*, 176.

In addition to Latin influence on English, one should also mention hybrids: English words with the Latin prefixes and Latin words with English prefixes. Shakespeare contributed tremendously to this category, introducing 107 hybrids in total. Some examples include *renew*, *infrateful*, *trans-shape*, *out-villain*, *fore-advise* and *under-honest*, but more on that later.<sup>61</sup>

## 4.2. Influence of the Romance Languages on English

Regarding Romance languages, English was mostly influenced by French and Spanish. Previous chapters briefly explained the conflict between England and France during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the conflict between England and Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was presented. Even though England had established its own national identity by this time, many foreign words remained in English. Borrowings from French include, for instance, *amateur*, *avenue*, *balet*, *bigot*, *brochure*, *camouflage*, *cheque*, *essay*, and *menu*.<sup>62</sup>

Many words that entered English from Spanish are derived from the native American languages with which Spanish came in contact. Some examples include *barbecue*, *canoe*, *cigar*, *cocoa*, *maize*, *potato*, *sherry*, *tobacco*, and *tomato*.<sup>63</sup>

The following pie chart shows in percentages how much other languages have influenced the English vocabulary.

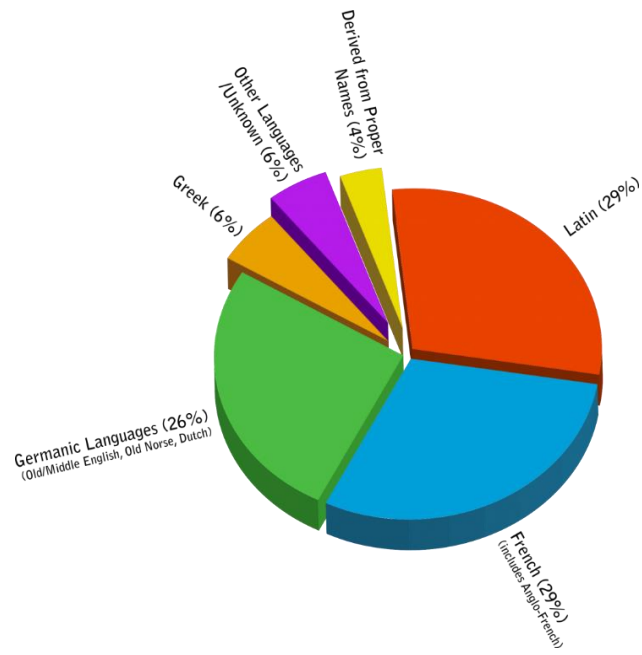
---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.





Picture 5 shows a pie chart of influence of other languages on English.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Mike Rowland, *French and English Share 40% of Their Vocabulary*, accessed August 3, 2024, <https://www.aiepro.com/french-and-english-share-40-of-their-vocabulary/>.

## 5. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It is impossible to discuss the English Renaissance without mentioning The Bard, William Shakespeare (1564 — 1616). He began his career in 1592 in London, where he continued writing and performing until his death in 1616. During his lifetime, he wrote 37 plays, usually divided into four categories: comedies, tragedies, histories, and romances. However, Shakespeare excelled in interweaving these genres in his plays to provoke audience reactions. For him, an audience was essential, as he was one of the shareholders of The Globe.

Shakespeare became a full-time professional dramatist for The Globe, which proved to be very successful. One of many reasons his plays were so well-received was that he wrote all the plays by himself. During that time, it was common practice to have several people engaged in writing a single play. This often caused many discrepancies, and the lack of coherence.<sup>65</sup>

New religious and political were emerging. These were often an inspiration for Shakespeare and his plays, so he frequently used phrases like “All the world’s stage.”<sup>66</sup> They remain applicable in both fictional and political contexts today.<sup>67</sup> For example, his plays, written from 1603 until 1606, often question the Jacobean rule.<sup>68</sup> Since James I ascended to the throne, he was considered less capable of maintaining authority than predecessor, Elizabeth I. This did not go unnoticed, and Shakespeare’s plays clearly reflect on the distrust of Jacobean rule.<sup>69</sup>

Although Shakespeare’s plays are seen as the epitome of English literature, it should be noted that they were not regarded as such when they were written. Most were considered provocative and challenging, even controversial to the extent that

---

<sup>65</sup>Gerald Eades Bentley, “The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare’s Time,” In *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115, no. 6 (1971) Visited on August 28, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/985840>, 421.

<sup>66</sup>Poets.org, “Act II, scene VII. As you like it,” Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://poets.org/poem/you-it-act-ii-scene-vii-all-worlds-stage>.

<sup>67</sup>Hattaway, *Renaissance and Reformations*, 27.

<sup>68</sup>Jacobean era was a period in English history from 1603 until 1625 and it coincides with the rule of King James I of England and Scotland.

<sup>69</sup>Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, “William Shakespeare: Theatrical conditions,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Shakespeare/Theatrical-conditions>.

some religious and civic authorities tried to outlaw them.<sup>70</sup> Despite numerous backlashes during his lifetime Shakespeare, continued writing and performing, contributing to the notion that the Elizabethan era was one of the most prosperous literary periods in English history.

## 5.1. Shakespeare's Vocabulary

Early Modern English, which Shakespeare used, bears a heavy resemblance to Contemporary English, which is why a present-day reader has little to no issues reading and understanding his works. His contribution to the English lexicon can be discussed in three categories: derivation, compounds, and borrowings.

In many of Shakespeare's works, we find derived or hybrid words. In this paper, hybrid words have already been mentioned and briefly discussed. Shakespeare used various prefixes, but in this thesis, these four will be discussed: *dis-*, *un-*, *re-* and *out-*. He used the prefix *dis-* with the reversative meaning: *disbench* 'drive from the bench', *disedge* 'take the edge of one's appetite', etc.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, he used *un-*; in imaginative ways, introducing many adjectives (e.g. *uneducated*), adverbs (e.g. *unaware*), and nouns (e.g. *underserver*).<sup>72</sup>

Regarding *re-* and *out-*, Muhić explains:

"The prefix *re-* could be found in the following examples such as *recall*, *regret*, *re-live*, *respeak*, etc. (Garner, 1987, p. 232). The prefix *out-* such as *outdure*, *outpeer*, *outprize*, *out-voice*, etc. (Garner, 1987, p. 232). In this context, the prefix *out-* means 'exceed, surpass' (Salmon, 2004, p. 96)."<sup>73</sup>

Shakespeare regularly used noun suffixes such as *-ment*, *-ure* and *-ance* (*-ence*) in his words like *cloyment*, *boddements*, *fleshment*, *exposure*, etc.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Shakespeare and the Liberties," Encyclopaedia Britannica, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Shakespeare-and-the-Liberties-1086252>.

<sup>71</sup> Vivian Salmon, "Some functions of Shakespearian word-formation," In *Shakespeare and Language*, edited by Catherine M. S. Alexander (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 95.

<sup>72</sup> Muhić, "Shakespeare's Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English," 34.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Most scholars note Shakespeare's contribution to compounds. He would combine almost every word class with another to create a compound, often for dramatic effect. Examples include: *rash-embraced despair* (adv./adj.+past part.+noun), *devilish-holy* (adj.+adj.), *fat-kidneyed* (adj.+noun+-ed), *snow-broth* (noun+noun), *shoulder-clapper* (noun+verb+er).<sup>75</sup> He often separated compounds by either a hyphen or comma for metric reasons, as in *headie-rush*, *heauy*, *thicke*.<sup>76</sup> In his comedies, he coined satirical expressions like *giant-dwarf*, *king-cardinal*, *master-mistress*, *sober-sad* and *pale-dull*.<sup>77</sup>

Shakespeare spoke French and Italian and was strongly influenced by Latin which explains his used many foreign word-forms. He also needed words for expressing the emotions of characters from different social classes. He introduced many Latin neologisms in his plays like: *acture*, *chapeless*, *convive*, *dismask('d)*, *exposture*, *intenible*, *moraler*, *nonregardance*, *oathable*, etc.<sup>78</sup> These examples demonstrate profound influence on the English language and, although some words are no longer in use, his influence remains quite notable in present day English.

## 5.2. Usage of Shakespeare's Vocabulary

This section is dedicated to the usage of some of Shakespeare's most famous quotes and expressions: *to be or not to be*, *green-eyed monster*, *giant-dwarf* and *master-mistress*.

*To be or not to be*, from the already mentioned soliloquy from "Hamlet," remains a widely used expression. In the play, Hamlet is contemplates ending his life, torn between two extremes. Today, this expression refers to a person facing a difficult, maybe even an impossible choice.<sup>79</sup>

In 16<sup>th</sup> century literature, emotions were often associated with colours. Green, for example, represented jealousy, as Shakespeare writes in Othello:

---

<sup>75</sup> Salmon, "Some functions of Shakespearian word-formation," 92.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>77</sup> Nevalainen, "Early Modern English lexis and semantics," 409.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 340.

<sup>79</sup> Muhić, "Shakespeare's Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English," 39.

“O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;

It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock

The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss.”<sup>80</sup>

This idea of jealousy being coloured green persists to this day, although today we use another expression: *green with envy*. Shakespeare went a step further and portrayed jealousy as a monster that destroys people, like his main characters in *Othello*.<sup>81</sup>

*Giant-dwarf* and *master-mistress* are among expressions that did not survive beyond the 16<sup>th</sup> century. *Giant-dwarf* is found in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*:

“This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy, this Senior Junior,  
giant dwarf...Cupid.”<sup>82</sup>

Shakespeare used this term to explain the paradox of love, with Cupid (love) being both powerful and weak at the same time. However, this was so specific, and could not be used in everyday speech, it remained confined to Shakespeare’s time. The same goes for *master-mistress*. Shakespeare suggests that Fair Youth (a young man who is often the subject of Shakespeare’s sonnets) has qualities being easily associated with both genders:

“A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;”<sup>83</sup>

This expression intended to convey the androgynous appeal of youth’s beauty, and it works within the framework of the *Sonnet*. However, just like *giant-dwarf*, it remained the product just for the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>80</sup> Poets.org, “Othello, Act III, Scene III,” Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://poets.org/poem/othello-act-iii-scene-iii-o-beware-my-lord-jealousy>.

<sup>81</sup> Muhić, “Shakespeare’s Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English,” 45.

<sup>82</sup> The Folger Shakespeare, “Love’s Labour’s Lost – Act III, Scene I,” Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/loves-labors-lost/read/3/1/>.

<sup>83</sup> PoetryFoundation.org, “Sonnet 20,” Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50425/sonnet-20-a-womans-face-with-natures-own-hand-painted>.

## 6. CONCLUSION

England underwent many political, religious, and economic changes from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The thesis discusses some crucial developments, focusing on their influence on the evolution of Early Modern English.

Politically, England separated from France in the Hundred Years' War, sparking a search for national identity reflected, among other things, in the expanding English vocabulary. This war caused internal dynastic conflicts, the Wars of the Roses, ultimately leading to the ascension of the Tudors to the English throne.

Religious changes started with Henry VIII break from the Roman Catholic Church and the establishment of the Church of England. One of his successors, Mary I, attempted to restore Catholicism, leading to many persecutions of Protestants. After Mary's death, her stepsister, Queen Elizabeth I, restored the Church of England and ended the cycle of constant religious shifts, affirming the dominance of Protestantism in the Kingdom.

Elizabeth's victory over Spanish opened doors for European and global trade, which was pivotal for the growing English nation. These contacts greatly influenced the English language. Trading companies facilitated borrowing from a vast reservoir of world languages (Russian, German, Turkish, etc.), enriching the lexicon of the English language.

The Elizabethan era was in lockstep with the English Renaissance. Elizabeth I's patronage the arts, increased their prestige in English society. One of the most important artists of that period was William Shakespeare. He left an indelible mark on the English language, through his introduction of new words and phrases.

Historical development and language evolution are inextricably linked as shown in this thesis. The quest for English identity, as well as the desire for an independent and influential language, and religious and political changes, all played significant roles in shaping Early Modern English.

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Book sources

- Baugh, Albert and Thomas Cable. *A History of the English language* (5th ed.). Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1993.
- Crane, Susan. *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Curry, Anne. *The Hundred Years' War: 1337-1457*. Osprey, 2002.
- Doron, Susan. *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Guy, John. *The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Hattaway, Michael. *Renaissance and Reformations: An Introduction to Early Modern English Literature*. Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Hicks, Michael. *The Wars of the Roses: 1455-1485*. Osprey Publishing, 2003.
- Konstam, Angus. *Tudor's warships (2): Elizabeth I's Navy*. Osprey Publishing, 2008.
- Lass, Roger. "Introduction." In *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume III: 1476-1776*, edited by Roger Lass (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-13.
- Levenson, Jill. "Comedy." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance drama*, edited by A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 254-292.
- Levin, Carole. *The Reign of Elizabeth I*. Palgrave, 2002.
- Holt, Mack P. *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Muhić, Nađa. "Shakespeare's Contribution to the Lexicon of Modern English." Master's Thesis, University of Sarajevo, 2021.
- Nevalainen, Terttu. "Early Modern English lexis and semantics." In *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume III: 1476-1776*, edited by Roger Lass (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 332-459.
- Salmon, Vivian. "Some functions of Shakespearian word-formation." In *Shakespeare and Language*, edited by Catherine M. S. Alexander (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79-101.

Speake, Jennifer and Thomas Goddard Bergin. *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance and the Reformation*. Facts On File, 2004.

The Bible.

Van Geldern, Elly. *A History of the English Language*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006.

Watson, Robert N. "Tragedy." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance drama*, edited by A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 292-344.

Wagner, John A. *Encyclopaedia of the Hundred Years War*. Greenwood Press, 2006.

### **Internet sources**

"Analysis of Henry VIII's personal Bible sheds new light on Britain's past." Queen Mary's University of London. Visited on August 27, 2024. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2020/hss/analysis-of-henry-viiis-personal-bible-sheds-new-light-on-britains-past.html>.

"Queen Elizabeth I and the wider world." BBC. Visited on August 30, 2024. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zstdhv4/revision/1>.

Bentley, Gerald Eades. "The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115, no. 6 (1971): 480–83. Visited on August 28, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/985840>.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Shakespeare and the Liberties." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Shakespeare-and-the-Liberties-1086252>.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Treaty of Medina del Campo." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Medina-del-Campo.Britannica>.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "William Shakespeare: Theatrical conditions." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, September 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Shakespeare/Theatrical-conditions>.



- Gareau, Frederick H. "A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE." *Il Politico* 47, no. 1 (1982): 97–114. Visited on September 02, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43099143>.
- Little, Becky. "7 Ships and Navigational Tools Used in the Age of Exploration." *History.com*. Visited on September 2, 2024. <https://www.history.com/news/navigational-tools-ships-age-exploration>.
- Mosse, George L. "Puritanism and Reason of State in Old and New England." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1952): 67–80. Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1925237>.
- Oates, Rosamund. "Puritans and the 'Monarchical Republic': Conformity and Conflict in the Elizabethan Church." *The English Historical Review* 127, no. 527 (2012): 819–43. Visited on September 02, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23272688>.
- PoetryFoundation. "An Introduction to the English Renaissance." Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/154826/an-introduction-to-the-english-renaissance>.
- PoetryFoundation. "To be or not to be." Visited on August 14, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/56965/speech-to-be-or-not-to-be-that-is-the-question>.
- PoetryFoundation.org. "Sonnet 20." Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50425/sonnet-20-a-womans-face-with-natures-own-hand-painted>.
- Poets.org. "Act II, scene VII. As you like it." Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://poets.org/poem/you-it-act-ii-scene-vii-all-worlds-stage>.
- Poets.org. "Othello. Act III, Scene III." Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://poets.org/poem/othello-act-iii-scene-iii-o-beware-my-lord-jealousy>.
- The Folger Shakespeare. "Love's Labour's Lost – Act III, Scene I." Visited on August 28, 2024. <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/loves-labors-lost/read/3/1/>.

## Picture sources

"The monarchs of Histories." Visited on August 28, 2024.  
<https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/history/the%20histories/kings1.html>.

McKee, Ian. *Title page of St John's College Great Bible*. Visited on August 18, 2024.  
[https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special\\_collections/early\\_books/gbible.htm](https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/early_books/gbible.htm).

Christie's.com. *HENRY VIII (King of England). Assertio septum sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum*. Antwerp: Michael Hillenius, 1522. Visited on August 21, 2024. <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5814485>.

"European trade routes of the 16<sup>th</sup> century." Visited on August 17, 2024.  
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/378513543654400766/>.

Rowland, Mike. *French and English share 40% of their vocabulary*. Visited on August 03, 2024.  
<https://www.aiepro.com/french-and-english-share-40-of-their-vocabulary/>.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the profound political, religious, and economic transformations in England from the 14th to the 17th centuries and their impact on the evolution of Early Modern English. The study highlights how the Hundred Years' War and subsequent Wars of the Roses fostered a search for national identity, reflected in the expanding English vocabulary. It explores the religious upheavals triggered by Henry VIII's break from the Roman Catholic Church, Mary I's attempt to restore Catholicism, and Elizabeth I's reaffirmation of Protestantism, which stabilized the religious landscape. Additionally, the thesis discusses how Elizabeth I's victory over Spain and the subsequent rise in global trade, driven by trading companies, introduced numerous foreign words into English. The Elizabethan era, marked by the English Renaissance and the contributions of William Shakespeare, is shown to have significantly enriched the English lexicon. Overall, this study underscores how England's evolving national identity, religious and political shifts, and cultural developments were deeply intertwined with the growth and transformation of Early Modern English.

**Key words:** Early Modern English, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, trading companies, William Shakespeare

## SADRŽAJ

Ovaj rad opisuje političke, vjerske i ekonomske promjene u Engleskoj od 14. do 17. stoljeća te njihov utjecaj na razvoj ranonovovjekovnog engleskog jezika. Naglašava kako su Stogodišnji rat, i kasniji Ratovi ruža, potaknuli potragu za nacionalnim identitetom, što se odražava u širenju engleskog vokabulara. Istražuje vjerske promjene izazvane raskidom Henrika VIII. s Rimokatoličkom crkvom, pokušajem Marije I. da obnovi katoličanstvo i reafirmacijom protestantizma za vrijeme Elizabete I., što je stabiliziralo vjerski krajolik. Također, u radu se raspravlja o tome kako je pobjeda Elizabete I. nad Španjolskom, i kasniji porast globalne trgovine, potaknut trgovačkim kompanijama, uveo brojne strane riječi u engleski jezik. Pokazalo se da je elizabetinsko doba, obilježeno engleskom renesansom i doprinosom Williama Shakespearea, značajno obogatilo engleski leksikon. U konačnici, ovaj rada naglašava kako su razvoj nacionalnog identiteta Engleske, vjerske i političke promjene te kulturni razvoj bili isprepleteni s razvojem i transformacijom ranonovovjekovnog engleskog jezika.

**Ključne riječ:** ranonovovjekovni engleski, Henrik VIII., Elizabeta I., trgovačke kompanije, William Shakespeare