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Social and cultural history of English

**RENAISSANCE AND
ELIZABETHAN PERIOD:**
SHAKESPEARE, HENRY V

WS 2009/2010
English and American studies

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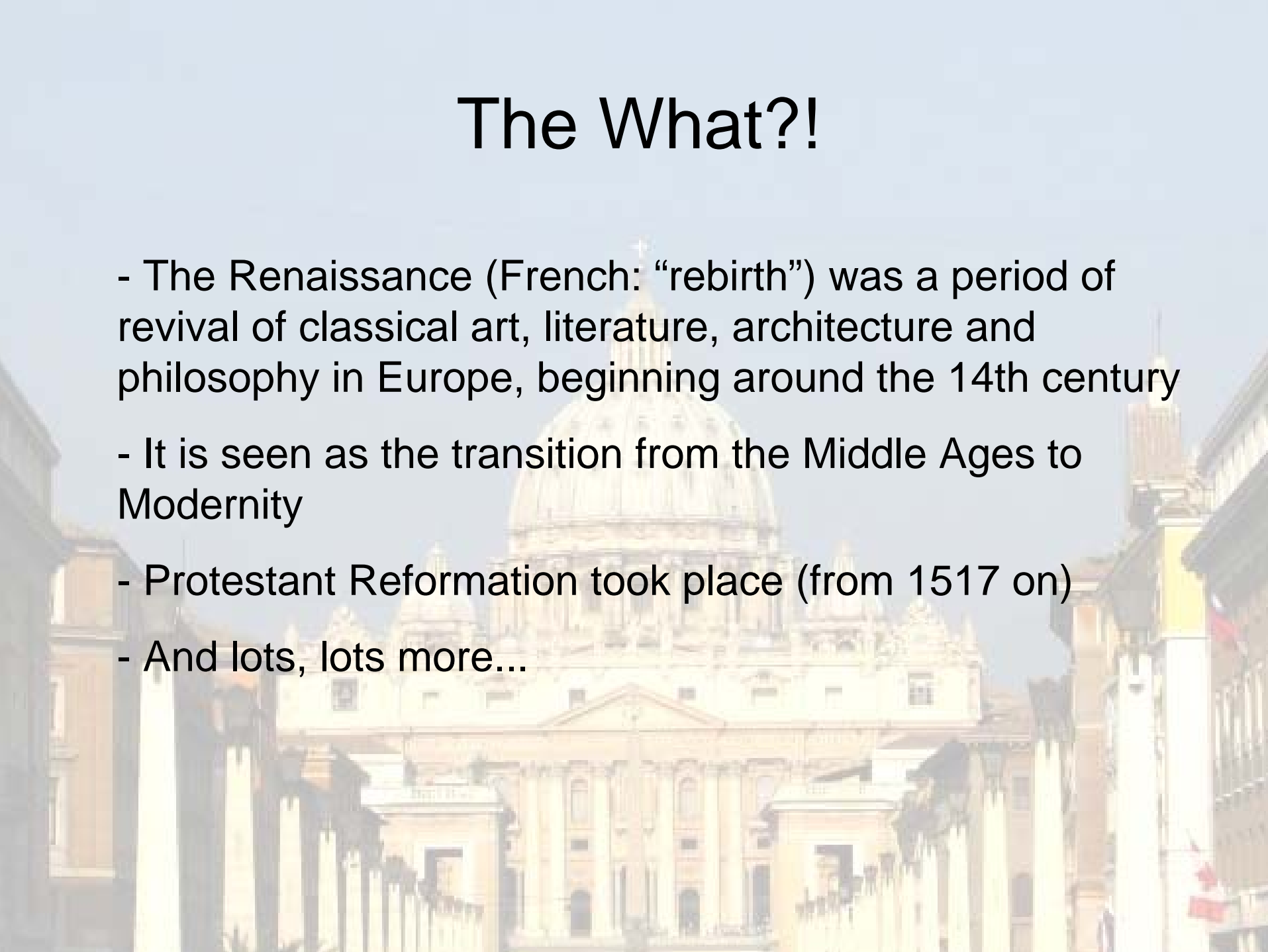
The Renaissance in Europe

A photograph of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Italy, viewed from a distance down a street. The large dome is the central focus, topped with a cross. The building is surrounded by other structures, and the sky is clear and blue.

Presentation: Vincent Gouws, 3rd December 2009

The What?!

- The Renaissance (French: “rebirth”) was a period of revival of classical art, literature, architecture and philosophy in Europe, beginning around the 14th century
- It is seen as the transition from the Middle Ages to Modernity
- Protestant Reformation took place (from 1517 on)
- And lots, lots more...



Italy in the 14th Century

- Northern Italian communes were left self-governed due to the Roman Empire's ongoing dispute with the Pope over the extent of Church authority in secular government
- Also the northern Italian regions were wealthy and culturally diverse due to successful trade with the Arabic Mediterranean
- The cultural exchange included Arabic approaches to science, mathematics and philosophy

Renaissance beginnings

- **Giotto** (1267-1337), Florentine painter and architect
- Was the first to leave the Byzantine style behind and to paint realistically

Marriage at Cana,
Scrovegni Chapel



Renaissance beginnings

- **Petrarch** (1304-1374), Florentine scholar, poet, one of the first Renaissance humanists
- “The Father of Humanism”
- His sonnets became a model for modern lyrical poetry
- His works are mostly concerned with personal inner conflicts rather than Christian themes
 - *Canzoniere*, a collection of sonnets, expressing unconventional forms of adoration
 - *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae* ("Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul"), a self-help book

Renaissance Humanism

The background of the slide is a faded, light-colored image of the Florence Cathedral (Duomo) and the surrounding streets of Florence, Italy. The cathedral's large dome is the central focus, with its intricate architectural details visible. The surrounding buildings are multi-story structures with windows and balconies, typical of the city's architecture. The overall tone is bright and slightly hazy, providing a historical context for the text.

- Developed largely in the second half of the 14th century in Florence
- Basically inspired by the themes and thoughts of the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle
- Themes:
 - The liberal arts and their studies should not be reserved solely for the rich
 - Approval of the self, human worth and individual dignity

Renaissance Art and Music

- The Renaissance yielded some of the most significant works of painting, sculpture, architecture and music

Question: Which Renaissance artists come to your mind?



Masaccio 1401-1428

- Was one of the first painters to apply the technique of the vanishing point, developed revolutionarily natural plasticity (humanist style) and so, inspired, for example, Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo



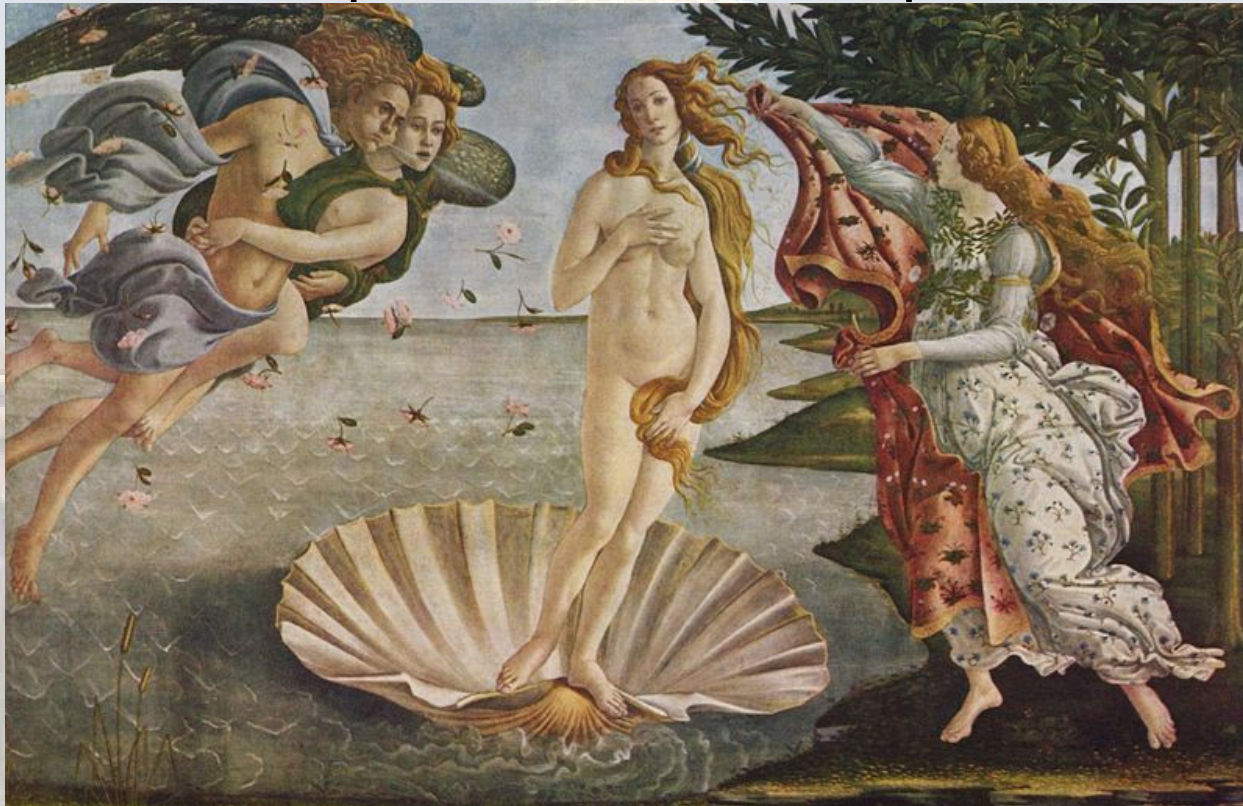
Masaccio 1401-1428

- Painted one of the most famous images of Adam and Eve in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence (1428)



Botticelli 1445-1510

- Employed Platonic philosophy in his *Birth of Venus* (1480s), Venus symbolising the Virgin Mary / Eve, platonic love, the personal relationship to God

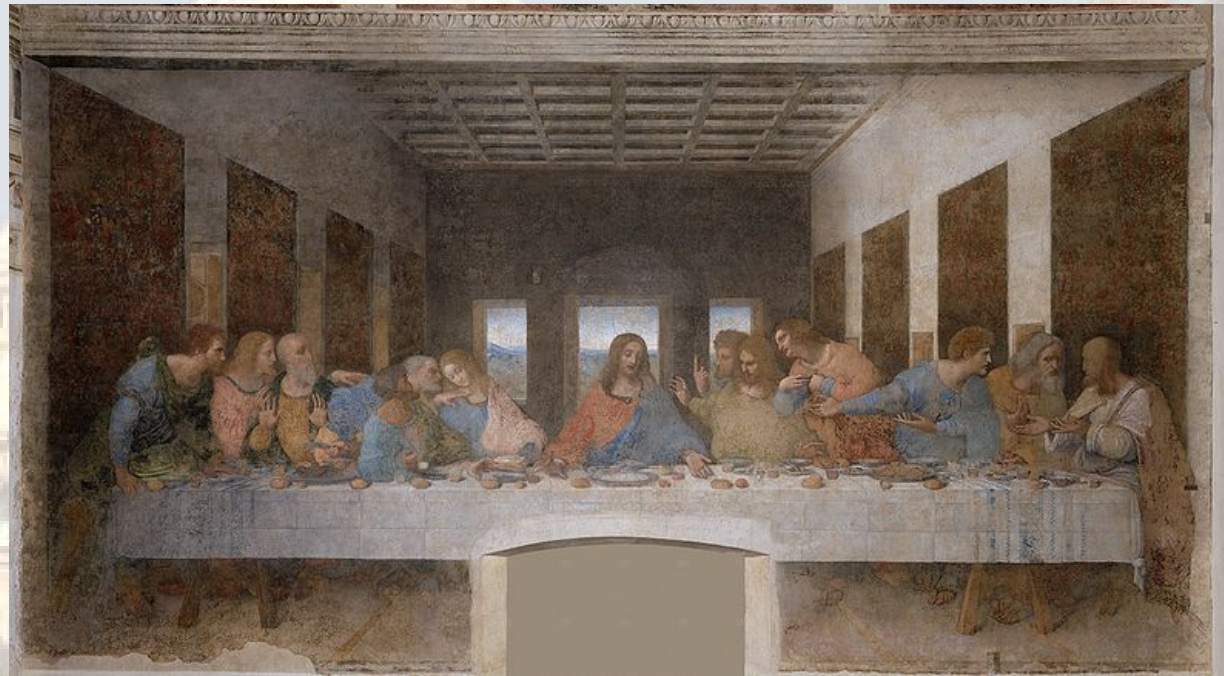
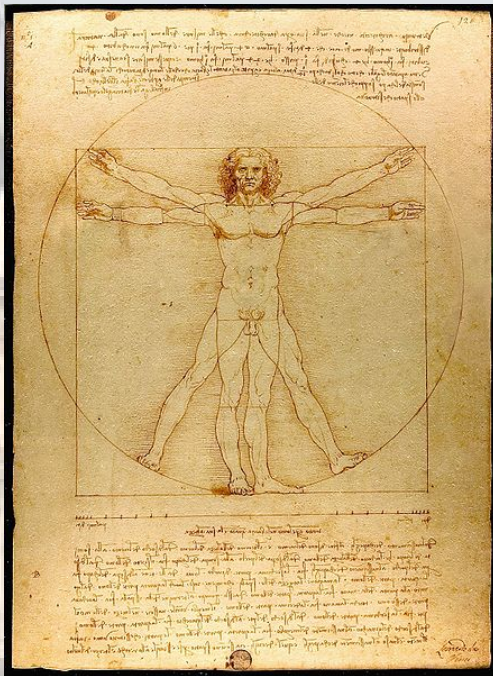


Leonardo da Vinci



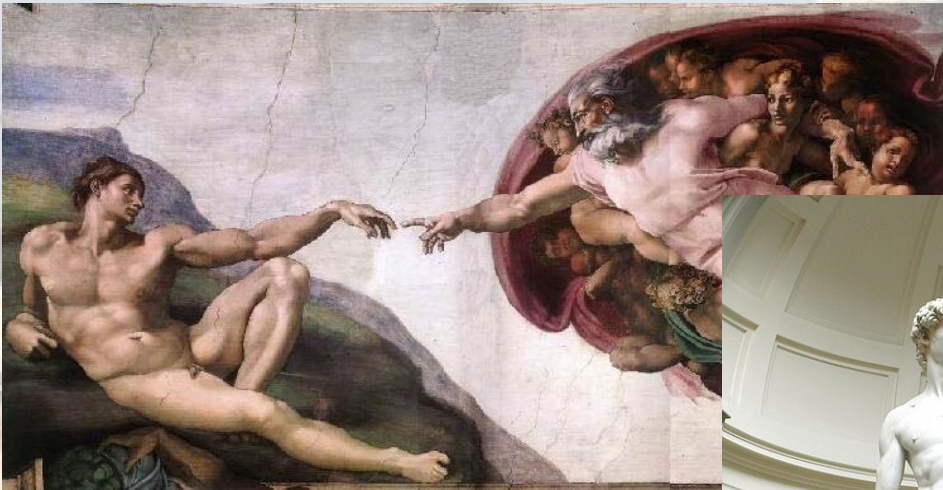
- Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the defining Renaissance artist and observer / inventor

- Works: *The Last Supper*, *Mona Lisa*



Michelangelo

- Michelangelo (1475-1564), painter, sculptor, architect...
- Works: *Creation of Adam*, *David*, St Peter's Basilica



Raphael 1483-1520

The Sistine Madonna



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A photograph of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, viewed from a street level. The cathedral's large dome is the central focus, topped with a cross. The building is made of light-colored stone and features classical architectural elements like columns and arches. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text is overlaid on the image.

Thanks for your attention!

Next:

Ivo with

Elizabethan England

Religions of the time

- **Church of England (Protestanism)** – officially established state church after the persecutions of Mary Tudor, Bloody Mary or Mary I (July 1553 – Nov 1558), daughter of Catherine of Aragon (Henry VIII's first wife)
- **Puritanism** – represented the Calvinist view within the Anglican church
- **Catholicism** – there was no legal way for Catholics to practice their faith after Anne Boleyn
- **Calvinism** – emphasizes that man is incapable of doing anything on his own to obtain salvation. God alone is the initiator at every stage including the formation of faith and the decision to follow Christ
- **Judaism**
- **Atheism**

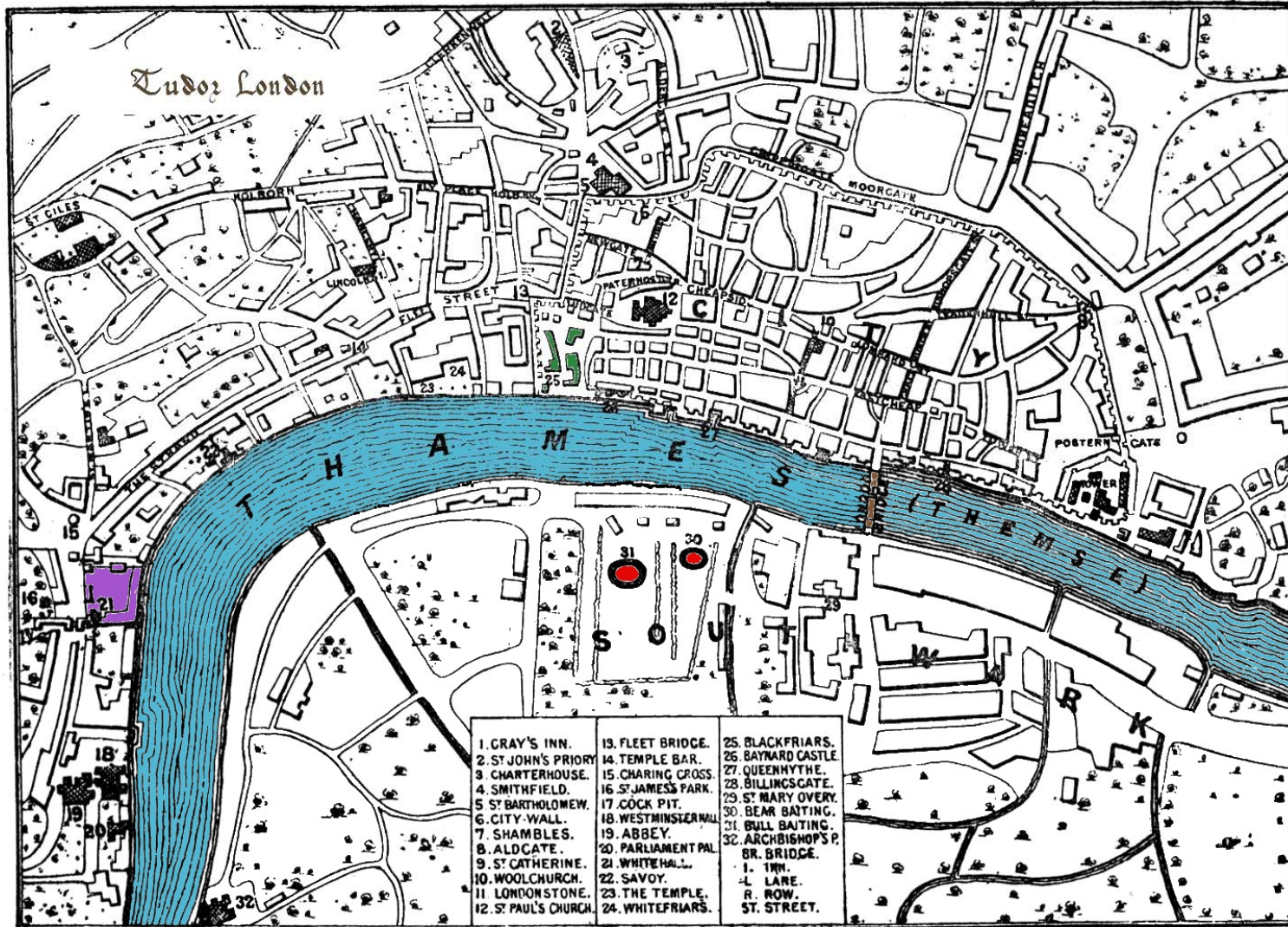
Religions of the time (cont'd.)

- **Act of Supremacy** – was restored, after being repealed by Mary I in 1554. The Queen was affirmed as the Governor (not 'Head') of the (Protestant) Church of England, which was thus independent of Rome. All office-holders had to swear their allegiance. Elizabeth installed a new generation of Protestant bishops.
- **Act of Uniformity** - Everyone had to go to church once a week or be fined 12 pence, a considerable sum for the poor. With this act Elizabeth I made it a legal obligation to go to church every Sunday.
- **Political pressure** - Since the educated urban middle classes were the most likely to be radical Protestants (Puritans), they began to use their political instrument, the House of Commons, to greater effect by withholding money from the crown.
- **Religious conflict** - The conflict of allegiance to pope or monarch was increased by the fact that Elizabeth had been excommunicated in 1570. Elizabeth was regarded as a bastard by Catholic Europe and thus was for them not a rightful ruler. In England, English Catholics were legally traitors and could be executed as such.

Population

- **London** – largest city in Europe with 200 000 inhabitants, population had grown 400% from 1500 to 1600 and doubled again in 50 years; center of trade and social life because of the Thames; the large number of in-migrants; jobs were scarce
- Occupations – bookseller, mercer, seamstress, milliner, tailor, draper, bowyer, blacksmith, lawyer, apothecary, barber surgeon, stapler, steward, factor, nurse, wet nurse, tutor, etc.
- Country unified, trade and commerce flourished
- **England in general**
- population growth, enclosures, urbanization
- increase in overseas and home trade and 'industry' – the beginning of capitalism,
- beyond feudalism: the rise of the lower gentry and the 'middling sorts,'
- between Puritan and Catholic beliefs

Population (cont'd.)



Population – Negative Aspects

- **High drinking rate**, many deaths from drunkenness
- **Sickness and diseases**: bubonic plague, small pox, tuberculosis, measles
- **Lack of personal hygiene**; people bathed rarely, bad breath, rotting teeth, stomach disorders, scabs and sores; poor sanitation; Average life expectancy = 40 years
- **Pollution**: ditches used as toilets, dead carcasses thrown on the streets, garbage into the river; mass graves for the poor
- **Not a clean or safe city** — “The Thames was a beautiful sewer” and criminals ran rampant
- **Plague death toll**
 - 1563 – took almost 80 000 lives (20 000 in London alone); 1000 people died weekly in August, 1600 – in September, 1800 – in October
 - 1578 – Queen’s decree to find a solution. All taverns, plays and ale-houses were ordered closed (until 1590)

Crime and punishment

- Crimes against the state – “the greatest and most grievous punishment [...] is drawing from the prison to the place of execution upon a hurdle or sled, where they are hanged till they be half dead, and then taken down, and quartered alive, after that, their members and bowels are cut from their bodies, and thrown into fire ...”
- Suicides
- Thieves – “... are often stocked and whipped [...] such fellows as stand mute, and speak not at their arraignment are pressed to death ...”
- The punishment corresponded the severity of the crime.

Royal houses of England

- Normandy (1066 - 1135)
- Blois (1135 - 1154)
- Plantagenet (1154 - 1399)
- Lancaster (1399 - 1471)
- York (1471 - 1485)
- Tudor (1485 - 1603)
- Stuart (1603 – 1649; 1660 - 1714)
- Hanover (1714 - 1901)
- Saxe – Cobourg (1901 - 1910)
- Windsor (1910 - present)

Elizabeth Tudor, the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I, Queen of England and Ireland (7 September, 1533 – 24, 1603)

- Daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn
- Succeeded her half-sister Mary (daughter of Catherine of Aragon)
- received a humanist education
- spoke French and Italian fluently;
- could read Latin and Greek
- believed in royal absolutism
- rebellion against her and her laws was not only criminal but also a blasphemous act
- had an immense influence over the country; politically and socially
- was reckless, unpredictable:
- had Mary, Queen of the Scots, executed
- had Sir Walter Raleigh imprisoned

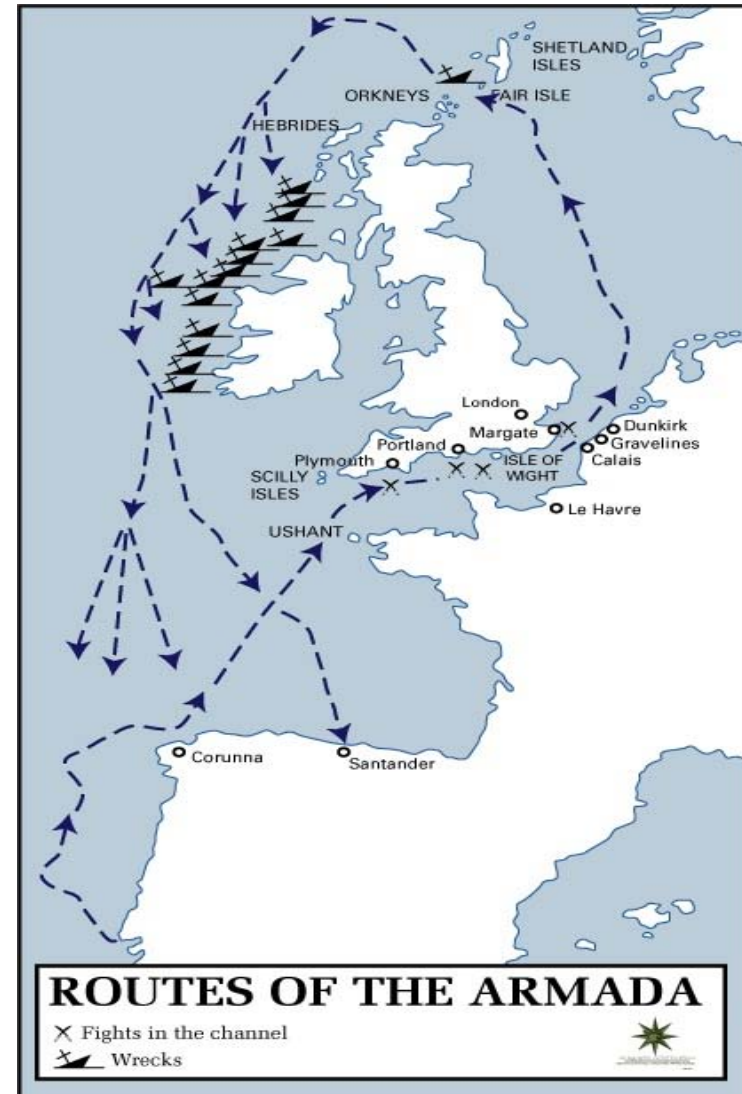


Elizabethan period (1558-1603)

- golden age in English history.
- height of the English Renaissance, and saw the flowering of English literature and poetry.
- Elizabethan theatre grew and William Shakespeare, among others,
 - wrote plays that broke with England's past style of plays.
- more Londoners were educated during this time than ever before.
- * world influence and a colonial power
- * return to Protestantism
- * improvement of the educational system
- * English language gained in importance
- * literary movements and developments (drama and theatre)

Colonialism

- Sir Francis Drake – added to the nation’s prestige and competitiveness in navigation and exploration (1577 - 1580)
- 1588 – The defeat of the Spanish Armada; English fleet half the size of the Spaniards’; English ships dreadfully small but very fast
- 1599 – England enters the arena of world trade and colonization and would come to dominate it for the next three centuries with the chartering of the East India Company
- Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) – aristocrat, poet, soldier, pirate, writer; knighted in 1585 by the queen for his contribution to the English nation



Education and literature

- England experienced true cultural reawakening and renaissance one century after its beginning in Italy
- At the Queen's direction, Oxford and Cambridge universities were reorganized and chartered as centers for learning and scholarly endeavour
- The blossoming of poetry and drama
 - Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) – ambitious poem of homage of Elizabeth I – *The Faerie Queen*; adapted sonnets
 - Sir Phillip Sidney (1554 -1586) – coastal defense advisor in Parliament, wrote *The Defence of Poesie* aka *An Apologie for Poetrie*, *Arcadia*, the book of sonnets *Astrophel and Stella*, and the first English essay of literary criticism.
 - William Shakespeare (1564-1616) – the most celebrated English author ever; wrote 37 (arguably 38 plays) and a total of 154 sonnets; participated in the building of the Globe Theater in 1599 as a shareholder together with the Burbidge brothers; established the troupe of Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's men); married Anne Hathaway and had three children; first acting sequence in London in 1592

Shakespeare and his influence on the English language

Daniel Riechmann

Early Modern English and the Renaissance: Standardisation (1500-1700)

- - English already looks very familiar to us in this period but the familiarity is often deceptive.
- - many words that look like modern words have a different meaning in Early Modern English
- - the most prominent difference: pronunciation and the
- Great Vowel Shift: over a period of two centuries; eventually all the long vowels were affected
- - gradual change from handwritten manuscripts to print

Early Modern English Cont'd.

- 1476: the introduction of the printing press to England by William Caxton was a starting point in the standardisation process of the English language.
- In 1700<. by this time Modern Standard English was well established and the English language had started its expansion across the world.

(Jucker: 41)

Early Modern English Cont'd

- At the beginning of the early Modern English period English had asserted itself as the official language in Chancery, the office of the royal scribes.
- It was used in most official and formal situations but it did not yet have enough prestige to be used in all fields.
- English was considered to be “vulgar” and “barbarous” because it did not have enough words.

That if I would apply
To write ornatly
I wot not where to finde
Tearmes to serve my mynde

(John Skelton c. 1460 - 1529) (taken from Muir/Schoenbaum: 78)

Shakespeare's influence on the vocabulary

- Between 1575 and 1580 a change of attitude towards English suddenly took place. Since then English was considered to be not only a useful language but an eloquent language.
- Shakespeare was a Renaissance writer and therefore shared a special interest in the classical languages and literatures but also in modern languages like Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese.
- words were borrowed from other languages
- Shakespeare's language had a very considerable influence on the further development of the English language, mainly on its vocabulary. (Jucker: 51).

Shakespeare's influence on the Vocabulary Cont'd

- Shakespeare used approx. 20,000 words in his works (Brook: 26).
- The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) records over 2000 entries that are first attested between 1590 and 1610 and have a supporting quotation from Shakespeare's works. (Jucker: 51)
- Shakespeare is full of words which were already "archaic" in his times. In fact many archaic words have been kept in use solely because the audience has heard them in the theatres people have learnt them in school when studying Shakespeare. (McEvoy: 15)

Some examples from Shakespeare's play *King Henry V*.

Shakespeare's influence on vocabulary (cont'd.)

Some examples from Shakespeare's play *King Henry V*.

shog v. = to shock (in today's primary meaning)

[ME. shogge, prob. related to OHG. scoc (pl. scocga) oscillation, swinging, a swing, MHG. schock, schocke swing, see-saw, MDu., Du. schok shake, jolt, MLG., MDu., MHG. schocker to swing, oscillate, shake. The word was doubtless felt as phonetically symbolic of the character of the movement denoted; cf. [JOG](#) v. See also [SHOCK](#) v.1] (OED: q.v.)

To go away, begone. Usu. with *off*.

1599 [SHAKES.](#) *Hen. V*, II. i. 47 *Will you shogge off?* *Ibid.* II. iii. 48 Shall wee shogg?
1625 [FLETCHER](#) *Coxcomb* II. i, Come, prethee let's shogg off, and browze an hour or two. **1884** [C. M. YONGE](#) *Armourer's Prentices* I. x. 192 Bolt..bade him shog off, and not come sneaking after other folks' shoes. **1929** [J. C. POWYS](#) *Wolf Solent* vii. 154 Lob began to swagger slowly away. 'I knows why you wants me to shog off,' he called back. *Ibid.* ix. 208 Wolf shogged off by himself. **1962** L. R. BANKS *End to Running* I. v. 71 I'll just say to hell with her, to hell with the money and the house and everything else I'll just shog off. (OED)

- Henry V: “Free from gross passion or of mirth or anger constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood, garnish'd and deck'd in modest compliment, not working with the eye without the ear, and but in purged judgement trusting neither? Such and so finely **bolted** didst thou seem. (Henry V 2.2)

bolted/bolt

[f. BOLT v.¹ + -ED.]

Sifted; *fig.* carefully selected, choice.

c1200 ORMIN 992 Recles smec, & bulltedd bræd att bakenn wass inn ofne. **c1440**
Prompt. Parv. 55 Bu[l]tyd, *taratan-tarizatus*.

1607 SHAKES. *Cor.* III. i. 322 He..is ill-school'd In **boulted Language**.

(OED)

Different meanings : (more familiar to us)

[f. [BOLT](#) *n.*¹ and *v.*² + [-ED.](#)]

1. Closed and fastened with a bolt; also *fig.*

1588 T. L. *To Ch. of Rome* (1651) 19 Those bar'd and bolted hearts of yours. **1687** [H. MORE](#) *Death's Vis.* viii. 200 Id'e Storm those Bolted Ears. **1784** [COWPER](#) *Task* IV. 304 The bolted shutter. **1828** [CARLYLE](#) *Misc.* (1857) I. 143 That bolted towers should encircle her.

2. Formed into or like bolts.

1747 T. GIBBONS *Elegy* vi, His shafted Lightnings, and his bolted Storms. **1860** [T. MARTIN](#) *Horace* 79 Bolted lightnings flash.

3. Fastened together with bolts.

1797 *Encycl. Brit.* s.v. *Ship*, They..have the beams, knees, and fore-hooks bolted into them. **1832** [H. T. DE LA BECHE](#) *Geol. Man.* 75 Blocks..squared and bolted together in the form of piers and jetties.

4. *bolted arrows*: (app.) arrows with blunt heads, bird-bolts.

1864 *Reader* 24 Dec. 792/3 Shooting, with bolted arrows, partridge or pigeon.
(OED)

Characteristics of Shakespeare's Syntax

Syntax reflects the full range of variants in Shakespeare's time.

The grammar is not fixed yet. If we analyse Shakespearean syntax from a modern standpoint, it seems archaic and looks somewhat Germanic. Often the word order is similar to our Modern German sentence structure (Scheler: 84):

Example: Say thou to Harry (H5 III/6/115)

Make we our March towards Birnan (Mac V/2/31)

What makes he heere ? (Oth I/2/49)

(Scheler: 84 f.)

Characteristics of Shakespeare's Syntax

Cont'd

Different variants still coexisted and had distinct uses (e.g. *thou* and *you* and their other grammatical forms *thee*, *thy*, *thine*, *your*, etc.)

thou was used by: parents to children, and by masters to servants, and to inferiors in general.

you was a more respectful form, used by children to parents and servants to masters, or to social superiors.

But *thou* was also given to those with whom you were intimate.

(McEvoy: 16)

The staging of Shakespeare plays and its influence on the standardisation process of the English language

- The characters who were members of higher social classes in Shakespeare plays usually spoke London Standard English, which was considered to be “good English”. The staging of Shakespeare plays in the late 16th and at the beginning of the 17th century was an event for all social classes. But the majority of the playgoers could neither read nor write.
- So they had to listen carefully to every word and developed a sensitive feeling for language and differences in language. By listening to the actors the audience could get an impression how the “London Standard English”, which was spoken by the higher social classes, actually sounded. They could also reflect on their own pronunciation.
- In this context Shakespeare promoted a “standard use of English”.

How Shakespeare plays with language in his play *Henry V*

- The nobility in *Henry V* speaks English exclusively. Henry V is not able to speak French anymore, although he wants to become King of France. Shakespeare caricatures this phenomenon in the last scene, in which Henry V courts the French princess Katharine. (see the following extract *Henry V* 5.2)

KING HENRY: Fair Katharine, and most fair,
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms
Such as will enter at a lady's ear
And plead his love-suit to her

KATHARINE: Your majesty shall mock at me; I cannot speak your England.

KING HENRY: O fair Katharine, if you will love me soundly with
your French heart, I will be glad to hear you
confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do
you like me, Kate?

KATHARINE: Pardonnez-moi, I cannot tell vat is 'like me.'

KING HENRY: An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

KATHARINE: Que dit-il? que je suis semblable a les anges?

ALICE: Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grace, ainsi dit-il.

KING HENRY: I said so, dear Katharine; and I must not blush to affirm it.

KATHARINE: O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies.

KING HENRY: What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

ALICE: Oui, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits: dat is de princess.

How Shakespeare plays with language in his play King Henry V (cont'd.)

In the following scene Shakespeare might have taken reference to the Welsh and Irish accent by staging a dialogue between CAPTAIN FLUELLEN (Welsh) and CAPTAIN MACMORRIS (Irish). See Henry V. III.2

MACMORRIS

By Chrish, la! tish ill done: the work ish give over, the trompet sound the retreat. By my hand, I swear, and my father's soul, the work ish ill done; it ish give over: I would have blowed up the town, so Chrish save me, la! in an hour: O, tish ill done, tish ill done; by my hand, tish ill done!

FLUELLEN

Captain Macmorris, I beseech you now, will you voutsafe me, look you, a few disputations with you, as partly touching or concerning the disciplines of the war, the Roman wars, in the way of argument, look you, and friendly communication; partly to satisfy my opinion, and partly for the satisfaction, look you, of my mind, as touching the direction of the military discipline; that is the point.

How Shakespeare plays with language in his play King Henry V (cont'd.)

In the following scene Shakespeare takes up the phenomenon that uneducated servants were using excessively words from other languages which they had taken up from their masters in order to sound more educated. The scene also symbolizes the interest of Shakespeare's contemporaries in classic and modern languages and play with words.

(see Henry V. 2.1)

NYM: Will you shog off? I would have you **solus**.

PISTOL: '**Solus**,' egregious dog? O viper vile!

The '**solus**' in thy most mervailous face;

The '**solus**' in thy teeth, and in thy throat,

And in thy hateful lungs, yea, in thy maw, perdy,

And, which is worse, within thy nasty mouth!

I do retort the '**solus**' in thy bowels;

For I can take, and Pistol's cock is up,

And flashing fire will follow.

(A few verses further)

PISTOL

'Couple a gorge!'

That is the word. I thee defy again.

O hound of Crete, think'st thou my spouse to get?

No; to the spital go,

And from the powdering tub of infamy

Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,

Doll Tearsheet she by name, and her espouse:

I have, and I will hold, the **quondam** Quickly

For the only she; and--**pauca**, there's enough. Go to.

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