

## Topic Page: [Tudor](#)

Definition: **Tudors** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

English royal dynasty (1485-1603). Of Welsh origin, they were descended from Owen Tudor (d.1461), who married the widow of Henry V. In 1485, Owen Tudor's grandson defeated Richard III at Bosworth to win the English throne as Henry VII. The dynasty ended with the death of Elizabeth I in 1603. See *also* Henry VIII; Edward VI; Mary I; Stuart

Summary Article: **Tudor**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

English dynasty 1485–1603, founded by Henry VII, who became king by overthrowing Richard III (the last of the York dynasty) at the Battle of Bosworth. Henry VII reigned from 1485 to 1509, and was succeeded by Henry VIII (reigned 1509–47); Edward VI (reigned 1547–53); Mary I (reigned 1553–58); and Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603). Elizabeth died childless and the throne of England passed to her cousin James VI of Scotland, who thus became James I of England and the first of the Stuart line.

The dynasty was descended from the Welsh adventurer Owen Tudor (c. 1400–1461), who fought on the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses. Owen Tudor later became the second husband of Catherine of Valois (widow of Henry V of England). Their son Edmund, Earl of Richmond, married Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509), the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, who was the fourth son of Edward III. Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty, was the son of Edmund, Earl of Richmond, and Margaret Beaufort.

The dynasty's symbol, the Tudor rose, combines the red and white roses of the Lancastrian and Yorkist houses, and symbolizes the union of the two factions, which was cemented by Henry VII in January 1486 when he married Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of Edward IV.

The Tudor period was one of significant religious change in England, which took place initially under the direction of Henry VIII. Henry was not opposed to the Roman Catholic Church on doctrinal matters, but, by 1526, he was desperate for a male heir, and he and his wife, Catherine of Aragón, had only produced a daughter. He subsequently demanded a decree of nullity from the pope, and, when this was refused, declared himself head of the Church in England. Thereafter, between 1534 and 1540, he imposed a new ecclesiastical order on the country and, chiefly through the agency of Thomas Cromwell, gradually dissolved England's monasteries.

**Edward VI** Protestantism gained a still more secure footing in England during the reign of Henry's successor, Edward VI, as churches were stripped of images, and more Protestant doctrine and ceremonial was introduced by the first and second English Prayer Books. Moreover, when Edward died in 1553 he left a will that went directly counter to his father's, and named the Protestant Lady Jane Grey (rather than his Catholic half-sister Mary, the daughter of Catherine of Aragón) as his heir. The succession was disputed by Mary, however, and, after she became queen in 1553, Lady Jane Grey and her supporters (the Duke of Northumberland and his son, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester) were committed to the Tower of London and later beheaded.

**Mary I** Mary restored the Catholic religion, and, for a time, England's allegiance to the pope. She married Philip II, King of Spain, and this, together with the religious persecutions that took place, did

much to make her unpopular. A number of high-ranking Protestants, including Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and Thomas Cranmer, were burned at the stake during her reign.

**Elizabeth I** Mary was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth I, who governed authoritatively for 45 years, and tried to provide the Church of England with a *via media* ('middle way'), a compromise of doctrine designed to reconcile Catholic and Protestant factions. Elizabeth's reign was threatened, however, by external dangers from Scotland and Spain. In the first place, Scotland was disturbed by religious quarrels, and Mary Queen of Scots (who was dangerous as a Catholic claimant to the English throne) was driven into England as a fugitive, where she remained a prisoner until her execution in 1587. Then, in the following year, King Philip II of Spain sent a fleet of ships to invade England (see Spanish Armada), which was engaged in battle and defeated by the English fleet on 7–8 August 1588. This was the crowning victory of Elizabeth's reign, and effectively made England into one of the great international powers. In the later years of Elizabeth's reign, however, acute problems developed in Parliament, especially in matters of religion and taxation, which were to prove a hazardous legacy for her successor, James I.

**Culture** The Elizabethan period was a golden age for English literature, and saw major developments in both poetry and drama. The chief writers of the time included the playwrights Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare (who portrayed the Tudors in a favourable light in his history plays), as well as the poets Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. Other important, though subsequently lesser known, authors were the scholar and royal tutor Roger Ascham (who wrote treatises on archery and education), and Bishop Richard Hooker, the author of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594).

The Tudor period as a whole is also notable for its architecture, in which Renaissance-style decoration is combined with the perpendicular Gothic style. Secular Tudor architecture is most notable for its half-timbered houses, which often feature large groups of rectangular windows, multi-gabled roofs, and decorative brickwork, as well as interior wood-panelled walls and moulded plasterwork features. Examples of Tudor architecture include Burghley House in Cambridgeshire and Longleat House in Wiltshire.

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## APA

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