

## Tudor Coins as Bearers of Ideology of a Young Nation State

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*Sixteenth century England saw the conception and dissemination of a new ideology aimed at national consolidation and identity formation. Elaborated in philosophical and theological writings, Parliamentary acts and ordinances, underpinned by contemporary literature and art, the new ideology had one more potent but often overlooked vehicle of propagation – the Tudor money, a unique semiotic system of signs encoding in its iconography and inscriptions the abstract principles of the nascent ideology. The article argues for the significance of the political dimension of the coinage in question and suggests possible ideological readings of coins' visual design and their textual component. We also hypothesize that coin symbolism, literary texts professing national values and ideals, and visual art form distinct but inter-complementary domains (numismatics, pictorial art, and poetics) and function as potent tools of propaganda.*

### Introduction

The period this paper is concerned with is the Tudor age (1485-1603), which spans a century, is represented by five crowned monarchs and is marked by dramatic changes in all spheres of economic, political, religious, and cultural life. According to historical chronology, the 16<sup>th</sup> century marks the beginning of the Modern period in the history of England, which is characterized by the transition from feudalism to a new economic order accompanied by sweeping restructuring of industry and agriculture and consequent painful social changes. The distinguishing features of this period are consolidation of absolutism and imperial aspirations of the Crown that resulted in the subjugation of new territories and peoples. The epoch is imbued with a spirit of discovery that spurred the development of the Navy and brought to the fore new iconic figures like John Cabot, Sir John Hawkins, and Francis Drake. The period is known for proliferation of knowledge and education bolstered by the expanding print culture and the English Renaissance. The Protestant movement in England initiated and supported by the King split the country along religious lines for many decades, but at the same time became a theological validation of capitalism through entrenchment of religious individualism. All these developments make this epoch a unique and most impactful historical period and a fertile domain for uncovering undercurrent philosophical and theological doctrines that brought about the conception of an ideology of a young nation state within a new historical context. I seek to expose covert ideological structures and political

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implications of the Tudor coinage, which together with contemporary literature and art contributed to the indoctrination of public thinking.

### Theoretical Premises

The subject of money in the early modern period has attracted researchers of different schools with differing approaches. They addressed the questions of numismatic portraiture, described functions of money within a new economic and social context, studied its influence on the language of contemporary drama and poetry, examined how Tudor literature was shaped by economic thinking and examined how the age-old concept of value was transformed under the aggressive onslaught of materiality of gold and silver money.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, coins as such bearing effigies of kings and queens as a stamp of royal power, endorsed by legends chosen personally by English sovereigns, were considered the scope of numismatics. In this article, the Coin with its iconography and symbolism is regarded as a meaning-saturated gestalt, on which converge politics, religion, and – art, all of which reflect the nascent ideology.

Money's significance goes far beyond its purely economic role as a medium of exchange and encapsulates social, political, ideological and cultural content because of its abstract, symbolic character. Recent economic theory suggests that "money indeed creates its own universe of knowledge ... and determines how we understand the world."<sup>2</sup> Some researchers go so far as to postulate that money culture is "at the root of the very structure of symbolization and representation that frame the way we make sense of the world."<sup>3</sup>

The focal interest of the current research is the complex concept of ideology – the commonly held conventions and beliefs that make up the dominant ideas of a society and belong to the superstructure alongside culture, literature, law, art, etc. Karl Marx revealed that changes in ideology and culture are predicated on productive forces as "a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always

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1. To gain a better insight into the scope of themes addressed by researchers see: H. Farquhar, *Portraiture of the Tudor Monarchs on their Coins and Medals* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1908); B. Cook, *Angels and Ducats: Shakespeare's Money and Medals* (London: British Museum Press, 2012); A. Wong, "Uttering Angels and Minting Metaphors: Some Numismatic Tropes in Early Modern British Poetry," *British Numismatic Journal* 82 (2012): 121-132; P. Grav, "Taking Stock of Shakespeare and the New Economic Criticism," *Shakespeare* 8, no. 1 (2012): 111-136; D. Landreth, *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2. D. Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58.

3. I. Capeloa and H. da Silva, *The Cultural Life of Money* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2015), 7-11.

combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force.'<sup>4</sup> It is a productive force in a sense that it affects all constituents of the superstructure, especially perceptions of the world. According to Marx, "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas."<sup>5</sup> It follows from this definition that with changes in the methods of production, previous ideology is ousted or exists on a 'residual level,' whereas new ideological content gradually takes hold of the minds of people implanting in them a new, ordered set of ideas, with the aim to achieve public prevalency.

Conventional venues of propagating ideas are, in the first place, literature and pictorial art, which willingly embrace a new figural system of symbols and tropes. In the Tudor age, church preaching, popular ballads, poetry, and of course drama, became the most efficacious media of communicating doctrinal messages. Unexpectedly, coins due to their ubiquity and capacity to reach any single person became instrumental in shaping and transmitting new ideological principles, so special care was taken by the monarchs of the visual aspect of coins, which requires on the part of a researcher attention to minute details of the coin design as any can be a bearer of significative value. "The essence of money resides not so much in its visible or material qualities as in numismatic engravings that are impressed into electrum ingots."<sup>6</sup>

One of insightful approaches to the study of the evolution of nations' ideologies is Anthony Smith's 'ethno-symbolism' theory, which is concerned with the need to consider the accumulated heritage of symbolic resources (values, myths and symbols) involved in motivating ideologies; that means analyzing their symbolic dimensions which are integral to shared identity.<sup>7</sup> According to Smith, the creation of national identity can be achieved through the rediscovery of ancient myths, symbols, and memories and that "social reality is inconceivable outside of symbolism."<sup>8</sup> Smith categorizes coins as 'community symbols' alongside with flags, hymns, crowns, and totems.<sup>9</sup>

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4. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*. Part One, with Selections from Parts Two and Three, together with Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy." (New York: International Publishers, 2001), 50.

5. *Ibid*, 64.

6. M. Shell, *Art and Money* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

7. A. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 16.

8. *Ibid*, 24-25.

9. A. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16.

## Objectives and Material

The general goal of the research is to analyze changes in the ideology of 16th century England and expose its constitutive elements communicated through various venues among which coins are of special interest. The study aims to explore the following aspects of coins: 1) their pictorial design with special attention to how the signification process is organized through the visual; 2) legends inscribed by Tudor sovereigns as politicization of religion; 3) political and ideological messages of coins, and 4) the interconnectedness of the English coin system with other venues of propaganda. The list of coins for the study includes gold coins in which ideological content is most pronounced: *Sovereign, Angel, Crown, Noble/Royal*.

## Basic Elements of the Tudor Ideology

The English kingdom under the Tudors was in a state of transition, and hence turmoil and turbulence. Henry VII (1485-1509), the first Tudor king, put an end to the reign of the Plantagenet dynasty (the House of York) winning the battle of Bosworth (1485) and both virtually and figuratively picking up the crown of the fallen enemy (Richard III). He ended the War of the Roses and married Elizabeth of York. As a sign of reconciliation of the two houses, he designed the Tudor double rose (Figure 1); the cinquefoil became emblematic of the Tudors and featured on all coins issued in their time.



**Figure 1.** *The Tudor Rose*

Source: Wikipedia.

The rose and the King were poetized in the ballad *The Rose of England*:

In the midst of a garden there sprange a tree,  
And there vppon sprang the rose soe redd, ...  
This rose was faire, fresh to behold,  
Springing with many a royall lance;  
A crowned king, with a crowne of gold,  
Ouer England, Ireland, and of Ffrance.<sup>10</sup>

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10. F. Child (Ed.), *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston: Little, Brown and company, 1860), 331.

Henry is believed to have created the English nation-state on the pattern of France's sovereign state under King Louis XI. According to Marx, the ruling class, when coming to power, uses ideology as an apologetic technique for justifying the existing state of affairs. The Tudors had to offer such political and ideological values that would gain pervasive acceptance and at the same time would meet a particular set of needs of the Crown, among which the most urgent was legitimization of their power.

### Apologia of Absolute Royal Power

Historians generally regard the appearance of absolute monarchy as instituted in the France of Louis XIV (1643-1715). But the famous words "L'état, c'est moi" ("I am the state") were pronounced a century after the Tudor kings – father and son – turned the idea of absolutism into reality. It should be also noted that J. Bodin's famous treatise *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*,<sup>11</sup> in which he formulated the main principles of absolutism also called 'The Divine Right of Kings', was written in 1576 and published in English translation in 1606 after the political practice of unlimited centralized authority had been operating in England for more than half a century.

The origins of the concept of absolutism in England should be looked for in the works by Sir John Fortescue (1394-1479), especially his famous treatise *The Governance of England or Monarchia*<sup>12</sup> (ca 1471), in which he formulated principles aimed at the strengthening of the powers of the Crown and the reduction of the influence of the nobles. Though in his political views Fortescue was leaning toward limited monarchy, his writings exposing the evils which stemmed from Monarch's weakness (anarchical tendencies among the barons, the struggle of the aristocracy for the influence on the king, and many others which might lead finally to civil wars) proved to be the guidelines as to how to erect the edifice of absolutism and were dilligently followed by the first Tudor kings. The main distinction between 'absolute' and 'limited monarchy' lies in whose hands legislative and fiscal powers are. As Fortescue put it, "they differ in that the king may rule his people by such laws that he makes himself. And therefore he may set on them such charges and impositions as he wants himself without their consent."<sup>13</sup>

The Tudor kings were known for their ingenuity to extract revenue from their subjects, who had to pay "taxes, tallages, subsidies, scot, lot, and other

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11. J. Bodin, *The Six Booke of a Commonweale* (London: Impenfis G Bifhop, 1606).

12. J. Fortescue, *The Governance of England* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926).

13. *Ibid*, 109.

charges to the king's majesty and for the king's honor"<sup>14</sup>. This policy falls in with Fortescue's caution against the poverty of the Crown and his demand that the king should have for his expenditures more than the revenues of any lord; he stresses "the harme that comitth off a Kinges poverté,"<sup>15</sup> which is a dishonor and belittles the glory of a king. What is more dangerous is that poverty may be the cause of King's diffidence and disloyalty on the part of his subjects because "his subgettes woll rather goo with a lorde þat is riche, and mey pay thair wages and expenses, then with thair kynge þat hath noght [nothing] in his purse,"<sup>16</sup> foreign princes included. Henry VII's parsimony was well-known. He turned his realm into "the golden hyl," spent great sums on jewels, and left to his son immense riches, which Henry VIII "dissipated by the prodigal expenses of the youthful monarch within several years."<sup>17</sup> In the same vein runs the policy of the resumption of lands alienated from the Crown in previous periods. In this way Henry VII eliminated the landed aristocracy, and Henry VIII wiped out Catholic ecclesiastical elite restoring Crown lands given away to monasteries.

The next postulate, which was later enunciated by Bodin, was that there may be no greater peril to a prince than to have an overmighty subject or subjects equipollent to him, who might "aspire to þe estate [power] of his prince"<sup>18</sup>. Bodin considered that nothing on the earth can be "greater or higher, next to God, than King's majesty."<sup>19</sup> He laid down the foundation for the ideology of the "Divinity of Royal Rights," stating that "they (rights) wholly and alone belong unto the king,"<sup>20</sup> are inseparable and are not to be divided or shared with anybody else. Richard II in Shakespeare's eponymous play believes that his right to the throne is "*Sacra Sacrorum*, of Sacred things the most Sacred," and God will be his protector. He, who is fighting a losing battle against Bolingbrook,<sup>21</sup> still believes that Angels will be on his side.

God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay  
A glorious angel; then if angels fight,  
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.<sup>22</sup>

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14. W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce During the Early and Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 519.

15. Fortescue, 119.

16. Ibid.

17. R. Ruding, *Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain and its Dependencies*, volume 1 (London: Manning and Mason, 1840), 300.

18. Bodin, 128.

19. Ibid, 153.

20. Ibid, 155.

21. Richard's cousin, who removed him from the throne and became King Henry IV.

22. W. Shakespeare, *The Complete Works. Richard II* (London: CRW Publishing Limited, 2006), 219.

Long before his break with Rome, Henry VIII wrote about spiritual supremacy of kings and declared that “by the ordinance and sufferance of God we are king of England, and the kings of England in time past have never had any superior but God alone,”<sup>23</sup> by which he repudiated papal primacy. He also pronounced the English nation exempt from foreign jurisdiction.

Both Fortescue and Bodin believed that the exclusive right of monarchs was appointing and dismissing the great officers of state. The peril to the monarch was that “great princes and lords might be so occupied with their own matters, and with the matters of their kin that they may attend but litle, or not at all, to the Kyng's matters”<sup>24</sup>. He thought it feasible for the King to appoint yearly several lords at his discretion out of “the wisest and best disposed men that can be found in any part of this land, who would advise him on matters very difficult that might befall the king.”<sup>25</sup> All the Tudors practiced this policy and created a new nobility dependent on royal favor. In the tragedy *Richard III*, Gloucester,<sup>26</sup> is exasperated that “the nobility is held in contempt” and high positions are granted to people of low origin and doubtful merits: “... many fair promotions/Are daily given to ennoble those/That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble”<sup>27</sup>

Henry VII built the strongest monarchy in the history of England based on the theory of divine rights and providentialism. His son, Henry VIII (1509-1547), subordinated the Church to the Crown, and forced Parliament to designate him “Protector and Only Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy in England.” He politicized Protestantism and used it as an instrument of war against Catholicism: after a long squabble with the Pope, and the latter's threats of penalties and excommunication, exhortations to repent and return to the papal jurisdiction, Henry composed the following answer: “We have, will, and shall, by all ways and means say 'Nay' and declare our 'Nay' in such sort as the world shall hear and the pope feel it.”<sup>28</sup>

The allegorical woodcut of *King Henry VIII of England Trampling on Pope Clement VII* by an anonymous painter fully reflects the spirit of the day. It shows Henry enthroned, sword raised in his right hand, trampling on a bearded figure of Clement VII. The papal cross and pallium (liturgical vestment) have fallen, and the tiara lies broken on the step of the throne (Appendix, Figure 9). Henry VIII made ecclesiastical body part of body politic and precluded any interference *ab extra*. The edifice of absolutism was complete.

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23. P. Ackroyd, *Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I*. volume 2 (New York: Macmillan Press, 2013), 16.

24. Fortescue, 145.

25. *Ibid*, 146-147.

26. Richard Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III.

27. Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 56.

28. W. Aubrey, *The National and Domestic History of England*, volume 2 (London: James Hagger, 1867), 440.

Henry VII looked back to the past for the justification of the legitimacy of his kingdom. He felt intuitively that he needed what Antony Smith calls 'a myth of common ancestry,'<sup>29</sup> whose pragmatic function consists in promoting a feeling of unity or harmony between members of a society, especially in the period of crises and rapid change.<sup>30</sup> From the deep past he extracted an old myth about Cadwaladr's<sup>31</sup> prophecy that "his stock should reign once more in the land." Whether it is a historical fact or a mythological fiction does not matter because myth-based truths "often have more influence than careful historiography."<sup>32</sup>

In addition, a new myth was created that Henry VII was greeted at the gates of Worcester with a poem:

Cadwallader's blood lineally descending,  
Long hath be told of such a prince coming.  
Wherefore friends, if that I shall not lie,  
This same is the fulfiller of the prophesy.<sup>33</sup>

Henry made ample use of the symbols associated with the Britons' king. The greyhound was Henry's badge at the battle of Bosworth Field, and he was fighting under the red dragon flag, which is believed to have been the ensign of Cadwaladr. Moreover, he transferred these symbols onto his coinage.

To demonstrate his absolute authority, Henry VII ordered "to make a new money of gold" according to his personal design (Figure 2). It was to excel all the current gold coins at its grandeur. The incentives for the introduction of a new coin were political rather than economic. The new ostentatious money called *the Sovereign*, a name that meant 'great, superior, ruler', had its aim to assert the Tudors' monarchical power and carried covert ideological structures of absolutism.

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29. A. Smith, 1999, 13.

30. D. Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (1955): 384.

31. Cadwaladr was the last king of the Britons (655-682), to whom Henry claimed the direct lineage.

32. G. Grant, "The Song of Roland," in *Omnibus II: Church Fathers through the Reformation* (Pennsylvania: Veritas Press, 2005), 143.

33. H. Dobin, *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1990), 51.





**Figure 2.** Henry VII. Gold Sovereign

Source: Golden Art Treasures.

The coin featured the King seated facing on a low-armed throne with scepter and orb wearing a closed crown on the obverse; the reverse had the Tudor rose with a shield of the Royal Arms of England and France in the center and a crown with crosses and fleur-de-lis above. Besides clichéd political symbols (orb, scepter, crown), Henry added the greyhound and the dragon on the pillars of the throne and the portcullis of the House of Beaufort below the King's portrait emphasizing his genealogic linkage with ancient English kings. The portcullis is a symbol of the Beauforts (Henry's mother was a Beaufort), descendants from King Edward III of England (1312-1377). The coin performed a ceremonial function: in 1502, it was given as a diplomatic gift to ambassadors from Hungary, and in 1506 to the king of Castile and members of his household.

The pattern of an enthroned king with multiple symbols of royal power endured throughout the Tudor reign with variations depending on the immediate historical context. Edward VI contributed to the glory of the coin by issuing in 1551 a *piedfort* (double sovereign), a thick, heavy coin intended for ceremonial purposes. He also experimented with the portraiture introducing for the first time his half-length profile. He is pressing the sword hard to his shoulder and holding an orb (Figure 3) – both attributes emblemizing a strong sovereign power. We also see a substantial shift in the portraiture of the monarchs. Henry VII's representational image is replaced with a life-like portrait of Edward VI.



**Figure 3.** Edward VI. Gold Sovereign

Source: Coins UK.

Under Elizabeth I, the sovereign became a bullion coin, which functioned as a store of value or an investment rather than a medium of exchange and very soon became a “coin of honor” in the theatrical world; and the Queen got the

renown of a patron of the arts. If the Queen attended a performance and liked the play or an actor, she might present the playwright or the star with a sovereign. This greatly raised the social and professional status of the recipient.

Another coin that was meant to embody the divinity of the king and assert that kings were "lieutenants of the most mighty and immortal God on the earth for the welfare of other men"<sup>34</sup> was *the Angel* (Figure 4). According to semiotic theory, there are signs of great eminence, the so called sacramental signs, which are at once social and religious, whose sanctification is determined by social acceptance<sup>35</sup>. Biblical symbolism is dominant on the obverse of the coin, which depicts Archangel Michael, a warrior who fought against God's enemies, slaying the dragon, incarnation of sin; the reverse symbolizes temporal power and England's maritime glory featuring its main symbols – a ship bearing the royal shield and the rose.



**Figure 4.** Henry VIII. Gold Angel

Source: [coinupdate.com/history](http://coinupdate.com/history).

Introduced by Edward IV in 1465, for many years the angel had remained the only gold coin until Henry VII began to issue gold sovereigns, and approximately at that time the coin got a special status of the "Royal touch" piece. In the Middle Ages, kings were endowed with divinity and were believed to possess "miraculous powers of healing" by simply touching the suffering person.<sup>36</sup>

The 'Royal touch' myth had a sociological value; it referred to the rites of monarchical institutions. In England, the ceremony was well defined and observed by all the Tudors: prayer, laying on hands, making the sign of the cross, and gift giving (gold coin). Before the Tudors, the needy had received one penny. Henry VII increased the sum to six shillings and eight pence, which was the equivalent of the angel coin. The ceremony and the coin endued the king with divinity of being a conduit of God's healing powers.

At the beginning, the content of the ritual remained within Catholic thaumaturgies. The Reformation introduced some changes in the ceremony, not

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34. Bodin, 153.

35. J. Maritain, "Sign and Symbol," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937): 3- 4.

36. M. Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 3.

many, very delicate, subtly aimed at enhancing the sacral nature of the monarchy. All intercessors such as saints or the Virgin Mary were removed, and the monarch got the holy bounty of healing (*charisma*) directly from the Lord.<sup>37</sup> It proved that the person performing the healing ceremony was sacrosanct. Thus the 'Royal touch' became a touchstone for checking the rightfulness of the king/ queen on the throne.

### Apologia of Maritime Supremacy

Since time immemorial, the sea surrounding the Isle had been venerated and worshiped because it insured the security of the island. Most eloquently the idea is expressed by Hastings<sup>38</sup> in *King Henry VI*, who believes that the only defence England needs against France is the English Channel:

Let us be back'd with God and with the seas  
Which He hath given for fence impregnable,  
And with their helps only defend ourselves;  
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.<sup>39</sup>

Under the Tudors, who understood that the way to power and wealth of an insular country was in naval supremacy, England became a maritime power number one. Starting with an insignificant number of mainly merchant ships, by the end of the century the Tudors had a fleet of 197 well-manned, well-armed ships that defeated the "invincible" Spanish Armada in 1588. Henry VIII founded royal dockyards, equipped his ships with cannons cast in England, set up a school preparing officers, combat marines, and sailors. The country lived up to the principle formulated in the previous century: "Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamyralte, That we bee maysteres of the narowe see"<sup>40</sup> [Value trade, exercise powers of the naval commander, so that we should be masters of the sea around us].

Old myths handed down through generations argue that the English are indigenously related to the Sea as they are an 'elect nation', direct descendants from *Neptune* and his favorite son "mightie *Albion*, father of the bold/And warlike

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37. S. Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England: Politics, Medicine and Sin* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Limited, 2015), 54.

38. A Yorkist and a supporter of King Edward, who helps Edward escape from captivity and convinces him to stop pretending to only be claiming his dukedom.

39. Shakespeare, *Henry VI*, 46.

40. G. Warner, (Ed.), *The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, a poem on the use of sea-power* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), xvi.

people which the Britaine Islands hold"; though he "was slaine [by Hercules], but that which is th' immortal spirit/Lives still."<sup>41</sup>

The greatest event of the century was, no doubt, the defeat of the Spanish fleet. About 55 ballads dealing with the Spanish armada appeared in the period between June 29 and November 27, 1588.<sup>42</sup> The ballads are permeated with the sense of national pride for English marines and their exploits in the face of superior enemy forces.

This mighty vessel  
was threescore yards in length.  
In her were placed  
a hundred cannons great.  
And yet subdued,  
with many others more:  
And not a ship of ours lost!<sup>43</sup>

The ballad ends with a patriotic call to "safeguard your native soil and think of your country's good, wherein you nursed were! And fear not in defense thereof, to spend your dearest blood!"<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 5.** Edward III. The Gold Noble

Source: baldwin.co.uk.

The coin that was meant to emblemize England's naval glory was the gold *Noble*. Introduced in 1354 during the reign of Edward III and minted for the last time under Edward IV (1442-1483), it was designed to commemorate the naval victory of Edward III over the French at Sluys in 1340 and had become a symbol of maritime valor. The coin features King standing in ship with upright sword and quartered shield. The reverse has an ornamental cross with *lis* and crowned lions (Figure 5). It is a rare case that a coin was berhymed in a poem by an anonymous author, who described in minute detail the impress on the obverse:

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41. E. Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*, volume I (London: Printed for J. Brindley, 1751), 361.

42. J. Mc Aleer, "Ballads on the Spanish Armada," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 4, no. 4 (1963): 602.

43. T. Deloney, *His Thomas of Reading and Three Ballads on the Spanish Armada* (New York: Taylor & Co., 1903), 188.

44. *Ibid*, 190.

Within the shypp is shewyd there the sayl  
 And oure kynge of royall apparaylle,  
 Wyth swerde drawn, bryght, sharp and extente,  
 For to chastisen enmyes vyolente;  
 So shulde he be lorde of the see about  
 To kepe enmyes frowythine and wythoute,  
 And to be holde thorowgh Cristianyte  
 Master and lord environ of the see.<sup>45</sup>

[Within the ship is shown the sail/And our king in royal apparel/With the sword drawn, bright, sharp and long/ To chastise violent enemies/So that He should be the lord of the sea/To keep away enemies within and without/And to be held throughout the Christian world/Master and lord environ of the sea].

The coin was reinstated by Henry VIII as the *George noble* because the reverse for the first time carried the mounted St. George (Henry's favorite saint) slaying the dragon, one of the most prominent military saints and the patron saint of England (Figure 6). The revival of the noble falls in well with the ideology of naval supremacy.



**Figure 6.** Henry VIII. *George Noble*

Source: coins-of-the-uk.

Back in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the *Rose Noble* was also called the *Royal*. Mary I reintroduced this name. She also redesigned the old picture placing herself on a ship with a sword and a shield, the letter M on the flag and the rose below.

There are several facts eloquent of the Tudors' reverential attitude to the Navy. It was demonstrated by Henry VIII in 1544 when he seized Boulogne. The Protestant army smashed down and burned the relics of the Catholic Faith. Despite Henry's personal distaste for the veneration of saints, he preserved and took back to England as a trophy of victory the statue of Our Lady of Boulogne featuring the Virgin and the Child Jesus in a boat hoping that it would be a guardian and protector of his mariners. Another fact is that when in 1574 Elizabeth I granted a license to the city of Bristol to mint copper tokens,<sup>46</sup> her condition was that the coin should feature a ship on the obverse. Bristol was

45. G. Warner, 1926, 44.

46. Private tokens for money as payment for small things were stamped by inferior tradesmen and were current in that city and ten miles about.

honored because it was the starting point of many voyages headed by glorified adventurers.

The coin is fraught with a multitude of political ideas: the figure of the king/queen in a ship and the accompanying signs on the gold noble symbolize the power of England exerted on the sea; England's preponderance over the once strong enemies; the necessity to maintain complete command of the sea and naval supremacy in the world; vindication of the new expansionist policy and some other.

### Apologia of English Imperialism

The development of the Navy went hand in hand with explorations of *terra incognita* and the acquisition of new lands. In this matter, Spain and Portugal had left all other marine states far behind. Nevertheless, in 1496, Henry VII formulated the imperialist ideology and laid down the foundations for the future colonialist policy by granting John Cabot<sup>47</sup> a patent of "full and free authority... to sail to all parts of the eastern, western, and northern sea... to find, whatsoever islands, countries, regions, or provinces in whatsoever part of the world placed, ... subdue, occupy and possess, [them] as our vassals."<sup>48</sup> Though the terminology used was manifestly feudal, the very idea belonged to a new (capitalist) world order. Cabot's expedition is the earliest known European exploration of coastal North America, and Cabot was the first European to cast anchor at "New Found Land," which led to the establishment of a colony there in 1549. Ships sailing under the British flag in pursuit of yet unclaimed lands, the establishment of British dominion over new territories rich in fruits, wood, ore, jewels, etc. were manifestations of the Tudors' imperialist ideology. To impose its will upon peoples outside England, the empire instituted various tools of control such as laws, royal decrees, parliamentary acts and ordinances, and economic measures among which money was an effective instrument.

At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Crown's imperial ambitions did not go beyond France, Scotland, and later Ireland; however, by the mid-century they evolved to a more expansionist policy underpinned by a philosophy of discovery. Henry VIII cherished an idea of the Atlantic World. In 1530, the naval admiral Sir John Hawkins<sup>49</sup> made his way to Guinea and Brazil; in 1576, English ships

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47. G. Caboto (1450-c. 1500), navigator and explorer of Italian origin living in England. The first Tudor Atlantic adventurer. Naturalized in England after his invaluable discoveries.

48. J. Hower, *Tudor Imperialism: Exploration, Expansion, and Experimentation in the Sixteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Washington DC, 2013), 179-180.

49. J. Hawkins (1532-1595), a naval commander and administrator, a merchant, shipbuilder, privateer, and slave trader.

reached the coast of Labrador and Baffin Island (Canada). The Tudors did not want to miss out on an opportunity to “partake in the expected treasure of the New World.”<sup>50</sup> In 1579, Sir Francis Drake<sup>51</sup> landed on the territory of today's California and claimed this area for the English Crown, calling it 'New Albion.' In 1583, the expedition sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>52</sup> founded the first colony in North America named Virginia.

Approximately in the middle of the century, the language of British imperial ideology was being forged and such new terms appeared in writings as “Empire of greate Briteigne” or the “Empire of Briteigne,” colony, etc.<sup>53</sup> It is quite telling that under Elizabeth I all ordinances included a phrase that they were effective “within the queen's majesty's dominions.”<sup>54</sup>

Coin design changed respectively: Henry VII's closed crown was replaced with an imperial crown, which is a symbol of an empire England was becoming under the Tudors. The first Act of Supremacy (1534) read: “It is manifestly declared and expressed that this realm of England is an empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one Supreme Head and King having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial Crown of the same.”<sup>55</sup>

The heroes of the day were explorers and adventurers like the naval admiral Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Hawkins known as England's *Nestor*, Sir Francis Drake called *Neptune*, who was most famously known for his circumnavigation of the world in a single expedition, from 1577 to 1580, and for his participation in the defeat of the Spanish Armada, as a vice admiral and second-in-command of the English fleet. A legend has it that during his expedition to Panama, Drake climbed a high tree in the mountains and became the first Englishman to see the Pacific Ocean. He remarked that one day an Englishman would be able to sail it – and it was he who became that Englishman. He died at sea on his voyage to Spanish America and was buried at sea, inspiring the poet to write:

England his hart; his Corps the Waters haue;  
And that which raysd his fame, became his grave.<sup>56</sup>

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50. W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce During the Early and Middle Ages*, 1910, 479.

51. F. Drake (1540-1596), naval officer, sea captain, privateer, slave trader, explorer of the Elizabethan era.

52. W. Raleigh (1554-1618), writer, poet, soldier, politician, courtier, spy and explorer. One of the most notable figures of the Elizabethan era.

53. D. Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 36.

54. Ruding, 350.

55. P. Grierson, "The Origins of the English Sovereign and the Symbolism of the Closed Crown," *British Numismatic Journal* 33 (1964): 132.

56. R. Barnfield, *Poems 1594-1598* (London: Archibald Cosstable & Co., 1876), 84.

In order to perpetuate their authority in distant lands, the English were to be presented to the world as an imperial nation by right of their geopolitical position and distinctive hallmarks. A conceptualization of an imperial nation is offered in the book by Thomas Smith *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England* first printed in 1581. The first condition is national consolidation: “Everye kingdome devided in it selfe shal be desolate.”<sup>57</sup> A consolidated nation must be uniquely intelligent and have superiority of wisdom and polity chiefly through learning due to which it will have the sovereignty over the rude and unlearned nations. Outreach missions became a perfect camouflage for the idea of conquest: Among all nations in the world they that are “politique” and civil do master the rest of the world<sup>58</sup>. Historically, Smith justified the right of the British to rule the world by Roman legacy alluding to the conquest of Britain by the Roman Empire from 43 to 410 AD. Smith's writings were surreptitiously slipping into English minds the idea of an imperial monarchy and the right of possession of overseas riches.

The defeat of the Spanish fleet opened for British expansionism eastern routes. In 1600, Elizabeth I awarded a group of merchants the monopoly on trade with the East. Elizabeth I ordained “that no silver should be exported by her merchants but only such as should be coined with her effigies and picture on the one side, and the portcullis on the other”<sup>59</sup> because only her image must be known and respected by the Asians. So, special “money was made of a kind unknown to the British mint either before or since her time, for it was intended” for the East India Company<sup>60</sup> to demonstrate the power of the British wherever their money circulated. The coins (Figure 7) were not popular with local people, so another set of coins featuring the portrait of Queen Elizabeth I supplied with additional symbols – the Red Dragon, a ship that sailed on the first voyage and an image of a pepper leaf – were issued.



**Figure 7.** Elizabeth I. Portcullis Money

Source: [obsoletecoin.com](http://obsoletecoin.com).

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57. T. Smith, *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 131.

58. *Ibid*, 22-23.

59. Ruding, 353.

60. *Ibid*, 354.



Imperial ideas were taken up by the pictorial art and literature. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, to commemorate the greatest sea victory of Elizabeth's reign, a portrait was painted by an unknown artist entitled *The Armada Portrait* (see Appendix, Figure 10). The Queen is depicted as the "Empress of the world." The painting is rich in symbolism: the imperial crown to the right of the queen; Elizabeth's hand resting on a globe, her fingers covering the Americas, which suggests her ambition to make England a world power; two pictures in the background, one depicting the quiet sea landscape representing English triumph (left) and the turbulent sea destroying the Spanish fleet (right); a massive gold figure behind the queen emblemizing riches that may be found in colonies.

### The Crown as a Symbol of Nationhood and Patriotism

The Crown as a royal headdress is a symbolic reification of the abstract idea of monarchical power, which makes it the most cherished and craved for object of kings, their heirs, and all kinds of pretenders to the throne. In the thematic content of Shakespearean history plays, the crown becomes a literary stock motif. In *Richard II*, the climax of the play is the dramatic scene when Richard is forced to resign his crown. He says, "My crown I am," and tells Henry to hold to the crown, too: "Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown;/Here cousin:/On this side my hand, and on that side yours."<sup>61</sup> Thus the symbolic concept of the 'crown' with deep rooted meanings of royal power, nationhood, and sovereignty had been formed by the time Henry VIII took up the reins of power.

For some time, Henry continued to issue gold sovereigns and angels. But because of the scarcity of gold bullion, some foreign coins were permitted to circulate in England. One such coin was the French *écus au soleil* (crown of the Sun). In 1526, it was decided to issue an English coin of the same value as it was considered unpatriotic to use foreign money. "And whereas the Crown of the Sun was a strange coin, the king thought fit that there should be a piece of gold of his own coin of the like fineness, weight, and goodness as the said crown of the Sun, to be called 'the Crown of the Rose,' and to be current in like manner"<sup>62</sup>. The name *Crown* prompted the design for Henry VIII's first English coins (Figure 8). Both obverse and reverse featured the Crown; the former had the Tudor rose topped by a large crown, the latter had a shield surmounted by a crown.

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61. Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 223.

62. Ruding, 304.



**Figure 8.** Henry VIII. Gold Crown

Source: Pinterest.com.

Foreign coins, especially brass coins, caused problems in the functioning of the monetary system. As Smith warned: “A coin made beyond the seas, like in all things to our coin, which they brought over in heaps; and when they see that [they were] esteemed as silver, they bring that for our commodities and give us brass for them”<sup>63</sup>. Royal proclamations tried to impress on people that the poor quality of foreign coins was fertile ground for forgery and fraud. In 1525, Henry VIII issued a proclamation for the valuation of foreign coins officially authorized in the realm; Elizabeth I repeatedly warned her subjects “not to receive any manner of foreign coin of gold or silver not being valued by public authority, on account of the great loss they might sustain.”<sup>64</sup>

Literature of the time had its say in debunking foreign crowns. In the play *Henry V*, the King tries to inspire his “war-worn ruin'd band” to victory. In his speech before the battle, Henry mocks the gilded epaulettes of French commanders and resorts to the image of clipped coins.<sup>65</sup>

KING HENRY: Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to one they will beat us, for they bear them on their shoulders. But it is no English treason<sup>66</sup> to cut French crowns, and tomorrow the King himself will be a clipper.<sup>67</sup>

The disdainful attitude to French crowns becomes evident when it concerns venality and treason. After the Southampton plot is exposed, the King accuses the three conspirators that they were paid by France with 'treacherous crowns.' Addressing Lord Cambridge, one of the conspirators, he mentions the poor quality of French debased coins and compares them to the base motifs of traitors:

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63. T. Smith, 1929, 45.

64. Ruding, 344.

65. Clipping is the act of shaving off a small portion of a precious metal from coin for profit, considered equal to counterfeiting and was occasionally punished by death. The word 'crown' also means top of the head.

66. According to the law *Lèse-majesté* (to do wrong to majesty), it was considered treason to clip or counterfeit English crowns as they bore the monarch's image; French crowns did not come within the purview of the law.

67. Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, 295.

“this man/Hath, for a few light crowns,<sup>68</sup> lightly conspired, to kill us here in Hampton.”<sup>69</sup>

John Donne's scorn for *French crowns* is still more pronounced as he compares debased French coins to the 'French disease': the alloy contains less gold (pale), their weight is reduced (lean), coins are clipped (lame), debased coins are ruinous for the economy.

Were they but Crownes of France, I cared not,  
For, most of these, their naturall Countreys rot  
I think possesseth, they come here to us,  
So pale, so lame, so leane, so ruinous.<sup>70</sup>

### Legends as an Ideological Tool of Religious Politics

In this part, legends around the outside edge of all Tudor coins are analyzed. It is a specific genre, which in a compact and concise way conveys incontrovertible truths of predominantly religious content that in a given historical context acquired political significance marked by a personal touch. They were in Latin, not numerous, but easily read into and interpreted by the contemporaries. Inscriptions on the front traditionally named the sovereign and his/her dignities, for example, “Henry by the Grace of God King of England and France, Lord of Ireland.” The legends on the reverse comprise mainly Biblical citations, excerpts from sermons and Scripture revealing a broad array of political allusions characteristic of the period at issue and the monarch on the throne.

Throughout the reign of Henry VII, the Catholic Church remained an integral part of the state power. Among the highest ranks of government the clergy presented a domineering force. Henry was devoted to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, which becomes evident from the legends on his coins. The inscription “*But Jesus passing through their midst went His way*” was engraved on the first sovereign issued by Henry VII. It refers to Luke's description of Jesus' return to his native town where he was rejected and nearly killed. His moral power, inner staunchness, and the strength of his faith awed the angry mob, so Jesus left Nazareth by quietly going through the madding crowd and went to Capernaum,<sup>71</sup> to preach and teach there. This Sentence of Scripture resonates with Henry's own vision of his predestination. He had to fulfill the challenging task of transforming England amidst baronial riots, abrasive relationships with Scotland and Ireland, plots and conspiracies inside and outside the country.

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68. Debased coins which do not have enough gold in the alloy are lighter.

69. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 289.

70. J. Donne, *Elegies*. Poems of John Donne, volume I (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896), 16.

71. A town in Galilee.

On gold Angels the legend read: “*By Thy Cross save us O Christ our Redeemer*” and on *half-Angels* “*Hail thou cross my only hope*” – suitable inscriptions for the healing coin. At the end of his life, when Henry VII minted silver *shillings* (*testoons*) and *groats*, probably assessing his achievements, he inscribed, “*I have made God my helper.*”

No other subject sparked so much interest in the ballads of that time as the struggle between Protestants and Catholics. It began during Henry VIII's reign, who began a Catholic, the “Defender of the Faith,” and ended a Protestant. However, this change of faith was not an outburst of an outraged and spiteful person, who failed to obtain consent to divorce from the Pope. The break with Rome in the 1530s was preceded by a long history of English kings trying to assert king's sovereign power within the realm. In 1351 under Edward III, the Statute proclaimed “the Holy Church of England” as distinct from the pope of Rome. Richard II was declared the absolute emperor of his dominion. In 1485, the king of England was proclaimed answerable only to God and superior to the pope within his realm. Henry VII appointed bishops himself as he did not want any other sovereign power in his kingdom.<sup>72</sup>

One of the earliest ballads devoted to the dissolution of monasteries mentions the principles of Catholicism that Henry VIII wanted to do away with in a very scoffing way: “Their hearts were so rooted in the pope's laws ... They had false prophets ... Their hope was for help in their popish masse ... The vicars commanded them to stick to their Idolatry.” The paean ends with extolling the King, “All England rejoices at their overthrow/For only the Lord is our Kyng's victory.”<sup>73</sup>

The new religion corresponded better to the spirit of the nascent capitalist economic system. Max Weber considered that the spirit of capitalism was inherent in Protestant religious values and was a basic tenet of Protestantism.<sup>74</sup> The fundamental principle and essence of Protestantism is religious individualism, which includes “the right of private judgment,” (the need for personal decision), private prayer, and what is most important, “a relationship with God should be established in individual terms as well”. The new religion is described almost in secular terms: “There can be a venturesomeness in Protestant life and thought ... new advances, new insights, new understandings of the faith,”<sup>75</sup> which may be regarded as the secularization of all ideals through Protestantism.

Though Henry VIII initiated changes in his religious policy, he was not a wholehearted Protestant, in large part, he remained within the parameters of the

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72. P. Ackroyd, *Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I*, 2013, 16.

73. H. Rollins (Ed.), *Old English Ballads 1553-1625* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1920), ix.

74. M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005).

75. R. Brown, *The Spirit of Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 11.

traditional devotional practices of Catholicism. His choice of legends on the coins issued in his time reflects his warlike spirit and pride in naval exploits. He added a new floral embellishment to the inscriptions: "By the grace of God, king of England and France, Lord of Ireland, *a dazzling rose without a thorn.*" This is a celebrated cliché from fourteenth-century Church Latin used in poetry versifying English military victories and glorifying English valor and maritime supremacy over the French. "*Anglia regna, mundi rosa, flos sine spina./Mel sine sentina, vicistibella marina.*" [Kingdom of England, rose of the world, flower without a thorn,/ honey without sediment,/ you have won the war at sea]<sup>76</sup>. This motif endured on the coins of all the Tudors. For the gold *George noble* Henry chose the last two lines of the stanza from a hymn by Prudentius:

The Cross dispels all darkness,  
All sin before it flies,  
And by that sign protected  
The mind all fear defies.<sup>77</sup>

In the context of national sovereignty, the English Reformation under Henry VIII was a movement against alien domination rather than a break with the religious doctrine.

Henry VIII's son was the first monarch to be raised as a Protestant. He tried to quicken the pace of his father's religious reforms, but his life was too short to complete them. The legends on the coins of Edward VI display a greater diversity than those of his father and grandfather, and testify to his profound knowledge of the Bible and deep faith, amazing in one so young. He adds to the already existing legends some of his own. On the half-sovereign of 1548, the legend reads, "*The shield of faith shall protect him*". This is a citation from the apostle Paul preaching about "the full armor of God."<sup>78</sup> In an extended metaphor based on comparison drawn between religious people and Roman warriors, he mentions the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. "Above all, take up the *shield of faith* with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one"<sup>79</sup>. The shield of faith is an

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76. D. Carlson, John Gower, *Poetry and Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2012), 52.

77. A. Prudentius, *The Hymns of Prudentius* (London: J M. Dent & Co., 1905), 66- 67. A Roman Christian poet of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He wrote hymns for daily use, festivals, and even for every hour of the day.

78. Interestingly, the same metaphor is used in a ballad in reference to Mary I and her war against Protestantism: "Our life is a warfare, the worlde is the fielde;/Her highnes her army hath alwayes at hande;/For Hope is her helmet, Faith is her shielde;/And Loue is her brest plate, her foes to withstand" (Rollins, 14).

79. New International Version of the Holy Bible, [Ephesians 6: 16-17](#) (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1984), 830.

invisible shield that protects believers from evil. The legend asserts true faith received from God through His word as distinct from Catholicism full of superstitions, rituals, and idolatry. On half-sovereigns a line from psalms was inscribed: "*Thy word is a lamp unto my fee ... and a light unto my path.*"<sup>80</sup> The psalm implies that God's word dispels darkness and shows the way. In 1549, he chose for a legend a part of Solomon's Proverb: "*The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.*"<sup>81</sup> The meaning is that those who fear God and do not fall into traps of sin, will receive eternal life from the river of life, flowing out of the throne of God.

After Edward's death, many hoped that Mary would continue her brother's work to advance true faith.

Oure moast godly Queene  
That seekes our preseruasion:  
No doubt wil strongly buyld vpon  
Her brothers good fondacion.  
The ground worke hee hathe layde him selfe,  
And she is left a lon,  
To buyld he house, and fortresse vp  
Of trew religion.<sup>82</sup>

However, these hopes did not come to fruition. Being a zealous Catholic, Mary I tried to re-instate Roman Catholicism in England. Protestant religious legislation was repealed; Pope in Rome was re-instated as Head of the Church of England. She believed she was trying to redeem the country from religious destruction and persecuted faithful protestants as heretics. 300 people were burnt at the stake. Her aspirations are reflected in her legends. The legend on the sovereign was replaced with a line from Psalm 118: "*This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.*"<sup>83</sup> This psalm is the Te Deum expressing gratitude to God for helping the righteous, for being their strength and salvation. Each line of the psalm is resonant with Mary's feelings and actions: "The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies."<sup>84</sup> She tried to restore the True Faith and do away with Protestants by "*cutting them down*" and "*burning as thorns*".

Many historians try to make out Elizabeth I to be a peacemaker and conciliator between Protestants and Catholics. True, she worked with the Privy Council to create a religious settlement that would unite the country into one Church. However, contemporary ballads testify to the contrary. She matched her half-sister in diligently persecuting heretics. Priests were allegedly condemned of

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80. Ibid, Psalms 119:105, 439.

81. Ibid, Proverbs 14: 27, 458.

82. Rollins, 1920, xiii.

83. NIV, Psalm 118: 23, 436.

84. Ibid, 436.

treason, “not for their religion, as Papists persuade/But for haynous hie Treason whiche they did and intended”, but the majority of priests were not guilty of any crime, apart from their religion.

In this our English coast much blessed blood is shed:  
Two hundred preistes almost in our time martered!<sup>85</sup>

Elizabeth brought in much secularism into religion. By a statute of Parliament she was made the Supreme Governor (not Head!) of the Church of England, a fully secular title. Another sign of secularization was the Protestant calendar that included such holy days as the Queen's birthday and the defeat of the Armada. Elizabeth I, though she introduced many new coins, did not change any of the legends. The only alteration was on the quarter angel where she added to her titles a short phrase “*Queen of the Faith*” thus combining spiritual and temporal authority.

The analysis of the legends shows the Tudors' reliance on religious texts resonant, in their view, with the historical moment, each claiming to have restored the true light of the gospel. In essence, the new religion with its emphasis on individualism and the abandonment of public rituals, submission of the Church to the secular authorities, served the ideology of the new formation – capitalism.

## Conclusions

Economic, political and religious changes roiled England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the young state embarked on a road of transformation and building a shared, national identity. In these processes ideology is of pivotal importance, it must offer a coherent picture which people will be willing to accept. Under the Tudors, ideology brought together several aspects: absolutism, imperialist mentality, martial spirit, religious individualism, and a feeling of elitism. They took efforts to link the incipient nation to its historical or mythological roots (Cadwaladr, Neptune, Albion), all while creating contemporary heroes (Drake, Cabot) and novel mythology.

The new ideology was in need of a multimedia venue of transmitting the ideas. In addition to philosophical writings, oral and written literary texts, and art, which combined their efforts in presenting the Tudors as an 'elect' dynasty and the English as an 'elect' nation, the contemporary coinage was built into the ideological paradigm to efficaciously disseminate new ideas.

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85. Rollins, 75.

Each gold coin was an artifact of excellence and had potent political resonances articulating sovereignty and absolutism (sovereign, royal, crown), naval supremacy (noble), imperialistic aspirations (India/portcullis money), and the divinity of regal power (angel). Under the influence of Renaissance art, numismatic portraiture moved towards realism imprinting recognizable, lifelike images of kings and queens.

Each coin was ideologically charged. Their iconography displays intensive use of emblematic content. Symbols stamped on the coins included royal insignia (orb, throne, crown), dynastic badges (greyhound, portcullis, red dragon), naval attributes (ship), symbols of Christianity (cross), which in combination with legends forged Englishness and national identity.

Most important, coins were a vehicle of fostering patriotism. In respect to money, it meant coins of the highest quality. There were several attempts to convince Elizabeth I of the necessity and advantages of copper coins on the model of Europe; a proclamation was prepared to this effect, but was never made public because Elizabeth would not hear of any metal other than gold and silver, which inspired Barnfield to write with pride:

Within the Coast of Albion ...  
Siluer and Golde, and nothing else is currant,  
In England, in faire England happy Land:  
All baser sorts of Mettalls, haue no Warrant."<sup>86</sup>

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86. Barnfield, 12.



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Appendix



**Figure 9.** *The Pope Suppressed by King Henry VIII (ca 1532)*  
Source: alamy.com.



**Figure 10.** *Elizabeth I. The Armada Portrait (1588)*  
Source: Wikipedia.

