“Henry VIII, a Dazzling Renaissance Prince and the Great Matter”

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ABSTRACT

As the title of this monograph suggests, this research focuses on King Henry VIII’s “Great Matter”, and how relevant it was to the whole process of the English Reformation covering a period of 17 years (1530-1547). Through this analysis, this work evidences the whole process of Reformation that England went through during the XVI century. As a result, the English Church becomes independent from the authority of the Pope. The main purpose of this investigation is to carefully examine the primary and secondary facts that prompted the separation from the Catholic Church on the grounds that the Henrician Reformation developed differently, in relation to the European process. Furthermore, this work intends to unveil the true nature of King Henry VIII’s character and the way his actions, way of living, beliefs and thoughts influenced on the separation of the Church and as a result lead to the Reformation era. After all, Henry VIII was one of the most controversial political figures of all times. The most important highlights in King Henry VIII’s life are presented in order to contextualize the reader to the conditions that conducted to the most striking changes that Catholic England had undergone. Together with Henry’s Great Matter, this work also presents a complete account of the King’s personal life, to make the reader understand the decisions made by Henry in critical times, covering from the relationships with his wives, mistresses, children to his medical records, controversial aspects in his life that for most historians turned him into a tyrant while for some other, one of the greatest English Kings ever. All of this with a unique conclusion, he was the King who was able to change the History of England to achieve what he wanted in life.

Key words: The Great Matter, King Henry VIII, Reformation, Henrician Reformation, Catholic Church, separation.
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Introduction

"Well-beloved subjects, we thought that the clergy of our realm had been our subjects wholly, but now we have well perceived that they be but half our subjects; yea, and scarce our subjects; for all the prelates at their consecration make an oath to the Pope clean contrary to the oath that they make to us, so that they seem to be his subjects, and not ours". (Henry VIII, 1532).

The King’s “Great Matter” has been a topic of considerable controversy, inviting unlimited interest about the changes effected by this event. One of the most drastic alterations that this Great Matter had was the English Reformation.

Between the years 1530 to 1547, one of the most radical political and religious processes took place in England. However, this process happened indistinctly from the wider that were striking Europe at the time. Essentially, this transformation is broadly known as the Henrician Reformation owing to the fact that it had its own colors in England. Colors provided by one of the most amusing soup operas of all times.

King Henry VIII has long been studied by historians and scholars, in order to understand one of the most significant changes of the English belief. Before Henry, England was a pious and dutiful Catholic kingdom. So, what happened to Catholic England? Where within 17 years, monasteries were burned, images of Saints and the Virgin destroyed, priests were excluded from their churches and the authority of the Pope over the English Church was declared null and void.

This account reverts to the times of King Henry VII, or Henry Tudor, Henry VIII’s father. Within the first chapter, the arrival of Henry VII to the throne of England will be discussed. Once Henry VII proclaimed himself King of England, killing Richard III in combat, a period of stability reigned in the nation. Despite this fact, the long expected steadiness of the Crown was exposed, when Arthur, the firstborn male and heir to the throne died, drawing young Henry into the spotlight. King Henry VIII was meant, since an early childhood, to be a man of faith, in all probability educated to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. Therefore, the monarch in
question came to the throne of England without really meaning to. All aspects of King Henry’s life must be considered, so that, we can thoroughly comprehend the reasons that triggered the English Reformation.

To fully comprehend the nature of the reformation, we need to take a meticulous look at the reasons that caused such action, as well as the fact that led the King to need so desperately a male heir, since it seems reasonably obvious that he needed to continue with the Tudor Dynasty. Nonetheless, there are other considerations to take into account as well. King Henry was the only heir to the crown of England after his brother’s death; therefore, he focused all his attention to secure the sake of the deeply wounded English throne immediately, owing to numerous civil wars and the subsequent political instability. King Henry, therefore, felt the urgency to procreate as many descendants as possible, preferably males, since nobody wanted to have female rulers since after the unsuccessful reign of Queen Matilda. The first chapter of this monograph deals with the origins of King Henry VIII, prior to the decision of separating from his early consort, Catherine of Aragon, thus beginning with the “Great Matter”.

The whole process of Reformation, and the struggle that the King Henry underwent in order to establish himself as the supreme head of the Church of England, will be dealt in chapter two. Here the main facts, as well as the most important characters involved in this drama, such as: Thomas Wolsey, Thomas Cranmer and Anne Boleyn will be described along with the role they had in the whole process of Reformation. In this chapter, there will also be discussed all the secondary causes that motivated the rupture with the Catholic Church. For example, the influence of the European Reformation and the impact of the translation of the Bible into a vernacular language played.

The monarch’s impossibility to procreate a male heir to the throne was the triggering factor prompting this Reformation. At the beginning, there were no religious reasons valid to separate from Catholic Church. However, this changed as time passed, once he understood the great benefit that the Reformation would bring both, to England and to himself. Henry undertook a series of controversial measures in order to secure the faith of the new Anglican Church. In the third chapter of this research, there will be describe the most important aspects of the process of Reformation. In this section, the consequences of the King’s Great Matter are going to be
described such as the dissolution of the monasteries and how the faith of the Anglican Church was structured.

Taking everything above mentioned into consideration we can, therefore, conclude that the most important intention of this monograph is to unveil the motivations prompting the alienation from the Catholic Church, analyzing the King’s Impossibility of procreating a male heir as the triggering fact that caused the Henrician Reformation.
Chapter I
The Path to a Dynasty

Henry VIII was one of the most outstanding English rulers, well known for his unique characteristics and very singular achievements as well as for his shameful life aspects which are going to be discussed thoroughly further in this work. His rule was not marked by successfully managed military campaigns or an excellent leadership, but to his scandalous personal life and for the separation of the English Church from Catholicism led by it, in fact, many historians refer to him as “the majestic lord who broke bonds with Rome” (Pollard, 2009). Highlighting the historical relevance this special King had, this was, in fact, one of the most subversive acts in all English history.

In order to start depicting Henry’s political and religious achievements, it results extremely important to start by stating the way in which he became King and the events behind this process. In other words, to contextualize the reader into the circumstances surrounding King Henry VIII’s arrival to the throne, his early childhood and the role his father played in his upbringing.

1.1 The Tudor Dynasty

The Tudor dynasty ruled England from 1485 to 1603. The family story encompasses some of the most dramatic and unforgettable events in European history. They remain as the most famous and controversial of royal families. To what our topic respects, the importance of the birth of the Tudor Dynasty is imperative, due to the fact that the instability of the crown as well as the ambition of Henry VIII led to one of the most important events in English history which was the separation from the Catholic Church and the birth of a new religious faith. However, in order to talk about these changes, we need to describe the struggle that Henry VIII and his father before him had to undergo in order to establish the Tudor Dynasty and to preserve it. Beginning far beyond his time, with the War of the Roses and ending with the crowning of King Henry VIII.
1.1.1 The War of Roses

The so called War of the Roses was never one single conflict per se; but it was a series of confrontations between two of the most powerful houses of England; Lancaster and York. It was a conflict that affected a country for almost a century, where jealous cousins struggled to claim the throne of England.

"England hath long been mad, and scarr’d herself: The brother blindly shed the brother’s blood; the father rashly slaughter’d his own son; The son, compell’d, been butcher to the sire. All this divided York and Lancaster..." (Shakespeare, 1914)

When Edward III died in 1377, he left behind him several sons (see appendix 1). In order to care for his offspring, he had created the first English dukedoms for them, bestowing unprecedented power upon the masses. After the old King’s death, though, it was not a son but a grandson who succeeded him, Richard II. He was only nine years old and was the son of a direct claimant to the throne “The Black Prince”. However, this admirable character of English history died at an early stage, leaving England in the hands of his son Richard who on his fourteenth years old admirably undertook the Peasant’s Revolt. Unfortunately, Richard never demonstrated such leadership, good judgment and capacity again, and later in his reign, he managed to alienate both, his family and the nobility. An inevitable disaster struck in 1399, when his powerful cousin, who was sent abroad into exile, Henry of Lancaster mounted a successful coup d’état and took the crown. This royal claimant had also the right to govern. In fact, he was supported by the English nobility. For the next few decades Henry’s heirs ruled England in relative peace.

Both houses began their dispute with the overthrow of King Richard II by his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, in 1399. Richard II's government had been highly unpopular and Bolingbroke returned from exile, initially to reclaim his rights as Duke of Lancaster. With the support of most of the nobles, Bolingbroke then removed Richard II from the crown and was crowned as Henry IV.

Both houses held numerous battles and many people died defending the honor of Lancaster and York, these intermittent fights lasted about 30 years. Nevertheless, there had been previous and post disputes related to this historical event.
The War of the Roses, named in this way due to the badges of each house (see appendix 2), broke out in 1455. The main causes for the series of military conflicts were the following:

- Both houses were direct descendants of King Eduard III
- The ruling Lancastrian King, Henry VI, surrounded himself with unpopular nobles
- The availability of many Lords with their own private army
- The constants episodes shown by Henry VI where his mental state was under question.

The first armed encounter took place in St. Albans in May, 1455. This was the opening battle in the War of the Roses. Richard of York led a force of about three thousand men towards London, while, Henry VI moved from London to intercept the Yorkist army. The Yorkist attacked and defeated the Lancastrian. The Queen and her young son Edward fled into exile.

After this, there came a short period for political treaties and truces, this is exclusively important for the York descendants since for the first time asserted his claim to the throne, and after a long discussion, both parties made a compromise, by which Henry VI was to keep hold of the crown during his life-time, after which it was to revert to the House of York and his successors. In the meantime, the Duke and his sons were not to interfere with the King; any attempt on the Duke’s life was made high treason. Therefore, the conflict would be at a standstill situation. Nonetheless, another important political figure at the time, Margaret of Anjou, did not acknowledge nor recognize such treaty and gathered forces in order to strike back, on the notice of gathering the Lancastrian forces in the north, the Duke of York marched.

Edward, son of Richard Duke of York, went into battle as well. After his father’s death, Edward won two military conflicts that meant him the throne of England. Not only because his military achievements, procured by his allies, but also because the people recognized him as the King. Hence, he was crowned as King Edward IV. Soon after becoming King, he married an unknown widow named Elizabeth Woodville. This marriage procured his two heirs who would have the saddest fate in English history. Once Edward IV died, his brother Richard, the Earl of
Gloucester, seized the throne of England and locked his two nephews on the Tower of London, becoming Richard III.

By 1485, Richard III’s position in the throne of England was becoming weaker and weaker before the presence of Henry Tudor. It is in this period that Henry Tudor challenged Richard III for the crown. Stoke is considered as the final conflict in the War of the Roses on June 16\textsuperscript{th}, 1487. In this battle, Richard moved to meet Henry’s army in the south of the Village of Market Bosworth. After the armies engaged Lord Thomas Stanley and his brother Sir William, both commanders in Richard’s army, switched sides and fought for Henry. Even a critic of Richard, like the chronicler John Rous, could only admire the courage, with which he went to his death: “...He bore himself like a noble soldier and honorably defended himself to his last breath, shouting again and again that he was betrayed, and crying “Treason! Treason! Treason!!” (http://www.r3.org/rnt1991/bosworthfield.html) The Yorkists were defeated, and Henry ushered in the Ruling of the House of Tudor, ending with the War of the Roses. As to make his House even more solid, Henry married Elizabeth of York, the daughter of the late Yorkist King, Edward IV.

The economic damage left by the war was small, but for the kings and barons thought that the political damage was devastating owing to the fact that more than fifty of the leaders of English society had been killed, murdered or executed. Now, they all wanted peace which made the rule of Henry VII considerably easier.

1.1.2 King Henry VII

“His body was slender but well built and strong; his height above the average. His appearance was remarkably attractive and his face was cheerful especially when speaking; his eyes were small and blue; his teeth few, poor and blackish; his hair was thin and grey; his complexion pale” (Vergil, 1506).

Henry having been acclaimed as King Henry VII, he strengthened his position by marrying Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, the best surviving Yorkist claimant. Thus reuniting the two royal houses and merging the rival symbols of the red and white roses into the new emblem of the red and white Tudor Rose (see appendix 3). Henry anchored his position by
executing all other possible claimants whenever any excuse was offered. An example of this is the story of Perkin Warbeck, a pretender to the throne of England. Traditional belief claims that he was an impostor, pretending to be Richard of Shrewsbury, 1st Duke of York, the younger son of King Edward IV of England, but he was in fact a Fleming born in Tournai around 1474.

Henry VII was a very singular character in English history. He seized the throne from a man that had also seized the throne from another. To make matters even more difficult for him, he was only distantly related to royalty, for his mother. Therefore, his position, and that of his heirs, was constantly put into question, and so would be that of his son Henry VIII during his reign, facing constant struggles to consolidate his position.

His arrival to the throne meant the end of the War of Roses and to some historians even became the end of the Middle Ages. However, his appearance to the throne was exceedingly questioned at that age, basically due to the fact that his claim was never based on ancestry alone and he understood the fact that this claim was going to be criticized. The ancestry he had came from his mother’s behalf Margaret Beaufort; who had been granddaughter of John Beaufort, the eldest of the bastard sons of John of Gaunt, son of Eduard III. Nevertheless, he could claim the throne of England after an act of parliament in 1397 that enabled his broth to become heirs to the throne.

The greatest problem aroused later when their title of heir to the throne of England was being criticized. Since no one could deny the fact that they got to the throne in an illegitimate way, later in the same period, when Henry Bolingbroke became king, he confirmed this Act of Legitimacy, but he added a stipulation that the Beauforts should never succeed the English throne in the year 1407. According to historians, this fact was of outmost importance, since the family began to be regarded as a threat to the throne of England by the English nobility, that made them live in an uncomfortable position among the English aristocracy for being a hazard to the security of the throne.

The story of how Henry VII got to the throne of England is ultimately amusing. Due to the fact that he was never intended to become so. Moreover, luck and circumstances helped him greatly. This would mark the course of events happening thereafter, his constant struggle as well as his need to consolidate his positioning, England became a major topic to deal with and was
later transmitted to his heirs. We must consider that every king had to pass his throne to the first male heir, which makes it important for kings to have male heirs in order to strengthen their power, but for Henry Tudor meant something more profound and related to personal proud as well. Since he needed to consolidate his Dynasty, a Dynasty constantly criticized and acclaimed by many.

Henry Tudor’s mother, Margaret, was married to Edmund Tudor the step brother of King Henry VI (see appendix 4). Here is another reason for Henry’s arrival to the throne was so controversial, since his father, the Earl of Richmond, did not descend from royalty either. Edmund was a descendant of Catherine de Valois, who was previously married to one of the most important kings of England, Henry V. Catherine, was promised to Henry V as a compromise made by the King of France, making him the heir to his throne as well. In this way, he would become King of England and France. Catherine remarried Owen Tudor to whom she had four children, being Edmund the eldest son.

Edmund was engaged to marry Margaret Beaufort. The reason of this engagement came from his mother’s blood. Catherine de Valois had a son with Henry V. He became the heir to the English and French throne. Nonetheless, he was all alone when both of his parents died, Henry V died in battle and Catherine died from a disease. He began to grow interested in his two stepbrothers (Edmund and Jasper) upbringing, and procured their safety and took them to England. Henry VI gave them nobility. He knew he had to recognize his half-brothers in some public manner, making them an official part of the Royal Family. So, on November 23rd, 1452, Edmund was created Earl of Richmond and Jasper was created Earl of Pembroke. Now, they were the premier Earls of England and had precedence over all other laymen except Dukes. They were also gifted with estates and rich gifts. Eventually, Henry VI married his step brother Edmund to Margaret Beaufort. From this marriage Henry Tudor was born.

At the time when Edward IV, the most successful Yorkist King, arrived to the throne of England in 1461, Edward’s rule was successful. He managed to marry Elizabeth Woodville, with whom, he had six children. Among them, there were the two young princes, who at that time became direct heirs to the throne of England. The children could have consolidated the reign of the House of York. However, his brother’s ambition was bigger. Richard of Gloucester,
commonly depicted as a vile leader, usurped the throne of England in 1483. When Edward IV died, he was named Lord Protector of England and; therefore, protector of the young princes as well. Richard eventually locked the two young princes in the Tower of London. This changed the course of English history.

By the time Richard III ascended to the throne of England, in France, Henry Tudor was positioning himself as heir to his murdered uncle Henry VI. With the support of exiled Lancastrians and the French monarchy, Henry planned to mount an invasion of England. Eventually Henry Tudor became Henry VII by means of defeating Richard III in battle, becoming the last King of England in usurping the throne and Richard the last King to die in battle. “...the fallen King was the third and ablest of English monarchs who bore the name Richard; and the man whom the battle made a king to be the seventh and perhaps the greatest of those who bore the name Henry”. (Bindoff, 1485)

1.1.3 Consolidation of the English Crown

The circumstance that Henry VII became King of England was somewhat unexplainable. His father was a Welshman of royal lineage, but this was not relevant enough for him to take the throne. Nonetheless, the real importance was on his heritage through his mother, a descendant of Edward III, who was one of the most successful English monarchs of the Middle Ages.

Henry VII achieved the throne with no previous training, as he was not supposed to be the next King of England. Being a common practice, most English kings were educated since childhood, in statesmanship, warfare, or diplomacy. But Henry VII came to the throne as a complete novice in those arts, which only makes his achievement more remarkable. “The main problem facing Henry was restoring faith and strength in the monarchy. He also had to deal with other claimants, with some of them having a far stronger claim than his own. To deal with this, Henry strengthened the government and his own power, at the expense of the nobles”. (Eakins, 2007)

There were many aspects that Henry VII did not manage. Nevertheless, and despite all of these facts, he became an overly important King consolidating the power of his sovereignty. The restoration of the political stability of England was crucial as well as the administrative,
economic and diplomatic initiatives that helped to the growth of a society that was full of expectation.

By the beginning of the 16th century, he was strong in central government as well as successful in foreign wars. Apart from that, England became even more prosperous and enormous strides were made to its culture. It is also known that after twelve years of being in charge of the throne, he laid a solid financial foundation of government and enacted the main body of his legislation. The English Monarchy had never been one of the wealthiest of Europe and even more after the War of the Roses. Henry VII’s work was crucial due to the fact that he was able to accumulate wealth during his reign in order to leave a considerable fortune to his son, Henry VIII, to ensure his line would continue in the English crown. Henry VII strengthened the monarchy by employing many political innovations that helped him to make his monarchy wealthier and even more powerful. A Committee of the Privy Council, a Court of the Start Chamber to increase royal involvement in civil and criminal cases and in order to get an alternative of taxation from Parliament. He imposed forced loans and grants on the nobility. Henry Tudor also created the Court of Requests, a poor man’s court of equity. Where the poor could take legal action against the crown without payment of fees, and were given free legal aid.

Henry VII’s reform of the economic system laid the bases for transforming England into a modern society. He improved the productivity of the population through government improvements in infrastructure, technology, and the living standards as well as with the productivity of the population. During his reign, Henry VII implemented a series of monetary policy measures, such as Regulating Foreign Trade, which was in charge to control foreign trade, for the purpose of promoting national economic development. Another measure was referring to The Cloth Industry, which dealt with the promotion of English manufactures. Apart from that, the creation of the Navy was also crucial to his sovereignty. This measure centralized control over the military as well as ending the power of the nobility to make war.

Finally the Foreign Policy for Peace, Henry took great interest in foreign affairs. All of these new systems were strategies for him to strength his reign. “It could be debated whether or not Henry VII was a great king, but he was clearly a successful king...he had established a new
dynasty after 30 years of struggle, he had strengthened the judicial system as well as the treasury and had successfully denied all other claimants to his throne”. (Eakins, 2007)

Henry VII strengthened his reign as well as his legacy to the future King. He turned the English crown into a vision that was admired by everyone. Despite, he was not trained to become a king, he was able to act as one of them. “The monarchy that he left to his son was a fairly secure one and most definitely a wealthy one”. (Eakins, 2007)

Henry VII tried very hard to give the throne to a man. He was convinced that he must have a male heir, to ensure that his line would continue ruling in England. A woman claimant to the English Throne was a situation unprecedented since the 12th century. No woman could hope to win support on her own account. He believed that a woman could never hold a throne and also that by nature, women were inferior to men. He also wanted to prevent the country from descending once more the chaos of civil war.

1.1.4 Henry the VII and his Dream

Henry VII and Elizabeth of York (see appendix 5) had eight children in total but only four of them reached adulthood. Arthur, Prince of Wales, born on September 20th, 1486; was the first son of King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York; therefore, heir to the throne of England.

- Margaret Tudor born on November 28th, 1489, at Westminster Palace, Westminster, London, England, was the eldest of the two surviving daughters of Henry VII, and the eldest sister of Henry VIII. She died on October 18th, 1541.
- Henry VIII born on June 28th, 1491, became King of England from April 21st, 1509 until his death. He was also Lord of Ireland (later King of Ireland) and claimant to the Kingdom of France. Henry VIII was the second monarch of the House of Tudor, succeeding his father, Henry VII.
- Elizabeth Tudor born on July 2nd, 1492, was the second daughter and fourth child of Henry VII. She died on September 14th, 1495 at age 3 at Eltham Palace, Kent, England, from 'atrophy', the condition of losing flesh, muscle and strength in a part of the body. She was buried at Westminster Abbey, Westminster, London, England.
• Mary Tudor was the fifth child of Henry VII and the youngest to survive infancy. She was born on March 18th, 1496, at Richmond Palace. She was Queen consort of France through her marriage to Louis XII. Mary died at Westhorpe Hall, Westhorpe, Suffolk on June 25th, 1533.

• Edmund Tudor was the sixth child of Henry VII. He was born on February 21st, 1499, bestowed at birth with the title Duke of Somerset, although never formally created. He was christened on the February 24th and died at 15 months of unknown causes on June 19th, 1500. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

• Edward Tudor was the second to last son and his birth date is unknown. He died young and was buried at Westminster Abbey, Westminster, London, England.

• Katherine Tudor was the eighth and last child of King Henry VII. She was born on February 2nd, 1503. She was also reported to have been born on February 11th, 1503 and she died shortly after her birth about February 18th, 1503 at the Tower of London, London, England.

Elizabeth of York did not survive long after Katherine's death. Still grieving for her eldest son, Arthur, who had died shortly before she became pregnant, Elizabeth succumbed to a post pregnancy infection on February 11th, 1503, at her thirty-seventh birthday.

In the end, Henry VII had two male sons, one of them, Arthur, designated to become the next King of England, and Henry who was educated to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. His wishes were that the Tudor's Dynasty had the control over the two main institution of that time. In one hand, the Reign of England and on the other hand the Roman Catholic Church. The main reasons Henry VII had to make such decisions over his sons’ lives are not well-known, even though, it is said that it was more economical to provide for younger sons out of ecclesiastical, than royal revenues. To have a clear idea of the power that could have been achieved if this plan would have succeeded, it is of great importance to be aware of the implication of the two positions that Henry VII wanted to gain. In one hand to have the Reign, crowing his elder son Arthur as the King of England, the highest position inside the Royalty. On the other hand to have the Ecclesiastical position, making his younger son, Henry, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or in other words, to be the man in charge of most of the Churches in England. The Archbishop of Canterbury had great power over most territorial ecclesiastical areas in England, besides the King
himself. So this magnificent union could have been an excellent model to be followed by the next rulers so as to have the entire power under one big family, validating the importance of the Tudor’s Dynasty.

On November 14th, 1501 Arthur, Prince of Wales, married the Spanish princess Catharine of Aragon. Catherine of Aragon represented a political union between a strong and powerful Spain and the up and coming England. The wedding celebrations lasted for two weeks and included daily jousts and banquets followed by pageants, masques and dancing. This is a clear example of the importance that this union had to consolidate the Tudor dynasty. At this point his eldest son was soon to be crowned King of England and Henry VII managed to marry him to the princess of Spain, which would eventually bring great benefits. It is necessary to take into account that England had been long at war with France so Henry VII saw in Spain a powerful ally in case of an eventual conflict. On the other hand was young Henry, who was destined to occupy the highest position inside the Catholic Church.

Shortly after the wedding, Arthur and Catherine went to live in Wales at Ludlow Castle, as was tradition for the heir to the throne. But, five months after the marriage began; it ended, with Arthur's death on April 2nd, 1502. Arthur, Prince of Wales died at Ludlow Castle of the “sweating sickness” and was buried in princely state in Worcester Cathedral.

With this tragedy to the Tudors family, not only the alliances with Spain were interrupted but also the young Henry was now under the Kingdom’s eyes, as suddenly becoming the next in the line of succession. Arthur’s death had left behind a young widow. She was kept in England almost alone by King Henry VII due to the lack of accomplishment in giving the dowry when Catherine was married to Arthur. As many ruler used to practice, the last thing kings considered was the domestic felicity of their children. Their marriages were pieces in the diplomatic game and sometimes the means by which the states were built up. As Henry VII’s plans of having both sons in high positions in the state had failed due to the death of Arthur, he had to find a new strategy for consolidating the Tudor Dynasty, now young Henry was under the spotlight.
1.2 King Henry VIII

“His Majesty is the handsomest potentate I ever set eyes on; above the usual height, with an extremely fine calf to his leg, his complexion very fair and bright, auburn hair combed straight and short, in the French fashion, and a round face so very beautiful that it would become a pretty woman, his throat being rather long and thick.... He will enter his twenty-fifth year the month after next. He speaks French, English and Latin, and a little Italian, plays well on the lute and harpsichord, sings from book at sight, draws the bow with greater strength than any man in England and jousts marvelously... a most accomplished Prince”. (Pasqualigo , 1515)

King Henry VIII (see appendix 6), one of the most eccentric character in English History, was born on June 28th, 1491 and, like all the Tudor monarchs except Henry VII, at Greenwich Palace. His two brothers, Prince Arthur and Edmund, Duke of Somerset, and two of his sisters predeceased their father; Henry VIII was the only son, and Margaret Tudor, afterwards Queen of Scotland, and Mary Tudor, afterwards Queen of France and Duchess of Suffolk, were the only daughters who survived. By far, King Henry VIII had been the most magnificent of all the Tudors rulers. Henry was a second son destined for a life in church until fate took a hand when his elder brother, Arthur, died. Henry's destiny changed from secular to the monarchy.

1.2.1 Henry VIII’s Early Life

Henry was the first heir to the throne of England on behalf of the House of Tudor, although, he was not supposed to be the King of England in first place. Not until his brother’s death he was noticed, indeed, Henry was not given many royal duties during his early life. These duties were expected to be performed by his older brother, Arthur, who was being prepared to rule England. This fact along with his upbringing marked his personality greatly.

As Henry VIII was not counted as significant until his brother Arthur died in 1502, he was raised alongside his sisters Margaret, Mary, and Elizabeth and, unusually for a royal prince. His mother, Queen Elizabeth of York, played a big part on his childhood. The evidence lied in Henry’s handwriting. Henry’s handwriting has always been a bit of a mystery. The “Y’s” with a little back loop, the R’s which looked much more like a Z, in modern handwriting, and the H’s are quite unlike the handwriting of Henry’s known teachers (see appendix 7). On the other hand,
it is rather like the handwriting of Henry’s mother, Elizabeth of York. It is possible to state that Elizabeth herself was the first teacher of her daughters and of her second son Henry. But Henry’s childhood was also shadowed by death. When he was four years old, his younger sister Elizabeth died and soon after his eldest brother died as well.

With Arthur’s death, suddenly young Henry was heir to the throne. He took over his brother’s titles of Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall and seven years later he became King of England. Everything that happened after his brother’s death was of outmost importance in order to start depicting him as a monarch, due to the fact that once Arthur died, Henry was drawn into the spotlight, which modeled his temper and character for the rest of his life.

Henry VIII was spoilt by his doting grandmother and mother together with the attendants in his retinue. His grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, supervised his early education. Henry VIII was considered a handsome and precocious toddler who was noted for his energy and his temper. His knowledge of the subject and the Bible was to be of great help to him in his later life which generated even a bigger debate around Henry’s decision of breaking bonds with the Roman Catholic Church. This seems, at first hand, counterproductive due to the fact that eventually Henry divided the faith of his people.

It is said that he has a “vivid and active mind, above measurable to execute whatever task he undertook” (Pollard, 1919). His knowledge was so wide that he was able to manage French, Latin and Spanish (when he married Catherine). He was the first English monarch to be educated under the influence of the Renaissance. This is really important at the moment of understanding Henry’s personality during this period where great knowledge regarding humanistic and arts was introduced. Henry VIII received an education befitting a prince of the royal blood, and was taught a range of different lessons including languages, grammar, theology, history, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, arithmetic, literature, geometry, and music. In addition to all of these subjects, the education of the young Henry also included astronomy, navigation and cartography as well as non-academic subjects such as riding, jousting, tennis, archery, hunting and dancing. Henry was raised to become the most suitable person to be in charge of the Throne of England.

The closest childhood friends of Henry VIII were his cousins, William Compton and Charles Brandon and a young noble called Henry Norris. Charles Brandon shared his most
prominent characteristics: natural athleticism, strong physical health and an enthusiasm for all sports including riding, hunting, tilting and jousting. During his early life, Henry VIII had his own retinue with servants and minstrels. He also had a fool named John Goose.

Now the line of succession had changed and Price Henry, as being the only possibility of Henry VII to continue with the Tudors Dynasty, was brought under the public attention in the English Court. Henry VII became obsessed with the welfare of his son. The King wanted to protect the young Prince from any injury or illness. Anyone who wished to visit Henry must have received the authorization of the King. It was not allow to the young Prince to go out except through a private door which led to an isolated park and just with the person previously appointed to delivering that task. Henry spent his days in a room where the only way to gain access to it was thorough the King’s chamber (Scarisbrick). It was so powerful the King’s domination under his only living son that no one dared to approach or even speak to young Henry. He never spoke in public unless it was to answer a question from his father. Under such strict conditions of life, it could be assumed that his childhood and adolescence where not as normal as it used to be for the King’s son, forbidding him to performance ordinal activities appointed to an heir. “His respect and fear to his father’s temper led him to control his exuberant personality in public” (Castelli). This may have inked in Henry’s life, but it did not interfere with his continuing education. His father paranoia was immense that he never let his son to attempt anything in which he did not succeed. He was a shy 18 years old young man when he became King of England, after his older brother’s death. Even though, he was a slim, beautiful, elegant, musical, poetical, reasonable charming, sweet tempered young man who would marry for love. At this time, he was not the image of the overweight and ill man of his later years. In his youth, he was handsome and athletic. He was tall and had a bright red-gold cap of hair and beard, a far cry from the fat, balding and unhealthy man that it is often remembered.

1.2.2 Marriage to Catherine of Aragon

After Arthur’s death, Henry VII had planned to marry the widow with his only heir, Prince Henry. The new betrothal may have been spurred by Henry VII's legendary avarice. Catharine had brought half of her dowry with her upon marriage to Arthur. If she returned home, her marriage contract required that the dowry must have been returned. Even though, this new
alliance would not take place until the dowry was given fully to the English Kingdom. This idea was shared by the Spaniards ruler Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile (see appendix 8), as an attempt for the security and future of their daughter who was born to become a great Queen owing to his outstanding skills in political affair and also with the more common and domestic issues involved in the guidance of palace. A treaty was signed that would allow Catherine to marry the next heir to the throne. Until then, Catherine's parents would send over 100,000 crowns worth of plate and gold as a wedding gift and Henry VII would pay the agreed upon dowry. During this time that lasted for over seven years, Catherine was kept in England (see appendix 9). Her living conditions steadily deteriorated; she was miserably unhappy, many of her Spanish attendants were sent home, she lacked money for even basic necessities. Food and adequate clothing were constant concerns. She struggled to bear her hardships with the serene and regal dignity that was ingrained in her character as a princess of Spain. Despite her royal position, she lived in poverty.

For the marriage to be accomplished not only the marriage settlement must have been given but also a Papal dispensation must have been granted so as to let the union of Arthur and Catherine invalid. As she was his dead brother's wife, this marriage was prohibited in Leviticus 18:16 "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness." At the time, and throughout her life, Catherine denied that her marriage to Arthur had even been consummated. Catharine and her duenna, Dona Elvira, both wrote that her marriage to Arthur had never been consummated. This is a very plausible theory for Arthur began feeling ill shortly after his marriage. This theory gained credibility, so no dispensation was needed. Nonetheless, both parties in Spain and England wanted to be sure of the legitimacy of the marriage, so the permission from the Pope was sought and received. Pope Julius II granted the dispensation. The dispensation was officially known on November 1504, when Catherine’s mother was about to pass away. This issue would be very important during the Divorce and the Break with Rome. However, the marriage still did not take place. Henry VII had been slow to pay his part of the arrangement and Catherine’s parents were refusing to send the marriage portion of plate and gold. The stalemate continued until Henry VII died on April 22nd, 1509 and his son became Henry VIII.
Succession to the British throne is governed both by common law and statute. Under the common law the crown is passed on by male preference primogeniture. In other words, an individual’s male children are preferred over his or her female children, and an older child is preferred over a younger child of the same gender, with children representing their deceased ancestors.

Henry's father, Henry VII, was always careful with money and his court was not famous for its show of wealth. Henry VIII wanted to change all that. When he met one of his rivals, King Francis I of France (see appendix 10), just outside Calais in 1520, a complete town of tents and timber was built for the meeting. Yards of velvet, satin and cloth of gold were sent to decorate the temporary palaces. It was called "The Field of the Cloth of Gold" (see appendix 11). Henry loved all this display.

Henry VIII became King of England on the death of his father, King Henry VII, on April 21st, 1509 (see appendix 12). His coronation took place on June 24th, 1509. A week before his accession to the throne, he married Catherine of Aragon. With the coronation and marriage to Catherine of Aragon, King Henry VIII was ready to give the long awaited stability to the English crown. No one at that age could anticipate the deep crisis in which the political and religious life of the Henrician period, the island nation, would face which was to become the greatest crisis on English history. The role of Henry’s upbringing in the future years due to the fact that the spoilt boy, handsome and excel sportsman was never used to defeat or disappointment. The impossibility of the male heir, which threatened the security of his Dynasty, began causing problems. The King began to question his relation with Catherine, as a matter of fact. The Bible had a harsh view of the marriage between brothers in law. This gave birth to Henry’s darkest feeling towards his marriage and began tormenting him daily and thus gnawing his nerves. This impossibility to procreate a male heir that survived infancy became an estate issue. In addition to the new King’s infatuation with Lady Anne Boleyn, (see appendix 9) it triggered one of the most sinister periods in religious life in England, The Anglican reformation.

1.2.3 Henry VIII’ Personality

"After dinner, we were taken to the King [Henry VIII], who embraced us, without ceremony, and conversed for a very long while very familiarly, on various topics, in good Latin
and in French, which he speaks very well indeed, and he then dismissed us, and we were brought back here to London.... His Majesty is the handsomest potentate I ever set eyes on; above the usual height, with an extremely fine calf to his leg, his complexion very fair and bright, with auburn hair combed straight and short, in the French fashion, his throat being rather long and thick... He speaks French, English, and Latin, and a little Italian, plays well on the lute and harpsichord, sings from book at sight, draws the bow with greater strength than any man in England, and jousts marvelously." (Venetian ambassador of Henry's court, 1515)

In the beginning of his reign as King, Henry VIII was wildly popular. Between his father's teachings and his natural charm, he became loved by his court and his people. His personality was quite amazing; his intelligence, learning, and curiosity impressed even the world-weary ambassadors who littered his court. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable. He did spend his entire reign reading dispatches, scribbling notations, meeting with diplomats and politicians. Very little occurred in England that escaped his attention, indeed, very little occurred in Europe that escaped Henry VIII. He prided himself on this and well he should- The Spanish ambassador reported that Henry knew of the fall of Cadiz before the Holy Roman Emperor.

He was usually genial company. Unknown to most, he was also a successful musician and poet and even wrote some of his own pieces. One example is "Pastyme With Good Company." He enjoyed dancing and entertainment. He held countless banquets and tournaments. He enjoyed all physical activities and succeeded at most of them.

Despite his licentious reputation, Henry VIII was really a 16th century sexual prude. Among his European contemporaries, he philandered the least, as it is evidenced through the six wives he had. Even though, his love affairs were never his grand passion, Henry's hearty appetites and fickle passions are legendary. Being married with Catherine of Aragon, he had a handful of mistresses. While reading any biography of Henry VIII, it is always amusing to read descriptions of Henry as the lustful tyrant torn between bedding and beheading innocent women. In truth, he blushed at dirty jokes and was more faithful than it could have been imagined. He waited years to physically consummate his relationship with Anne Boleyn, and despite being in the prime of his life, remained faithful to her until marriage which evidenced his incurable romanticism. “Darling, though I have scant leisure, yet, remembering my promise, I thought it convenient to certify you briefly in what case our affairs stand” (Henry VIII, 1527)
His personal and political decisions were always grandiose, melodramatic, and played for
great effect. He loved pomp and pageantry. Henry was well-versed in English history and
desperate to continue the Tudor Dynasty, to secure his claims to Ireland, Scotland, and France. In
that way, Henry could raise England to the status of its continental neighbors, and to expand his
God-given right to rule all Englishmen.

1.2.4 Henry VIII’s Medical Records

As far as had been established, Henry VIII was a magnificent monarch who spent his
youth days into pleasures, sports and affairs. It is hard to believe how Henry VIII became the
tyannical monster remembered by history because of a personality change following a serious
jousting accident, according to a new historical documentary. After the accident, just before he
became estranged from the second of his six wives, Anne Boleyn, the King, once sporty and
generous, became cruel, vicious and paranoid, his subjects began talking about him in a new way,
and the turnover of his wives speeded up. The accident occurred at a tournament at Greenwich
Palace on January 24th, 1536 when 44 year-old. Henry, in full armor, was thrown from his horse,
which then fell on top of him. He was unconscious for two hours and was thought at first to have
been fatally injured.

But, although he recovered, the incident, which ended his jousting career, aggravated
serious leg problems which plagued him for the rest of his life, and may well have caused an
undetected brain injury which profoundly affected his personality, according to the History
Channel documentary “Inside the Body of Henry VIII”. The programme focuses on the King's
medical problems which grew worse in his later years, especially his ulcerated legs and his
obesity. By the time of his death in 1547 at the age of 56, he is likely to have weighted 177
kg.(see appendix 6)

Henry VIII offered a picture of a sovereign eventually overwhelmed by health problems
by the time of his death. His doctors recorded that he had badly ulcerated legs, was unable to
walk, his eyesight was fading, and he was plagued by paranoia and melancholy. However, Henry
VIII had started out with excellent health as a young man, being universally admired for his
manly physique.
In relation to his medical history, it can be traced back that he may have had a bout of smallpox at the age of 23, but the experts speculate that his real medical problems began at the age of 30 when he appears to have contracted Malaria, which is thought to have returned throughout his life. They were intensified by two factors: open sores on his legs and sporting injuries.

The sores, varicose ulcers, which began on his left leg when he was 36, and later affected his right leg, may have been caused by the restrictive garters he wore to show off his calves. They never healed, and increasingly restricted his mobility. Henry VIII also suffered various injuries because of his well-known love of sports. He excelled at pursuits such as archery, wrestling and royal tennis, and, playing the latter game, he seriously injured his foot.

But it was jousting, two armored horsemen charging at each other with wooden lances in "the lists", which proved the most dangerous. His first serious accident occurred in 1524 when he failed to lower the visor on his helmet and was hit by his opponent's lance just above the right eye, after which he constantly suffered from migraines. Jousting nearly killed him 12 years later. The fall at Greenwich left him speechless for two hours, and Anne Boleyn, the woman for whom he had divorced his original Queen, Catherine of Aragon, was told that he would die. The shock of this news, she said, caused her to miscarry the child she was expecting. The miscarried baby was a male, and it was immediately after this that Henry VIII told Anne they would clearly never have male children together, and turned against her. Less than six months later, Anne had been executed and Henry had married the third of his six wives, Jane Seymour (see appendix 9).

But the jousting accident may have affected his whole personality, the experts suggest. Lucy Worsley, one of the investigators of the documental says: "We posit that his jousting accident of 1536 provides the explanation for his personality change from sporty, promising, generous young prince, to cruel, paranoid and vicious tyrant, from that date the turnover of the wives really speeds up, and people begin to talk about him in quite a new and negative way...After the accident he was unconscious for two hours; even five minutes of unconsciousness is considered to be a major trauma today." Henry VIII may have suffered a brain injury, Dr Worsley says. "Damage to the frontal lobe of the brain can perfectly well result in personality change." This historical fact into Henry VIII’ life may explained how he turned into an ogre King who beheaded two wives, divorced two others, and rejected another in one of the most
humiliating ways possible. Having in mind his romantic strategies to approach to his mistress such as poem and love letters what is possible to observe in one of his letter to his second wife, Anne Boleyn: “Myne awne Sweetheart, this shall be to advertise you of the great ellingness1 that I find here since your departing, for I ensure you, me thinketh the Tyme longer since your departing now last than I was wont to do a whole Fortnight” (Henry VIII, 1533)

When he grew older, his former pleasures became torments. Like most former athletes, Henry VIII became fat as he aged and the once-loved pastimes became bitter reminders of the ravages of time. He ruled over a country where almost half the population was 18 years old or younger! Youth was everywhere, staring the old King in his face. We can imagine the effects. Quite naturally, he sought reassurances from women, his courtiers, and his council.

What is beyond doubt is that the end of his jousting combined with his leg ulcers to restrict his movement and Henry VIII, who had a large appetite anyway, began to put on weight rapidly.

Henry VIII executed many of his advisors. This act can be justified with his extreme change of personality after the jousting accident. One the so called friend was Cardinal Wolsey (see appendix 13), who was in charge of obtaining an annulment to Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon. As Cardinal Wolsey failed in this task, together with the Boleyn’s faction, worked to undermine the Cardinal's authority with the King, claiming that Wolsey was actually hard at work.

Thomas More (see appendix 14) was another advisor executed by Henry VIII’s hands. More helped Henry VIII in writing his Defense of the Seven Sacraments, a repudiation of Luther, and wrote an answer to Luther’s reply under a pseudonym. More had garnered Henry’s favor, and was made Speaker of the House of Commons in 1523 and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1525.

In April 1534, More refused to swear to the Act of Succession and the Oath of Supremacy, and was committed to the Tower of London on April 17th. More was found guilty of treason and was beheaded on July 6th, 1535. More’s final words on the scaffold were: “The King’s good servant, but God’s First.” More was beatified in 1886 and canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint by Pope Pius XI in 1935.
Chapter II

The Crash of Catholicism

As it will be analyzed further in this chapter, Henry VIII’s plan for reformation had both, personal and political basis. The impossibility of procreating a male heir to the throne of England, that could ensure the safety of the crown and of the Tudor Dynasty, put his reign into hazard. The long awaited stability that Henry VII fought for was now in danger, therefore, to young Henry this became a Great Matter within his Kingship.

Henry VIII, a man who was used and managed to do everything he desired, was now before a problem beyond his reach. He began to doubt the religious legitimacy of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon due to an impossibility to conceive a son. A new important element was added to this predicament, her name was Anne Boleyn. The King’s infatuation with Anne gave birth to one of the most radical changes that Catholicism had ever had in England. Some historians even regard Anne as the King Great Matter itself, owing to the fact that she had a great bearing over the decisions taken politically during the reign of Henry VIII. Here lies the importance of the following chapter, where it will be analyzed the way in which a love affair lead to the reformation of the Catholic faith in England, and how the “King Great Matter” became the most entertaining soup opera of all Europe.

2.1 The Impossibility of a Male Heir

Catherine was promised to England in a betrothal contract that was signed long after their marriage. As before mentioned, when young Henry’s brother, Arthur, died the position of Catherine inside the English court was uncomfortable. She stayed in England waiting for Prince Henry to become a suitable husband. While she stayed in England, she did not have the benefits that a Spanish princess deserved. In fact, she did not have enough money to buy appropriate clothes to a future Queen.

In 1509, the situation was resolved with startling speed. Henry VII died and his eighteen year old son became King. Handsome, proud, and imbued with the romantic spirit of chivalry, he promptly married Catherine. It was because there was a sort of obligation or maybe Henry VIII wanted to respect his father’s wish. The true reasons are uncertain, even though, there are many
other possible causes of this marriage. It is said that Henry VIII wanted to maintain and continue the alliances with Spain, as his father previously did. As well as the possibility that Henry really loved Catherine. It is important to know that they acted like a loving and affectionate couple, far beyond typical royal marriages. There were public displays of affection, declarations of love and respect, and for a long while, she was also a close political adviser.

Catherine of Aragon was to represent a political union between a strong and powerful Spain and the up and coming England. Instead, she became a model of excellence during a stormy period in European history.

When Henry and Catherine married, the court was full of celebration. It was a welcome change from the austerity of his father's rule; let us remember that King Henry VII was very well known for his soberness. In fact, his kingship was marked by a successful management of the resources. He not only finished a devastating civil war and brought under control the spirit of ancient feudalism, but also with a clear investigation of the state of affairs of foreign powers. He secured England in almost continuous peace while he developed her commerce.

Catherine proved herself to be the perfect consort, even when politics led her father to humiliate and betray Henry, Henry had tried to get his father in law, King Ferdinand, to come to join ventures against their mutual enemy, King Louis of France, but when it came to cunning politics, King Ferdinand was the best he shamelessly exploited Henry’s lust for glory and failed to deliver the military supports he needed in order to achieve victory, and it is a well known fact that in order to achieve victory against the French forces, the mighty Spanish Armada was of utmost importance. However Catherine had sworn allegiance to King Henry VIII and she would never betray him, the way her father did, she even decided to stay on Henry’s side and turn her back to her conning father.

Catherine’s primary duty was both, personal and political, to bear children, as many as possible and preferably sons. This was especially important in England since Henry VIII was the sole surviving son of his father. Catherine was far from infertile, and did her best. In the first nine years of their marriage, she conceived at least six times. She miscarried twice, once delivered a stillborn daughter, and two sons died within weeks. The only surviving child was a daughter, Princess Mary, born in 1516. Catherine’s last recorded pregnancy was in 1518, when she was
thirty-three years old. This means that the Queen Catherine did have the intention of procreating, furthermore, this showed that her goals where alienated with those of Henry. She was willing to continue the Tudor Dynasty. There are several reasons attributed to the impossibility of Catherine of having a male heir to the throne of England.

Henry VIII was not unhappy with the birth of Mary. He assured ambassadors that if it were a daughter this time, a son would surely follow and he was quite convinced of it thus happy and expectant. But it was soon clear there would be no sons, as time went by the possibility of having the long awaited male heir to the throne vanished. The age difference between him and Catherine was now more noticeable than when they married. Catherine was only twenty four years old when she married the young 18 year old Henry. However, almost 10 years later the Queen, struggling with frequent pregnancies and constant stress, looked older than her years. Henry was a far more prudent King than most. He had just two serious affairs during his marriage to Catherine. But one of his mistresses, Elizabeth Blount, bore him a son. It was clear for him that he could have sons, but the Queen could not.

By 1527, the question of the succession was the most pressing issue facing the King. Two years before, he had titled his illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy (see appendix 15), as the Duke of Richmond and granted him vast estates. Many, Catherine included, believed this was a preliminary step to naming him heir to the throne. This never occurred because the Duke of Richmond died in 1536. Until then, it was a possibility. Henry sent his daughter, Princess Mary (see appendix 16), to Ludlow Castle as Princess of Wales, giving her the possibility of being the official heir, but even that did not stop the rumors of her mother's concerns. By this time, Henry’s personality was becoming more and more noticeable, at this age the King was very well known for his strong personality and his mercurial temper. Catherine confronted Henry, but he responded angrily and dismissed several of her beloved Spanish attendants.

Henry, who was also deeply pious and a student of theology, now took a closer look at his marriage to Catherine. In particular, he looked at the text in Leviticus which seemed to directly refer his own life “If a man shall take his brother's wife it is an unclean thing..... They shall be childless.”(Leviticus, XX, 21). Of course, they were not childless but a daughter was not the heir he needed. Therefore, the King began questioning his marriage and thinking that the impossibility to procreate a male heir perhaps was a punishment sent from God, due to his unlawful union with
his brother’s wife. On that age, it was seen as something uncommon that a woman ruled the kingdom. In fact, many wars could have been avoided if there had been a single blood succession to the English throne coming from a King. Obviously, Henry wanted to avoid this due to the fact that the throne of England was secure after a long confrontation between families. Outside the Royal House, there were still some popular representatives of the White Rose, the Marquis of Exeter, who was Edward IV’s grandson. The Countess of Salisbury, daughter of Edward’s brother the Duke of Clarence, and sister of the murdered Earl of Warwick. Henry's life was the only obstacle between the collisions of these opposing pretensions. Furthermore, no woman had attempted to rule England since the disastrous Matilda centuries before. Henry now firmly believed that his incestuous marriage had been doomed from the start. Yet another element was added to this complicated equation, her name was Anne Boleyn.

2.1.1 Medical Theory

Nowadays, approximately five hundred years after King Henry VIII’s death, there are several theories trying to explain the King’s impossibility to procreate a male heir. His sexual health was extensively investigated owing to his impossibility to create a son. In the History Channel documentary “Inside the Body of Henry VIII” appears to be an explanation for the several miscarried babies that the wives of Henry VIII had. This main issue could be attributed to an illness called “Syphilis”.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that, if left untreated, can lead to serious health problems and increase the risk for getting Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. Syphilis also can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy and cause serious complications, as it is presumably the case of the King’s offspring. A syphilis infection in its early stages can be treated with antibiotics, and can be prevented by avoiding sexual contact with someone who is infected, obviously at that time both were almost equally impossible for King Henry VIII. In one hand, the vaccine against viral and bacterial infections did not exist at that time; on the other hand, King Henry VIII had an extensive reputation for having love affairs and extra marital relationships. Syphilis is caused by the bacteria *Treponema pallidum*, often does not cause any symptoms in its early stages. But if left untreated, it can progress to affect the entire body. (Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media)
As it was stated, Syphilis is an infection that can cause troubles during the birth of the baby, and if the infection is transmitted from the mother to the child, the baby could be born dead or could cause miscarriages. The first records of Syphilis in Europe were traced back on 1495. For the Tudor’s doctor, Syphilis was not a new disease, they used to be called it “the great pox” and as a cure they used Mercury. The investigators stated that Henry VIII could have been a carrier of the disease, who transmitted it to his wives through sex and the wives, at the same time, to their babies through pregnancy, without noticing. According to the recent research, the possibility of Henry VIII having Syphilis could be the explanation of the babies born dead, as well as, those miscarried ones. This was very important to understand, due to the fact that at that time, viruses were something inexplicable and surely they were not aware of the effects that this disease could have. Therefore, the only thing that the medieval man could rely on was religion. This is why Henry VIII as well as Catherine, most of courtiers and the English people believed in some extent that the main reason of their impossibility to procreate was sent from Heaven. As Henry was first educated to become a priest and reach a high position inside the church, he was very pious and also very concerned with religious matters. As was predictable for a devout man in that period, he relied on religion and blamed his incestuous relation for the impossibility to have an heir to the throne of England. However, Henry’s predicament was far from being over owing to the fact that the long desired of a male heir did not come until much later. As he grew tired of this impossibility to have a heir to his throne and continue with the Tudor Bloodline, he started aiming at new directions. We have to take into account that Catherine was not able to conceive a male son, but Henry did have a son in one of his extra marital relations. Therefore, the King not only blamed his incestuous relation but also blamed Catherine. In this part of the story is where the polemic character of Anne Boleyn appeared.

2.2 Lady Anne Boleyn

“She is of middling stature, with a swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, and in fact has nothing but the King's great appetite, and her eyes, which are black and beautiful, and take great effect on those who served the Queen when she was on the throne. She lives like a Queen, and the King accompanies her to Mass - and everywhere.” (The Venetian Ambassador, 1532)
Anne Boleyn’s birth date is unknown; even the year is widely debated. General opinion now favors 1501 or 1502, though some historians convincingly argue for 1507. She was probably born at Blickling Hall in Norfolk. Her father was Sir Thomas Boleyn (see appendix 17), a minor courtier with a talent for foreign languages. He was of London Merchant Stock and eager to advance in the world. She was the sister of a former mistress of King Henry VIII. That was the reason she had to refuse to take that position herself knowing that, if she agreed his romance with the King of England, this relationship would have not lasted long and it was not something that this power insatiable young girl wanted.

Anne’s first years at court were spent in service to Henry VIII’s first wife, Catherine of Aragon. She became quite popular among the younger men, not only because of her beauty but also due to her cultivated mind, which was not something very common on young girls who did not descend from royalty. She was not considered a great beauty; a former mistress of the King, his sister Mary occupied that position in the family. Hostile chroniclers described Anne as plain, sallow, and possessing two very distinct flaws, a large mole on the side of her neck and an extra finger on her left hand. She received focus on her style, her wit and charm. She was quick-tempered and spirited. These last two attributes were probably those who attracted Henry the most, due to the fact that she never succumbed to his grace. One could say that she played a very intelligent game with the King of England, where she was able to seduce him and to keep him in this way for a very long time, or at least as long as the annulment was being worked. Not to mention her most remarkable physical attributes were her large dark eyes and long black hair.

The King’s attraction was focused upon her sharp and teasing manner, and her often stated unavailability. Most historians attribute Henry’s infatuation to his impossibility to have her. What He could not have, He desired the most. For Henry this was especially difficult, owing to the fact that he was used to have his own way in everything. Anne was also seriously involved with Henry Percy, the son and heir of the Earl of Northumberland. There were rumors of an engagement and declarations of true love; obviously for the King this did not represent good news at all. The King now saw Anne as a prey, and the King was the best hunter of his times. The King ordered his great minister, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, to cut all bonds between them. Wolsey did so, consequently ensuring Percy's unhappy marriage to the Earl of Shrewsbury's daughter and Anne’s great hostility who blamed the Cardinal than the King. Also, Henry’s
jealousy revealed the depth of his feelings, and Anne quite naturally thought if she could not be an Earl’s wife; certainly she will try for the crown of England. Which, she then strived to obtain.

When Anne avoided Henry’s company, or when she was dour and evasive to him, he sent her away from court. The King hoped that a few months in the country would persuade her of her evasive attitude. It did not work. Anne was already playing a far more serious game than the King. Later, after she had been arrested, Henry would claim he had been “bewitched” and this term was not used lightly in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. But perhaps, it was simply the contrast between her vivacity and Catherine’s solemnity, or perhaps the King mistook the inexplicable ardor of true love for something more threatening, long after that love had faded.

It is impossible to fully explain the mystery of attraction between two people. The King by now had hopes of a legitimate heir. He had fallen in love with a young English woman, Anne Boleyn. Despite the greatest obstacles and the constant presence of malicious gossips, how Anne was able to capture and maintain the King’s attention for such a long while cannot be explained. Henry was headstrong and confrontational for several years. He remained faithful to his feelings for Anne, and his attendant desire for a legitimate male heir.

It is often thought that Henry’s infatuation with Anne led him to seek a way to annul his existing marriage. Nevertheless, there is a good evidence to suggest that Henry may have made the decision to set aside his marriage with Catherine of Aragon solely because of her failure to bear him a male heir. He believed this was essential to prevent the collapse of the Tudor Dynasty. In fact, it was the only thing he could do to keep his reign together and not wasting everything his father had done to preserve the name of the Dynasty, as well as, giving stability to England. Due to this fact, we cannot separate the King’s desire for a son, indeed its very necessity, from his personal desire for Anne. The two interests merged perfectly in 1527. Henry had discovered the invalidity of his marriage to Catherine. Now it was possible to annul his marriage and secure his two fondest hopes: Anne’s hand in marriage and the long-desired heir.

\subsection*{2.2.1 Anne’s Influence over Henry VIII}

Anne Boleyn’s position at the English court became even more prominent. On the English throne, Anne Boleyn, who acted independently of her future husband, was able to grant petitions,
receive diplomats and presided over patronage appointments and foreign policy. During this period, Anne Boleyn played an important role in England’s international position by solidifying an alliance with France. In 1529, Anne Boleyn became the most powerful person at court. She had considerable power over government appointments and political matters. Henry VIII bestowed upon Anne the Marquessate of Pembroke, making her the first English female commoner known to become a noble in her own right by creation, rather than through inheritance.

Anne’s exasperation with the Vatican’s refusal to make her Queen also persuaded her to endorse a new alternative to Henry VIII. She suggested that he should follow the advice of religious radicals like William Tyndale, who denied Papal authority and believed that the monarch should lead the Church. In 1533, the English Church was declared to be under Henry’s control. This was the famous “Break with Rome”, which signaled the end of England’s history as a Roman Catholic Church country. Queen Anne Boleyn was delighted at this development. She believed that the Papacy was a corrupting influence on Christianity.

In 1533, Henry VIII announced the decision that his first marriage, to Catherine of Aragon, was invalid. He secretly wed Anne at the Palace of Westminster. In any event, the marriage was not made public knowledge for some months. However, in 1532, Anne Boleyn got pregnant and Henry was forced into action. They were secretly married despite the fact that King’s marriage to Catherine was not dissolved. “In the King’s mind it had never existed in the first place, so he was free to marry whomever he wanted”. (Eakins, 2007)

After that, the Archbishop officially proclaimed that the marriage of Henry VIII and Queen Catherine was invalid and Anne Boleyn became a crowned and appointed Queen. Anne’s child was born on September 7th. The physicians and astrologers had been mistaken; it was not a prince, the healthy baby girl called Elizabeth (see appendix 16) was not the disappointment most assumed, nor did she immediately cause her mother’s downfall.

Anne Boleyn’s reputation as a religious reformer spread through Europe. She was hailed as a heroine by Protestant characters; even Martin Luther (see appendix 18) viewed her rise to the throne as a good sign. Anne also saved the life of the French reformer Nicolas Bourbon. She appealed to the French Royal Family, who spared Bourbon’s life as a favor to the English Queen.
Nicolas Bourbon would later refer to her as “the Queen whom God loves”. She championed religious reform, especially translating the Bible into English. As her husband opposed most of the Lutheran Doctrinal Reforms, Anne had to treat carefully with regard on pushing England toward what was often called as “the new learning”. She was a generous patron of charity, distributing alms to poor relief and funds to educational foundation.

2.3 The King’s Great Matter

The "Great Matter" is referred to Henry's desire for a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Henry believed that he had committed a sin against God by marrying his brother's widow. Despite a dispensation from the Pope and her own solemn oath her marriage to Arthur was not consummated. By interpreting a Bible passage, Henry insisted that his lack of a male heir, which to most historians was the main cause for seeking the annulment, was the curse sent from God for breaking the Catholic Regulations. Wolsey named this problem "The Great Matter" as he began to investigate ways to end Henry's marriage and free him to marry Anne Boleyn. Although, Wolsey did not know about Anne and, indeed, when first Henry muttered about this "Great Matter" was before he was truly in love with Lady Anne.

It results impossible to depict clearly the King’s “Great Matter” and the consequences that this had on English history, without first talking about one of the most impotent character of this epoch, Thomas Wolsey (see appendix 13). He was an English political influence and Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. When Henry VIII became King of England in 1509, Wolsey became the King’s Almoner. Wolsey’s affairs prospered and by 1514 he had become the controlling person in virtually all matters of state and was extremely powerful within the Church. The highest political position he attained was Lord Chancellor, the King's Chief Advisor, enjoying great freedom and often depicted as an Alter Rex (other king). Within the Church, he became Archbishop of York, the second most important seat in England, and then was made a Cardinal in 1515, giving him precedence over the Archbishop of Canterbury.

2.3.1 Wolsey’s Struggle

In order to work on the annulment, the King asked Wolsey for help. However, a divorce was not a simple issue. In fact, it was a very complicated one, especially five hundred years ago.
Henry VIII was a Roman Catholic believer and the head of this church was the Pope based in Rome. The Roman Catholic faith believed in marriage for life. It did not recognize, let alone support, divorce. Those who were widowed were free to re-marry; this was an entirely different issue. But husbands could not simply decide that their marriage was not working, divorce their wife and re-marry. The Roman Catholic Church simply did not allow it. This put Henry VIII in a difficult position. If he went ahead and announced that as King of England, he was allowing himself a divorce, the Pope could excommunicate him. This meant that under Catholic Church law, his soul could never get to Heaven. To someone living at the time of Henry, this was a very real fear, and a threat which the Catholic Church used to keep people under its control.

Wolsey was a consummate manager, attentive to details in both, matters and men. Someone who could strike the parliament, when that was necessary and bang heads together, even very aristocratic heads when that was called for. He was a master manipulator of patronage, of bribes and of threats.

Wolsey pleaded with the King to avoid such action, but the King was adamant. Henry claimed having long doubts of the validity of his marriage to his dead brother's widow, citing a biblical passage (from Leviticus 20). As Papal legate, Wolsey convened a secret ecclesiastical court for May 17th 1527, and the King testified not being sure about the legitimacy of the union and asking for judgment. The court reconvened twice more, and on May 31st declared they were not qualified to judge such a difficult case.

The story of Wolsey was tragic, to say the least, but also was somehow sardonic specially when we consider the way he dies and how did Anne managed to do him so much harm to both, his political and personal life. To Thomas Wolsey, this seemed as a mock coming from high above, due to the fact that it was Wolsey who practically made all arrangements in order to make possible that Anne and Henry could meet. Wolsey understood the relation between power and display, he used it for his own ends in Hampton court, but he also used it for the King, acting as the impresario for one of the greatest shows in his career, the Field of the Cloth of Gold (see appendix 11). This was a meeting between the King of England and the King of France in order to strengthen the bonds between both nations. The meeting in 1520 between Henry and the young French King Francis I was supposed to be a demonstration of the heartfelt amity, as well as, a
pointed message to the recently elected Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (see appendix 19), that old enemies could, if it is needed, become friends.

The important aspect of this event was not only the magnificence in which both kings displayed their possessions, but one single aspect of this encounter. In this meeting, the entire ruling class of England and France merged together in celebration, and somewhere in the middle of the celebration was a young English woman, a lady in waiting to Claude, the wife of the French King. Little did Wolsey imagine that this would become the woman who would bring the Cardinal’s immense house of power crashing down in ruins, and with it, inconceivably, the power of the Roman Catholic Church. She was Lady Anne Boleyn.

Cardinal Wolsey had long advocated an Anglo-French alliance. For that reason, he disliked the Spanish Catherine of Aragon. That was the main reason for him to pursue an annulment of Henry VIII and Catherine’s marriage. His plans were to remarry the King with a French Princess or perhaps a great lady of the English court in order to give King Henry more power and stability. To have a French alliance was worthy for him in his plans to obtain a better position inside the Church. Wolsey did not like Anne basically because she was everything he loathed, she did not descend from royal lineage, on top of this, her sister had been one of Henry’s mistresses, and she despised him for that earlier injury to her heart. She did what she could to work against the Lord Chancellor.

The Privy Council recommended the King apply to the Pope for a decision on the annulment. Wolsey suggested that he could be sent to France to convince King Francis to use his influence to persuade the Pope to extend Wolsey's authority, in order that Wolsey could judge on the case. He left for France in July. While Wolsey was out of the country, the Boleyn faction worked hard to undermine the Cardinal’s authority with the King, claiming that Wolsey was actually hard at work preventing an annulment. By the time Wolsey returned from France in September, having failed to secure the support of Francis, the King already doubted his loyalty.

Unfortunately, for Wolsey, the Pope was captured and put prisoner to the Holy Roman Emperor by Charles V, Queen Catherine’s nephew. The Queen kept sending missives to persuade his nephew. “My tribulations are so great, my life so disturbed by the plans daily invented to further the king's wicked intention, the surprises which the king gives me, with certain persons of
his council, are so mortal, and my treatment is what God knows, that it is enough to shorten ten lives, much more mine.” (Catherine of Aragon, 1531)

Charles V told Pope Clement VII (see appendix 20) he was “determined to preserve the Queen’s rights” and forbade him to annul the marriage or to let the case be tried in England. Thus, when Wolsey’s and Henry’s respective ambassadors visited him, Clement cordially refused to grant a dispensation for an annulment. Wolsey, who was aware of the King’s growing displeasure and distrust with him, was doing everything in his power to get Clement to reconsider. In one letter, he wrote, “If the Pope is not compliant, my own life will be shortened, and I dread to anticipate the consequences” (Wolsey)

In October 1529, Wolsey was officially stripped of the office of Lord Chancellor, and was required to return the Great Seal. Desperately trying to avoid indictment, Wolsey gave the King most of his property, including York Place, himself retiring to a modest house in Esher, Surrey. York Palace was to be renovated, renamed Whitehall, and given to Anne Boleyn. In November, Wolsey begged the King for mercy, and Henry, placated, placed Wolsey under his personal protection. Just after Christmas, Wolsey fell ill and was thought to be dying. The King sent him a message saying “he would not lose him for £20,000”, and the Cardinal's health improved.

However, Anne was not finished with Wolsey. She was furious when on February 12th 1530; the King pardoned Wolsey formally and confirmed his Archbishopric of York. Anne began in earnest to cry for Wolsey’s blood. Wolsey had never privately supported the King’s wish to obtain an annulment. Realizing that his only road back to power would be if the Queen was retained and Anne disposed with, Wolsey wrote to the Pope to have the matter solved with more speed.

Anne was not waiting idly. She had Wolsey’s physician bribed into falsely accusing Wolsey of urging the Pope to excommunicate Henry, and to seize the English throne himself. Wolsey had also written to Francis I and Charles V to ask them to intercede with the King on his behalf, and this also was used against him as evidence of treachery. The Cardinal was arrested on a charge of high treason in November. Travelling from Cawood, Yorkshire, to the Tower of London proved too much for Wolsey who fell ill on the way and died at Leicester Abbey. He is
said to have said on his deathbed, “If I had served God as diligently as I have done the King, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs.” (Wolsey)

Wolsey was the first to be dragged by the crisis due to the fact that Henry had no use for an incompetent advisor who couldn’t handle his divorce, and Woolsey was quickly rid of, ostensibly for fraud and corruption. Within a year, he was dead, charges of high treason still hanging upon his head.

### 2.3.2 Anne’s Unpopularity

As time went by and the English people became acquainted of the king’s intention to divorce Catherine, Anne became more and more criticized. This can be attributed to several factors, but most importantly is the fact that Queen Catherine was appraised by her people. Many historians agreed with the fact that Anne Boleyn was the sole responsible for Wolsey’s dead and many other unfortunate judgments that the King made. But Anne alone did not cause Wolsey’s fall from grace, though she took the blame for it. Indeed, “Nan Bullen”, as the common people derisively called her, became the perfect excuse for all the King’s unpopular decisions. But it is important to remember that no one, not Wolsey, not Cromwell, and certainly not Anne Boleyn had ever controlled Henry VIII, or made him do other than exactly what he wanted. He was the King of England who thoroughly knew and enjoyed his position. Sir Thomas More would pertinently point this out to his son-in-law, William Roper “If a lion knew his strength, it were hard for any man to hold him” (More). And later, when Roper commented upon the King’s affection for More, the philosopher replied that if his head would win the King a castle in France, then Henry would not hesitate to chop it off. Actually this quote tell us a lot of Henry’s personality and way to view life, if he wanted something, he did whatever was possible to acquire it, no matter what, so the eventual outcome of the Great Matter had seemed evident.

Most people found it easier to hate Anne than to hate their monarch, it was also safer for them. The Henrician period was characterized for something that did never happen before in the history of England, for the first time ever, it was considered a blasphemy to say something against the King or to criticize the way he did things, and as a blasphemy that person would have the worst punishment, death.
As the King’s desire for an annulment became the gossip of all Europe, she was roundly criticized and condemned. She was not popular at the English court either. Both, her unique situation and her common rough personality offended many. Catherine’s solemn piety had impressed the English court for three decades; her supporters were numerous, though not inclined to face the King’s formidable wrath. In truth, Anne was sustained only by the King’s affection as well as her father’s support, and she knew his mercurial temper. It very likely to most historians that Anne was in fact as surprised as anybody else with the King’s faithfulness, given the circumstances in which they met as well as Henry’s well known character.

As the struggle for an annulment proceeded and the Pope prevaricate between Henry VIII and Catherine’s nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Anne’s position at the English court became steadily more prominent. There were at first little signs. The King would eat alone with her; she received expensive gifts; she began to dress in the most fashionable and expensive gowns; the king paid her gambling debts since Anne, like most courtiers, enjoyed cards and dice.

For her part, Catherine was kept in the dark for as long as the King could manage it. But she was no fool. She knew of the romance between her husband and Mistress Boleyn. She knew Henry avoided her company, though he was scrupulous about attending official functions with her. He had always respected her unassailable dignity and eloquence. He did not wish to fight Catherine; he wanted an amicable end to their union and he was prepared to be generous.

When news of his intentions became official, she was given counsel but only who were chosen by the King. She turned to the Spanish ambassador and close friends at court for support. Anne Boleyn was not popular and Catherine was a respected and beloved Queen. The King soon came under popular scorn for his plans.

But Henry was as firmly convinced of the righteousness of his cause as Catherine was of hers. He had read the Bible; he had debated the issue with prominent theologians; he even sponsored hearings of the case at European universities. Both, King and Pope, knew it was a valid basis for the annulment, and a pressing national need for it. Clement VII could have granted it without troubling his conscience. And with the spread of Lutheranism in the German states, Clement had no wish to antagonize the loyal and devoted King of England. But the English King could not be helped at the Holy Roman Emperor’s expense. This was soon made abundantly
clear. The Pope evaded; he could do little else. And for several years, the “King’s Great Matter” consumed England and fascinated Europe.

The King was not too eccentric at first for he had no desire to prejudice the Pope against his case by flaunting a new love. But, as the delays began, and rumors of his new love spread, Henry realized there was no purpose in hiding the truth. By 1530, Anne was openly honored by the King at court. She was accorded precedence over all other ladies, and she sat with the King at banquets and hunts while Catherine was virtually ignored. The pretense of his first marriage was allowed to continue. Catherine continued to personally mend his shirts and send him gifts and notes. But it was an untenable situation. It grated on both women. Anne perhaps taxed the King with it. To soothe her, she was titled Marquess of Pembroke on September 4th, 1532 at Windsor Castle.

2.3.3 Reformation Parliament

After the failure of Cardinal Wolsey to win the Black friars trial, King Henry VIII was frustrated. He was left without a male heir, and his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was considered to be past child-bearing age. In 1529, Henry opened what would later become known as the English Reformation Parliament. It opened in the month of October and ran until December 1529 without forming a coherent plan on what to do. Because of this, Henry used it to discredit Wolsey. Soon after this, Henry turned his attentions to the Church itself.

By this time Anne had managed to obtain great power inside the court, and also had the privilege of advising the King in important matters. It was Anne’s herself, who at some point in 1530, steered the whole problem in a radically new direction. She put literally in Henry’s hand a little book that, to her, not only seemed fundamentally true, but also, given the present circumstances, extremely useful. It was by that arch-propagandist William Tyndale, and it was called “The Obedience of a Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern”. Like all Tyndale’s work it was a pungent read “one King, one law, is God’s ordinance in every realm”. He wrote, in other words, the writ of the Bishop of Rome did not run in England. However, Anne’s was not finished yet, either a typical mixture of conviction and self-interest. She got a think tank of theologians including Thomas Cranmer, to find the documents from the history of the early Church proving royal supremacy.
The more Henry learned about his supreme power, the better he liked it. It might have begun as a tactic in political intimidation against the Pope, but now, royal supremacy seemed, on its own merits, a self evident truth.

One of the first measures taken by the Parliament against the Church was the reinstatement of the charge named Praemunire, where individuals could be convicted of a crime for appealing to any power outside of the realm for resolution of a situation within England. In particular, the law was aimed at those recognizing the Pope's authority. The law gave leave that charges could be dropped if fines of £118,000 were paid. However, this was not the only one the King passed legislation threatening to deprive the Pope of the revenues coming from the annates, of best known as Church’s taxes; this law basically cut the payments sent to Rome. During this year, even more intensive work was done to try to get Pope Clement VII to agree with the divorce Henry required. The Parliament threatened that if Henry did not get his annulment/divorce within a year that all payments to Rome would be stopped.

It was only when the Parliament started acting against the Church that Pope Clement VII, at last, took the step of launching sentences of excommunication against Henry and Thomas Cranmer, declaring at the same time the Archbishop's Decree of Annullment to be invalid and the marriage with Anne null, and Papal Nuncio was withdrawn from England and diplomatic relations with Rome were broken off.

Finally, Henry did the only thing he could to end the marriage but he also rejected the authority of the Holy Pope and declared himself Supreme Head of a new Church of England. His archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer (see appendix 21), issued the long-awaited decree of nullity. Catherine was no longer Queen of England but “Princess Dowager of Wales”. Princess Mary was now illegitimate.

The circumstantial evidence is undeniable. Anne would give birth to Elizabeth just a year later, in September 1533, and it is very unlikely that she and Henry, after waiting for years to be together, would suddenly have sex and risk an unplanned and, most importantly, illegitimate pregnancy. Secret weddings were hardly uncommon at the Tudor Court. If they had a secret ceremony and consummated their relationship, then Anne became pregnant with Elizabeth just a few months later and that made a second, unquestionably legitimate wedding necessary.
Catherine was exiled from court and to a succession of damp and unpleasant castles. She had but a handful of servants for few would call her Queen and she refused to be called Princess. It was a mark of her early education that she was meek, deeply pious and believed in obedience to her husband, but she was also a proud and intelligent Princess of Spain. She would never allow her dignity, or that of her daughter, to be destroyed. In the end, this stubborn spirit did both, her and Mary, far more harm than good. Catherine was undoubtedly truthful when she declared her marriage to Arthur unconsummated, but the truth was cold comfort in the last years of her life. Her final years were lonely and sad; the Spanish ambassador kept her informed of outside events and smuggled letters to her daughter, but she was often ill. “In this world I will confess myself to be the king’s true wife, and in the next they will know how unreasonably I am afflicted.” (Catherine of Aragon, 1532) She died at Kimbolton Castle on January 7th, 1536. There were rumors that she had been poisoned. A lingering illness and the psychological effects of her exile were the obvious causes. She was buried at Peterborough Abbey with all the ceremony befitting the widow of the Prince of Wales (see appendix 22). Henry VIII did not attend the funeral.

2.3.4.1 Act of Supremacy

When the Pope still did not grant the divorce, Henry undertook the most extreme of measures, claiming jurisdiction over the English Church for himself. The Act of Royal Supremacy of 1534 (see appendix 23) stated that the Crown was reclaiming powers that it had always possessed; powers that Rome had usurped during the previous four hundred years, a fact which Henry and his advisors firmly believed. It recognized Henry VIII as the “Supreme Head of the Church of England”, supplanting the power of the Catholic Pope in Rome. One aimed of this Act was to increase the power of the English monarch and to decrease the influence of Rome. This Act of Supremacy was created after Henry VIII saw that the Papal approval for his divorce from Catherine of Aragon was not coming. Henry VIII took matters into his own hands due to the fact that the Papal decision was an obstacle for his future plans. “…the King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and oweth to be the supreme head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm in their Convocations” (Act of Supremacy original text, 1534)

Henry VIII opted for this decision because he was probably sincere in his belief that the Church of England was riddled with poor administration, and had long since lost the right to act
as an independent body. In addition to this, Henry VIII had his eyes on the wealth of the English Church, particularly the property of the monasteries. In that time, Henry VIII was in a precarious financial position because of his lifestyle and his desire for military glory. He decided to take control over the Church of England and to take possession of it. The Act of Supremacy gave full authority to Henry VIII to be the head of the Church and to be able to take decision no matter what the Church would say.

This Act of Supremacy emphasized that Henry VIII, as well as his heirs and successor’s kings, would have all the power to be in charge of the Church and to do what they thought it was correct. “full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed corrected, restrained or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion” (Act of Supremacy original text, 1534)

Henry VIII’s Act of Supremacy was repealed in 1554 in the reign of his Catholic daughter, Mary I. However, it was reinstated by Mary I’s Protestant sister, Elizabeth I, when she ascended to the throne. Being on the throne, Elizabeth declared herself Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and instituted an Oath of Supremacy, requiring anyone taking public or Church Office to swear allegiance to the monarch as head of the Church and State. Anyone who refused to take the Oath could be charged with treason.

Concerning to the Oath of Supremacy, there were three levels of penalties for refusal. A first refusal was a loss of all movable goods. A second offence could mean life in prison and a loss of all Real Estate Possessions. A third offence would result in charge of High Treason and Death.
2.4 The Situation of the Catholic Church in Europe and England

The King’s Great Matter had been always connected with the presence and influence of Anne Boleyn. Even though, there were other reasons that produce a great impact into the decision of making a change in the religious and political way of life of the English people in 1500’s. One of the most important causes, that afterwards became a substantial pillar, was the situation of Catholic Church in those times. Not only the power that this institution had over the lives of many, but also how this power was acquired, by which means it became so powerful that most of the common people were extremely afraid of not going to Heaven. This sort of influence was not only in Europe, where the Roman Catholic Church had its vast Empire, but also in England. There the same strategies were applied in order to maintain the high position of the Catholic Church. So as to comprehend deeply, the following section makes a clear description of the Roman Catholic Church’s influence and power over Europe and England.

In 1500 the Roman Catholic Church was hugely powerful in Western Europe. There was no other alternative in terms of beliefs. The Catholic Church jealously guarded its position and anybody who was deemed to have gone against the Catholic Church was labelled as a heretic, and therefore immediately lost the possibility to go to Heaven.

The power of the Catholic Church had been built up over the centuries and relied on ignorance and superstition on the part of the people. Its main doctrine lied in the thought that the only way to get to Heaven was by the Church. This spread belief gave a priest enormous power at a local level on behalf of the Catholic Church. The local population viewed the priest as their “passport” to Heaven as they have been taught it from birth. In a way to maintain this wrong belief, it was constantly being repeated during Services (Mass). “Hence keeping your priest happy was seen as a prerequisite to going to Heaven.” (Trueman, 2000)

In England, its power was almost the same, owed to the same teachings of beliefs. This power was evidenced through the land. The Church owned many large areas of farmland. People who grew crops on this land had to give one tenth of everything they grew to the Church. This was called the Tithe. This was a lot of crops for many poor people to lose. As well as in Europe, the Church controlled people’s beliefs. The Church told people that when they died, their souls lived on either in Heaven or in Hell. It is said that after a person die his/her soul goes first to a
place called Purgatory, where it would stay until any sins had been burnt away. Another major point of the control of the Catholic Church was its richness. As people wanted to be the shortest time in Purgatory, they had to follow different rules in order to pass to Heaven easily. One of them was to buy a special pardon. These pardons were known as Indulgences. Other significant factor, in its importance in England, was that it was not controlled by the King. The Church was Roman Catholic and, therefore, was lead by the Pope. “This meant that the King could not tell anyone from the Church what to do.” (Lind)

2.4.1 The Vices of the Catholic Church

The importance of the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, and especially in England, was not enough to be against it, as Henry VIII did. It was necessary to establish more deeply which were the specific points that were done, thank to the power acquired through the years. In that way, the Reformation would have stronger basis so as to build different beliefs and new ones as well. These wrong practices were known as Vices. Actions performed by Catholic Church’s member that were out of any logical reason. They used to take advantage of their position inside of the Church so as to be more powerful, respected or richer.

The relationship between people and Church was essentially based on money. Rich families could buy high positions for their sons in the Catholic Church and this satisfied their belief that they would go to Heaven and attain salvation. However, a peasant had to pay for a child to be christened (this had to be done as a first step to getting to Heaven as the people were told that a non-baptised child could not go to Heaven). People had to pay to get married and bury someone from their family in Holy Ground. To go with this, people would be expected to give to the Church, via the collection at the end of each service, what it was as Tithes (a tenth of their annual income had to be paid to the church which could be either in money or in kind such as seed, animals etc.). In those times, the common belief was that if a person did not go to Heaven, then the likelihood was that his/her soul had been condemned to Hell.

The Catholic Church also had three other ways of raising revenue. Relics: they were pieces of straw, hay, white feathers from a dove, pieces of the cross etc. that could be sold to people as the things that had been the nearest to Jesus on Earth. Indulgences: these were sort of certificates produced in bulk that had been pre-signed by the Pope which pardoned a person’s
sins and gave this person access to Heaven. This industry was later expanded to allow people to buy an Indulgence for a dead relative who might be in Purgatory or Hell and relieve that relative of his sins. Pilgrimages: these were very much supported by the Catholic Church as a pilgrim would end up at a place of worship that was owned by the Catholic Church and money could be made by the sale of badges, Holy Water, and certificates to prove you had been there and completed your journey.

The Catholic Church of 1500’s was also known for its intolerance to the heresy. Heresy was visibly punished with public burnings which people were expected to attend. The Catholic Church did not tolerate any deviance from its teachings as any appearance of being a little bit soft might have been interpreted as a sign of weakness which would be exploited. This act was condemned by burning guilty people on the stake in public places, the so called Inquisition.

2.4.2 Martin Luther and its Influences

As many probably know, Henry VIII’s Reformation and Separation from the Roman Catholic Church had a lot to do with Martin Luther’s acts against the biggest institution on Europe. Even though, it was not entirely the same Reformation for King Henry VIII and Martin Luther. The courage of this priest made Henry thought that he could be against the Catholic Church as well. Luther’s influence opened Henry’s eyes so as to take action into what he really want to be able to marry Anne Boleyn and; therefore, to have another chance of procreating a male heir that would ensure the Tudor Dynasty’s years to come.

The rottenness of the Roman Catholic Church was at the heart of Martin Luther’s attack on it in 1517 when he wrote the "95 Theses" (see appendix 24) thus sparking off the German Reformation. It was specifically the issue of Indulgences that angered Martin Luther, a priest and professor from the German town of Wittenberg, and encouraged him to speaking out against them, potentially a very dangerous thing to do. He protested on October 31st, 1517, he posted on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg his 95 theses, inviting a debate on matters of practice and doctrine. Luther’s action was not as yet a revolt against the Church but a movement for reform within. It was, however, much more than an objection to the money-grabbing and secular policies of the clergy. His disagreement with the Church on matters of doctrine soon became apparent. In 1519, Luther in a dispute with Johann Eck openly espoused doctrines that were
implicit in his theses, and he denied the authority of the Church in religious matters. In 1520, the Pope issued a bull of excommunication against Luther, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, thundered against him. Luther defied them, publicly burned the bull of excommunication, and issued vigorous pamphlets assailing the papacy and the doctrine of the sacraments.

The main ideas under Luther’s complain were the corruption of the Catholic Church as well as the Pope itself and, the denial of admitting that there were seven sacraments. For Luther, there were only two of them that could have been valid in front of God’s eyes. Finally, he argued for the supremacy of faith over good works. This act had never been seen in the Catholic Church in centuries of existence. These three main aspects of Luther’s protest were exposed to the Pope and the Catholic followers on 1520.

A less exalted reason for the wide distribution of Luther’s doctrines was the development of printing with movable type. The Reformation created a demand for all kinds of religious writings. The readership was so great that the number of books printed in Germany increased from about 150 in 1518 to nearly 1,000 six years later.

2.4.3 The Printing Press

In those years, the spread of written work was not as common as nowadays. As the written work was made by hand, it was extremely difficult to multi-copy any work. When the printing press (see appendix 25) was created, this problem was solved. The importance of this invention was first saw in the Bible; because this was the first book published by the printing press. With the Bible printed, the diffusion of the printed work was more accessible in Henry VIII’s reign so as to realize about the reality of the Catholic Church in Europe and England.

In 1440, German inventor Johannes Gutenberg (see appendix 26) invented a printing press process that, with refinements and increased mechanization, remained the principal means of printing until the late 20th century. The inventor’s method of printing from movable type, including the use of metal molds and alloys, a special press, and oil-based inks, allowed for the first time the mass production of printed books. His initial efforts enabled him in 1440 to mass-produce Indulgences, printed slips of paper sold by the Catholic Church to remit temporal punishments in purgatory for sins committed in this life, for those wealthy enough to afford...
Indulgences. Legal documents indicate that Gutenberg probably began printing the Bible around 1450. It was in this year that Gutenberg entered into a partnership with Johann Fust who lent him money to finance the production of a Bible. Gutenberg certainly introduced efficient methods into book production, leading to a boom in the production of texts in Europe, in large part, owing to the popularity of the Gutenberg Bibles, the first mass-produced work, starting in 1452. Even so, Gutenberg was a poor businessman, and made little money from his printing system. However, he left to humanity one of the most shocking and revolutionizing inventions of all times, an invention that could help people to gain knowledge, that at that time was only meant for those having money or coming from royal lineage, without knowing he gave the people knowledge.

2.4.4 The Printing of the Bible

The Bible was the first written work that was ever printed. With the spread of this printed material, the access to the Bible became common. People, who had enough money to afford one, had the possibility to learn more about “God’s Teachings”. As it happened in Henry VIII’s reign, the spread of the printed Bible marked a big step into the decision of making a Reformation, in fact, this was a radical movement into the birth of a whole set of new religious faith.

This is also one important aspect to take into account at the moment of addressing the Reformation, due to the fact that in Henry’s times, people lacked knowledge in relation to God’s “ways” and the real meaning of the Church. The fact of printing this document helped the people to become aware of certain things that were happening inside the Church, but what was more important, people became acquainted with the idea that the Church, and more specifically priests, were not the only way to get to Heaven, and that the Holy Roman Church had long been committing misdeeds against people, taking advantage out of ignorance.

Gutenberg experimented with printing single sheets of paper and even small books, such as a simple textbook of Latin grammar, before beginning his work on the Bible around 1450. The handmade paper used by Gutenberg was of fine quality and was imported from Italy. The number of presses in Gutenberg's shop is unknown, but the number of pages he needed to print suggested that more than one press must have been in use. No one knows exactly how many copies of the Bible were printed, but the best guess is that around 180. 145 of them were produced on paper
and the rest on the more luxurious and expensive vellum. A contemporary account by a visitor to Mainz indicates that the book was nearly ready in October 1454 and available for sale by March 1455. Although, the cost of the book is not known, it would have been far too expensive even for wealthy individuals, and so most copies were likely purchased by Churches and Monasteries.

### 2.4.4.1 The Translation of the Bible

The translation of the Bible into a vernacular language in Henry VIII’s times was not a new idea, but there was nobody brave or fool enough to start translating the Holy Bible into a language that could be understood by the commoners. Martin Luther went on to be the first person to translate and publish the Bible in the commonly-spoken dialect of the German people; a translation more appealing than previous German Biblical translations. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs records that in that same year, 1517, seven people were burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church for the crime of teaching their children to say the Lord’s Prayer in English rather than Latin.

William Tyndale (see appendix 27) was the first to take on the dangerous task of translating, publishing and printing an English version of the New Testament. Tyndale is a recognizable historical type. He was austere, steely, and disarmingly clear in what his vision, goals and convictions concerned. According to Tyndale “it was not possible to establish the laypeople in any truth except the Scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue”. (Foxe, 1848)

In 1524, Tyndale fled London for mainland Europe, ending up in Worms in Germany, a city which had recently been made safely Protestant by its allegiance to the new radical doctrines of Martin Luther. Tyndale’s English New Testament (see appendix 28) was completed by January 1526, and in weeks, copies were on sale in London. The tragedy that followed was an English version of the Spanish Inquisition, denunciations, arrests, and book burnings, show trials the Holy images that the English people so long venerated were now burned and thrown away.

In 1530, there were some copied which were printed but they were burned as soon as the Bishop could confiscate them, but copies trickled through and actually ended up in the bedroom of King Henry VIII. The Church declared that it contained thousand of errors as they torched
hundreds of New Testaments confiscated by the clergy, while in fact; they burned them because they could find no errors at all.

Having God's Word available to the public in the language of the common Englishman, it would have meant a major disaster to the Church. No longer would they control access to the scriptures. If people were able to read the Bible in their own tongue, the Church's income and power would crumble. They could not possibly continue getting away with selling Indulgences (the forgiveness of sins) or selling the release of loved ones from a church-manufactured "Purgatory". People would begin to challenge the Church's authority, if the Church were exposed as frauds and thieves. The contradictions between what God's Word said, and what the priests taught, would open the public's eyes, and the truth would set them free from the grip of fear that the institutional Church held. Salvation through faith, not works or donations, would be understood. The need for priests would vanish through the priesthood of all believers. The veneration of Church-canonized Saints and Mary, Jesus’ mother, would be called into question. The availability of the scriptures in English was the biggest threat imaginable to the wicked Church. Neither side would give up without a fight.

In 1539, Thomas Cranmer (see appendix 21), the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the bequest of King Henry VIII to publish the "Great Bible". It became the first English Bible authorized for public use, as it was distributed to every church, chained to the pulpit, and a reader was even provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in plain English. It would seem that William Tyndale's last wish had been granted, just three years after his martyrdom. William Tyndale became martyr due to his constant struggle to translate the Holy Bible into English. He was persecuted and captured by the charge of heresy. He was burnt at the stake on 1536. It is said that while he was being burnt, he cried: "Lord! open the king of England's eyes." (Foxe, 1848). Cranmer's Bible, published by Coverdale, was known as the "Great Bible" (see appendix 29) due to its great size: a large pulpit folio measuring over 14 inches tall. Seven editions of this version were printed between April of 1539 and December of 1541.

It was not that King Henry VIII had a change of conscience regarding publishing the Bible in English. His motives were more sinister, but the Lord sometimes uses the evil intentions
of men to bring about His glory. King Henry VIII had, in fact, requested that the Pope permit him to divorce his wife and marry his mistress. The Pope refused. King Henry responded by marrying his mistress anyway, (later having two of his many wives executed), and thumbing his nose at the Pope by renouncing Roman Catholicism. He took England out from Rome’s religious control, and declaring himself as the reigning head of State to also be the new head of the Church. This new branch of the Christian Church, neither Roman Catholic nor truly Protestant, became known as the Anglican Church or the Church of England. King Henry acted essentially as its “Pope”. His first act was to further defy the wishes of Rome by funding the printing of the scriptures in English, the first legal English Bible, presumably just for spite, without really knowing what outcomes this would bring.

2.5 The King’s Advisors

The Protestant Reformation was an overly important movement of the Middle Ages. In fact, its repercussions last until nowadays since the Anglican Church still exists. It has spread throughout the entire world and the King, and in present days, the Queen of England is the head of the Church of England.

As well as the King, there were other two men who gave the first steps to the English Reformation. Thomas Cromwell (see appendix 30), whose political views, guaranteed rights of religious liberty for all Protestants, and Thomas Cranmer who gave direction to the spirit of the reform, “at the pivot point of every great movement, we usually find one man who stands out head and shoulders above the rest. So it was in the English Reformation”. (Hirst, 1934.)

Although, Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer led the idea to achieve the Reform which resolved the King’s complications, they were treated as traitors, sent to the Tower and executed. In fact, many of the people who surrounded the King in those times, and that held important charges as well, ended in the same situation owing to Henry’s short temper. Therefore, it can be assumed that to become Henry’s advisor or servant it was a very difficult and stressing job indeed.

In 1523, Thomas Cromwell emerged into public life as a member of parliament. He was introduced to government services as a secretary for Cardinal Wolsey, the great cardinal who
dominated both, Church and state. His abilities won him the older man’s respect and soon Cromwell was his most trusted servant and principal secretary. He became involved in all of Wolsey’s business.

When Cardinal Thomas Wolsey fell from power, Cromwell attached himself directly to the court. In 1529, Cromwell was elected to the Reformation Parliament; the later sessions of which he helped manage for the King. In 1532, Thomas Cromwell began to accumulate government offices, and he gained the confidence of Henry VIII, in the long run, he became the King’s Prime Minister.

Thomas Cranmer drafted the Act in Restraint of Appeals, passed by the English Parliament in 1533, to allow Henry VIII’s divorce without interference from the Pope, and subsequent legislation which affirmed royal supremacy in religion and provided for a Church of England independent from Rome.

Thomas Cromwell had some adversaries, mainly religious conservative people like Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. As well as, members of the old aristocracy like Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. After Cromwell arranged the King’s disastrous marriage to Anne of Cleves, these enemies combined to dethrone Thomas Cromwell from the Court. It was the Duke of Norfolk who accused Cromwell of treason and he was sent to the Tower of London. A vast number of crimes were added to this charge at the same time, but not submitted for trial. There were many accusations that caused a political stir among the members of the English Court. Thomas Cromwell was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1540.

### 2.5.1 Thomas Cranmer

“Thomas Cranmer was England’s Reformer par excellence, and the wider Reformation of which he was part was nothing if not a Bible-movement. All of the great Protestant leaders in Continental Europe, whether first or second generation, strove to base their ideas on the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments”. (Elliott, 1995)

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born on July 2nd, 1489. Cranmer received his early indoctrination from “a marvelous severe and cruel schoolmaster” whose discipline must have been rigorous; indeed to be qualified for this particular recognition in a
period when no schoolmaster bore the rod in vain. After that and at the age of fourteen, Thomas Cranmer was sent to the University of Cambridge. Little is known with conclusiveness about his university career beyond the facts that he became a fellow of Jesus College in 1511. Consequently, Thomas Cranmer was requested to become a fellow of the college by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey at Oxford. The circumstances Thomas Cranmer went from the university to the court of England, as well as, his studies at the University of Cambridge are not clear. However, Cranmer was designated to the English Court and made himself a fortune by his work by advising Henry VIII to declare himself Head of the Church. This advice was given with a patriotic view of making the Royal Authority superior to the one given to the Pope. This determination was overly useful to Henry VIII, owing to the fact that in that way he could opted for a divorce and to marry Anne Boleyn, all of this to have a male as a future heir to the English Throne.

Thomas Cranmer was one of the most important figures in the Anglican Reformation due to the fact that he played a mayor role in the separation with the Roman Catholic Church. Not only did he give direction to the spirit of the reform, but also officially dissolved Henry VIII’s marriage with Catherine of Aragon, which is considered as the first tangible step toward the separation and the independence from the Catholic faith. In addition to this, Thomas Cranmer helped preside over the trial of Anne Boleyn, the divorce from Anne of Cleves, and Catherine Howard’s trial and execution. Due to this, Cranmer was one of Henry VIII’s most valued servants. Nonetheless, this did not prevent him from dying the way he did. Thomas Cranmer’s was known as a loyal advisor and because of this, he attracted the special notice of Henry VIII who made him royal secretary in the House of Commons.

During the reign of Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer worked toward his own version of sensible Ecclesiastical Reform, including a new translation of the Bible in English. It made Cranmer a truly controversial figure. In 1549, Cranmer produced “The Book of Common Prayer” which presented the view that a proper Christian Communion depended more on the heart of the practitioner than the actual bread and wine used in the ceremony. He encouraged the public reading of the Bible by the entire congregation. Because of these ideas, he was castigated by Catholics.
The breach with Rome and the issues concerning to the Catholic Church in England had been practically achieved before Cranmer’s appointment as Archbishop. Meanwhile, Thomas Cranmer was actively carrying out the policy which had associated his name more closely to the Reformation in England. It is important to state the circulation of the Bible in English which was placed in every Church and in a convenient area for reading in order to encourage people to read it. In addition to this, another important work done by Thomas Cranmer was the re-adjustment of the creed and liturgy of the Church, which formed Cranmer’s principal work during the latter half of his life. Although, there is no much information about Thomas Cranmer and the Catholic Church, it is well known that Cranmer was tried for treason and after over two years and under pressure from the Church of England’s authorities, he reconciled himself with the Roman Catholic faith.

In addition to this, Thomas Cranmer officiated at the coronation of King Edward VI, and during his reign, the work of the Reformation made rapid progress. The sympathies both of the Protector and of the young King being decidedly Protestant. All of this in favor of Thomas Cranmer who had become an overly important reformer who had changed the history of the nation, who had given the spirit to the English Reform providing the King with all the faculties to govern and to be over the English Church.

Unfortunately, in 1553, Cranmer was sent to the Tower. The immediate occasion of his imprisonment was a strongly worded declaration he had written a few days before against the Mass. Cranmer was condemned for treason. Mary could scarcely have an Ecclesiastic put to death and Cranmer was reserved for treatment as a heretic by the highest of the clerical tribunals, which could not act until parliament had restored the papal jurisdiction. Thomas Cranmer had been tried by a papal commission, over which Bishop Brooks of Gloucester presided. Brooks had no power to give sentence, but reported to Rome, where Cranmer was summoned, but not permitted to attend. Finally, he was buried during the reign of Henry VIII.

2.6 Anne Boleyn’s way of Living and Death

As Queen, Anne Boleyn presided over a magnificent court. In the 16th century, royals were expected to be extravagant in order to convey the strength of the monarchy. Anne spent huge sums on gowns, jewels, head-dresses; ostrich-feather fans, riding equipment, and the finest furniture and upholstery from all over the world. Numerous places were renovated to suit her
extravagant tastes. Anne’s married life was stormy. The royal couple enjoyed periods of calm and affection, but Henry’s frequent infidelities greatly upset his new wife, who reacted with tears and rage to each new mistress.

Henry VIII allegedly heard gossip that his wife had conducted extramarital affairs with four different men; although, there was no concrete evidence to support the rumor at the time. In addition to this, a fifth man would later be added to the list of Anne’s lovers. Henry VIII decided that the most efficient way to get rid of his wife was to accuse her of adultery, as well as, high treason. The charge of treason was for Anne’s suspected conspiracy with some of her lovers to murder the King, but this accusation also lacked of any supporting evidence. In 1536, Anne Boleyn was arrested at Luncheon and taken to the Tower of London. Queen Anne Boleyn protested about the injustices that had taken place and wrote to Henry VIII that “…never Prince had Wife more Loyal in all Duty, and in all true Affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn, with which Name and Place I could willingly have contented myself; if God, and your Grace’s Pleasure had been son pleased” (Boleyn, 1536). Although, Anne Boleyn knew what the fate had for her. She asked as last and only request that “my self may only bear the Burthen of your Grace’s Displeasure, and that it may not tough the Innocent Souls of those poor Gentlemen, who (as I understand) are likewise in strait Imprisonment for my sake…let me obtain this Request; and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further, with mine earnest Prayers to the Trinity to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your Actions”. (Boleyn, 1536)

She had prayed for exile, to end her days in a nunnery, but now faced a more tragic fate, but still she met it with bravery and wit. She was brought to the scaffold at 8 o'clock in the morning on May 19th, 1536. It was an unknown spectacle. For the first time in English history, the public execution of an English Queen was seen as a show which many people attended to see. Not only due to the uncommon of the spectacle but also because many were expectant, many indeed longed for this outcome. Queen Anne, who had defended herself so ably at her trial, chose her last words carefully:

“Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, for according to the law, and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that, whereof I am accused and condemned to die, but I pray God save
the king and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never: and to me he was ever a good, a gentle and sovereign lord. And if any person will meddle of my cause, I require them to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. O Lord have mercy on me, to God I commend my soul”. She was then blindfolded and knelt at the block. She repeated several times, “To Jesus Christ I commend my soul; Lord Jesus receives my soul”. (Eakins, 2007)

It was a sardonic message to the King. Even now, he waited impatiently to hear the Tower cannon marked Anne’s death. He wished to marry Anne’s lady-in-waiting, Jane Seymour. They wed ten days after the execution. Elizabeth (see appendix 16), Anne and Henry’s daughter, was just three and a half when her mother died. Anne was buried in an old arrow box since no coffin was provided. But the box was too short that her head was tucked beside her. The remains were taken to St Peter ad Vincula, the Church of the Tower of London (see appendix 31), where they would later be joined by her cousin, and Henry's fifth wife, Catherine Howard.


Chapter III

Reformation’s Consequences and Henry’s Final Years

What came after the English Reformation changed so deeply the history of England in its political and religious fields that the repercussions were felt centuries after. In this chapter, we intend to define and clarify the political and religious consequences that the separation from the Holy Roman Church bought to England, as well as, the personal consequences that The Great King had to undergo due to his reckless lifestyle. After the separation, King Henry VIII could do as he pleased; he was now the most important political and religious figure in England and could manage his divorce to Catherine with the help of Thomas Cranmer. In other words, King Henry VIII could manage the matter in order to fulfill his own ambitions. Nonetheless, happiness never came for the almighty King. Henry saw his dreams accomplished to the cost of a disastrous personal life. As the King grew old, his body and mind deteriorated severely. In this chapter, we will cover the mayor issues involving Henry VIII’s downfall.

3.1 The Great Matter and the Consequences

In 1534, the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy. This effectively stripped all of the authority the Pope held in England and gave it to Henry VIII. Also, because of the Act of Supremacy, Henry VIII gained a new title: Supreme Head of the Church of England. However, there was a problem. The Act of Supremacy only vaguely defined the new powers that had been given to the King. Consequently, it was necessary to establish what exactly his new powers were and their limits. The other issue that had to be dealt with was the establishment of the canons of the Church of England. It was a new Church with no rules, in place other then, the establishment of Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England.

Henry VIII formally accepted the title the following year, and the nobility were required to swear the Oath of Supremacy, recognizing the King as head of the Church. This controversial matter came to ahead when Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn secretly, in January 1533, after discovering she was pregnant. Yet, by the end of 1534, the English Church was still Catholic. Although it was now free of Rome, its religious doctrine had not changed at all. There was plenty
of debate on the line of thoughts the Church should take, and Henry incorporated some evangelical ideas into his Church.

The English Church may have broken with Rome, but no core doctrines had been touched. The real presence of Christ on the mass was preserved, priests were still expected to be celibate, and prayers in the Bible were still held in Latin. And so things may have remained, but they did not, and to understand why, it is necessary to look at two of the most extraordinary characters in British history, Thomas Cranmer (see appendix 21) and Thomas Cromwell (see appendix 30). Their agenda was always more radical. The King’s both advisors finished a feeble work that the King had begun, in other words, these two men were responsible for most of the atrocities committed during the Reformation Process. Cromwell’s Protestantism was the product of the kind of anti-establishment killer instinct, due to this fact he had been always considered the strong arms in Henry’s kingship. He pulled the threads so well, that in four years period, he was able to change radically the religious system of the Island Nation. On the other hand, Cranmer’s convictions were more profound and thoughtful. Most historians regard him as a man who was against the changes which the Holy Catholic Church was undergoing. He disagreed with its vices, and he was not a fully devoted Protestant either. However, he also had more personal reasons to side with the reformers. Shortly before he was appointed archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer had secretly married a German woman, Margareta, thereby committing himself to one of Luther’s most shocking innovations. Cranmer as Cromwell was devoted to the Renaissance idea of a strong Prince in a strong Christian State. The people were going to be given a new version of the Bible, and no other version was to be allowed.

Thomas Cromwell is probably the least sentimental English man ever to run the country. He understood with clarity that Henry VIII could never manage that. It would not be enough for the break with Rome to be proclaimed and expect everybody to fall into line. He anticipated a fight, and he was prepared to fight it hard. What is even more important, he understood what he had to do in order to win. Cromwell knew that sooner or later, the Pope would throw his most powerful weapon at the time, excommunication. And if the King was to win the war he would better fight back with something more or less original in the language of politics. The country had to be aroused by a new sense of its own sovereignty, its potency, and; therefore, demonize Rome as the foreigner, the alien, the enemy.
An oath had to be sworn recognizing Royal Supremacy. On March 23rd, 1534, Parliament passed the Act of Succession (see appendix 32), vesting the succession of the English Crown in the children of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. This act, effectively, set Princess Elizabeth first in line for the throne, declaring Princess Mary a bastard. It was also proclaimed that subjects, if commanded, were to swear an oath to recognizing this Act as well as the King's supremacy. People, who refused to take the oath, including Sir Thomas More (see appendix 14), one of his advisors, were charged with treason. Obedience to the authority of the Roman Church was made treason and was punished by death. Thomas More, resigned the chancellorship in 1532 because he could not follow Henry VIII’s vision and; therefore, was executed for treason. “Sir Thomas More indicted of treason upon the Statute in which it was made treason to deny the King to be supreme head of the Church, into which indictment were put these words, maliciously, traitorously, and diabolically” (Roper)

This Act was overridden by the Act of Succession, 1536, which made the children of Jane Seymour first in line for the throne, declaring the King's previous marriages unlawful, and both princesses illegitimate. By this time, insulting the new Queen was treason, calling the King a schismatic or heretic was treason. For the first time in the English law, it was a crime to express thoughts. Cromwell managed to turn England into a frightening place where the denunciation was a Holy Duty.

The first step in this process was the establishment of a committee of 32 doctors of law by the King. Their goal was to create what was called The Henrician Canons. They began their work almost simultaneously with the passing of the Act of Supremacy because as there was critical need to establish religious practices and statutes of the realm, to fill the void created by severing ties with Rome. Not surprisingly, one of the most important issues they tackled was heresy. They provided brief doctrinal positions of the Church and defined what acceptable theology was. This made clear what was heretical and what was not. Then, they provided a brief description of what steps to follow with heretics. Interestingly though, the canons established by them never became law. A continuance for the committee was not renewed in 1536 and their manuscript was not furthered. The reason for its end is unknown.

In 1536, the Ten Articles were produced as a formulary of the new Church's faith. These articles referred to just three sacraments - Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist - rather than the
usual seven. This was radical at the time, but also confusing, and there was much debate over the “missing” four sacraments of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage and Last Rites. A month later, Thomas Cromwell's Injunctions took a moderate stand against images in Churches and against Pilgrimages, and it also banned some Holy Days and Saints' Days. The issue of transubstantiation was not specifically mentioned, and the Lutheran concept of justification by faith alone was watered down. Therefore, the official religion of England did not condemn the Mass and it did not condemn the Catholic call for good works; but emphasis was laid upon the words of the Scriptures and upon the merits of the simple Christian life. It was a tentative move in an Evangelical direction.

The Ten Articles established the general theme and points of discussion for all the documents pertaining theology and practice of the Church of England to come among them.

1. Defending the truth of the whole Biblical Canon; the believing in three Creeds: Apostles, Nicaean, and Athanasius; condemning any belief that was not in accordance with the four sacred councils: Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedone.

2. The Sacrament of Baptism is the only way one can be saved and be truly cleansed of their sins.

3. The Sacrament of Penance is necessary so that a man who was Baptized and has again fallen into sin may be remitted of his sins and receives eternal life.

4. The Sacrament of the Altar: The King and Church believe in transubstantiation the wine and bread become the blood and body of Jesus Christ when blessed by the priest.

5. Justification results from a combination of contrition, faith and charity.

6. Images should only be used to honor God, Jesus, the Cross, Mary or any other Saint and not in a superstitious manner.

7. Saints are to be honored only as revered people who lived on earth and not in any way equal to God.
8. It is acceptable to pray to saints to be intercessors for us to God, but only from God does salvation and remission of sins come.

9. The use of Rites and Ceremonies are good practices to put people in the mood of remembrance for their salvation and the acts of Jesus and God, but do not have any bearing on ones salvation.

10. Purgatory may exist, but not in the way the Roman Catholic Church believes. (Lloyd, 1825)

In 1537, the “Institution of a Christian Man” was a further attempt at a formulary of faith. It tried to deal with the questions of Purgatory, and the status of the four missing sacraments in the Ten Articles, which were now found to be lesser sacraments. It emphasized the fact that justification through the merits of Christ did not dispense with the need for good works.

The purpose of the Bishop’s Book was to expand the discussion of “The Exposition or Interpretation of the Common Creed, of the Seven Sacraments, of the Ten Commandments, and of the Pater Noster, and the Ave Maria, Justification and Purgatory.” (Lloyd, 1825)

The Bishop’s Book was a far longer work than the Ten Articles, and it began where the Ten Articles left off. Henry VIII knew that he needed a clear formulary of faith for the Church in England, if he was going to be able to maintain the Church of England and provide the necessary spiritual guidance his subjects so deserved.

However, a great breakthrough for Evangelicals did not come until 1537, when royal permission was given for a vernacular version of the Bible to be published. In 1538, Cromwell issued further Injunctions that required that all Churches acquired a copy of the English Bible. The central position of scripture in Protestant belief made it vital to make the text available, and an official version gave the English Bible the stamp of approval. Cromwell's Injunctions also took a strong line against images, and centers of pilgrimage.

Two more religious documents were issued in 1539 to put the final touches on the religious establishment and the authority of Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England. The first was another Royal Proclamation, issued in February 1539 entitled Prescribing
Rites and Ceremonies, Pardoning Anabaptists. It only had two goals. The first one was, as the title suggests, to clarify and expand the positions on practicing rites and ceremonies, both established in the Ten Articles and the Prohibiting Unlicensed Printing of Scripture. The section on rites and ceremonies continued to explain which ceremonies and rites should be practiced and how. It also reiterated the position that rites and ceremonies should be practiced and was good for a person to practice, but these practices had no inference on one’s salvation. The second part of the proclamation was concerned with the pardoning of Anabaptists and Sacramentaries.

The second document was the Act of Six Articles, which was passed by Parliament in 1539 at the King’s will. The Act reiterated several ideas that the King wanted to reinforce. It addressed the Sacrament of the Altar, Communion, Priestly Marriage, Vows of Chastity, Private Masses, and Auricular Confession. After the passage of the Act of Six Articles, the religious formularies of the Church of England changed very little until the death of Henry VIII in 1547.

In 1539, the Act of Six Articles returned the Church to unambiguous grounds. Amongst other things, transubstantiation and auricular confession were reaffirmed. Clerical marriage, which had crept in, was condemned, and vows of chastity were now held to be unbreakable. This was an embarrassment to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, whose marriage was an open secret at the time.

The Roman Catholic core doctrines had been changed little by little, one act of reformation after another. Within a period of four year, the King had managed to change the faith of his people, utilizing coercive methods. Yet the summit of this tragedy became the dissolution of the monasteries, which ended the so called Henrician Reformation.

3.2 The dissolution of the Monasteries

The Dissolution of the Monasteries may have been primarily concerned with money and land, but it also swept away a huge and privileged clerical society. This was a very visible attack on the pre-Reformation Church, and the whole task was completed within the four years between 1536 and 1540.
Nowhere in Cromwell’s strong arm regime did his shock troops seemed to enjoy their work more thoroughly than in the visitation to the monasteries, done with lightning speed during the course of 1535 and early 1536. The destruction of an entire way of life had little to do with reforming zeal, out of nowhere, the newly coined reform turned into an English form of the Spanish Inquisition.

Having made himself supreme head of Church, Henry VII’s next step was to secure resources to maintain his absolutism as his conscientious advisors had urged him to do, and by a judicious distribution of bribes to prevent a return of the old order. A way was discovered in the dissolution of the monasteries, which offered the further attraction of crushing a class which contained the most determined opponents of the royal policy. These were the real reasons for the step, suggested, no doubt, by the resourceful Cromwell, who boasted that he would make his King the richest prince in Christendom.

Many historians have never argued the real importance that the monasteries had, however; in order to fully understand why it was so important for Henry VIII to destroy them, it is necessary to look at the real importance that these holy institutions had in the Middle Ages.

It is easy to romanticize the loss of the monasteries due to their historical and architectural importance; nevertheless, they served other purposes besides ornamenting cities which excludes structural magnificence and representing traditional Christianity.

A monastery could function as a school, a place of employment for common laborer, a place for the homeless or the travelers who seek comfort, and of course, they represented a place of prayer. Prayers were especially important due to the fact that they provided intercessory help on behalf of the dead, as well as, the living. Here lies on of the most controversial issues involving the monasteries dissolution, since, it has been proved that abbots and abbesses did not prayed for everyone, they devoted more time to pray for their benefactors and the people who funded the monasteries, so that the people who provided more money had the higher chanced of being prayed for and; therefore, more chances of intercession before God. It is difficult to assert the true value of prayers in those times. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, this was one of the most important aspects of monasteries which have helped them to remain for such long time.
Another noted function of monasteries was their care and attention to travelers and pilgrims, referred to as hospitality. While some monasteries were more equipped than others to aid people who were in need, back in those times, it was generally understood among the population that one could receive rest or nourishment at a religious house while travelling or making pilgrimage to a Holy Shrine. Wealthy patrons also found rest at monasteries rather than inns. This was also, somehow, controversial due to the fact that there are expanse record that in the monasteries these landlords or common wealthy people, not only were given rest and food, but also the most privileged guests were provided with entertainment, in the form of comedians and theatrical spectacles. However, most monasteries were not wealthy enough to provide such service for their guests. It is, as in those times, there was no organized governmental social service. Another important mission that these monasteries had was the action of giving coins and food to people. These actions seemed more important on Saint’s days and holidays. Those monasteries that could provide such service were recognized for their offerings. Nonetheless, several monasteries were poor and small; therefore, unable to provide these accommodations.

The monasteries could also serve as places of employments for laypersons. Monasteries were usually involved in some elements of agriculture, and people were asked to provide the labor of the land. Actually, some of the cause of the rebellions in Lincolnshire, lied in the fact that these monasteries provided work to people, they were paid to work the land. However, with the dissolution of the monasteries, these people were unemployed and; therefore, had no means of survival. Some communities depended greatly on these monasteries due to the income these facilities provided.

Having established that monastic functions included prayers, sheltering and almsgiving, to those in pilgrimage or helpless, there is evidence that put into question the real ability that these monasteries had to perform such important duties. On top of this, to which extent these monasteries were willing to cooperate with these people. We must consider that, at those times, the monasteries had acquired great power and some of them became wealthy.

Some of these monasteries created unlawful, before the eyes of Catholicism regulations. For example, some monasteries were able to attend people only certain days of the week. This was, apparently, to keep away those specially needed individuals who might have been very sick
or difficult to help. Turning people away did not seem christianly; hence, people began to grow upset with some policies that these monasteries had. In fact, the dissolution of the monasteries succeeded with minimal objection on behalf of the people. To some historians, this represented the lack of concern, save isolated examples Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, means that the people were not truly attached to the monasteries.

The suppression of the monasteries in England was carried out during the reign of King Henry VIII. A process started by Thomas Wolsey and completed by Thomas Cromwell, both personal advisors of the King. Ostensibly, the monasteries were eliminated due to prevalent corruption and indolence. Actually, it was to secure the King’s absolute power and to fill the dwindling royal coffers. Its dissolution was extremely important for Henry VIII’s plan for Reformation due to the fact that these religious houses were a symbol of Papal authority which needed to be crushed, in order to avoid all type of foreign influence.

3.2.1 The Plan for Dissolution.

There is no historical evidence, in terms of documents, such as acts or diaries that can confirm that there was a plan for dissolution the Monastic England. However, it seems that King Henry VIII had everything planned beforehand. It is debatable if this was a labor managed by Cromwell, but it becomes evident that the dissolution of the monasteries was an organized process that started after the Act of Supremacy.

After the King Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church of England, the next step he undertook was to look for a way in which he could take the money that these religious houses had and retrieved it to the crown of England instead of the Roman Church. The step was clear, and the Act of Fruit and Tenths was passed. This law declared that all new members of the clergy, propertied and salaried, were required to give the crown one full year’s income and a tenth of their yearly income from then on. This was applied to secular clergy, who were usually quite wealthy; to landed members of the aristocracy, including bishops and abbots. Nevertheless, it was an extremely financial blow to the clergy, and many suffered as a result of this Act. Also this act permitted the King to know which members of the clergy were more endowed than others, since the amount collected annually would reveal their actual income.
It allowed King Henry VIII to obtain large amounts of gold. However, it was not enough for the crown and new measure were undertaken in order to attain more money from the Church. The reason Henry VIII needed so many resources was because, at that time, he needed to finance his war against France and Scotland.

Prior to the dissolution, a kind of audit was necessary, in order to survey and assess the wealth and holding of the Church. Therefore, the King passed *The Valor Eclesiasticus* of 1535, which was the result of an investigation into Church preordered by the Henrician crown, which took approximately seven months to complete. The King’s new appointed general vicar, Thomas Cromwell, was well awarded that there had not been a complete assessment of the Catholic Church in more than 200 years. Hence, it was to carry out a serious work if the King wanted to value the Churches’ holdings.

### 3.2.2 The Dissolution of the Smaller Monasteries

In 1536, the Act of the Dissolution of the Smaller Monasteries dissolved any monastery that accumulated less than two hundred pounds annually. The preface to the dissolution of the smaller monasteries did not begin with a pronunciation from the crown over the Church or any suggestion that England wanted to become more Protestant. People understood that something radical would happen, everyone noticed how quickly the census took place, since the dissolution began in the year 1536 and the census known as *Valor Eclesiasticus*, took place a year prior. The fact of having such a mobilization of census takers and commissioners must have alarmed the population, due to the fact that such an elaborated undertaking had not occurred since the 1200’s.

Back in those years, there was a big uproar among people, they understood that the King was about to make dangerous maneuver in relation to religious matters. The perception of the people of England is very important in order to understand what the real impact on their beliefs was. To some people, the *Valor Eclesiasticus* was nothing more than a taxation assessment. However, to others more aware of the action of the King such as the separation form Rome, the removal of the Papal authority and the taxation through the Act of Fruits and Tenths, all suggested an encroachment of the secular authority over the religious authority. It was, also very likely for the clergy to become suspicious since the valor Eclesiasticus was another step closer to dissolving the monasteries, which came immediately after the calculation of the census results.
The final census supplied Cromwell and Henry VIII with the standards, by which, the first dissolutions took place in 1536. The only monasteries dissolved where those that accumulated less than 200 pounds annually. Obtaining a record of their income, lands, and location enabled the King accomplished his plans of dissolution.

When Parliament met on February 4th, 1536, popular feeling in the city was inflamed by means of sermons, caricatures, and pamphlets. Cranmer declared at Paul’s Cross that the destruction of the monasteries would relieve the people of a great burden of taxation. It was stated that “when the enormities were first read in Parliament House they were so great and abominable that there was nothing but “down with them”” and an act was carried suppressing all monastic houses with an income under £200 a year or with less than twelve inmates. To accomplish this goal, Commissions composed of local gentry, were appointed to conclude the affairs of the houses denounced by Cromwell's agents.

By that date, approximately 376 monasteries were dissolved. A portion of their inmate went into larger houses, others were provided with pensions. By paying large sums of money, a few houses were allowed to continue for a time. According to estimations, about 2000 monks and nuns were dispossessed, and of servants, farm laborers, and others dependent upon them, perhaps four times as many more were affected. Aside from lands and buildings, money, plate, and jewels, as well as, the proceeds of the sale of lead, bells, cattle, and furniture, passed into the King’s hands.

The Court of Augmentations was established in April 1536 by Thomas Cromwell to manage ex-monastic lands and administer their revenues. It had many regional officials who valued the land and property of the dissolved religious houses and delivered their valuations to the Court. The Court then disposed of the land and property either through sale or gift. It soon became the major revenue collecting body in the country rising over £250,000 in 1544. But it began to decline after the death of the King in 1547 and in 1554 it was abolished.
3.2.3 The Dissolution of the Great Monasteries

The dissolution of the greater monasteries occurred in a different context. In 1539, it was more a matter of surrender than a declaration of dissolution. However, most historians, dealing with the issue of the reformation, agree with the fact that this was a second dissolution because if the crown had not applied coercion and threat, they would not have surrendered.

The abbots in the disturbed districts were attainted of treason, and by a great stretch of the law their houses were suppressed. The process, thus facilitated by the part which the monks took in the rising, went on until not a single religious house remained in England.

Henry had no legal right to the larger monastic houses, especially those not involved in the rebellion. So, he employed through his agents the method of “voluntary surrender”. Those heads that consented to yield were promised pensions and other rewards, while such benefits were withheld from those who proved “willful and obstinate”. Thus, chiefly during the years 1538 and 1539, some 150 monasteries and 50 convents of women were surrendered into the royal hands. During the autumn of 1538 and the spring of the following year, the English friars were destroyed.

3.2.3 Consequences

It has been estimated that over 8,000 monks, canons, and friars were dispossessed, while at least, ten times that number of dependents were affected. The annual value of property secured seemed to have been from £150,000 to £200,000. Of this only, about £45,000 was retained by the King, the rest was either appropriated for public purposes or given or sold to royal supporters. The melting value of the gold and silver was probably about £85,000. Altogether, what with proceeds of sales and annual revenues, the King secured, exclusive of vestments, ecclesiastical furniture, and jewels, close to £1,500,000.

Of the property thus acquired, some was given in pensions to the dispossessed monks, a very small proportion of what had been taken from them; some was devoted to the erection of six new bishoprics, and some was applied to coast defenses. But the greater part went to certain favored nobles and gentry. In this way some of the best known of the present English families
such as the Russells, Dukes of Bedford, and the Cavendishes, Dukes of Devonshire started on their upward road. The purpose of the King’s generosity was to ensure the permanence of the separation from Rome; for men gorged with Church plunder would never return to the fold.

Another result of the dissolution was to weaken the spiritual power of the House of Lords, since the bishops were no longer reinforced by abbots and priors. Finally, the economic and social situation was profoundly affected. A further impulse to enclosures was given, and the state was forced to give more attention than would have been immediately necessary to the subjects of education and poor relief. Although, the monasteries had outlived their usefulness and had ceased to make the best use of their resources, the method employed by Henry VIII and his agents to suppress them was marked by great cruelty and injustice, and caused much suffering to innocent people.

Parliament in 1539 dealt the final blow by passing an act vesting in Henry and his heirs all the monasteries which had already or should surrender for the future. The abbots of Reading, Colchester, and Glastonbury were executed for pretended treason. With the surrender of Waltham, March 23rd, 1540, the last of the abbeys fell victim to the royal rapacity and the irresistible assertion of supremacy, though the pretext that their inmates led “slothful and ungodly lives” was still insisted on.

### 3.3 Henry VIII’s Four Last Wives

King Henry VIII also became famous because of having six wives. Each of Henry’s wives had precious moments along the King. However, most of them ended their marriage to the mighty King in detrimental conditions for them; Henry even killed two of them. In this section of the monograph, we are going to describe the last 4 wives that King Henry VIII had after the Reformation. These were Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr.

Throughout all his life Henry VIII was characterized as a villain and as a short tempered ruler, basically due to the fact that in his final years these infamous characteristics of the mighty King were even more noticeable. The reasons of this were the constant diseases that the King had along with the problems in his legs as a result of diabetes. These constant changes of mood produced in his instability and a sense of paranoia that took him to suspect of everyone that
surrounded him. This is one of the main causes why he had so many wives; he could not have a single wife that could be with him until the end of his days. The main point of this section is to clarify and to detail each of Henry’s relationships, in order to help the reader to understand in a better way the main aspect of the King’s marital life so as to have a clear picture of his decision making in terms of love affairs; basically due to the fact that this King had always been characterized as villain. In fact, King Henry acted in this way due to his constant mental changes, as well as, the conditions in which he lived.

Popular belief claims that he was a devilish ruler who mistreated his wives. Nevertheless, this is not entirely true, some of his marriages were quite successful and there were other external factors that impede him to live a lasting relationship with other person.

3.3.1 Jane Seymour

Henry VIII’s third wife was Jane Seymour (see appendix 9). She was the only one who gave him a son. She fulfilled her most important duty as Queen, but she was never crowned and died just twelve days after the long and arduous birth.

Seymour’s meek manner was in distinct contrast to Henry VIII's second wife, the sharp tongued Anne Boleyn. Jane had served as lady in waiting to Anne and she supplanted her in much the same way Anne had replaced Catharine of Aragon in Henry VIII's affections.

Jane Seymour's family was of ancient and respectable lineage. Her father was Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall in Wiltshire. He served in the Tournai campaign of 1513 and accompanied Henry VIII to the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 (see appendix 11). He was made a knight of the body and later a gentleman of the King's bedchamber. Both positions were very desirable for they allowed personal access to the King. Jane’s birth date is unknown; various accounts use anywhere from 1504 to 1509. She first came to court as a lady in waiting to Catharine of Aragon, Henry VIII’s first wife.

Nevertheless, soon enough Anne Boleyn became Queen of England and Jane had to attend Anne. She witnessed firsthand the tempestuous relationship between Anne and Henry. Jane herself was known for her quiet and soothing manner. Certainly, Henry knew of her but there is no evidence that he took particular notice until September 1535 when his royal progress
stopped at Wolf Hall. Such a visit was a great honor for the Seymour family. And it brought Jane, away from court and its flirtatious young beauties, immediately to the King’s attention. In February 1536, Henry made his affection clear to Jane. She received costly gifts and her brothers were promoted at court.

On January 29th, Anne miscarried a son; the King ominously declared that he would have no more children by her. For Henry VIII, it was suddenly clear that if he could rid himself of Anne and marry Jane, then he would have a legitimate marriage recognized by all and another possibility for a son. The King began to mention publicly that he had been bewitched into marriage with Anne; he knew his words would reach her. Anne was terrified but could do little. She had few friends at court, and even those were prepared to desert her for the King’s favor. On May 2nd, she was arrested and taken to the Tower of London. On May 15th, she was condemned to death; Henry sent a personal message to Jane with the news. Five days later Anne was executed, on May 20th, the King was formally betrothed to Jane. They married ten days later on May 30th and Jane was publicly declared Queen on June 4th. She chose an apt motto, “Bound to obey and Serve”.

Almost a decade had passed since the King’s Great Matter first began and still Henry VIII did not have a legitimate heir. On July 20th, 1536, he received the devastating news that his only illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, duke of Richmond (see appendix 15), had died at the age of 17. There had always been the possibility that Fitzroy could have succeeded him, but now Henry VIII was left with only two daughters, both declared illegitimate.

But Jane was able to provide the King with his fondest wish. And indeed, the whole country wished for an heir; they had no desire to return to ruinous civil war. Rumors of her pregnancy began almost immediately after her marriage. But it was not early 1537 that rumors could finally be confirmed as fact. Bonfires were lit and celebrations held throughout England; prayers were offered for a safe delivery. In early October, Jane went to Hampton Court Palace for her lying in and on October 12th, after a long and difficult labor, she gave birth to the wished-for son (see appendix 16). It was the eve of St Edward's day and so he was baptized by that name on October 15th. After 29 years as King of England, Henry VIII finally had a legitimate male heir. Past grievances could be forgotten at this grand moment.
Jane Seymour was already weak and exhausted. She needed quiet and rest and received neither. Only a day later, it was reported that the Queen was very ill. Her condition quickly worsened. She was delirious and had a high fever; doctors bled her and attendants hastened to fulfill her craving for sweets and wine. The King’s chief minister, Thomas Cromwell would later blame the sweets for her death but they did little to harm Jane Seymour. Modern historians believe she had puerperal sepsis, or “childbed fever”. It was all too common in the 16th century.

Sadly, Jane was a victim of her times. Poor hygiene and medical knowledge could not stop the fever which finally killed her near midnight on October 24th, 1537. Seymour was given a solemn state funeral; her body was embalmed and laid to rest in the tomb at Windsor Castle which Henry was building for himself (see appendix 33). Years after her death, even while he was married to other women, Jane continued to appear in royal portraits as Queen consort. Her special status as mother to the heir was never forgotten. The King wore black until 1538 and waited more than two years to marry again. This was the longest interval between marriages during his reign.

3.3.2 Anne of Cleves

Henry VIII remained single for over two years after Jane Seymour’s death, possibly giving some credence to the thought that he genuinely mourned for her. However, it did seem that someone, possibly Thomas Cromwell, began making inquiries shortly after Jane’s death about a possible foreign bride for Henry VIII.

Anne of Cleves (see appendix 9) was the fourth wife of King Henry VIII; it was a very brief marriage, to the astonishment of all observers but the relief of both spouses. Henry VIII infamously referred to his bride as a “Flanders mare” and told courtiers and ambassadors that he could not perform his husbandly duties because of Anne’s appearance.

Henry VIII's first marriage had been a foreign alliance of sorts; although, it is almost certain that the two were truly in love for some time. His next two brides were love matches and Henry could have had little or no monetary or political gain from them.
But the events of the split from Rome left England isolated, and probably vulnerable. It was these circumstances that led Henry and his ministers to look at the possibility of a bride to secure an alliance. Henry did also want to be sure he was getting a desirable bride, so he had agents in foreign courts report to him on the appearance and other qualities of various candidates. He also sent painters to bring him images of these women.

Hans Holbein, probably the most famous of the Tudor court painters was sent to the court of the Duke of Cleves, who had two sisters: Amelia and Anne. When Holbein went in 1539, Cleves was seen as an important potential ally in the event France and the Holy Roman Empire (who had somewhat made a truce in their long history of conflict) decided to move against the countries who had thrown off the Papal authority. England then sought alliances with countries that had been supporting the Reformation of the Church. Several of the Duchies and principalities along the Rhine were Lutheran. Holbein painted the sisters of the Duke of Cleves and Henry decided to have a contract drawn up for his marriage to Anne.

Although, the King of France and the Emperor had gone back to their usual state of animosity, Henry VIII proceeded with the match. The marriage took place on January 6th, 1540. By then, Henry was already looking for ways to get out of the marriage.

Anne was ill suited for life at the English court. Her upbringing in Cleves had concentrated on domestic skills and not the music and literature so popular at Henry VIII's court. And, most famously, Henry VIII did not find his new bride the least bit attractive. In addition to his personal feelings for wanting to end the marriage, there were now political ones as well. Tension between the Duke of Cleves and the Empire was increasing towards war and Henry VIII had no desire to become involved. Last but not least, at some point, Henry VIII had become attracted to young Catherine Howard.

Anne of Cleves was probably smart enough to know that she would only be making trouble for herself if she raised any obstacles to Henry’s attempts to annul the marriage. She testified that the match had not been consummated and that her previous engagement to the son of the Duke of Lorraine had not been properly broken. After the marriage had been dissolved, Anne accepted the honorary title as the “King's Sister”. She was given property, including Hever
Castle, formerly the home of Anne Boleyn. Anne lived away from court quietly in the countryside until 1557 and attended the coronation of her former step daughter, Mary I. She was buried in a somewhat hard to find tomb in Westminster Abbey. (See appendix 34)

3.3.3 Catherine Howard

Catherine Howard’s short life is one of the great cautionary tales of Henry VIII's reign; there is about it something strangely pathetic and small, but also powerful and moving. Catherine was neither particularly beautiful nor intelligent, but she was a charming, flirtatious girl who rose, virtually overnight, from obscurity to become Queen of England.

Catherine Howard (see appendix 9) was the daughter of Lord Edmund Howard, a younger brother of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. She was also first cousin to Anne Boleyn, Henry’s second Queen. She was brought up in the household of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. As part of the Duchess’ household, she would have spent most of her time at Lambeth and Horsham. Catherine came to court at about the age of 19 as a lady in waiting to Anne of Cleves and there is no doubt that the spirited young girl caught Henry’s attentions. Catherine’s uncle, Thomas Boleyn (see appendix 17) probably encouraged the girl to respond to the King’s attentions and saw it as a way to increase his own influence over the monarch. The Duke of Norfolk also took advantage of the debacle of the Anne of Cleves’ marriage as a chance to discredit his enemy, Thomas Cromwell. In fact, Cromwell was executed shortly after the marriage was nullified.

Sixteen days after the King was free of Anne, Henry took his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, on July 28th, 1540. Henry was 49 years old and his bride was no older than 19.

For all that can be said against this match, Catherine did manage to lift the King’s spirits. Henry had gained a lot of weight and was dealing with the ulcerated leg that was to pain him until his death. The vivacious young girl brought back some of Henry’s zest for life. The King lavished gifts on his young wife and called her his “rose without a thorn” and the “very jewel of womanhood”. Less than a year into Catherine’s marriage, the rumors of her infidelity began. In a way, one could not blame her for seeking the company of handsome young men closer to her own age. But to do so, even if only in courtly flirtations, was dangerous for a Queen, especially one who came from a powerful family with many enemies. Catherine did not help matters much
by appointing one of her admirers as her personal secretary. “I found her in such lamentation and heaviness, as I never saw no creature, so that it would have pitied any man's heart in the world, to have looked upon her” (Cranmer, 1542)

By November 1541, there was enough evidence against the Queen that Archbishop Cranmer informed the King of Catherine’s misconduct. At first, Henry VIII did not believe the accusations, but he agreed to allow further investigations into the matter. Enough evidence was gathered that the Queen had been promiscuous before her marriage and may have had liaisons after becoming Henry VIII’s wife. She was executed on the Tower Green on February 13th, 1542 and laid to rest near her cousin Anne Boleyn in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula at the Tower of London. (See appendix 35)

3.3.4 Catherine Parr

Catherine Parr (see appendix 9) was the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Parr and his wife Maud Green, both of whom were at the court of Henry VIII in his early reign. Maud was a lady in waiting to Queen Catherine of Aragon and named her daughter, born in 1512, after her. So, Henry VIII’s last wife was named after his first one. Thomas Parr died in November 1517, leaving his three children, William, Catherine and Anne in the care of their mother. Maud managed the children’s education and the family estates and must have left an impression on her daughter of the greater role an independent woman could have in society. The education that Maud arranged for the children was similar to that of other noble figures of the time and at least in the case of Catherine, it ignited a life-long passion for learning. She was fluent in French, Latin and Italian and began learning Spanish when she was Queen.

Catherine Parr’s first marriage was to Edward Borough, the son of Thomas, third Baron Borough of Gainsborough in 1529, when she was 17 years old. Edward died only a few years later, probably in early 1533. It was during this marriage that Catherine’s mother Maud died, in December 1531. Catherine’s second marriage was to John Neville, third Baron Latimer of Snape Castle in Yorkshire, whom she married in the summer of 1534 when he was 41 and she was 22. Latimer had two children from his previous marriages so Catherine also became a stepmother for the first time. During the Pilgrimage of Grace, a rebel mob forced Latimer to join them and later
took Catherine and her stepchildren hostage at the castle. Latimer was able to eventually secure their freedom and managed to escape arrest for his associations with the rebellion after it was finally put down. Catherine’s ailing husband died in March 1543, leaving her a widow for the second time, now at the age of 31. It was around this time that Catherine was noticed by not only the King, but also Thomas Seymour, brother of the late Queen Jane Seymour. Catherine expressed her desire to marry Thomas Seymour after Latimer’s death, but the King’s request for her hand was one that Catherine felt it was her duty to accept. Catherine and Henry VIII were married on July 12th in the Queen’s closet at Hampton Court Palace in a small ceremony attended by about 20 people.

Catherine Parr was interested in the reformed faith, making her enemies with the conservatives of Henry VIII’s court. It was Catherine’s influence with the King and the Henry VIII’s failing health that led to a plot against her in 1546 by the conservative faction. Catherine and her ladies were known to have had banned books which was grounds for arrest and execution on charges of heresy. To gain evidence against the Queen, Anne Askew, a well-known and active Protestant, was questioned and tortured, but refused to recant her faith or give evidence against Catherine and her ladies. However, there was enough other evidence against the Queen to issue a warrant for her arrest. The warrant was accidentally dropped and someone loyal to the Queen saw it and then quickly told her about it. This is a well-documented incident that has made its way into many historical fiction accounts. Sometimes the history itself is the best drama. After learning of the arrest warrant, Catherine was said to be very ill, either as a ruse to stall or from a genuine panic attack. Henry went to see her and chastised her for her outspokenness about the reformed religion and his feeling that she was forgetting her place by instructing him on such matters. Catherine’s response in her defense was that she was only arguing with him on these issues so she could be instructed by him, and to take his mind off other troubles. Playing to Henry’s ego no doubt helped and Catherine was forgiven.

Catherine was close with all three of her stepchildren as Henry’s wife and was personally involved in the educational program of the younger two, Elizabeth and Edward. She was also a patron of the arts and music. Catherine’s own learning and academic achievements, as alluded to previously, were impressive, and in 1545, her book “Prayers or Meditations” became the first
work published by an English Queen under her own name. Another book, “The Lamentation of a Sinner”, was published after Henry VIII’s death.

Henry VIII died in January 1547 and Catherine had probably expected to play some role in the regency for the new nine-year-old King, Edward VI, but this was not to be. Only a few months after Henry’s death, Catherine secretly married Thomas Seymour, but the quickness and secret nature of the union caused a scandal. Catherine was still able to take guardianship of Princess Elizabeth and Seymour purchased the wardship of the King’s cousin, Lady Jane Grey. It was during this time that the rumors of a relationship between Elizabeth and Seymour arose and Elizabeth was sent to another household in the spring of 1548.

After three previous marriages and at the age of 37, Catherine was pregnant for the first time and in June 1548, she moved to Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire to await the birth of her child. On August 30th, she gave birth to a daughter named Mary. Catherine soon fell ill with puerperal fever, which was to claim her life in the morning hours of September 5th. Catherine was buried, with Lady Jane Grey as the chief mourner, in the chapel at Sudeley Castle, where the tomb can still be visited today. (See appendix 36)

3.4. Medical records

During the onset of his life, King Henry VIII suffered several diseases that contributed to his constant changes of humor. In fact, some historians say that these diseases determined the future of the English crown owing to the fact that the mighty King had several problems and many decisions he made affected the course of event to happen.

Henry VIII started being a charming and handsome King but he became in an obese and cruel tyrant. When he died, Henry VIII’s body was a huge mass of 180 kg. His doctors conquered that he had the legs seriously injured. He could not walk and he was losing the sight. In addition, the paranoia and melancholy were in charge of his will. As mentioned before, the health of the King was a public concern in 1500’s because of its political influence, it was extremely important for his reign as well as his allies and enemies. The foreign advisor that attempted to his court had a detailed report of his medical status.
Young Henry was strong, and he outstood in the medieval combat. All the chronics agreed that he was a healthy man when he became King. And during the following five years, his health continued being as iron. But the Tudors England was full of illnesses. The lack of healthiness and the poor sewer system were fertile ground to mouse colonies and other carrier of different diseases.

3.4.1 Infections

The first illness that could be tracked back in the medical record of Henry was after five years of being King. According to his personal medical recorder, it said that: “The King is indisposed with a fever, opinions are divided as to what caused the aliment” (Inside Henry VIII, 2010). Nowadays, it is believed that this fever was Smallpox. Smallpox is a viral infection that it is transmitted by the air. In the present days, it is possible to obtain a vaccine. But in Henry VIII’s times, there was no such a thing. Even though, Henry could manage to get over. This event showed how strong could have been his builds. Six years later, at his thirties, Henry was ill again because of another fever. According to his medical’s record, it said that: “The King caught a fever which grew to two tertians, and paroxysm, he is also troubled by pains in the head” (Inside Henry VIII, 2010). This time the King had Malaria.

Today, common people associate Malaria with the Tropical areas of the world. But in the Tudors time, it was endemic in England. Malaria comes from the Italian, and it means “Bad air”. Because it was through air that people acquired this disease by the “Evil Steams” that were in it. Nowadays, it is known that it can be transmitted by a mosquito bite. Because of the huge amount of swamp, the mosquitoes were extremely dangerous for the people as well as lethal. From 1521 on, the symptoms of Malaria were present during Henry’s entire life. The Malaria became chronic.

This infection developed a terrible paranoia. He did not want to get another illness. He had lost his father and his elder brother because of infections. His obsession with his health became something insane. Nowadays, he would have been a hypochondriac. His paranoia was reflected in the constants movements of his court from a palace to another one. At the minimal sign of an illness, Henry VIII ordered to change the court’s place.
In 1524, Henry had a serious injury in the head because of a Jousting game where he did not cover his face with the protective sight of his helmet. Since then, Henry suffered from horrible and constant headaches. Many historians associate these headaches with his constant personality changes.

### 3.4.2 Wrenched Foot

The England of the Tudors was a small potency at the beginning of Henry’s reign, but he was determined to make it stronger. His ambition to get this goal would have great impact on his own body. In Henry’s times, the beauty of a man could be measured by the shape of his legs. The ambassadors used to claim Henry’s legs, saying that there were no other similar that they had seen before. The calves were a symbol of manliness among the Tudors and Henry was the most exceptional exemplary of them.

He was also a great lover of the Royal Tennis, a mixture between tennis and squash at the same time. His passion led him to build the first real tennis court in England. As he used to practise it most of the time, he gained the common torn of muscles of any sportsman. The first one recorded was a wrenched foot. It occurred during 1527 and it must have been really serious because during several weeks he had to wear a black slipper made of velvet as a way of recovering from the wrench.

### 3.4.3 Varicose Ulcer

When Henry was 36 years old, he suffered another injury, a varicose ulcer. He began to have huge problems with his leg that would continue for the rest of his reign. The most suitable cause for this wound was the restrictive garters that he used on his leg. These restrictive garters threatened the beauty of his calves. Because of the bad circulation, the blood was not able to come back to the heart, so it accumulated in the vessel and they broke causing the ulcer. In Henry’s times, this was especially dangerous because it could get an infection, and this infection could contaminate the blood.

At his forties, Henry’s body had suffered enough illness and infections. It was necessary for him and his public image to show himself as a strong leader even when he did not have a
male heir yet. So, he decided to exhibit his virility in a jousting game on 1536. This decision would change his life. During this game, the King suffered a severe accident. He was thrown from his horse and remained two hours unconscious. “The King mounted a great horse to run at the lists, both fell so heavily that everyone thought it a miracle that he was not killed, but he had been for two hour without speech” (Inside Henry VIII, 2010). This was a grievous accident, in modern times it can be compared to a car accident at 60 km/hr. Henry only survived because he used complete armour. With this unfortunate incident, Henry’s ulcers reappeared. Besides, it caused him a great injury on the head that led him to a temporary loss of consciousness. Nowadays, to loss of consciousness for more than 5 minutes can cause a person a severe cranial trauma. For many, this incident marked the change of personality of the King, as his medical records showed: “the King had a very mal d’esprit, he was irascible, unpredictable moody, often in a different opinion in the morning than after dinner” (Inside Henry VIII, 2010)

His ulcerous legs got worse after the accident. The doctor in charge of healing them was Thomas Vycary who had healed them in 1527. But this time, after the jousting accident, every time that Henry’s ulcers healed, he got worse. Actually in some contemporary records said that he was near to die “the King has had stopped one of the fistulas of his leg and for 10 to 12 days the humours which had no outlet were like to have stifled him, so that he was sometimes without speaking, black in the face and in great danger” It was possible that with the jousting incident, Henry damaged his leg’s bone causing an infection that produced pus under the ulcers. That was the reason that when an ulcer healed in the surface, the King got even worse in his health.

As a way of maintaining the King awake, his doctors decided to have his ulcer opened as drainage injuries. They cauterized them with burning iron. From then on, Henry’s legs were continuously injured until his final days. These ulcers expelled a putrid smell that it could be felt in more than three rooms next to King’s chamber but nobody could say a word it. “The King has the worst legs in the world. Those who have seen them are astonished that he doesn’t stay continually in bed, and judge that the least exertion could be dangerous to his life yet no-one dare to tell him” (Inside the Body of Henry VIII, 2009)

The medical team of 15 doctors that Henry had was working hard in finding a cure to his legs. Nowadays, the best solution to ulcer legs is the amputation, but in Henry’s times, this was a
very risky procedure. The life of the King of England was being manipulated. If the surgery would have gone wrong, the King’s life could come to an end. And the doctor’s life would probably meet the grave for this reason. In 1500’s, just a 10% of the amputated people survived to the surgery, so it is no surprise that any doctor dared to amputated Henry’s legs. Nobody wanted to be blamed of killing the King of England.

3.4.4 Obesity and Diabetes Type 2

There was another consequence that would change Henry’s life. Because of the varicose ulcer on his leg, the King could not work out so it started gaining more weight. His height was of 1.83 cm. but from his twenties to his fifties his waist widened from 81 cm. to 132 cm. his chest grew from 99 cm. to 135 cm. Without any physical exercise, Henry became the fattest King in England. Henry became a compulsive eater that suffered from Greed.

The amount of food that Henry ate every day was out of control. Every day, he consumed 13 dishes and one of them used to be pork. Henry’s diet was built up mainly with pork, lamb, chicken, bovine, deer, rabbit and a variety of birds as the peacock and the swan. As in 1500’s the water was a real danger to drink, the Tudors solved it drinking beer. The King drank 5 litres of beer per day. Henry also consumed red wine. As any family, the bread was a principal part of a diet. With this quantity of food, Henry consumed twice the necessary food for a man at his age, so it would have been inevitable that he gained more weight knowing that his physical exercise were out of the picture. Owed to his weight, it was common to think that Henry suffered from Diabetes Type 2. At the age of 45, Henry was clinically obese (see appendix 6). This could lead him to develop a high blood pressure and Diabetes Type 2. There are many evidences showing that the King suffered from diabetes. Henry had the appearance of a diabetic person, he was obese, he had ulcers on his legs, he had bad sight and he had an awful circulation. Diabetes Type 2 was probably the illness that Henry VIII suffered and without any doubt, it contributed to his death.
3.3 Henry VIII Final Years

Henry VIII had been described as a "despot under the forms of law"; and it is apparently true that he committed no illegal act. His despotism consisted not in any attempt to rule unconstitutionally, but in the extraordinary degree to which he was able to use constitutional means in the furtherance of his own personal ends. Historians have debated the extent to which he was manipulated by his court, and the extent to which he manipulated them, and he had been called a “sad” and “bitter” figure. He ruled without a key minister once Cromwell fell from grace. Henry VIII is one of England’s most divisive monarchs. He was sometimes called a monster for the execution of two wives and several friends. He was arrogant and egotistical. He is both attacked and praised for being the architect of England’s Reformation, which brought the Church under crown’s control but also caused dissension which would lead to further bloodshed.

The jousting accident of 1536 damaged his frontal lobe, and harmed even more his ulcer legs. Thank to all this injuries, his lifestyle changed and he developed a Diabetes Type 2 and a really high blood pressure. Henry VIII became a compulsive eater, a prisoner of his thought and paranoid, a huge man of 180 kg. The suffering of Henry’s life was difficult to imagine. In one hand, there were the terrible headaches that he suffered every day plus the fever owing to his chronic Malaria. On the other hand, his doctor gave him horrible treatments to his ulcer legs. It should have been extremely dreadful to be trapped in that ill body. Henry could not hide his mental state from the people in his court. His public image was losing credibility. “the King was in ill humour and taking medicine, he broke into tears at the private council meeting and he took such grief that of late it was thought he had gone mad” (Private Council).

King Henry VIII finally died dumb and without any friend at 2:00 am of the Friday 28th of January, 1547 (see appendix 37). His corpse stank. He died paranoid and prisoner on his own chamber. There are reports saying that Henry’s body exploded on his coffin before being buried. As a King, Henry VIII became obsessed with his public image, but for a tragic irony was this obsession the one that cost his health and finally took him to his grave.
Conclusions

The Separation from the Holy Roman Church

Henry VIII was raised and taught as a Roman Catholic. Actually, he was a firm believer and supporter of the Catholic Church and it was clearly proved when a protestant called Martin Luther accused the Church of corruption and claimed for it to be reformed. As a consequence, Henry VIII launched a book named “Defence of the Seven Sacraments” which was a rejection to Luther’s claims against the Catholic Church. Due to this action, Henry was granted the title “Defender of the Faith” by Pope Leo X.

One of the greatest fears of Henry was to leave the throne of England without a male heir, so he decided to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, since she was not able to give him a male heir. In order to do this, he needed a special papal dispensation which was not accepted and as he met failure over and over again, he was advised by Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, his new advisors, to split the English Church off from the Roman Church and to be the Head of the English one so he could be able to grant his own annulment.

As a conclusion in regard to the separation from the Roman Catholic Church, it can be said that this alienation from the Holy Catholic Church did not happen because the King wanted to follow the newly coined Protestant doctrines. On the contrary, it is widely known that King Henry was a very Catholic man. Actually, King Henry VIII remained a Catholic man even after the Reformation process, and many historians agree on the fact that he never quitted being a fervent believer on the Catholic faith. Due to the research made, it can be even stated that if Henry VIII would have been able to procreate a male heir to the throne of England, he would have never separated from the Catholic Church.

The main reason for the separation came in hand with the necessity to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon, as a result of her impossibility to procreate a male heir. Therefore, what prompted Henry VIII to separate from the Holy Roman Church were never religious, in fact, this was strictly a political manoeuvre in order to obtain the long awaited divorce.
The Vision of the Catholic Church

This monograph points out to the consequences that King Henry VIII’s “Great Matter” had on the Catholic England Church. The Catholic Church was very comfortable with their presence in England and the Holy Roman Church never wanted a separation. The Catholic Church was very comfortable with their presence in England. We must take into account the issue that in Europe the future of Catholicism was threatened by the outburst of Protestantism, and the Pope did not want to lose a faithful child, as he regarded King Henry VIII.

The Pope was also in between of a harsh clash of interests. On the one hand was Charles V, who did not want the Pope to grant the Papal dispensation to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. On the other hand, was Henry VIII, who threatened with the separation and acted accordingly by means of the political exercises. Hence, the Pope prevaricated. Probably, if it had not been for the presence and the coercive methods used by Charles V, in order to avoid the separation, King Henry would have annulled his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, considering the Pope could not grant a divorce since the canon law did not allowed it. He could grant a Papal Dispensation as a way of showing respect for the English monarch, and also ensuring his devotion to the Catholic Church. However, the course of events were widely different and to the sorrow of the Catholic Church the King did not have other choice than to separate. Nonetheless, it is important, to the purpose of this monograph, to clarify the true vision that the Catholic Church had of the King’s Great Matter.

The Anglican Reformation

Once Henry VIII became acquainted with the benefits of the Protestant movement’s doctrines, he understood the way in which he should proceed. At the beginning, the separation from the Church was a mere political manoeuvre and many historians consider that this kept in this way, even after the separation, due to the fact that King Henry never turned to the Protestant religion thoroughly.

Once the basis of the severance was set, in the form of the Act of Supremacy, the King now needed a way to secure and structure the faith of the new Anglican Church. Most of the articles proposed by Henry VIII, specially the Six Articles, remained with a strong Catholic
tendency. In spite of the King’s good intentions, it seemed that for his people, and for the sake of the English crown, he did quite the opposite. Every action undertaken by him seemed to threat the welfare of his country, especially at the beginning of the break with the Holy Roman Empire, where strict regulations regarding the canon law, as well as, the stability of the English crown as the Supreme Head of the Church were needed.

All sorts of coercive methods and threats were applied by Henry VIII in order to dissolve Monastic England. These determinations brought along several repercussions that neither Henry VIII nor Thomas Cromwell, had quite well anticipated. The dissolution of the monasteries would change the future of the common Englishman. Such was the impact that the blow against the representatives of the Catholic Church in England suffered, as well as, traditions, customs and religious organization were severely damaged by the King’s actions. Basically, due to the fact that these people were only concerned about their own personal benefit and not on the benefit of those around them.

The Role of the Bible

By far, one of the most radical measures made by reformers such as William Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer was the translation of the Bible to a vernacular language. This was the final blow that the Catholic Church undertook in order to begin with the Reformation Process.

Having God's Word available to the general public in the language, England became a menace to the Roman Church for they could no longer control the access to the scriptures. Once people were able to read the Bible in their own language, the Church’s income and power inevitably crumbled. They could not possibly continue selling Indulgences or selling the release of loved ones from a Church manufactured “Purgatory”. People began to challenge the Church’s authority. As a result, the Church’s members began being regarded as thieves and corrupt. The contradictions between what God’s Word said, and what the priests taught, opened the public’s eyes and the truth set them free from the grip of fear that the institutional Church held. Salvation through faith, not through hard work or donations, became understood. The need for priests began to be vanished through the priesthood of all believers. The veneration of church-canonized Saints and Virgin Mary was called into question. The availability of the scriptures in English was the biggest imaginable threat to the wicked Church.
In the end, the victory came in the hand of the reformers, owing to the fact that in England the Reformation movement went on as one of the hardest processes, similar to the Spanish Inquisition. Notwithstanding the fact that an English version of the bible appeared as threat to the XVI century Catholic Church, eventually became the axis on which faith stood on, in fact nowadays still remains the same way. After the reformation a much greater emphasis on the teaching of the bible arouse, there was a great emphasis on education about the Scriptures and its teachings were almost exclusively in the vernacular, the language of the common people, whereas much had previously been in Latin only, which only educated people knew. Thus, much religious practice which had previously been a mystery to many, particularly the poor, uneducated classes was made accessible and understandable.

**The King’s Personality**

King Henry VIII had been long depicted as a villain and a devilish ruler. However, it can concluded that originally he never meant to commit these atrocities. On the contrary, his medical history, as well as, the literature written in the times of Henry VIII supports the thesis that he was a pious Christian man, concerned about the political and religious welfare of his countrymen, a loving husband, and excel sportsman. Primary sources claim that Henry VIII had suffered from deceases that hindered his mental, as well as, his physical condition. The different infections and diseases suffered from, contributed greatly to his change of personality. In fact, he became well known for his short temper. The same short temper that it is considered to be one of the most important contributing factors leading to the separation from the Holy Catholic Church.

The context in which King Henry VIII was raised modelled his personality. In fact, the people who were in charge of his upbringing did nothing but to spoil him, which would be a prominent feature of King Henry VIII in his years to come. Used to having everything he desired and being followed and surrounded by people that did everything he commanded.

This part of the conclusion does not intent to justify Henry’s misdeeds and at some points tyrannical regime. Nonetheless, in order to understand why this excel sportsman fun loving and deeply pious King became the tyrant we all know, it is necessary to take a close look at his life and the circumstances surrounding him. The constant injuries and diseases, added to his spoiled upbringing surrounded by the departure of his closest relatives that extended to his adulthood.
The constant pressure being doted on him as the only male heir to a feeble Dynasty trying to rule an even feebler England, severely damaged after a civil war, changed this man. Quoting the Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset “yo soy yo y mis circunstancias” meaning that one cannot deny the real importance of the context in which he grow is relevant for it defines a person. In other words, the reality surrounding a man becomes the man’s other half. Henry VIII was not the tyrannical ruler everyone depicts, but he was the man that his times and the context in which he was brought up.

The King’s Decisions

Many of the decisions that King Henry VIII took were a by-product of his personal desires, as well as, the personal interest of those manipulating him. King Henry VIII had always been depicted as a strong ruler that managed to do what he wanted. However, this is not entirely true. King Henry did whatever he desired in court, in fact, depending on the mood of the day, Henry could either kill someone who smiled at him or befriend him immediately, but with respect to bigger matters and foreign policies, he always recurred to his appointed advisors who regrettably for the sake of England often acted according to their own interests. Take into account for instance the case of Thomas Wolsey who was eager to make peace treaties with England’s most famous enemies, France. Lady Anne Boleyn advised the King into betraying his deepest religious beliefs just because she wanted to legalize her relationship with him, and Tomas Cranmer who had married a German woman and was deeply interested in turning to the Protestantism so that he could legalize his marital status, being an ordained priest.

The story of people acting to satisfy their own need at expenses of the welfare of the Island Nation can be lengthy. The mighty King had been ill advised throughout his entire kingship. Every action performed by the King did not have his own colours, especially considering the interest on the people who were around him. In terms of his personality it is not compatible to successful monarchs, for example with King Henry V who met the profile that a great King needed. Henry VIII was never raised to become the King of England. On the contrary, he was destined from an early age, to become the head of the Church; therefore, the mighty King was never the brilliant ruler who characterized for taking proper decisions. In fact, most of his military campaigns were disastrous.
The Role of Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn became one of the most important political characters along with Thomas Wolsey, Cromwell and Cranmer by the time King Henry VIII was ruling. They were considered the most influential figures of the time.

According to investigations, Queen Anne Boleyn was one of the main contributing factors of the Henrician Reformation being an educated woman fond of Protestantism. She was the person in charge of prompting the King to separate the English Church from the Roman Catholic Church. Anne Boleyn was a reformist by excellence coming from a Protestant family. She was very committed to the Protestant cause, which is a matter of great importance when referring to the Anglican Reformation. Beside her personal reasons attached her to the Reformation Process. To abolish the power of the Pope came to be her outmost goal so as to obtain the long desired separation of the King to his former wife Catherine.

There are several versions that try to explain Anne’s downfall, on the one hand historians explain that was the one-time ally Thomas Cromwell who engineered her downfall, basically due to the issue of redistribution of monastic assets, Anne wanted to donate them to charity and educational institutions. However, Thomas Cromwell needed these incomes to fill the kingdoms depleted arcs. In this sense Anne became a threat to Cromwell’s strong arm regime. On the other hand, there is the best known version which explains that Anne Boleyn signed her own death penalty by having affairs with the English nobility, the latter recovers importance before the numerous testimonies delivered in relation to Anne unfaithfulness towards the king of England.

The Anglican Reformation’s Outcomes

Most of the people involved in the King’s Great Matter and the further Reformation of the English Church were concerned about their own benefit and the accomplishment of their own personal goal. Nonetheless, this was not the way in which kings were supposed to govern. They did not take into account the future repercussions that their actions would eventually have, as it is the example of Thomas Cranmer, Tomas Wolsey and Anne Boleyn.

The main objective in Henry’s life was to procreate a male heir that could give stability to the throne of England and a long life of the Tudor Dynasty after the constant struggles to attain it.
However, the option of a male heir was never available to Henry VIII. The King’s Great Matter became an important state issue and entertained most Europe. This was the main reason that led King Henry to the approval of the Act of Supremacy, which became the first step to turn England into a Protestant Nation.

This issue has long been regarded as disastrous, it is considered as one of the most sinister periods in the history of Catholic England. Nonetheless, this work considers that despite the hard times that England went through with the Process of Reformation, Henry VIII did something great for the future of the English faith. It can be concluded that by this proclamation, King Henry started a path that would eventually lead to the cure of all vices that the English Church had during the Henrician period; furthermore, to align the doctrines of the Catholic Church with those really promoted by the Bible itself.

There is debate on how wealthy England was after the kingship of King Henry VIII. The King also provided England with one of the biggest treasuries of all times as a result of his Reformation Process. Through this England became a powerful and economically stable nation but also in the seizing of economic and political power from the Church. The confiscation of monastic lands and assets of the church were a short term strategy with long term social consequences.

**Henry VIII’s Final Years**

Henry VIII became one of the most important English rulers to run a country. However, this success did not come in hand with successfully military campaigns or for having a resolute and strong government. The main cause of his popularity was the Anglican Reformation that changed the English faith. Henry was a supreme egotist, to many unfit to rule. He advanced personal desires under the guise of public policy or moral right, forced his ministers to pay extreme penalties for his own mistakes, and summarily executed many with little excuse. In his later years he became grossly fat, paranoid, and unpredictable. Nonetheless, he possessed considerable political insight, and he provided England with a visible and active national leader.

In the end, Henry VIII could accomplish his father’s dream to be the most important exponent of the Church, yet not in the way Henry VII expected. He changed the faith of the
people just for his reckless personality and stubborn character. Though mainly motivated by dynastic and personal concerns, and despite never really abandoning the fundamentals of the Roman Catholic Church, Henry ensured that the greatest act of his reign would be one of the most radical and decisive of any English monarch. His break with Rome in 1533 and 1534 was an act with enormous consequences for the subsequent course of English history beyond the Tudor Dynasty.

On top of this, he could change the vices of the Church of England, the injustices that were committed at the monasteries and in the long run, he allowed a vernacular version of the Bible. This led people allowed to understand the real meaning of the Holy Scriptures. To this extent, the King did manage a significant Reformation of the English faith, regardless how questionable his methods could have been. The most noticeable legacy that King Henry VII left were the institution of an effective navy and the beginnings of social and religious reform. The navy was organized for the first time as a permanent force. Wales was officially incorporated into England in 1536 with a great improvement in government administration there.

Henry worked hard to present an image of unchallengeable authority and irresistible power. He executed people at will, beheading more English nobles than any monarch before or since. The decapitations included two wives, one cardinal, twenty peers, four leading public servants, and six of the King’s close attendants and friends, not to mention various heads at the monasteries. In addition to this, Cardinal Wolsey died in prison.

King Henry VIII died as an obese man, whose physical appearance did not match with his description as a young man. Late in life, Henry became a heavy man and had to be moved assisted by others and with the help of mechanical inventions. This seems a sarcastic fate for a King who was so concerned about keeping a strong position in the throne of England, and achievement of fame and glory, as well as, the fact that he needed to show himself as a powerful and mighty King. He died at the age of 55, which at Tudor time was an old age. His fate not only was tragic but also sardonic; for the mighty King died in the worst way he could ever device. King Henry VIII died alone in his castle, obese and unable to move due to the multiple infections that attacked his weakened body, hoping his son Edward VI could continue with the Tudor Dynasty. After the King’s death, his son could only reign for a short period. His life was short and untimely. The define cause of his death is unknown. Tragically, he passed away at the age of
17 of tuberculosis and later his two bastardized daughters ruled the county. The most ironical thing was that for the King, a male heir was necessary to strengthen his Dynasty in the English crown. However, his two daughters became the most influential female rulers in English history.
Bibliography

Books from Internet


4. LEVITICUSSSSSS


Web Pages


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Albeit, the King's Majesty justly and rightly is and oweth to be the supreme head of the Church of England, and so is recognised by the clergy of this realm in their Convocations; yet nevertheless for corroboration and confirmation thereof, and for increase of virtue in Christ's religion within this realm of England, and to repress and extirp all errors, heresies and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same, Be it enacted by authority of this present Parliament that the King our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England called Anglicana Ecclesia, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities, to the said dignity of supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining. And that our said sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed corrected, restrained or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for the conservation of the peace, unity and tranquility of this realm: any usage, custom, foreign laws, foreign authority, prescription or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding
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Excerpt from the Act of Succession, original text

THE FIRST ACT OF SUCCESSION, A.D. 1534.

In their most humble wise shown unto your majesty your most humble and obedient subjects, the lords spiritual and temporal and the Commons in this present Parliament succession assembled, that since it is the natural inclination of every man, gladly and willingly to provide for the surety of both his title and succession, although it touch only his private cause; we therefore, most rightful and dreadful sovereign lord, reckon ourselves much more bound to beseech and instant your highness (although we doubt not of your princely heart and wisdom, mixed with a natural affection to the same) to foresee and provide for the perfect surety of both you, and of your most lawful succession and heirs, upon which dependeth all our joy and wealth, in whom also is united and knit the only mere true inheritance and title of this realm, without any contradiction; Wherefore we your said most humble and obedient subjects, in this present Parliament assembled, calling to our remembrance the great divisions which in times past have been in this realm, by reason of several titles pretended to the imperial crown of the same, which sometimes, and for the most part ensued, by occasion of ambiguity and doubts, then not so perfectly declared, but that men might, upon froward intents, expound them to every man's sinister appetite and affection, after their sense, contrary to the right legality of the succession and posterity of the lawful kings and emperors of this realm; whereof hath ensued great effusion and destruction of man's blood, as well of a great number of the nobles, as of other the subjects, and especially inheritors in the same; and the greatest occasion thereof hath been because no perfect and substantial provision by law hath been made within this realm of itself, when doubts and questions have been moved and proponed, of the certainty and legality of the succession and posterity of the crown; by reason whereof the Bishop of Rome, and see apostolic, contrary to the great and inviolable grants of jurisdictions given by God immediately to emperors, kings and princes, in succession to their heirs, has presumed, in times past, to invest who should please them, to inherit in other men's kingdoms and dominions, which thing we, your most humble subjects, both spiritual and temporal, do most abhor and detest; and sometimes other foreign princes and potentates of sundry degrees, minding rather dissension and discord to continue in the realm, to the utter desolation thereof, than charity, equity, or unity, have many times supported wrong titles, whereby they might the more easily and facely aspire to the superiority of the same; the continuance and sufferance whereof deeply considered and pondered, were too dangerous and perilous to be suffered any longer within this realm, and too much contrary to the unity, peace, and tranquillity of the same, being greatly reproachable and dishonourable to the whole realm:
Appendix 33
Jane Seymour's grave

Appendix 34
Anne of Cleves’ grave

Appendix 35
Catherine Howard's grave

Appendix 36
Catherine Parr's grave
Appendix 37

King Henry VIII's grave