THE UNLUCKIEST QUEEN:
A GENDERED EXAMINATION OF ANNE BOLEYN

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A Gendered Examination of Anne Boleyn

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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by
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This thesis gives readers a new look at Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII. Although many scholars have studied Anne extensively, all of the scholars have failed to look at the gendered aspects of Anne’s downfall. This thesis posits that Anne was murdered due to her inability to conform to the gender norms of the 16th century. This inability to conform led to the majority of the English populace to hate Anne. Plots and plans to remove Anne from power began to form in the minds of Henry, his advisors and courtiers, resulting in her beheading on the 19th of May 1536.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*Let them grumble, that is how it is going to be.*¹
-Arna Regina

Anne Boleyn’s motto of 1530, “Let them grumble, that is how it is going to be,” is representative of her amazingly stubborn personality and her refusal to conform to the expectations of her era. She was one of the most unusual English queens in history due to her drive to get what she wanted. This drive and refusal to conform is what makes her so intriguing to historians and the reason for the loss of her head. She is an historical figure who should be admired by women today because she lived her life following her own wishes and desires.

It is no surprise that Anne intrigues many scholars of English history. There is exhaustive scholarship regarding Tudor England and Henry VIII is one of the most researched men in British history. Scholars have examined his government, religion(s), advisors, society, foreign relations and, most recently, his wives. The study of Henry’s six wives has increased immensely during the past forty years due to the rise in social and women’s history.² Portrayals of Anne have evolved from wholly negative views to descriptions that are more positive. This change is attributed to the rise in popularity of the study of feminism and the reexamination of primary sources about her. Authors have argued that Anne was simply a woman who did what she believed was needed to achieve her

personal goals of becoming queen. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars such as Retha Warnicke and Hester Chapman wrote positive biographies of Anne as well as Henry’s other wives. Biography is still the main genre of Tudor queen historians, but recent scholars have expanded their biographies to answer new questions about her. This paper will follow the latter avenue and explore her role within the context of gender norms.

Anne Boleyn was Henry’s second wife and arguably, the most interesting due to the political turmoil she caused. This turmoil arose from her involvement in the Anglican Schism, her inability to conform to gender norms of the 16th century and the fact that she was beheaded on the orders of her own husband! Scholars have debated the reasons for her downfall. This paper contributes to the debate not by attributing her downfall to one person or group of people. Instead, this thesis contends that because she did not obey gender norms of the 16th century, much of the populace hated her. This revulsion toward her personality led to factions plotting her downfall and eventually her death.

This paper will diverge from the works of previous scholars who have looked solely at Anne’s actions and interactions with others. Instead, I will examine how Anne’s actions compare with what was considered appropriate for women in 16th century England. Few scholars have considered the gender norms of the time and the ways in which Anne failed to conform to them. Eric Ives, one of the most prominent scholars of Anne and author of *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, goes so far as to call her a “feminist icon;” however, he does not back up this statement.3 This paper will examine Anne Boleyn through the context of gender to prove that her deviation from gender norms of the time was the reason for the common animosity towards her. Such animosity was the primary reasons for her downfall and death.

Anne deviated from gender norms in the 16th century in all three of her roles as wife, queen, and mother. Sources used to analyze gender norms of 16th century European wives, queens, and mothers provide details on the appropriate behaviors of men and women. Juan

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3Ives, *Life and Death*, xv.
Vives, a scholar and humanist, wrote *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* at the request of Catherine, Henry’s first wife. She commissioned Vives to write a text for Mary Tudor, Henry and Catherine’s living child, to use when she became of age and needed to know how to be a “proper” woman. The text includes information on ideal characteristics of women and how, specifically, they should treat their husbands. Another published reference of the time, *An Homily of the State of Matrimony*, written by Bishop Bonner, Archbishop Cranmer, Nicolas Harpsfield, and others describes the duties of husbands and wives. These two sources reveal the prevailing thoughts on how the ideal wife and queen should act.

To analyze the ideal mother, I used sources that describe the proper conduct of mothers during pregnancy and after. *The Trotula* is a 12th century text on conditions of women, which was widely used throughout Europe and was popular throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Aldobrandino’s *Li livres dou Santé* is another guide for women on the ideal conduct of mothers during and after pregnancy. Aldobrandino wrote the text in French in 1256 for Beatrice of Savoy, the countess of Provence. Although it was written in the high Middle Ages, its long-term and wide range acceptance is clear as it was translated into many other European languages during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Midwife Jane Sharp wrote another guide, entitled *The Midwives Book*, in 1671. It includes detailed information on the proper conduct of a mother during pregnancy. Although this text was written after Anne’s time, beliefs on prenatal care did not alter greatly between 16th and 17th centuries.


These three texts not only explain the proper conduct of a mother during pregnancy, but they also make it clear that the fetus’s care and health were the sole responsibility of the mother.

In addition to the above sources on gender norms, there are a multitude of primary sources that chronicle the life of Anne Boleyn. Scholars and popular biographers of Anne primarily rely on the State Papers of Henry VIII. Included in these papers are letters and state documents written by a wide variety of influential people. One contemporary writer featured prominently in the Henry VIII’s State Papers is Eustace Chapuys. As Chapuys was the Spanish Imperial Ambassador to England, his letters are included in the collection. He was not a Boleyn supporter. In fact, he abhorred Anne. His revulsion resulted in his writing of biased information about her. Although the information is biased, he is one of the most importance sources scholars have on Anne. Without his works, scholars would know very little about her actions, words, and relationships with others. Another important source is William Latymer. Latymer was Anne’s chaplain during her reign as queen. During the reign of her daughter, Elizabeth, he wrote a biography of Anne that contains enlightening details of her life. Other information about her comes from a broad variety of people and sources. These sources convey her life but fail to mention gender assumptions.

The following pages have been divided into four sections. The second chapter of this text discusses the historiography of Anne and gender norms. Although many of the texts I cite discuss gender roles, they do not directly examine 16th century England. However, they are pertinent to Anne in that gender roles changed little between the high Middle Ages and the Victorian era. Chapter 3 examines Anne from her birth to just before she was crowned queen of England; it will show the reader that Anne could not conform to gender norms in her early life. Chapter 4 will discuss Anne’s life from her coronation to her death. Her actions after she became a wife, queen, and mother were inappropriate, thus inciting the hatred of the

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English populace. The final chapter will illuminate to the reader Anne’s need to follow her own heart and mind, regardless of the consequences.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Scholars and laypeople have discussed Anne’s downfall for centuries. Below, I summarize some of the most important scholars’ views of Anne. Most scholars attribute Anne’s fall from power to different theories. However, what none of them successfully examine is the effect of gender roles on Anne’s life. Thus, I have also included a historiography of gender roles from the high Middle Ages to the Victorian era. Although this vast expanse of time may appear irrelevant, gender roles for women did not change significantly during this time. Therefore, beliefs about women’s bodies during these centuries aptly apply to Anne as well.

Anne’s Downfall

Authors who wrote about Anne provide varied reasons for her fall from power. Some scholars have argued that Anne did not play any role in her own demise. Others argue that she was brought down due to her crimes of adultery, incest, and treason. In actuality, there is little evidence to back up these accusations.

Among those that posit that a specific person or group was somehow responsible for her fall, three theories are most common: The downfall was attributed to Henry Tudor, Thomas Cromwell, or the Aragonese faction, a group at court determined to revert England back to Catholicism. Each of the authors that will be discussed below use almost all of the same sources but come to very different conclusions. Some authors take biased reports seriously, while others doubt them. Because we have so little extant information on Anne, we scholars must interpret the sources as best we can to attempt to discover the truth.
HENRY

The first theory of the three common theories listed above is that Henry had convinced himself of the invalidity of his marriage to Anne and proceeded to instruct his advisors to find a way to get rid of her. The second theory is that Thomas Cromwell’s and Anne’s political goals were no longer similar. Therefore, he saw her as an impediment to his power and attempted to remove her as queen. The last theory is that the advocates of Catholicism united around the Seymour family to replace Anne with Jane Seymour, a Catholic woman. There is no question that all of these actors played a part in Anne’s downfall. The question that is argued among the historians below is: who or what was ultimately responsible for Anne Boleyn’s demise?

Paul Friedmann wrote Anne Boleyn, which was first published in 1884, and focused mostly on Henry and his character as a man as the main contributor to Anne’s fall. Throughout his work, Freidmann argues Henry as a weak man who surrounded himself with strong advisors and politicians. Friedmann acknowledges that Henry knew his mind and got what he wanted but he never took action himself. Instead, he would enlist the help of his advisors. Freidmann therefore argues that Henry was ultimately responsible for the decision to be rid of Anne but he had Cromwell take over the planning of how to do so.11

Friedmann seems to forget that although Henry may have surrounded himself with courtiers who did his bidding, he was an all-powerful king who got what he wanted most of the time. When he did not, he destroyed those who prevented him from obtaining his desires.12 Also, Freidmann seems to take biased sources at face value. For example, Friedmann clearly believes that Chapuys’ description of Anne’s immorality and violent temper are unquestionably true.13 Friedmann fails to acknowledge that Anne was a devout Evangelical who instructed her court ladies to act with modesty and morality. Friedmann’s

12 See pages 41-42 of this paper.
13 Friedmann, Anne Boleyn, 32.
work stresses the importance of looking at the characters of the multiple individuals involved in Anne’s life to fully understand her downfall. His mistake is that he does not look at the breadth of sources to fully ascertain the character of Henry and, specifically, Anne.

Retha Warnicke is a celebrated historian of Tudor England and one of her most celebrated works is, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, published in 1989, which closely analyses Anne’s life from her childhood to her death. In this work, Warnicke blames Anne’s beheading on Henry due to his and the English populace’s superstitious beliefs. Warnicke aims to uncover the real reason behind Anne’s demise through the investigation of multiple primary sources that detail Anne’s behavior and philosophies. Warnicke lets the readers know early in her introduction that she does not take Chapuys’ assumptions at face value, unlike previous scholars such as Paul Friedmann. Warnicke looks at Anne’s positions on religion, politics, personal activities, and her relationship with Henry to negate the claims of previous authors who believe she was a master manipulator. Instead, Warnicke looks at the superstitious beliefs of the English people. She claims that the accusations against Anne arose from the belief that Anne was associated with witchcraft. Throughout her work, Warnicke compares the accusations against Anne to contemporary beliefs about witchcraft. This contribution helps readers to understand the general beliefs of the people of England at the time and how these beliefs could affect people’s lives. What Warnicke fails to examine is whether Henry actually believed in witchcraft. There is only one extant document that claims Henry said he believed Anne bewitched him. Warnicke seems to believe that Henry’s accusation of Anne as a witch was the ultimate reason for her downfall but she does

15 Ibid., 4.
16 She uses works such as K. Thomas’ *Religion and the Decline of Magic* as well as her own works “The Physical Deformities of Anne Boleyn and Richard III,” and “Sexual Heresy at the Court of Henry VIII” in order to compare Anne’s accusations to belief is witchcraft.
not look any further at Henry’s superstitious beliefs. After all, Henry may have just mentioned his seduction by witchcraft because he was ready to be rid of Anne or because he was exasperated, not because he actually believed in witchcraft.

Antonia Fraser, author of *The Wives of Henry VIII*, published in 1992, claims that Henry is ultimately responsible for Anne’s death because she failed to give him a son. She specifically points to Anne’s last miscarriage as the trigger to Henry’s decision.\(^\text{18}\) What Fraser omits however, are the sources that indicate that Anne and Henry’s relationship improved after Anne’s miscarriage. According to Chapuys, the couple had about three months of being fairly happy together during which Henry tried his best to show the great courts of Europe that he still favored her.\(^\text{19}\) This revelation is telling and likely true as Chapuys tended to only write about the negative aspects of their marriage. Therefore, Fraser’s argument that Henry decided to be rid of Anne on the date of her last miscarriage is unfounded.

**CROMWELL**

Thomas Cromwell was another possible suspect in Anne’s downfall. Cromwell was a well-known advisor to Henry. He gained a vast amount of power at the English court and eventually made an enemy of Anne. Scholars Joanne Denny and Hester Chapman ascertain that Cromwell was primarily responsible for Anne’s beheading.

Joanne Denny contributes much to the study of Anne by examining her religiosity in her book, *Anne Boleyn: A New Life of England's Tragic Queen*, published in 2004. Denny claims that Anne’s extreme leanings toward the Evangelical religion led her to reach for more power to advance the doctrine.\(^\text{20}\) Anne’s belief in the reform movement in England certainly is apparent in the primary source evidence available and it clearly influenced many


of her actions. Denny’s interpretation of Anne’s religious convictions led Denny to argue that the disagreements between Anne and Cromwell caused him to scheme for her demise. During the English schism, Henry and Cromwell decided to close many of the small monasteries throughout England. These monasteries were not only powerful, but also were very wealthy. Anne and Cromwell disagreed about what should be done with the proceeds from the shutdown of the small monasteries during the reform movement. Anne believed that the money should go to charitable institutions while Cromwell wanted to line Henry’s coffers. Although I agree with Denny that Anne certainly was an Evangelical, Denny leans too heavily on the extent of Anne’s religiosity throughout her work. Denny reads stories about Anne’s actions at face value, even though it is obvious that they are written by biased sources. Furthermore, such religious fervor would have been much too extreme for Anne to get away with at the time. Denny’s lack of primary source analysis leads one to doubt her conclusions.

The Challenge of Anne Boleyn by Hester Chapman (1974) emphasizes that Anne lacked political power and was completely reliant on her husband, Henry. Chapman argues that the reason for Anne’s downfall was because of Cromwell’s desire for more power and Anne’s lack of it. When Henry realized he was dissatisfied with Anne, Cromwell decided he must bring about her death in order to conserve his own power, as he was instrumental in Anne’s rise. However, Chapman contradicts her own argument about Anne’s demise when she writes, “Finally, Cromwell came to the conclusion that, even if she were divorced, Anne, as Marquess of Pembroke, with a great fortune and her brother’s support, would become as

21 See “Anne’s Religion” later in paper for more details, 52-55.
22 Denny, Anne Boleyn, 265.
23 Ibid., 253.
24 See “Anne’s Religion” section for more detailed information 52-55.
26 Ibid., 192.
dangerous an enemy to himself as she had been to Cardinal Wolsey.”\textsuperscript{27} This quotation shows that Anne, according to Chapman herself, did have some power of her own and was not simply the scapegoat of the problems within the English realm and Cromwell specifically.\textsuperscript{28} Also, Chapman seems to ignore Anne’s influence over Henry in terms of the reform movement. Without Anne, Henry never would have become the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

**Factionalism**

Eric Ives and David Loades are two well-respected scholars who argue that Anne’s downfall was primarily due to the plotting of the Aragonese faction. This group of courtiers desired to mend relations with Rome and believed that Anne was an impediment to their desires.

Eric Ives was one of the most respected scholars of Anne and contributed much to the study of her downfall and he even touched on the idea of analyzing Anne in the context of gender. Ives’ most influential work on Anne is entitled *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, published in 2004. In his work, Ives stresses the immorality of court life, which led to courtiers grasping for power, Anne included.\textsuperscript{29} He contends that the multiple courtiers attempting to gain power led to enmity among many as well as the creation of different factions amongst those with the same goal. Ives argues that due to the rise of factions combined with the increasing dislike of Anne among the populace, the members of the Aragonese faction found that they could, and did, plot to bring Anne to her death. They believed she had acquired too much power.\textsuperscript{30} In his description of Anne’s reach for power, Ives goes so far is to call her a “feminist icon.”\textsuperscript{31} Unfortunately, he does not back up this

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 171-174.

\textsuperscript{29} Ives, *Life and Death*, 6-7.

\textsuperscript{30} Ives’ detailed explanation of the factionalism revolving around Anne’s demise can be found in: Eric Ives, “Faction at the Court of Henry VIII: The Fall of Anne Boleyn,” *History* 57, no. 190 (June 2007): 169-88.

\textsuperscript{31} Ives, *Life and Death*, XV.
statement with evidence about gender norms of the 16th century. In the following pages, I will attempt to take Ives’ lead and analyze Anne’s life in terms of 16th century gender norms.

David Loade is the author of *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, published in 2014, and bases his analysis of Anne’s fall on factional politics at the English court. In his work, Loade emphasizes the importance of monarchical marriage. The behavior of the monarchs and their families was of great interest to their courts and created either supporters or detractors. Loade states that queens and their families were enveloped in factionalism in most courts in Europe.\(^{32}\) However, he claims that queens had no political power to influence the court.\(^{33}\) Although for many queens this may have been true, it certainly was not for Anne. Even Loade seems to recognize this when he describes Anne as a politician.\(^{34}\) She certainly had an impact on Henry and was involved in the English schism along with her family. Due to increased power and status of those related to the queen upon her marriage, jealousies were born. Loade argues that the majority of people in the English court disliked the Boleyn faction’s policies. Therefore, the Aragonese faction developed, which included supporters of Mary, Catherine and Henry’s only living child, the Seymour family, and Cromwell. With Henry’s waning interest in Anne after her 1536 miscarriage, Loade claims that the Aragonese faction attempted and succeeded in bringing Anne down.\(^{35}\)

Historians will never come to an agreement as to whether the primary responsibility for Anne’s demise should be placed upon Cromwell, Henry, or the Catholic faction. However, one question remains to be answered, one that has not been proposed by historians: What was the origin of the people’s hatred towards Anne Boleyn? This hatred is what all her plotters had in common and therefore must be the ultimate reason for her fall. This thesis argues that the loathing of Anne stems from her stepping outside the gender norms of the 16th century. She committed many acts that were considered inappropriate for 16th century


\(^{33}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 117.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 129-135.
women. She failed as an ideal wife, queen, and mother. This led not only to Henry’s hatred, but also to the enmity of many others including Cromwell and English Catholics. Anne’s failure to comply with the gender norms of the time was the decisive reason for her death.

WIVES, QUEENS, AND MOTHERS

To analyze Anne’s actions in terms of gender norms of the 16th century, one must closely examine the sources that describe the beliefs men and women had about gender roles during the time period. The following section will give a detailed description of how men and women were viewed in early modern Europe.

In 16th century Europe, men considered women mentally and physically inferior. According to Barbara Harris, a prominent gender historian, the subordination of English women “rested on an interlocking series of economic, legal, and political institutions,” which was justified based on “divine and natural law that decreed women’s inferiority and subjection.”

According to Lawrence Stone, an expert in English aristocracy, the subordination of women in the 16th century was exacerbated due to the decrease in kinship ties during this time. Previously, women could rely on the protection of their family because extended family members usually lived together. With the evolution of nuclear family units, wives were less protected and lost more of their rights.

Stone also claims that the shift towards Protestantism in England affected women’s diminished positions. He contends that because Protestantism emphasized love within marriage, this love “made it easier for wives to accept their position of submission to the will of their husbands.”

Women’s inferiority is evidenced in 16th century contemporary etiquette manuals written for women by men. Juan Vives, the scholar and humanist previously mentioned, wrote The Instruction of a Christian Woman. In his work, Vives supports the concept of

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38 Ibid., 142.
women’s inferiority to men by citing Aristotle’s philosophy. Aristotle believed that nature gave less strength and power to women than to men. In support of Aristotle’s argument, Vives cites the fact that many female animals lack the defense mechanisms that male animals have. He writes, “Moreover, these parts which nature hath given for weapons of defense unto beasts, as teeth, horns, spurs, and such other, the most part of females lack, which their males have.” Vives makes it clear that male animals, and more importantly male humans, were considered the protectors while female animals and women were weak and in need of male protection.

During the 12th century European renaissance, Aristotle’s works were recovered and studied. This revival led to “his having great influence on medical science.” Aristotle discussed the four elements, air, earth, fire and water, and claimed that everything in the universe was made up of these elements. He argued that because women were naturally cold and wet, which caused their sex organs to be on the interior, made them inferior to men. Also, Aristotle wrote that women’s menstruation cycles made them inferior to men because menstrual blood was considered unclean. Aristotle had a great impact on medieval and Renaissance scholars who used his works to “scientifically” prove that women were biologically inferior to men.

Religion also influenced popular ideas of the inferiority of women in the 16th century. According to contemporary Catholic theologians, humankind’s fall from grace was a result of Eve’s transgression. Catholic theologians cited biblical passages as proof of male dominance. It was generally accepted that Eve was responsible for human suffering. Thus, females were the inferior sex. Eve’s fall from grace allowed Christian theologians to

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
maintain the idea that men must be superior and dominant to prevent women considered morally inferior, from sinning.\(^{44}\)

Women were also considered intellectually inferior. According to the *Homily on the State of Matrimony*, a sermon that was frequently read in church:

For the woman is a weake creature, not indued with likenstrenght and constancie of minde, therefore they be the sooner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weake affections & dispositions of mind, more then men bee, & lighter they bee, and more vaine in their fantasies & opinions.\(^{45}\)

Women were not only considered physically weak but mentally weak as well. They were thought to be prone to fantasies and vain thoughts, not intellectual ideas. Because of this intellectual inferiority, men were supposed to humor their wives. The authors of the *Homily* cite Saint Peter, “You husbands deal with your wives…as unto the weaker vessel.”\(^{46}\) This passage indicates a teacher-student relationship where the man, as the teacher, is superior in intelligence and is to teach and humor his wife in her weaknesses.\(^{47}\)

A man’s perceived intellectual and physical superiority allowed him to dominate women. Wives’ lives revolved around reproduction and household managerial, political and social responsibilities.\(^{48}\) Husbands and wives were thought to be one unit: the husband was the mind and the wife was the body. The husband’s word was law.\(^{49}\) Vives obtained this idea from the Bible which states: “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ: and the Head of the Woman is the man: and the Head of Christ is God.”\(^{50}\) Also, the Bible states that while Adam “slept [God] took one of his ribs and closed its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought

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\(^{44}\) Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 24.


\(^{46}\) I Peter 3:7.

\(^{47}\) Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage*, 138.

\(^{48}\) Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 61.

\(^{49}\) Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage*, 136.

\(^{50}\) Vives, “Selections from The Instruction of a Christian Woman,” 113.
her to the man…and they shall become one flesh.” Vives interpreted biblical passages very literally. He espoused that women were incapable of intellectual thought and that men had to guide them. Furthermore, married couples were one person. He explained that the man represented the intelligent part of that being. The woman was to physically accomplish all tasks the “mind” required. In other words, she was to do whatever the man desired. Also, women were considered the physical property of men. Because of the belief that a woman was the property of her husband, obedience was of the utmost importance in an ideal wife. These unfortunate, long standing beliefs continued throughout the 19th century.

Chastity was another important quality in an ideal wife. Vives defines chastity as “all the best things that can be named”. He believed that chastity meant that a woman was to remain a virgin until marriage and should be associated with morality, purity, thriftiness, and graciousness. Vives writes, “A married woman ought to be of greater chastity than an unmarried woman.” Vives aligned chastity with other religious virtues of the era such as soberness (moderation and restraint) and shamefastness (modesty). He claims that in addition to being chaste, the ideal Christian woman was sober in her demeanor. She should be serious and thoughtful as well as moderate in her enjoyments. Acceptable enjoyments included food and drink, clothing, and personality. She was also supposed to be modest, frugal and pious. Because gluttony and pride were considered sins in Christian theology, a woman’s inappropriate appearance and demeanor were unacceptable.

52 Vives, Selections from The Instruction of a Christian Woman, 113.
53 Ibid., 108.
54 Ibid., 106.
55 Ibid., 112.
56 Ibid., 108.
57 Ibid.
Married women were also considered a reflection of their husbands. If a woman acted inappropriately, her husband was considered weak because he was unable to control her, his property. A woman’s body physically belonged to her husband. Women were extensions of their husbands. Women were reflections of their husbands and should look and act appropriately. If a husband could not keep his wife from being sinful, then his peers could question his control and authority. These questions would then have challenged his masculinity.

According to Harris, obedience and love were the key qualities in a good wife. When a wife demonstrated these qualities, her husband praised and rewarded her. Sir Philip Campernon, an English aristocrat of the 16th century explained why he chose his wife to be the sole executor of his will. He writes “the most obedient duty and gentleness that my said wife hath always…ministered and shewed unto me.” Sir John Baker, another aristocrat of the 16th century, explained to his daughters that if they were “faithful, assured, true, humble, and obedient wives,” then God would reward them. Good wives were rewarded when they were obedient, loving, and pleasant towards their husbands.

Contentedness and pleasantness were also important qualities in the ideal woman of the 16th century. Pleasantness was of utmost importance because it was the duty of the wife to please her husband. The best way to achieve this was to be obedient and ensure his happiness and contentment. Vives writes, “Wherefore if thine husband be foul, yet love his heart and mind whereunto thou are married in deed.” Here Vives is instructing women not only to tolerate “foul” husbands but to love them as well. He further explains:

And if thine husband be sick, then much though play the true wife, comfort him, nourish him, and make as much of him as though he were never so whole and so strong, and so shall he be less pained if he sees thee as it were take pain with him, and in a manner translate and shift part of his sickness unto thyself.

59 Ibid., 113
60 Vives, Selections from The Instruction of a Christian Woman, 115-116.
61 Harris, English Aristocratic Women, 72.
62 Ibid.
In this passage, Vives is instructing women to be as pleasant and helpful as possible when their husbands are ill. If necessary, a woman should have gone so far as to pretend physical pain in order to make her husband feel better. Essentially, women were responsible for caring and nurturing their husbands’. Louis XIV instructed women to “yield and accommodate themselves to the ways and moods of their husbands, like a good mirror which faithfully reflects the face, having no desire, love or thoughts of its own.”

An ideal wife agreed with and accommodated her husband in all things. If a husband and wife disagreed, the ideal wife would keep silent. Suppression of thought exemplified a wife’s submissiveness.

The qualities mentioned above were considered the ideal. Obviously not all women adhered to these model values. However, women could be punished if they found it impossible to remain compliant and respectful towards their husbands. Among the most well know examples are: Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, and Katherine Howard. Catherine would not grant Henry an annulment nor abide by his wishes to become a nun. She was punished by being sent to live in seclusion for the rest of her life. Katherine Howard, Henry’s fifth wife, was beheaded because she did not remain chaste in their marriage. Anne’s departure from accepted ideals and eventual punishment is detailed below.

Although there is very little information regarding the “proper” conduct of a queen, historians have agreed upon some expected attributes. The three main duties of a queen were to: provide heirs to the throne, seal diplomatic alliances and bring more land or money to the king in the form of a dowry. Anne fulfilled none of these purposes according to contemporary 16th century mores. There is very little evidence of what was considered proper conduct of queens as spouses of ruling kings. However, I argue that Anne acted outside the

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65 Harris, English Aristocratic Women, 77.

bounds of the traditional queenly female roles that have been established in terms of piety, nationalism, and the production of an heir.

As has been established, piety was an ideal attribute for women but especially for queens in the 16th century. However, active involvement in church reform was saved for men. Appropriate church activities for women included giving endowments to churches, participating in processions during high feast days, joining confraternities, and commissioning religious works of art. An example of the dominance of men and the exclusion of women in church reform occurred during the reign of Elizabeth I. Elizabeth had no husband and was thus the single monarch. According to accepted thought, there was no one on earth higher than she in the Great Chain of Being. She was the highest earthly religious authority. Yet, she was female. To counteract this fact, Elizabeth often portrayed and referred to herself as a man and king to gain acceptance as a female ruler. The schism was at issue during her reign. She desired to have England remain outwardly Protestant and to maintain the Anglican schism her father began. She succeeded in this endeavor and she managed to do so by portraying herself as male because that was the only way religious leaders and followers would take her seriously. This example makes it very clear that women were not supposed to be active in religious reform. As Susan Karant-Nunn writes: “Value of the woman came from their reputation for chaste behavior, rather than any other accomplishment.”

Another ideal expected of English and French queens was nationalism. In 1453, the Hundred Year’s War ended. This war, which lasted for one hundred and sixteen years, was a basic land and throne dispute. However, it resulted in so much animosity that, as Anne Curry

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71 Ibid., 168.
and J.L Laynesmith argue, English and French nationalism began to develop. Loyalty to the country eventually evolved into hatred of the enemy.\textsuperscript{72} L.J. Laynesmith, author of \textit{The Last of Medieval Queens}, writes “the entourage she (the foreign queen) brought with her, were essentially representatives of “the enemy.” She emphasizes this point by citing that the Yorkists, a faction during the War of the Roses, believed Margaret of Anjou, a Frenchwoman, to be “the cause of all England’s failures” because her marriage to Henry V did not result in lasting peace nor the avoidance of English territorial losses to the French.\textsuperscript{73} National loyalty was paramount to a queen and those that did not show it were blamed for the misfortunes of the country they ruled.

Women of 16\textsuperscript{th} century Europe knew “that, as wives, their ability to successfully give birth to children was their most important function.”\textsuperscript{74} Henry believed that “the only way to keep England and his Tudor dynasty secure was to have a male heir.”\textsuperscript{75} According to Laynesmith, “Kings needed children, preferably sons, to prove both that God approved of their kingship and that their dynasty offered security to the nation.”\textsuperscript{76} Although Anne was successful in producing a child, in Henry’s eyes she failed him and the English people by not producing a son. Henry’s increasing frustration with Anne throughout their married years was evident. Henry began to believe that God did not approve of his kingship. He was being punished for marrying Anne because of Anne’s birth of a daughter instead of a son and Anne’s subsequent miscarriages. These were all signs of God’s disappointment in Henry’s decision.


\textsuperscript{73} J. L. Laynesmith, \textit{The Last Medieval Queens} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 42-43.


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 164.

\textsuperscript{76} Laynesmith, \textit{The Last Medieval Queens}, 133.
Anne knew that her position would not be stable until she produced a male heir. It was in her best interest to behave as an ideal woman so as not to incur the wrath of Henry, the public, or the courtiers. As queen, Anne was watched constantly. All of her words and actions were observed and gossiped about by those in her court. She should have taken extra measures to be as well behaved as possible. She did not.

It is clear from extant documents that the 16th century populace believed the mother was solely responsible for the health and viability of her fetus. It was thought that the mother was the only contributor to the success of failure of the pregnancy.

There are many authors of medical texts that hold mothers responsible for the health of their fetuses. The Trotula is a 12th century text on conditions of women, including pregnancy. The Midwives Handbook, written by Jane Sharp, is a guide for midwives and expectant mothers. Aldobrandino’s Li livres dou Santé is a guide for women that outlines the ideal conduct of mothers during and after pregnancy. Each of these guides includes a plethora of information on the proper conduct of mothers during pregnancy. To properly take care of a fetus, Sharp suggests that mothers do not eat or drink too much. Aldobrandino gives more detailed information on a mother’s diet, suggesting that women should “eat little and often, having meat like chicken, partridge, blackbird, kid and mutton and dinking wine mixed with water.” Aldobrandino also makes recommendations about how a woman should behave during pregnancy: “a joyful and contended outlook was to be cultivated, and anger, fear, and trauma were to be banished from the mind.” The Trotula suggests that “when the

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77 Ives, Life and Death, 198.
78 Ibid., 348.
79 Green, The Trotula, 2.
80 Sharp, The Midwives Book.
84 Ibid.
time of birth comes, let her be bathed often, let her belly be anointed with olive oil or with oil of violets, and let her eat light and readily digestible food.”\textsuperscript{85} The Midwives Guide suggests that women near their time must “walk early in her chamber, and then lie down, keep herself warm, rest herself then stir again…let her not lie long abed…”\textsuperscript{86} Although each of these guides differ slightly in advice, they all share one underlying assumption: society believed that it was the sole responsibility of the woman to care for herself and her fetus. Therefore, anything that went wrong in the pregnancy was assumed the fault of the woman for not caring properly for her fetus. Given this generally accepted truth, Henry blamed Anne for her miscarriages.

What is striking about the belief that a woman was responsible for the health and well-being of her fetus is that women did not have ownership over their bodies. They were responsible for the health and reproducibility of their bodies, as well as the infirmity, but could not claim ownership. This responsibility of control negates the accepted norm that women did not own themselves. Although their bodies did not belong to them, they were responsible for them; this reasoning allowed a means to assign blame to women. This exemplifies the illogical aspects of the gender system of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Anne did not own her body, but was blamed and punished when her body did not conform to the desires of her husband and her people.

Anne also proved to be a less than ideal stepmother. Upon her marriage to Henry in 1534, Anne became a stepmother to Mary Tudor. There is very little historical research regarding 16\textsuperscript{th} century relationships between children and their stepparents. However, according to Barbara Harris, author of English Aristocratic Women, stepchildren were either brought into the folds of the family or were ignored. Harris provides evidence of 16\textsuperscript{th} century women who had satisfactory relationships with their stepchildren. Lady Lisle, a contemporary of Anne, had an excellent relationship with her stepdaughters and maintained

\textsuperscript{85} Green, The Trotula, 97.

\textsuperscript{86} Sharp, The Midwives Book, 187-188.
those relationships even after their natural father’s death.\footnote{Harris, \textit{English Aristocratic Women}, 120-125.} Harris makes it clear that if stepchildren and stepparents did not get along, they often ignored each other or lived separately.\footnote{Ibid., 122.} Anne did not conform to this norm. She did not care for Mary but instead of ignoring her, she made Mary’s life miserable.

**Gender Roles**

Between the high Middle Ages and the Victorian era, gender roles did not change significantly. Women were continuously viewed as lesser than men. Men were the patriarchs and women were expected to behave demurely with the men in their lives. Thus, if a woman disobeyed a man, she disrupted the social order, was blamed, and sometimes punished for her actions. This historiography gives a brief account of how women who did not follow societal expectations were treated.

Kathleen M. Brown is the author of \textit{Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs}, published in 1996, which describes the justification for women’s inferiority during the late 16th century and the effect of women who crossed gender bounds had on society. She writes that patriarchal power “derived much of its strength from his [patriarch] attempts to inscribe meaning- sexual, economic, medical, and punitive- on the bodies of women, children, and bound men in his household.”\footnote{Kathleen M. Brown, \textit{Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 5.} Patriarchal power is dependent upon the man’s relationship with others. These power relations were situated and defined by the Great Chain of Being in which women “had no direct relationship to other individuals in the chain but rather existed in subordinate positions to men of their ranks.”\footnote{Ibid., 15.} Disruptions in the chain of power equated to disruptions in social order. Therefore, a wife who did not obey and respect her husband (a disruption of social order) “exposed husbands’ failures to maintain
natural dominance in marriage and subjected unwitting men to the shame of the skimmington.” Therefore, a disobeying wife could have the potential to disrupt the entire social order of society. 

Although Brown’s work focuses on Colonial Virginia, her discussion of the power relations between men and women are prudent to this paper’s discussion of gender constructs. Henry was at the top of the Great Chain and thus, Anne was in second place based on her relationship to Henry. Anne’s disruptions of the accepted power relations between husbands and wives were considered to be a disruption of the socially agreed upon order of 16th century England. Henry’s ability to control his wives’ bodies was a way in which he exemplified his power. Therefore, any time that one of Henry’s wives disobeyed him, they also threatened his position in the social hierarchy and social order, which were some of Henry’s greatest fears due to his line newly acquiring the throne.

Many considered Elizabeth I’s ascension to the throne a threat to the social order. According to that consideration, it was common to ask: “how could a woman possibly assume the authority to rule?” To combat this, Elizabeth cleverly labeled herself as the mother of the English people. In essence, Elizabeth’s body belonged to the English people just as a mother belongs to her children. By giving herself to her people, Elizabeth was showing that she was responsible to them; her words and actions reflected the populace. Elizabeth succeeded in this role by espousing chastity and virtue, unlike her mother. Once a woman had threatened social order, “communities had a clear disposition to define them as the problem and to punish a range of offenders, including scolds, witches, whores, and adulterous wives.”

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91 Ibid., 29.
92 Ibid., 149.
93 Henry Tudor VII was the first Tudor on the throne of England.
94 Brown, Good Wives, 21-22.
95 Ibid., 29.
Disorderly Conduct: Visions in Victorian America was written by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, a prominent gender historian, who focuses on how some men and women broke free from the strict gender conventions during Victorian America. She describes how “disorderly conduct” affected society and family. Smith-Rosenberg claims that the strict social structure of Victorian America, and specifically the role of “isolated domesticity” caused women to fight against societal norms. This sometimes resulted in women “cloaking themselves in the robes of millennial and philanthropic enthusiasm, they claimed the right to take the values of the Christian home into the world.”

Women attempted to infiltrate the public world of men using their domestic role as moral guides. They often joined groups that worked for temperance societies and moral reform groups to influence the urban poor, similarly to how mothers attempted to religiously and morally influence their children. However, this infiltration resulted in the threatening of social cohesion and accepted norms.

The infiltration of women into the Victorian American public sphere imitates how Anne infiltrated the public sphere of 16th century England. Anne, as a proponent of the Evangelical religion, believed it her right and duty to influence the public’s opinions on evils of Catholicism and benefits of Evangelicalism. Anne also threatened social cohesion and thus, was killed for it. Similarly, Anne Askew and the Nun of Kent, contemporaries of Anne, violated the strict gender norms of England by publically preaching and were sentenced to death.

Another aspect of Smith-Rosenberg’s book is the control of women’s bodies by men. Similar to 16th century societal expectations, women in Victorian America were supposed to be chaste, delicate and loving. These expectations came from the belief that a woman’s “network of reproductive organs…controlled her physiology, determined her emotions, and

97 Ibid., 86-87.
dictated her social role.”

Essentially, women were not mentally able to control their sexuality or emotions because of their internal sex organs. Thus, women were directed, by their male physicians, husbands, fathers and brothers to “maintain sexual and general health.” In order to accomplish this, women were prescribed strict regimens such as ample rest, moderate exercise, and domestic tasks. This was one simple way for men to biologically justify the control of women and their bodies.

When women violated societal expectations by “education, attempts at birth control or abortion, undue sexual indulgence, a too fashionable life style, [or] failure to devote herself fully to the needs of husband and children,” they were threatened with the possibility of a “disease ridden menopause or hysteria which was defined by feelings of depression, frequent mood changes, egocentrism, and dramatics and was usually considered treatable. Although today these symptoms are common among all sexes, in Victorian America it was a means by which men could control women.

Although Anne was not described as hysterical, many of the “symptoms” mirror Anne’s own personality. As previously mentioned, Anne had a rambunctious life filled with frequent mood changes and bouts of depression. These qualities were not acceptable in 16th century England nor were they considered treatable diseases like hysteria was in Victorian American. Thus, there was no way to “cure” Anne of her womanly troubles. The only way Henry found he could control his wife was to have her tried and murdered for her “sexual crimes.”

Judith E. Walkerowitz is the author of City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London, which discusses the ways in which information was spread and altered among people. Although the study focuses on the 19th century, the discussion of

98 Ibid., 183.
99 Ibid., 187.
100 Ibid., 192.
101 Ibid., 202.
102 Ibid., 211.
the ways in which information was dispersed among peoples mirrors how information was transferred in the 16th century. Walkowitz describes the immoral crimes of men against women during the late 19th century and how the stories of these murders and attempted incarcerations due to insanity and hysteria were spread. Newspapermen and regular gossipmongers “constructed sexual danger as a national issue.”103 Stories about the murders were intended to “arrest, amuse or startle.”104 The goal of the stories altered the truth of the murders and attempted incarceration.

Throughout the book, Walkowitz describes the female victims of men. One particular victim, Georgina Weldon, was supposed to be sent to an insane asylum by her husband due to her spiritualism. Enraged by her husband’s intentions, Weldon used the media to help her cause by “refashioning different versions of herself, Georgina Weldon was able to publicize her situation and expose the private male plot that failed.”105 Ultimately, Weldon entered the male, public domain to counter the conspiracy against her and thus created three separate images of herself through media. She portrayed herself as extraordinary, the public shrew that appeared as an advocate for women’s rights, and a simple version of an ordinary woman. These three different versions were accepted by different people and caused the various public groups to choose the version of Weldon they believed he to be. This caused some to hate her and some to sympathize with her.106

So how does this relate to Anne? Although Anne did not use the media to alter public opinion on her, she did show three different versions of herself to people around her. These different versions were used in stories and gossip outside the court, which then caused either hatred or support. She clearly showed herself to be unlike other women when she entered the public realm of religion. This caused people like Chapuys and other Catholics to hate her.

104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 171.
106 Ibid., 187-189.
She was also viewed as a shrew that displaced Catherine and did not obey her husband. This led to many women disapproving of her. Finally, she showed herself as a version of an ordinary woman leading Evangelists such as Latymer to approve of and respect her. Clearly, media and gossip influenced public opinion as it still does today.

*Society and Culture in Early Modern France* by Natalie Zemon Davis also discusses gender transgressions and the effect of those transgressions on individuals and society. The advent of Protestantism gave women a voice because it freed “their souls from the rule of priests and doctors of theology.” By being able to read the Bible in the vernacular tongue, some women felt they had the capabilities and knowledge to form opinions and arguments about the scripture and to voice those to others, despite protest from their male counterparts. Marguerite de Navarre, Huguenot queen of Navarre, wrote, “Those who say it’s not for women to look at Holy Writ are evil men and infamous seducers and antichrist. Alas, my ladies. Your poor souls let them not be governed by such great devils.” Women like de Navarre advocated for women’s right to read and study scripture. But what did men think? They labeled these women “monstrous.” Regardless of the new ideas Protestantism brought, many men still believed that women should only use the new scripture to teach their children and servants.

Therefore, preaching about and discussing the new religion publically was considered a gender transgression.

Unfortunately, there were consequences to gender transgressions. Charivaris, “a noisy, masked demonstration to humiliate some wrongdoer in the community,” were a form of punishment for those who did not maintain the status quo. The focuses of Catholic led Charivaris were wife beaters, adulterers, barren couples, and Protestant preachers. In

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108 As quoted in Davis, *Society and Culture*, 78.

109 Ibid., 83.

110 Ibid., 97.

111 Ibid., 105-106.
a sense, this punishment was inflicted when an individual transgressed the status quo of society. Thus, women preachers were punished with humiliation in order to maintain gender norms of early modern France.\textsuperscript{113}

In the next two chapters, I will demonstrate the many ways Anne did not conform to the norms for an ideal woman. Her stubborn failure to conform caused those who knew her to dislike and eventually hate her. She was the cause of her own downfall. Anne was very aware of the risks involved with such behavior. She knew what Henry had done to her predecessor, Catherine. Without the protection a male son would have provided her, Anne should have acted as the ideal wife, queen, and mother to ensure the maintenance of her power and position. She did not. Her disastrous end resulted from her deliberated and inappropriate actions.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 120-121, 180.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 107.
CHAPTER 3

ANNE’S EARLY YEARS

Anne’s early life was rife with incidents that show she never truly was able to conform to gender norms of the 16th century. Her life before marriage was full of gender transgressions. Due to the belief of the English populace that women were physically and mentally inferior, it was dictated that the closest male relative of a woman was responsible for her care and her actions. In Anne’s case, she belonged to her father whom she was required to respect and obey.\textsuperscript{114} However, instead of acting as a demure, virginal woman, Anne took it upon herself to attempt to find a husband, paid too much attention to male courtiers around her, and made many enemies of the people surrounding her. Anne’s father even went so far as to banish her to the countryside after a certain incident with another courtier. Clearly, the punishment was ineffective. The drama and intrigue she was a part of gives readers a hint of how Anne would act as a wife, queen and mother. If she could not conform to gender norms while attempting to become queen, neither could anyone expect her to conform to gender norms after obtaining the crown; moreover, she had already set up a pattern of gender transgressions before her marriage.

Anne’s exact birthdate is unknown. However, many scholars agree that it was in 1501.\textsuperscript{115} Probably born at Blickling, the Norfolk home of the Boleyn family,\textsuperscript{116} she was the second of three children born to Thomas Boleyn and Elizabeth Howard.\textsuperscript{117} Thomas Boleyn

\textsuperscript{114} Smith-Rosenberg, \textit{Disorderly Conduct}, 187.
\textsuperscript{115} Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 15.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 3.
was an intelligent and successful courtier who worked as an ambassador during Anne’s childhood. He also spent time on Henry’s council, proving useful to him. In 1512 Thomas became ambassador to Margaret of Austria who resided in one of the most impressive courts in Europe. Margaret’s court enjoyed the status of “Europe’s premier finishing school” where Europeans “vied to place their offspring as attendants on her [Margaret] and her charges in the knowledge that they would effectively be educated alongside Europe’s rulers of the next generation.” Thomas’ appointment, coupled with his reputation as an effective councilor, caused him to gain Margaret’s favor. She eventually accepted Anne into her court as a maid of honor. At Margaret’s court, Anne learned the proper decorum of a court lady. She learned to speak French, the official language of the court. She also became skilled in the arts of dancing, entertaining, and the conventions of courtly love. These skills helped Anne in her next appointment. When Henry’s sister, Mary Tudor, traveled to France to marry Louis XII she became the Queen of France and Anne was chosen to be her attendant.

Anne moved to France in 1514. Her attendant duties for Mary did not last long. Mary’s marriage to Louis lasted only eighty-two days due to his untimely death at the age of fifty-two. Mary quickly remarried in 1515 and returned to England with her new husband, Charles Brandon. Anne did not go with Mary’s entourage. Instead, Anne entered the household of Claude, the new queen of France and wife of Francis I, spending the next seven years perfecting her courtly skills.


118 Ives, *Life and Death*, 4-6.
119 Ibid., 18.
120 Ibid., 19.
The Love Interests

Anne returned to England in 1521 due to a potential marriage with James Butler. This marriage would have given Thomas Boleyn the Earldom of Ormonde as well as more control of Ireland for Henry. However, the alliance fell through and Anne became an English courtier instead.\(^\text{125}\) Her first appearance at the English court was in March 1522 when she participated in a pageant with other courtiers.\(^\text{126}\) This pageant allowed Anne to show off the skills she spent the prior nine years perfecting in the courts of continental Europe, intriguing Englishmen with her French style and mannerisms.\(^\text{127}\) This impressive expertise paired with her unconventional beauty may have been what originally made her popular among court men, including Henry.\(^\text{128}\)

Anne’s first known love interest was Henry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland. George Cavendish, a servant of Cardinal Wolsey, recorded a detailed account of their relationship. Anne met Percy while she served as one of Queen Catherine’s maids of honor while Percy served in Cardinal Wolsey’s household simultaneously.\(^\text{129}\) According to Cavendish, whenever the cardinal traveled to court, Percy would “resort for his pastyme vunto the Quens chamber and there wold fall in dalyaunce among the quens maybens beyin at the last more conuersaunt with Mrs. Anne Bolleyn than with any other that there grewe suche a secret love bytwen them.”\(^\text{130}\) This love led to a pre-contract of marriage between the two. Cavendish further explains that Henry had also fallen in love with Anne at the same time. He then unfortunately discovered that she was pre-contracted to Percy. Henry


\(^{127}\) Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 18-36.


\(^{129}\) Ibid., 63.

demanded that Wolsey dissolve the pre-contract. Wolsey called Percy into his office and berated him for his foolishness in attempting to marry without the king’s and the Earl of Northumberland’s permission. Wolsey then called for the Earl’s support. He invited Northumberland into his chamber where the Earl also scolded his son and sent him away in humiliation. Anne was also sent home for the rest of the season due to her outlandish actions. During the lover’s absences, the pre-contract became dissolved. Percy eventually married the daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1525.

Cavendish’s claim that Henry instructed Wolsey to sabotage the marriage plans of Percy and Anne is most likely inaccurate. For one reason, the arrangements for the Percy-Shrewsbury marriage had taken place much earlier, in 1516. Furthermore, it was likely that Wolsey’s desire to stop the marriage between Percy and Anne was because Wolsey wanted Anne to marry James Butler, a noble Irishman instead. If she had, Henry and Wolsey would have gained more control over Ireland. It is also possible that Northumberland did not think Anne suitable for his son because of her lower station. Regardless of the reason for the dissolution of the pre-contract, Cavendish’s account tells us that Anne and Percy were involved in a relationship together and that it was commonly known at court. Even Chapuys had heard tell of the rumor of Anne’s involvement with Percy after Anne’s arrest—nine years after the fact. Anne’s agency in her own future was a clear violation of gender norms, as she should have waited patiently and demurely for her father to choose a husband for her.

A key result in Wolsey’s meddling in Anne’s affairs was her own disdain of him. According to Cavendish, “Mrs. Bolloyn was greatly offendyd sayeing that I it lay euer in hir power she wold worke the Cardynall as myche displeasure (As she dyd in dede after).”

131 Ibid., 30-34.
132 Ives, Life and Death, 64.
133 Ibid., 65.
135 Cavendish, Life and Death, 34.
Anne did not appreciate Wolsey’s meddling in her life and she apparently had a vendetta against Wolsey, which will come into factor later in the story.

Another known relationship of Anne’s was with Thomas Wyatt, a courtier and poet. Clues suggesting the evidence of this relationship can be found in Wyatt’s myriad of poems that scholars believe to be about Anne. One poem in particular alludes to the fact that Anne and Wyatt spent some time together when she was queen (1533-1536). Ives claims it was simply courtly love but I argue that because Wyatt wrote so many dramatically favorable poems focused on Anne, she must have at least been flattered and likely developed a close relationship with him. This relationship, therefore, resulted in the concept of “too much love.” One of Wyatt’s poems reads:

If thou ask whom, sure since I did refrain  
Her that did set our country in a roar  
The unfeigned cheer of Phyllis hath the place  
That Brunet had: she hath and ever shall.  
She from myself hath me in her grace:  
She hath in hand my wit, my will, and all.  
My heart alone well worthy she doth stay  
Without whose help scant do I live a day.  

Wyatt’s use of the goddess Phyllis is the most telling aspect of the poem. Phyllis was a Roman goddess who committed suicide because her husband did not return home from an adventure. If Wyatt was correct in his metaphor, Anne was miserable because she could never be with her true love due to her marriage to Henry. Also, it is clear that this particular poem is about Anne due to Wyatt’s reference to “her that set our country in a roar” as well as the physical description of her hair, “the brunet.” When Wyatt writes that Anne set the country in a roar he was referring to the anger of the people when Henry finalized his divorce with Catherine. Against the majority of the will of the people, he changed the official religion

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136 Ibid., 73.  
137 As quoted in Ives, Life and Death, 74-75.
of the country to obtain the divorce and to marry Anne. Lines five and six suggest that Anne held Wyatt’s life in her hands and that he did everything he could to please her. Lines seven and eight make it undoubtedly clear that Wyatt believed he could not live even one day without Anne’s attentions. This poem suggests that Anne paid too much attention to Wyatt and. In fact, Wyatt was arrested and questioned regarding Anne’s “indiscretions.” Wyatt would most likely not have written so many poems about Anne had she not encouraged his love.

It is obvious from Wyatt’s poems that he had strong, positive feelings for Anne but it is unknown whether she reciprocated those feelings. What one can glean from Wyatt’s poems is that, at the very least, the two played the game of courtly love for many years.138

By the mid-1520’s Anne was at the English court and attracting the attention of many courtiers. Wolsey, Henry and likely the rest of the court were discussing her because of the drama of her relationship with Henry Percy. Anne clearly had her sights set on moving up in the social hierarchy by attempting to take control of her own future in terms of marriage. According to Cavendish, she had already labeled Wolsey her enemy. Anne’s attempt to plan her own future was a disruption of ideal gender norms of the 16th century. Regardless of the intrigue surrounding Anne, Henry began his courtship with her in 1526.139

THE DIFFICULT ROAD TO ANNULMENT

Although we do not know when Henry began thinking about an annulment from Catherine, an educated guess can be made. By June 1525, Henry must have been certain that he would not have another child by Catherine and therefore he named his only living illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond. This title placed Henry Fitzroy above all other men in the country, aside from his father, in the social hierarchy.140 With this act, it

138 Ives, Life and Death, 69-78. See appendix for more poems by Wyatt.

139 “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 2728. In a letter to Wolsey from Fitzwilliam, Fitzwilliam quotes Princess Mary as saying “she was glad we spoke no more of Boleyn,” indicating that Anne was already in Henry’s favor by the date of the letter, December 25, 1526.

140 “Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 5, 1534-
appears that Henry was getting ready to legitimize Fitzroy so he could be named as heir in case Henry never had another son.\textsuperscript{141} Due to Henry’s fear of never fathering a legitimate male child, he knew that he must try to remarry to produce an heir. Henry looked to the Bible for guidance. Leviticus 20:21 states that “If a man shall take his brother’s wife, it is an unclean thing…he shall be without children.” Henry related this passage to his marriage with his brother’s widow, Catherine. He was convinced that this marriage would bare no sons as punishment for disobeying God’s law. Furthermore, he believed his marriage was invalid and cursed in the eyes of God. Henry was determined to right this wrong.

It is often argued that Henry’s interest in Anne was the reason that he began searching for a way to annul his marriage to Catherine. Whether this is true or not, we do know that Henry began to publicly seek an annulment to his marriage to Catherine in 1527. By that time, Henry had been courting Anne for at least a year.\textsuperscript{142} In May of 1527 Henry began secretly inquiring as to whether or not his marriage to Catherine was valid.\textsuperscript{143} In August of the same year, Henry sent a request for a dispensation to the Pope that would allow him to marry Anne. Henry’s request included a clause that would allow him to marry a woman who had already been contracted in marriage and a woman who was related to the king within the first degree of affinity. Henry could only have meant Anne when he included these specific requests as Anne was thought to have been pre-contracted to Henry Percy\textsuperscript{144} and Anne’s sister, Mary, had been Henry’s mistress previous to his courtship with Anne. Thus, she and Henry were related within the first degree of affinity.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{141} Ives., \textit{Life and Death}, 83.
\textsuperscript{143} “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” 69.
\textsuperscript{144} “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” 5,1, 48.
\textsuperscript{145} Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 84; David Loades, \textit{Thomas Cromwell: Servant to Henry VIII} (Stroud, UK: Amberley, 2013), 78. The original letter is no longer extant.
Obtaining an annulment and a dispensation from the Pope was going to be politically difficult. In May of 1527, when the annulment inquiries had just begun, Charles I of Spain, Catherine’s nephew, sacked Rome and captured Pope Clement VII.\textsuperscript{146} As Charles’ prisoner, the Pope was not likely to rule against his captor’s aunt. To stall the process of deciding on an annulment, the Pope agreed to allow the case to be tried in England with Wolsey and a visiting legate presiding with their authority coming from the Pope himself.\textsuperscript{147} The legate chosen was Cardinal Campeggio who knew that he must do all he could to stall the proceedings. He did so for months.\textsuperscript{148} However, after months of Campeggio’s stalling the proceedings began on May 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1529.\textsuperscript{149}

WHERE WAS ANNE?

Although Henry, as king, was the instigator of the plan to obtain an annulment from the Pope, Anne did not sit idly by with neither voice nor opinion. Love letters from Henry to Anne confirm this. These letters hint of Anne’s strong desire to have the annulment proceedings resolved to allow them to marry. One of these letters, probably written in 1528 due to the mention of Anne’s illness,\textsuperscript{150} shows that she was kept informed of the proceedings of the annulment. Henry wrote to her about the “matter” and explained that his letter was short because he had spent four hours working toward his goal.\textsuperscript{151} In another letter Henry writes, “Darling, though I have scant leisure, yet, remembering my promise, I thought it convenient to certify you briefly in what case our affairs stand.” He goes on to say that all

\textsuperscript{146} “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 3114.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 4345.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 5604
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 5613.
\textsuperscript{150} The French ambassador mentions Anne’s illness in a letter dated June 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1528; “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 4391.
people who were involved were doing everything they could to resolve the “great matter.” In these letters, it is clear that Anne was not only kept informed of the annulment proceedings but also that Henry felt the need to reassure her that he was doing everything in his power to make Anne his wife and queen. What is most interesting about Henry’s letters to Anne is that he seems to be making it clear to her what was going on in the proceedings, almost as if Henry was afraid Anne believed he was not committed to the annulment and marrying her. This is evident in Henry’s mention of how much time he had been spending on the “great matter.” In the first letter, he wrote that he had “spent above four hours this day” working on the annulment. The next letter explains that he had “scant leisure” due to his efforts on the “great matter.” Henry felt the need to reassure Anne that he was committed to their cause.

Henry’s next letter indicates that Anne requested more specific information. He writes, “The reasonable request of your last letter, with the pleasure also that I take to know them true, causeth me to send you these news.” Henry explains that the Cardinal [Campeggio] was on his way to England to hear the arguments for the annulment. Anne’s involvement is obvious. It is clear that she asked Henry directly about the news of Cardinal Campeggio. Again, Henry felt the need to assure her that he was working as diligently as possible to “enjoy that which I have so longed for, To God’s pleasure and our both comforts.”

In the meantime, Wolsey was painstakingly working to have Henry’s annulment approved by the Pope. However, there were men close to Henry who were tired of Wolsey’s influence over the king. According to George Cavendish, the anti-Wolsey faction developed, which included great lords of the council and Anne. Cavendish believed that Anne participated to gain retribution against Wolsey for his interference in her relationship with

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152 Ibid., 33.
153 Ibid., 35.
154 Ibid.
Henry Percy.\textsuperscript{155} Cavendish explains that Anne’s involvement in the faction was to “deprave hyme [Wolsey] so vnto the kyng in his absence that he shold be rather in his hyghe displeasure than in his accustomed favor.”\textsuperscript{156} However, according to Inigo de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, Anne was leading an anti-Wolsey faction, which included her father and the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk because she began to fear that Wolsey was deliberately stalling the annulment proceedings even though he did not.\textsuperscript{157} Whether Anne truly was a part of a faction to bring down Wolsey is unclear based on the sources we have, but it is known that Henry and Anne became frustrated over the delays of the annulment. The French ambassador confirms this when he writes, “I assure you, Wolsey is in the greatest pain he ever was. The dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk, and the others, lead the King to believe that he has not done as much as he could have done to promote the marriage.”\textsuperscript{158} Whether Anne was a participant in an anti-Wolsey faction that tried to bring him down or not, it is clear that Henry and Anne were becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of movement in their case. Their wrath fell on Wolsey. Cardinal Campeggio finally voted that Catherine should remain queen. Wolsey disagreed. Therefore Campeggio stated that the “suit to advoked to Rome.”\textsuperscript{159} Sadly for Wolsey, Henry’s blame and anger came down on his most trusted advisor. On October 9\textsuperscript{th} 1529, Wolsey was charged with \textit{praemunire}, a law that forbids foreign authority against the king. By October 22\textsuperscript{nd} of that year, Wolsey pleaded guilty.\textsuperscript{160} After a slight upturn in favor with Henry after Wolsey pleaded guilty, he was arrested on November 4\textsuperscript{th} 1530, and died of an unknown illness on the way to the Tower.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{155} Cavendish, \textit{Life and Death}, 35.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{157} “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” vol. III, 2, 621.
\textsuperscript{158} “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 5581.
\textsuperscript{159} “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” vol. IV, 134.
\textsuperscript{160} “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 6035, 6017.
\textsuperscript{161} Hall, “Triumphant Reigne,” 773-774.
With Wolsey out of the picture, Henry and Anne needed to find someone else to support their cause. Theologians, Thomas Cranmer and Edward Fox, argued that the marriage between Catherine and Henry would be declared void based on theological grounds. Cranmer was sent abroad in 1530 to pole the theological schools of Europe to discover how they felt about Henry’s biblically based argument for an annulment. The product of Cranmer’s research came out in November 1530 and was entitled The Determinations of the most famous and excellent Universities of Italy and France, a translation and expansion of Collectanea satis copiosai, the research papers regarding Henry’s great matter.\textsuperscript{162} Cranmer and Fox’s research resulted in the discovery that “each province in the early Church had its own jurisdiction, independent of the pope.”\textsuperscript{163} Therefore, the decision for an annulment should be made in England without regard to the Holy Father. Cranmer and Fox’s research revealed that the prevailing thought was that the Papacy was a superficial position ranking in power below the king. They discovered that “in any kingdom, all authority, by divine institution, belonged to its king.”\textsuperscript{164} This meant that the king not only had the right to govern people’s bodies but also their souls.

Cranmer and Fox were not the only people to come to the above conclusions. While these men were conducting their theological research and discussions, Anne provided Henry written materials that confirmed the belief that there was no one with more authority than he in England; not even the Pope. According to George Wyatt “divers learned and Christianly disposed persons resorting to her, presented her with sundry books of those controversies that then began to be questioned touching religion, and specially of the authority of the pope and his clergy, and of their doings against kings and states.”\textsuperscript{165} Some of these books included Supplication for Beggars by Simon Fish and The Obedience of a Christian Man by William

\textsuperscript{162} “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” vols. IV, I, 509; Ives, Life and Death, 132-136.
\textsuperscript{163} Ives, Life and Death, 136.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
Tyndale. Tyndale’s work was another treatise that emphasized the power and importance of kings. It argued that, in the divine order, there was no one with more power or authority than a king.\textsuperscript{166}

By 1530, it appeared as though Henry had all the arguments he needed to justify an annulment from Catherine without the permission of the Pope. So why did Henry hesitate? Henry hesitated to break with Rome completely because he was not anti-Catholic. In the early part of his reign, Henry believed in saints, especially St. Thomas. He went on pilgrimages, supported monasteries and visited shrines.\textsuperscript{167} It is clear that he and Wolsey believed there were problems with the English clergy but Henry never intentionally set out to break with Rome. He actually adhered to many of the most important aspects of Catholicism throughout his reign. Henry and Wolsey felt that the Church had become corrupted by greed and, therefore, they attempted to reform and improve the actions of the English clergy. However, due to the length of time the annulment process was taking and the clergy’s support of Catherine, Henry took out his rage on the Catholic church by repeatedly trying to get them to bend to his will.\textsuperscript{168} Wolsey and Henry never intended a complete break from Rome. However, only a schism would allow Henry to marry Anne. Thus, Anne’s pressuring of Henry was something his courtiers could not ignore as they saw her actions as a push towards the schism.

**Schism**

The progress toward the annulment and eventual marriage of Henry and Anne was advanced by the schism that evolved between Henry and the Catholic Church. It has been argued among Tudor historians that Henry was malleable and left the governing of his realm

\textsuperscript{166} Ives, *Life and Death*, 133.


and the process of the schism to his advisors. This was not true. What some scholars seem to have overlooked is that Henry, as king, was not only all-powerful but he knew he was all-powerful. This can be seen in Henry’s reaction to those who failed him such as Wolsey who was unable to get Henry the annulment he wanted. What happened to Wolsey? He was arrested and sent to the Tower. Later, Thomas More, an important friend and advisor to Henry, refused to sign the Act of Supremacy and he was put to death as well.

With his bold power, Henry began planning to extort money from the English clergy in the summer of 1530 to force them to approve of his annulment. He accused them of involvement in Wolsey’s crimes (praemunire). When parliament and the convocation of the province of Canterbury began in January 1531, Henry took action and officially accused the clergy of praemunire. The clergy immediately understood what was going on and therefore offered Henry one hundred thousand pounds in exchange for a pardon. Henry and his council tried to extort even more money by selling a pardon to the clergy for the “general exercise of illegal spiritual jurisdiction.” The convocation was not pleased and neither was Henry. He was weary of the Church’s resistance to his annulment. By February of the same year, Henry demanded that the clergy recognize him as ‘sole protector and supreme head of the English Church and clergy.’

During the conflict between the English clergy and Henry, Thomas Cromwell became much more visible at the English court. He proved to be a valuable intellectual figure in supporting the schism that would help lead to Henry and Anne’s marriage. Although

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Cromwell’s early life is “wreathed in obscurity,” we do know that he traveled around much of Europe where he practiced business and law. By 1523, Cromwell was back in England working for Wolsey and sitting in parliament. Cromwell was loyal to Wolsey until his death in 1530. By February of 1530, it was clear that Cromwell was not only working for Henry but was in great favor with him as well. In a letter to Cromwell, Wolsey asked that Cromwell intervene for him due to Henry’s displeasure. This is indicative of Cromwell’s rise to power and increasing influence over the king.

Many scholars have debated which man was responsible for the English Reformation: Cromwell or Henry. Cromwell was, after all, a strident supporter of the Evangelical religion and thus, a foe of the Catholic Church. Evidence of this includes Cromwell’s involvement in the publication of Protestant books, his influence in the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, which threatened papal revenues against the clergy, and his involvement in closing monasteries and other religious houses. Henry was not anti-Catholic like Cromwell. According to Elton, “It is fair to say that no one can be shown to have prophesied in 1529, or even in 1530, the complete separation of England from the papacy.” Henry had been relatively content with the church prior to his annulment issue. However, because of the reluctant clergy and the Pope’s unwillingness to grant the annulment, a schism was imminent as Henry increasingly became frustrated with the Church’s obstacles. Cromwell stepped in and showed Henry a way to get what he wanted. Cromwell pointed out that Henry had the right to spiritually and temporally control not only the clergy but also his subjects. This

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meant that any complaint in regard to religion had to be solved at home, in England. The Submission of the Clergy in 1532 and 1534 solidified this ruling.\textsuperscript{182} This act also happened to align with what Cromwell desired: a schism.

Cromwell’s desire for a schism is evidenced most clearly in his involvement in the Parliament of 1534. This session of parliament resulted in the removal of any and all authority of the Pope from England.\textsuperscript{183} Due to Cromwell’s multiple successes with his efforts to legally generate more power for Henry, Cromwell was appointed Master secretary in April of 1534. With this appointment, he generated enormous personal power.\textsuperscript{184} He was responsible for writing Henry’s letters, viewing all crown business relationships, and corresponding with foreign envoys. He also had access to the king’s seal and signet.\textsuperscript{185} With these responsibilities, Cromwell was able to place crown business in his own hands.\textsuperscript{186}

**Marriage Preparations**

The combination of Henry’s determination, Cromwell’s acute business capabilities, and the death of the Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury (the highest religious appointment in England besides the ‘Supreme Head’) in August of 1532, preparation for the official marriage between Henry and Anne commenced. It was important to Henry to obtain Francis Ist’s recognition of Anne as future queen. To accomplish this task, Henry decided that he and Anne would travel to Calais to meet with Francis. To raise Anne’s position prior to the visit, Henry gave Anne a new title: Marchioness of Pembroke.\textsuperscript{187} He also “stripped Catherine of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{183} “Letters and Papers,” vol. VII, 54; Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 97.
\item \textsuperscript{184} “Letters and Papers,” vol. VII, 446.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 98-99.
\item \textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 100.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Hall, “Triumphant Reigne,” 790.
\end{itemize}
her jewels” so that Anne could wear them upon meeting the French king.\textsuperscript{188} By October 11\textsuperscript{th}, 1532, Henry and Anne left Dover for Calais.\textsuperscript{189} Although Anne was well received by Francis,\textsuperscript{190} many noblewomen of France disapproved of Henry’s upcoming marriage. Henry hoped that Marguerite d’Anglouéme and other high-ranking French women would officially greet Anne so that she could obtain the recognition she needed, but many refused to attend.\textsuperscript{191} Even Henry’s sister, Mary, refused to journey with them to Calais, presumably because of her opposition to the marriage. She was a devoted friend to Catherine of Aragon and a staunch Catholic. Therefore, it is apparent that she opposed actions that resulted in her friends’ humiliation, including church reform.\textsuperscript{192} The Venetian ambassador gives evidence of Mary’s dislike of Anne when he wrote that Mary uttered “opprobrious language” against Anne.\textsuperscript{193}

Ultimately, the efforts to raise Anne’s reputation prior to the marriage were unsuccessful. No ladies were officially presented to Anne during their trip to Calais.\textsuperscript{194} This lack of support for Anne gives evidence to her popular dislike among court ladies.

Thomas Cranmer, an avid Boleyn supporter and backer of the schism, was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in January 1533, ensuring that the marriage between Catherine and Henry would be declared invalid.\textsuperscript{195} This was the last step before Henry and Anne’s marriage could be legal in the English realm.


\textsuperscript{189} Norton, \textit{Anne Boleyn}, 80.


\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 1377.


\textsuperscript{193} “Calendar of State Papers…Venice,” vol. IV, 761.

\textsuperscript{194} “Letters and Papers,” vol. IV, 1484.

\textsuperscript{195} Hall, “Triumphant Reigne,” 795.
The exact date of the marriage is unknown, but by late January it was important for the marriage to occur, as Anne was likely aware that she was pregnant. Although we are unsure of the date of the private marriage ceremony, we do know when it was publicly recognized. On the 23rd of May 1533, Archbishop Cranmer declared the marriage between Henry and Catherine invalid and Catherine was sent to live in seclusion. On May 29th, Anne was introduced at Greenwich as Henry’s new queen.

Throughout this chapter, I have explained that Anne’s agency in her own future is a clear violation of gender norms. Anne should have waited until her father found her a husband. She should not have taken action in pushing Henry towards a marriage. The English populace viewed Anne as a usurper to their “true” queen, Catherine. Anne’s actions led many courtiers and English people to feel that she was an inappropriate woman who was disrupting the status quo and altering the England they loved.

CHAPTER 4

ANNE AS WIFE, QUEEN, AND MOTHER

In May of 1533, Anne finally achieved her goal: she became queen of England and Henry’s adored wife. But her sovereignty did not last long. Anne was queen for only three years due to her inability to conform to the ideals of being a wife, queen, and mother. Upon becoming Henry’s consort, Anne’s body technically belonged to him. He was responsible for her actions, but Anne was not to be controlled. She could not control her temper nor did she act modestly nor chastely. When Anne was crowned, her responsibilities to the English people became paramount. She belonged to them similarly, to how a mother belongs to her children. Her words and actions were supposed to reflect the people’s beliefs and desires. However, Anne did not take this responsibility to heart. Instead, she attempted to gain too much power and authority in terms of the new religion. She also did not appear to be loyal to England, as she preferred French customs and ideas. In terms of motherhood, Anne failed to produce a son, the ultimate disappointment. She was perceived not to have taken care of her body to the best of her abilities and thus caused her miscarriages. Because her body did not belong to her, Anne’s miscarriages were a reflection of Henry’s inability to control his wife and her body. Also, the majority of the English people did not favorably look upon Anne’s irregular and harsh treatment of Mary Tudor. Due to all of these gender transgressions, Anne earned the hatred of the English peoples, many of her courtiers, and eventually Henry. This hatred resulted in her eminent downfall and execution.

The celebration of Anne’s coronation lasted for four days. The official coronation date was Easter Sunday, June 1st 1533. She and hundreds of her attendants began to assemble
at Westminster Hall at seven in the morning. The coronation occurred there later that day. Afterward Anne made her procession through London with much decoration and fanfare.\(^{197}\)

The largesse of the ceremony was clearly an attempt by Henry and Cromwell to validate Anne’s position and her appreciation for French culture. Many in the country blamed her for the religious schism in England.\(^{198}\) The people knew that if Henry had not wanted to marry Anne, he would not have needed to declare himself head of the church.\(^{199}\) Anne’s coronation was a perfect way for Henry to publically show his country that he had accomplished his goal: suppression of the supremacy of the Catholic Church. Also, Anne’s reputation needed to be improved; the extravagant ceremony was a means to that end.

Much of the decoration was tied to classical themes, which, according to Ives, was favored by Anne.\(^{200}\) The classical themes of Anne’s coronation were apparent in the pageantry and poems during her progression on Saturday May 31\(^{st}\), 1533. According to the official version of the event, as Anne neared to Gradechurch there was a:

> rightly costly pageant of Apollo, with the Nine Muses among the mountains, sitting on the mount of Parnassus: and every of them having their instruments and apparel according to the description of poets, and namely of Virgil; with many goodly verses to her great praise and honour.\(^{201}\)

Anne moved further in her procession and met a pageant involving the Three Graces. Following this was another pageant, which included Juno, Pallas, Mercury, Venus, and Paris.\(^{202}\)

Anne’s coronation was one of the most magnificent occasions of the time. According to Chapuys, it was “conducted more sumptuously than on any other occasion”\(^{203}\) and Ives

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\(^{197}\) This description of Anne’s coronation is a summary of Eric Ives, “A Coronation and a Christening,” in *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 172-187.

\(^{198}\) Discussion of popular dislike will follow below.

\(^{199}\) Elton, “King or Minister,” 224.

\(^{200}\) Ives, *Life and Death*, 229.

\(^{201}\) Norton, *Anne Boleyn*, 133.

\(^{202}\) Ibid., 134.

\(^{203}\) Ibid., 159.
claims that it was even “larger than Katherine of Aragon’s in 1501.” An eyewitness, Caelo Capello, wrote that:

On Saturday, the last day of the month, also in the afternoon, she passed from the Tower to Westminster, with very great pomp, clad in silver tissue, with her hair over her shoulders, and a coronet (coronella) on her head; being carried on a chair of cloth of gold, between two mules, which were also covered with silver damask, and under a canopy of cloth of silver, accompanied by the greater part of the nobility of this kingdom, with the utmost order and tranquillity, all the streets and the houses being crowded with persons of every condition, in number truly marvellous; and in many places there were triumphal arches, pageants, and other decorations, as usually made on similar occasions.

Although the ceremony was magnificent, there were notable instances that indicate the popular dislike of Anne. The English populace still loved Catherine and saw Anne as a usurper. There was an obvious absence of many distinguished female nobles. For example, the King’s sister, Mary, did not attend the coronation and neither did her daughter Francis. Although this may have been due to Mary’s illness at the time, it is still indicative of Mary’s disapproval of her brother’s new bride as she refused to send Francis in her stead. Mary’s absence was the second occasion in which Mary refused to spend time with Anne during an important event. Also, one of Henry’s most trusted advisors and friends, Sir Thomas More, refused to attend the coronation. He was a devout Catholic and avid supported of Catherine. His absence directly reflects his disapproval of Anne. Anne’s own aunt, the duchess of Norfolk, refused to attend the coronation due to her loyalty to Catherine.

An account of the coronation that reached Brussels went so far as to claim that people mocked the written symbol for the marriage: “HA” (representing Henry and Anne). “HA” was used as a joke to suggest “ha,ha” (the sound of laughter.) Anne’s choice of classical

204 Ives, Life and Death, 173
206 Paul, Catherine of Aragorn, 128.
207 Ives, Life and Death, 177.
themes, as well as other French influences and French attendants in her coronation, caused many French attendants to be labeled “whoreson knave, French Dog,” due to the populace’s dislike of France and French culture. An anonymous Spanish chronicler even wrote “there were not, I think, ten people who greeted her with a ‘God save you!’ as they used to when the sainted Queen passed.”

The negative accounts of Anne’s coronation cannot be taken too seriously as there were many rumors and falsities within the biased accounts of her. However, due to the lack of key official English nobles present and the multiple negative accounts of the coronation, it can be concluded that there was at least some popular discontent with the ceremony and Anne’s rise to power. She did not fulfill her responsibilities as queen as her coronation reflected French ideals as opposed to English ones. Although the coronation may have helped Henry prove his authority, it did not dampen the negative feelings that some had for Anne.

Anne’s early enemies saw her not only as a whore because they believed Catherine to be Henry’s rightful wife but also as a primary cause of the schism. She did not espouse the same beliefs as the majority of the English people. They believed Anne to be the instigator of the political and religious changes in England. She had too much power and publically spoke her opinion. The populace felt she was acting improperly for a queen. Furthermore, her choices revealed her loyalty and allegiance to France, a loyalty that a new English queen should have kept to herself.

Three months after Anne’s coronation she gave birth. It was not the heir that Henry had hoped for. On September 7th, 1533 at three in the afternoon, Anne gave birth to her daughter, Elizabeth. Before the birth, Henry planned jousts as a celebration for the birth of his son. After hearing the news of his new daughter, Henry had the jousts canceled. The

canceling of the joust indicates Henry’s disappointment in Elizabeth’s sex. If the desired boy had been born, the jousts would have proceeded as planned.

Shortly after the birth of Elizabeth, Anne became pregnant again. In July 1534, she miscarried.\textsuperscript{212} Henry’s disappointment was clear to many people, even those as far away as Spain. According to Charles V, King of Spain, Henry began a new affair shortly after the miscarriage. Charles writes, “He now shows himself in love with another lady, and many nobles are assisting him in the affair.”\textsuperscript{213} This quotation indicates that Henry was disappointed and likely even angry with Anne for her miscarriage. The timing of the affair suggests his displeasure with his new wife. After she was churched, it seems likely that Henry would have returned only to Anne’s bed to produce a legitimate, male heir. Instead, he spent time with an unknown court lady whose potential offspring would have been illegitimate. By 1534, he was well aware of Anne’s jealousy and he may have sought an affair as a means to punish her. Henry’s new love interest indicates his increasing dislike of Anne. Anne’s first known miscarriage was scene as a failure of her wifely duties.

By 1534, Anne was most certainly aware of her own precarious position. She had already witnessed how Henry treated his subjects who did not meet his expectations. Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More had both been beheaded and Catherine was put aside and sent to live alone in a remote part of England simply because she could not produce a living son. As Ives writes, “the arrival of Elizabeth revived and perpetuated instability.”\textsuperscript{214} Anne was an intelligent woman who was raised in the courts of Europe. She surely knew what was expected of women and how the ideal woman should act. Unfortunately, she did little to curb her strong beliefs and forceful personality. Rumors began to abound regarding her influence in the Reformation and her inappropriate interactions with Henry and members of the church and court. Increased popular hatred of Anne was a result.

\textsuperscript{212} Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 191.
\textsuperscript{214} Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 186.
**ANNE’S RELIGION**

Catholics did not approve of Anne because they blamed her for the schism in England. Most historians agree that Anne was a reformist. However, some scholars such as G.W. Bernard argue that Anne was not necessarily a devoted reformist. He felt some stories suggesting her Evangelical beliefs were embellished. Bernard argues that Latymer and Foxe exaggerated Anne’s involvement in religious change. For example, Latymer writes that Anne visited the Nuns of Syon in order to chastise them for their ignorance because they were praying using Latin primers. Latymer writes that Anne “gave them prayer books in English to exercise themselves with all, that they might both understand what they did pray for, and thereby be stirred to more devotion.”

Another incident involved an unknown religious house. Latymer claims that this religious house did not conform to the reform movement and was still loyal to the Pope. Latymer continues the anecdote when he writes that Anne entered their house and told the monks that she “laments to hear to see how obstinately you [the monks] have departed from God’s true religion, and forsaken your due obedience to your sovereign, and most cowardly yielded the same to the usurped poure [?] of the bishop of Rome.”

As amazing as these acts may have been, Bernard is correct to doubt them, as it is highly unlikely that they actually occurred. Overstepping the bounds of gender norms to this extent would have resulted in many more tales of the events. Regardless of the exaggeration of Anne’s religiosity, the corroboration by both Latymer and Foxe provides evidence that she was, in fact, a follower of the Evangelical religion. Thomas S. Freeman argues that, because stories of Anne’s devotion appear in two key sources, Latymer’s *Chronickille of Anne Bulleyne* and Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, then it can be concluded that she was a proponent of the reformed religion and I agree.

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216 Ibid., 54. Modernized.
John Foxe, William Latymer and Alexander Ales, a Lutheran theologian and reformer,"218 all praise Anne’s virtuous and gracious queenship.219 Latymer and Foxe both tell stories of Anne asking her chaplains to monitor her own behavior to be sure that she was on “the right path of sownde and pure doctrine.”220 All three also discuss Anne’s kindness to the poor, emphasizing the sizable alms she distributed frequently to those in need. These attributes do not confirm Anne’s Evangelical leanings, but do prove Anne’s support for the reform movement. Foxe, Ales, and Latymer all claim that Anne supported and aided reform minister appointments. Foxe writes that Anne “placed Master Hugh Latimer in the bishopric of Worcester, and also preferred Dr. Shaxton to his bishopric, being then accounted a good man.”221 According to Susan Wabuda, Anne even lent each “£200 to pay for their first fruits and tenths.”222 Latymer himself confirms Foxe’s claim that Anne helped Latymer and Shaxton gain their appointments along with others.223 These two accounts are also corroborated by Alexander Ales, who claims that Anne was a devout reformer who aided in the appointments of certain Evangelical bishops.224 From these accounts, it appears as though Anne was indeed a pious woman who wanted to set a good example to those around her. She


223 Latymer, 59. Latymer does mention other appointments of evangelicals such as: Thomas Cranmer who became Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Goodruck, and Mr. Skippe who both joined the Bishopric of Hereforde.

224 However, Foxe and Latymer only agree on Latymer himself and Shaxton and therefore they are the only two people discussed above.

was generous to the poor and aided in the reform movement by encouraging Henry to appoint reformist ministers.

Anne’s devotion to the reformed religion is also evidenced in her reading materials. She owned a copy of Tyndale’s Bible, which was written in English, Ecclesiaste, and Epistles and Gospels printed by Simon du Bois in 1530-32. All of these works had some aspect of the reform movement included in the texts. In fact, Tyndale’s Bible was outlawed at the time Anne had it. She possessed these books despite their illegality. The Ecclesiaste included information suggesting that the Bible should be available to all in English. The Epistles and Gospels stressed iconoclasm. Both were philosophies of the Reformation. Even Bernard grudgingly admits that these three texts “flirt with the concept of justification by faith alone, the central message of Martin Luther.”

By the mid 1530’s, the line between Catholics and Evangelicals was rather blurred and reformers were a minority. According to Melissa Harkrider, Evangelicals and reformers were not always hated by Catholics and did not necessarily result in factionalism. For example, Katherine Willoughby, widow of Charles Brandon and a staunch Evangelical, interacted with both Catholics and Evangelicals alike. Similarly, Marguerite of Navarre, an Evangelical and sister to the Catholic King of France, Francois I, wielded enormous power while her brother was king and maintained relationships with Catholic courtiers as well. Although religious differences did not necessarily result in polarizing politics, it did sometimes result in personal animosities depending on gender. Active involvement in the Reformation was still very much a controversial issue amongst some women. Reformist

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227 Ibid., 105.
229 Ibid., 48.
women like Anne, Katherine Willoughby and Marguerite de Navarre became involved in spreading their own beliefs to others: a sort of “self-imposed career.” This deviation from the norms for the proper piety of women to over-active piety was a step out of the bounds of acceptable womanhood and led to negative rumors about and negative propaganda against those women. In Anne’s case, most of these rumors were based on her religious beliefs, which were contrary to the majority of English whom were Catholic. She failed these Catholics as queen because she did not reflect their own beliefs. These rumors and animosity resulted in factionalism at court.

**Catholic Opinion**

Anne’s leanings toward reformed religion are clear. She made conscious efforts to help reformist ministers obtain positions in court. She owned reformist writings and she strove to be an example of a reformist woman to those surrounding her. Those who supported the Reformation wrote about Anne as a martyr for their religion and praised many of her good qualities. However, staunch Catholics blamed Anne for the changes in religion and wrote about her in a negative way. As queen, Anne was expected to respect the thoughts and beliefs of those she ruled over. She belonged to them and her responsibility was to them. Because she failed in this responsibility, negative rumors and propaganda about her abounded. According to Retha Warnicke, “These detractors displayed a willingness to attack women of any rank whatsoever if they were the wives of men with important, controversial, political office.” Therefore, men such as Nicolas Sanders and Cardinal Reginald Pole made their opposition to the Reformation known by defaming the wife of the one who was responsible: Henry. In doing so, they spread rumors of Anne’s negative reputation influencing others who supported their cause to view her in the same light.

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The most heinous rumors about Anne come from Nicolas Sanders. He begins his description of Anne by claiming that she was the daughter of King Henry (he was rumored to have had a relationship with her mother years before.) This defamation of her birth is a direct attack on Henry’s and the Boleyn family’s godliness. Sanders furthered these rumors by writing of Anne’s downfall and her unfavorable personality. He also claims that she led a licentious lifestyle and was involved with Thomas Wyatt. He continues to mention her wicked behavior throughout his book and blames her for the Reformation. Sanders writes, “It appears beyond all doubt that the ambassadors were well aware of the king’s purpose to renounce the faith together with his wife, rather than live without Anne Boleyn.”233 These defamations of Anne not only contributed to the negative view of her but also made Henry look like a cuckold, therefore placing the blame for the Reformation on Anne.234

Reginald Pole, a scholar and a Catholic, had been well liked by Henry. In fact, in 1529 Pole was sent to Paris to obtain a favorable opinion on the annulment between Henry and Catherine. Pole personally disapproved of Anne. Despite his own feelings, Pole successfully accomplished his mission. Upon his return to England, it appears that Pole made own personal opinion against the marriage known to Henry. Thus, in 1532 he fled England to escape Henry’s wrath.235 In exile, he wrote Pole’s Defense of the Unity of the Church, a book against the Reformation. Pole, like Sanders, blamed Anne for the Reformation. Comparing Anne to Jezebel he writes: “Jezebel, the impious wife of the impious Achab, alienated his mind from the true worship of God just as now it is clear that a new Jezabel has turned your mind away from the truth in this question.”236 Rather than blaming Henry, Pole and Sanders portray Henry as a fool in love and Anne as the instigator.

233 Sander, Rise and Growth, 50.
234 Ibid., 81.
236 Pole, The Defense of the Unity of the Church, 281.
Even pro-reformers such as Alexander Ales, the Scottish Lutheran, believed Anne to be involved in the Reformation. Because of this belief, she was hated. Writing to Elizabeth in 1559 about Anne he wrote, “I am persuaded that the true and chief cause of the hatred, the treachery, and the false accusations laid to the charge of that most holy Queen, your most pious mother, was this, that she persuaded the King to send an embassy into Germany to the Princes who had embraced the Gospel.”\textsuperscript{237} In this quote Ales clearly blames the hatred of Anne on her involvement in the reform movement.

Further proof of the popular Catholic hatred of Anne comes from the Abbot of Whitby when he writes, “the King's grace was ruled by one common stued huer [professional whore], Anne Bullan, who made all the spirituality to be beggared, and the temporality also.”\textsuperscript{238} Whitby’s distaste for Anne’s involvement in the reform movement is evident in his use of the derogatory term, “stued huer” or, in modern English, “professional whore.”\textsuperscript{239}

Even Catholic laymen hated Anne for her involvement in the schism. On May 4\textsuperscript{th}, 1534 a man named Henry Kylbie was attending to his master’s horse at a stable of the Inn of White House in Cambridge when the ostler of the inn came out to converse with Kylbie. They began a discussion about the Pope. The ostler said that there was no Pope, only the Bishop of Rome. Kylbie responded by stating, “then was both he an heritique and the King an other, and said also that this busines had never been if the Kinge had not maryed Anne Bullen.”\textsuperscript{240} Kylbie, a simple servant, clearly blamed the schism on Anne and loathed her for it.

Anne was not only hated for her religious beliefs but also because of her disregard for the sanctity of the sacrament of matrimony as she married a man who most believed was still lawfully married. The English people believed that matrimony was sacred. Anne’s marriage did not reflect this belief. Instead, she became the symbol of vice. In June of 1533 a man

\textsuperscript{237} Stevenson, \textit{Calendar of State Papers, Foreign}, 1303.
\textsuperscript{238} “Letters and Papers,” vol. V, 907.
\textsuperscript{239} Ives, \textit{Life and Death}, 200.
\textsuperscript{240} “Letters and Papers,” vol. VII, 754.
named Gervase Shelby refused to take the oath of succession because “his conscience grieved him sore to take the oath commanded to be taken of all the King's subjects in Kent, as the King had broken the sacrament of matrimony, and that when he went over the sea he went to Rome to the Pope to have his favor to marry with queen Anne, but the Pope would give him no licence.”

Similarly, in June of 1534 a woman named Mrs. Burgyn expressed dissatisfaction with Anne. When Mrs. Burgyn went into labor, she called upon the midwife Joan Hammulden for assistance. Mrs. Burgyn was so pleased with the midwife’s aid that she said to Hammulden, “for her honesty and her cunning she might be midwife unto the queen of England, if it were queen Katharine; and if it were queen Anne, she was too good to be her midwife, for she was a whore and a harlot of her living.”

Based on the accounts above, it is clear that Catholics hated Anne for her religion and blamed her for Henry’s break with the sacrament of matrimony. I believe that the defamations of Anne were a way for Catholics and others to show their dislike of the schism without having to verbally attack Henry himself, which would have been a dangerous undertaking. The result of these rumors led to even more widespread hatred of Anne.

**ANNE AND MARY**

Another reason for the popular dislike of Anne is attributable to the rumors regarding her poor relationship with Mary Tudor, Henry’s first living child by Catherine. Upon her marriage in 1534, Anne became a stepmother to Mary Tudor. Unfortunately, there is very little historical research regarding relationships between children and their stepparents. However, according to Barbara Harris, author of *English Aristocratic Women*, stepchildren were either brought into the folds of the family or were ignored. Harris provides a few examples of women who had good relationships with their stepchildren. Lady Lisle, a contemporary of Anne, had an excellent relationship with her stepdaughters and maintained

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241 Ibid., vol. VI, 634.
those relationships even after their natural father’s death. What is clear is that if stepchildren and stepparents did not get along, they often ignored each other or lived separately. Anne did not conform to this norm. Instead, she caused Mary great anxiety.

Anne and Mary’s mutual enmity stemmed from the fact that Henry abandoned Mary’s mother in favor of Anne. This is something that Mary was never able to approve of and thus, refused to recognize Anne as queen. According to Ives, Mary’s refusal to recognize Anne was a “denial of Anne’s own identity and integrity.” Declining to acknowledge Anne meant that Mary was also refusing to acknowledge Elizabeth as Henry’s legitimate heir. With this refusal, Mary was asserting herself as rightful heir to the throne. Anne recognized Mary’s strategy and once claimed that Mary “is my death, and I am hers.” If she had acknowledged Anne, she would have undermined her own ambition to be queen.

Anne’s cruel and harsh treatment of Mary is clearly exemplified in one occasion occurring in June of 1534. Henry was planning to go to Calais; the English territory in France to visit Francis I. Henry planned to leave Anne as regent of England. Chapuys reports that Anne was planning to kill Mary during Henry’s absence. Chapuys writes:

I am informed by a person of good faith that the King’s concubine had said more than once, and with great assurance, that when the King has crossed the sea, and she remains gouvernante, as she will be, she will use her authority and put the said Princess to death, either by hunger or otherwise.

Mary was aware of this threat and remained terrified for her life. Although there is no evidence of Anne planning or attempting to hurt Mary, Anne’s alleged rant about murdering Mary led her to fear for her life during Anne’s reign as queen. Anne stepped beyond the

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244 Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 120-125.
245 Ibid., 122.
246 Ives, *Life and Death*, 198.
247 Ibid.
249 Ibid.
bounds of a stepmother’s proper conduct by making her stepchild miserable, suffering with, according to Chapuys, a constant fear of death.

Another occasion when Anne was overly cruel to Mary is evidenced in letters between Anne and Lady Shelton from January of 1536. Lady Shelton was Elizabeth’s governess and responsible for keeping Mary in her proper place as bastard to the king. 250 On many occasions, Anne attempted to make peace with Mary with the aid of Lady Shelton. Anne wrote letters cajoling Mary to recognize her as queen and if she did, Anne would make sure Mary was treated as a king’s daughter ought to be treated. 251 After a few attempts at peacemaking and Mary’s subsequent refusals, Anne informed Lady Shelton to treat Mary harshly. She was ordered to stop all attempts to persuade Mary to conform to Anne and Henry’s wishes. Mary was to, without question, recognize Anne as queen and Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. 252 At the time, Anne was pregnant with the boy she would miscarry, allowing her more surety of her own position. Thus, she felt she could demand stricter and more severe treatment of Mary.

Anne was not the only Boleyn to inform Lady Shelton that Mary should be treated with less tolerance. According to Chapuys, Anne’s father and brother spoke to Shelton demanding that she use stronger discipline measures with Mary. This demand was likely on behalf of Anne as neither George nor Thomas had any specific reason to make Mary miserable. Chapuys writes:

I am told that the duke of Norfolk and the brother of Anne (George Boleyn) had the other day high words with the said governess because, as they thought, she treated the Princess with too great kindness and regard, when she ought to deal with her as a regular bastard that she was.

251 Ives, Life and Death, 198-199.
252 “Calendar of State Papers, Spain,” 12.
The result of this strict discipline led Chapuys to describe Mary as never being emotionally lower than she was at that time.\textsuperscript{253}

Compared to Henry’s subsequent wives, Anne’s treatment of and relationship with Mary was atypical. After Anne, Mary had four stepmothers with whom she had respectful and sometimes loving relationships. Anne was the only one who was cruel. Jane Seymour had “great love and reverence to the Princess”\textsuperscript{254} and even attempted to get Mary reinstated as heir to the throne, a title Henry revoked upon Elizabeth’s birth.\textsuperscript{255} Anne of Cleves, Henry’s fourth wife, also had a good relationship with Mary. They kept in contact with one another even through Mary’s reign as queen even though Anne was a Protestant.\textsuperscript{256} Katherine Howard, Henry’s fifth wife, was five years younger than Mary. Initially their relationship was poor but they were eventually able to get along. Chapuys stated that after a visit between Henry, Katherine and Mary, Henry gave Mary “full permission to reside at court, and the queen countenanced it with a good grace.”\textsuperscript{257} Catherine Parr, Henry’s sixth and final wife, established “excellent loving relationships with all three of her stepchildren, despite their very different needs and ages.”\textsuperscript{258} Chapuys recognized the good relationship between Mary and Catherine when he wrote, “The Queen does the Princess all the favour she can.”\textsuperscript{259} Mary’s relationships with all of her stepmothers except Anne ranged from mutual respect to even love. Because Anne did not respect Mary (nor Mary respect Anne), they had a tumultuous relationship. Anne failed as a stepmother because of her harsh and cruel treatment of Mary Tudor which the English people felt to be a gross violation of gender norms for step-mothers.

\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 57.

\textsuperscript{254} “Letters and Papers,” vol. X, 901.

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid., 908

\textsuperscript{256} Fraser, \textit{The Wives of Henry VIII}, 411.


\textsuperscript{258} Fraser, \textit{The Wives of Henry VIII}, 371.

\textsuperscript{259} “Letters and Papers,” vol. XIX, 118.
THE BEGINNING OF THE END

On January 29th 1536, Anne miscarried the long awaited son and heir. This would be her last pregnancy. According to Anne, she was fifteen weeks into this pregnancy when she miscarried and her attendants believed they could tell it was a boy. When Henry visited Anne on the twenty-fourth of February, she claimed she had miscarried because of stress due to Henry’s earlier fall from his horse. She also acknowledged that this stress was compounded by Henry’s new interest in Jane Seymour. In fact, Anne’s jealousy appears to be the primary stressor. Anne claimed that she could not tolerate seeing him with any other woman but herself. According to Nicolas Sander, a 16th century Roman Catholic priest and author of The Rise of the Anglican Schism, upon Henry’s entrance she ‘bewailed her mishap, and angry at the transference to another of the king’s affections, cried out to him, “See, how well I must be since the day I caught that abandoned woman Jane sitting on your knees.’

Although Sanders is a highly biased source on Anne Boleyn and the quotation may be exaggerated, Chapuys Jane Dormer, a contemporary noblewoman, also maintained that Anne blamed her miscarriage on Henry’s dalliance with Jane Seymour. Although both stressors may well have contributed to Anne’s miscarriage, the fact that she blamed the miscarriage on Henry goes against contemporary mores of women’s appropriate behavior. Anne was responsible for the care of her body and her fetus during her pregnancy. Thus, she should not have blamed Henry and, more importantly, she should not have voiced that blame. According to Aldobrandino, women needed “a joyful and contended outlook and anger, fear, and trauma were to be banished from the mind.” Anne clearly was not able to banish the

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260 Ives, Life and Death, 296.
262 Warnicke, Rise and Fall, 199.
263 Sander, Rise and Growth, 132.
265 Ward, Women in Medieval Europe, 55.
fear, anger, and trauma she felt during her pregnancy. Therefore, the miscarriage was generally considered to be her fault by Henry and his courtiers. This led Henry to declare that he “would have no more boys by her.”

Henry clearly placed the blame of the miscarriage on Anne while she blamed it on Henry. Anne failed as a mother by miscarrying a boy and failed as a wife by blaming and chastising her husband.

Anne’s inability to produce an heir was not just a disappointment to Henry but to the populace as well. It is interesting that even though her body, as queen, belonged to the populace; she was responsible for her own reproducibility. Today, we know that her fertility was not something she could control, thus, the increasing hatred of her was based on an illogical aspect of gender norms. Furthermore, the well-known fact that Anne blamed Henry for her miscarriage resulted in the populace hearing about how she defied her responsibilities as a wife - an additional motive for anger.

Anne’s outspokenness defied contemporary mores of the time. According to George Wyatt, son of the famous Thomas Wyatt, one of the men arrested for adultery with Anne, “that if like Catherine, Anne had been more tolerant of peccadilloes she would have risked less; however, ‘her too great love’ prevented what ‘she the rather have done respecting the general liberty and custom then that way.’” Essentially, if Anne had not crossed gender norms by speaking out against Jane, Henry may not have condemned Anne to death. Her outspokenness led to Henry’s hatred of her and her subsequent trial and execution.

During Anne’s last pregnancy, Henry became interested in Jane Seymour and they began a series of flirtations. Once Jane’s family became aware of Henry’s interest in her “[Edward Seymour, Jane’s brother] and others told Jane how to behave with Henry and she complied.” Jane’s family specifically instructed her to act very similarly to how Anne

266 Cavendish, Life and Death, 444.
267 Ives, Life and Death, 303.
269 Karen Lindsey, Divorced, Beheaded, Survived: A Feminist Reinterpretation of the Wives of Henry VIII
behaved when she had been on the path to becoming queen. Jane did not submit to Henry’s sexual advances, therefore refusing to become his mistress just as Anne had done. However, Jane’s mild and meek character was the complete opposite of Anne’s, which aided in Henry’s attraction due to his developed hatred of Anne. Jane not only acted as an honorable and virtuous woman but also as a meek, quiet woman, the ideal in 16th century England. Jane’s personality, the opposite of Anne’s, was appealing to Henry.

Henry’s anger over Anne’s latest miscarriage most likely led him to allow his courtship of Jane to become overt and public. He began sending her gifts and tokens of his love. On one occasion, Henry sent her a letter and a purse of gold coins. In the 16th century, a purse of money was not considered an honorable gift. Jane responded, as instructed by her brother, to return the purse. It has been recorded that Jane told Henry’s messenger to “ask the king on her behalf to consider carefully that she was a gentlewoman, born of good and honorable parents and with an unsullied reputation. She had no greater treasure in the world than her honor which she would rather die a thousand times than tarnish.”\(^{270}\) This act of virtue entranced Henry and he intensified his pursuit.

In the meantime, the Catholics (including the Seymours) and Cromwell devised a way for Henry to be rid of Anne forever so that he could make Jane his new queen. Cromwell began collecting “evidence” against Anne by interviewing multiple courtiers who were sympathetic to Cromwell’s goals. The evidence was manipulated and eventually led to Anne’s downfall.\(^{271}\) The courtiers gave fabricated and exaggerated information about Anne’s conduct with other men at court. These conspirators, along with Cromwell, inflamed Henry’s infatuation with Jane, which, in turn, escalated Henry’s hatred of Anne. Cromwell and Chapuys then pressed the accusations of adultery and treason against Anne, which resulted in her arrest.

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\(^{270}\) As quoted in Lindsey, *Divorced, Beheaded, Survived*, 119.

\(^{271}\) Denny, *Anne Boleyn*, 268.
The Evidence of Adultery

Morality and chastity were two important qualities that Anne did not demonstrate. According to contemporary men and women, Anne was morally lax and unchaste during her time as queen, which led Cromwell to the idea of accusing Anne of adultery. She failed in her responsibility as queen to express the ideals of her people. As early as January 1532 Anne acknowledged her own inappropriate behavior. In a letter from her dear friend Anne Rocheford, a mother figure to Anne, Rochford writes, “I pray you leave your indiscreet trouble, both for displeasing God and also for displeasing of me.” 272 Rochford wrote this in response to a letter Anne sent to her (no longer extant) which most likely was an admission of some sort of “indiscreet trouble.” Elizabeth Norton boldly speculates that Anne admitted to consummating her relationship with Henry Percy. 273 I find that conclusion too far-reaching. Because Anne’s letter is no longer extant, it is impossible to conclude what the indiscretion referred to. We can surmise that it was an admission of guilt and that Anne was acknowledging her own inappropriate behavior.

Another account of Anne’s indiscreet behavior comes from Henry Clifford’s The Life of Jane Dormer. Henry Clifford was Dormer’s live in biographer and began writing her biography in 1615. Jane Dormer, not born until after Anne’s fall, was a great friend and servant to Mary I. Thus, her account of Anne is likely prejudiced. However, the information is of value as it gives a Catholic impression of Anne’s actions during her reign. These impressions ultimately led to her arrest. Clifford writes that Anne spent much of her time:

…in masks, dancing, plays and such corporeal delights, in which she had a special grace - temptations to carnal pleasures and inventions to disgrace such and ruin them who were renowned for virtue. 274

According to Clifford, Anne had a taste for activities that were not considered appropriate for a queen.

272 Norton., *Anne Boleyn*, 252.
273 Ibid., 251.
274 Ibid., 148.
Another contemporary, George Cavendish was a servant and biographer of Cardinal Wolsey. He wrote Wolsey’s biography, *Thomas Wolsey, Late Cardinall, his Lyffe and Deathe*, between 1554 and 1558. Although the biography was written well after Anne’s death, Cavendish is a credible source as he was a witness of Anne’s activities at court during Wolsey’s time in power. Cavendish wrote that Anne had “too much love” for the courtiers around her and that if she could have tempered it, she may not have been accused of adultery. Essentially, Anne paid too much attention to the male courtiers around her whether in conversation, dancing, gambling or any other activity. She cared too much for them. Cromwell used these accounts as evidence of her adultery. They also fueled Henry’s hatred toward her. Anne’s female contemporaries, and even Anne herself, disapproved of her behavior and found her to be immoral.

Anne was thought to have had “too much love” for Mark Smeton, a musician and lowly courtier accused and convicted of adultery with Anne. After Smeton’s arrest Cromwell began questioning him about his relationship with Anne. According to an anonymous Spanish chronicler, Cromwell began by asking how a poor musician was able to afford such lavish dress and brand new horses. Smeton replied that the queen had given him over one thousand pounds. Cromwell felt this was a very generous gift, even for a queen. Cromwell then asked Smeton about his sexual relations with Anne. Under torture, he confessed and was taken to the Tower. Given the circumstances, Smeton’s confession was most likely a falsehood. However, his admission that Anne had given him over one thousand pounds is evidence of Anne’s attention as well as her morally lax behavior. She acted outside of not only gender norms but also the bounds of courtly love by giving Smeton such a huge sum of money.

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277 Ives, *Life and Death*, 258.
Eric Ives argues that Anne was merely acting within the mores of courtly love. He explains that courtly love was based on the ideal of service and that Smeton demonstrated this service to Anne with his musical performances. The suitor was supposed to be of service to his chosen lady and she could return only “kindness, understanding and a platonic friendship.”

By being Smeton’s patron, Ives believes that Anne was demonstrating proper courtly love as well. However, I argue that because Anne was aware of her precarious position due to the fact that she had not yet produced a son, it would have been in her best interests to behave as an ideal wife and not to cross any gender boundaries that would risk her being seen as morally lax. Unfortunately, she acted outside the moral norms and therefore cannot be seen as the ideal wife in terms of chastity and morality.

The game of courtly love was often a dangerous game for noble women to play. Anne Boleyn was not the only woman to die because of her “too much love” for other men. Cosimo de Medici was the Duke of Florence and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He had many children. Among them was Isabella de Medici who was born in August of 1542. Isabella was the favorite daughter of Cosimo and, as such, she was allowed much more freedom than most girls of Florence. However, she followed norms by marrying in September 1558. Usually, when a woman married, she moved into the household of her husband. Isabella did not do this. She and her husband, Lord Paolo Orsini, were allowed to live with her father. Paulo owed a massive debt to his father-in-law. Thus, Cosimo had a great hold over Paulo. During the marriage, Cosimo allowed Isabella to stay in Florence with her family while Paolo spent most of his time in Rome. Freedom from her husband’s watchful eye allowed Isabella to do as she pleased. She played the game of courtly love for years and even took a lover, Toilo Orsini, in or around 1563. This affair was a direct affront to Paolo and

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279 Ives, *Life and Death*, 70.
280 Ibid., 198.
282 Ibid., 66.
283 Ibid., 168.
threatened his manhood. However, due to his debt owed to Isabella’s father, nothing could be about it as long as Cosimo was alive.

Cosimo died in 1574. Upon his death, Isabella’s brother, Francesco, became Duke of Florence. Francesco and Isabella had a turbulent relationship and therefore Francesco had no real solidarity with his sister. After two years of disagreements and Isabella stalling to move to her husband’s household, Paolo decided to come to Florence in July to see his wife. He decided to take her on a hunting expedition. On July 16th, 1576, Isabella was found dead in her room. This occurred only two days after Isabella’s sister-in-law and good friend, Leanora, was found dead in the same hunting lodge. Rumors abounded that both women were killed by their spouses, presumably because of their inappropriate behavior (Leonora also had extramarital relations). According to Caroline Murphy, both of these women overstepped the bounds of courtly love, which resulted in their murders. Leonora and Isabella’s downfalls directly mirror Anne’s in that they were murdered because of their disregard for gender norms. The game of courtly love was a dangerous one. Women were sometimes killed because they snubbed the rules. Anne probably never went so far as to have an extramarital affair but she should have behaved more cautiously, especially since she was in a precarious position of not having produced a male heir. In many ways and on numerous occasions Anne exhibited behavior contrary to what was expected of a queen.

In May 1536, due to her inability to conform to gender norms, Anne was taken to the Tower of London pursuant to Henry’s order. He wished her to be examined for guilt in the charge of adultery by Secretary Thomas Cromwell, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, the Duke of Norfolk, Anne’s own uncle, and Chancellor Audley. All of these men were trusted advisors to the king. They interrogated her, attempting to force her into an admission of guilt. Anne replied by saying:

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284 Ibid., 310.
285 Ibid., 313.
286 Ibid., 326-327.
287 Ibid., 328.
Go to! It has all been done as I say, because the King has fallen in love, as I know, with Jane Seymour, and does not know how to get rid of me. Well let him do as he likes, he will get nothing more out of me; and any confession that has been made is false.

Anne had no wish to allow her husband an easy trial by confessing to a crime she had likely not committed. The four examiners later repeated Anne’s stubborn response to the king. Henry was rumored to have replied, “She has a stout heart, but she shall pay for it.”288 Henry clearly acknowledged Anne’s stubborn and brave nature and he did not appreciate it. With this response, he dismissed her statements and alluded to her ultimate death.289 Anne’s comments and Henry’s response are evidence demonstrating Anne’s stubborn and disobedient nature as well as Henry’s distaste of these characteristics in her. Anne’s inability or unwillingness to obey her husband’s wishes led to his hatred. The king’s hatred toward Anne influenced the examiners and resulted in her arrest, trial, and death.

While in the Tower, Anne provided even more evidence against herself. In conversations with Master Kingston, Constable of the Tower, Anne relayed an anecdote regarding her own inappropriate behavior, which, she believed, led to her arrest.290 The incident involved Henry Norris who worked as a groom in Henry’s privy chamber. Anne recollected a time when she asked Norris why he had not proceeded with his intended marriage to Margaret Shelton, Anne’s cousin and lady in waiting. Norris responded by saying he preferred to wait. His remark infuriated Anne. She responded by accusing him of wanting to marry hers if “ought not came to the king but good,” or, in other words, if the king should die. It is unclear what provoked this response. However, what is clear is that Anne instigated a fight with one of the men of court. More importantly, it was a fight dealing with love.291 By her own admission Anne’s behavior again contributed to her downfall. In this

291 Ibid., 452.
instance, Anne acted unchastely because she began the (courtly) lovers’ quarrel between she and Norris. According to the conventions of courtly love mentioned above, men were supposed to be the instigators of love while women sat back and maintained a platonic friendship. On this occasion, Anne was the instigator. It was also another example of Anne showing “too much love.” In addition to being outspoken and behaving immorally, she overstepped the bounds of courtly love.292

Although much of Anne’s behavior may have been within the confines of courtly love, many of her actions were still considered morally lax by her peers and even herself. She did not fulfill Vives’ definition of chastity. Anne had “too much love” for the courtiers around her. Thus, she gave Cromwell ample “evidence” against her.

On May 15th 1536, Henry Norris, Thomas Weston, William Brereton, and Mark Smeton, all of whom had been housed in the Tower near Anne, were brought to trial on charges of adultery with the queen. Of these four, only Smeton pleaded guilty in the hopes that he would receive mercy. All four men were found guilty.293 On May 15th, Anne and her brother George were brought to Westminster Hall for their trials. Both pleaded not guilty to partaking in an incestuous relationship. Based on the ample “evidence” shown to the jurors a guilty verdict was rendered for both. The punishment for Anne was, “To be taken to prison in the Tower, and then, at the King’s command, to the Green within the Tower, and there to be burned or beheaded as shall please the King.”294 George was to be “taken to prison in the Tower, and then drawn through the city of London, to the gallows at Tyburn, &c., as usual in high treason.”295 Two days later Anne watched from her window in the Tower as her brother and the three other convicted men were beheaded. On the 19th, Anne followed in the men’s footsteps and walked out to the tower green. Her last words reflect her resolute and stubborn nature. She said:

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292 Ives, Life and Death, 335.
294 Ibid., 876.
295 Ibid.
Good friends, I am not come here to excuse of or to justify myself, forasmuch as I know full well that aught that I could say in my defense doth not appertain unto you, and that I could draw no hope of life from the same. But I come here only to die, and thus to yield myself humbly to the will of the King my Lord. And if in my life I did ever offend the King’s Grace, surely with my death I do now atone for the same. And I blame not judges, nor any other manner of person, nor any thing save the cruel law of the land by which I die. But be this, and be my faults as they may, I beseech you all, good friends, to pray for the life of the King my Sovereign Lord and your’s, who is one of the best princes on the face of the earth, and who hath always treated me so well that better could not be: wherefore I submit to death with a good will, humbly asking pardon of all the world.296

After only three years as queen and bearing only one living female child, Anne was beheaded on Henry’s orders. 297

Anne’s inability to conform to gender norms of the 16th century was the ultimate reason for her death. Her violation of gender roles caused the English populace to despise her. She fervently pushed the new religion on the people when she should have been appropriately pious as a woman. Also, she did not care for her body and her fetus in a seemingly appropriate manner. Thus, the English populace blamed Anne for the schism and felt insecure without the promise of a future king. Hatred developed towards her and the plot to remove her ensued.

296 Norton, Anne Boleyn, 265-266.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Anne Boleyn was an extraordinary woman for her time. She was intelligent, vivacious, and, for a moment, powerful. She was also outspoken and listened to her heart. In the previous pages, it has been my goal to prove that, although Anne had many qualities women today strive for, these qualities resulted in her death. Anne was certainly aware of her perilous situation manifesting from her own nature. She knew what could happen if Henry tired of her. If she had been able to curb her own personality she may have managed to live a long life. But it was impossible for Anne to perform as expected when it was contrary to her heart.

Anne was unable to be an ideal wife. She failed to remain silent about Henry’s infidelities. She knew of Henry’s liaisons and made sure to berate him about his love interests. Also, Anne was much too close to some of the male courtiers surrounding her. She joked, laughed, and teased them, which ultimately resulted in the “evidence” that led to her death.

Anne did not fulfill the role of ideal queen. This failure was primarily due to her reputation among the populace. As a queen of England, Anne was responsible for reflecting the ideals and values of the English populace. However, she did not take the responsibility seriously as she had her own beliefs and put herself and her beliefs above all others. The common people of England viewed her as Henry’s whore, Catherine’s usurper, and the primary cause of the schism. Anne became the symbol of the downfall of the sanctity of marriage. Women of England believed that if Henry could throw away his lawful wife for another, then their husbands could do the same. The Catholic people of England loved Catherine and felt that she had been treated unlawfully. They believed Catherine to be their anointed queen and Anne was simply a usurper. Even the Pope once believed that Henry would come to his senses and take back his real wife.
Although the schism could have only been accomplished if Henry wanted it to, the Catholic people of England blamed Anne for it. People were well aware that Anne was a reformist and they believed her influence was the reason for Henry’s decision to leave the Catholic Church. The Catholic people’s libelous comments against Anne make their anger clear. Also, Anne was not silent about her religious beliefs and sentiments, which made her an even easier target for criticism.

The obvious reason Anne was not an ideal wife was because she did not produce a son. I believe that had she given birth to a male heir, she never would have been murdered. Most married men of the time wanted a son. Henry was obsessed with the desire. He went to extraordinary means to accomplish this goal. He put aside his first wife to marry another and replaced the official religion of England to ensure the recognition and legality of his marriage to Anne. He believed his marriage to Anne would surely provide a male heir. But, in Henry’s eyes, Anne could never be an ideal wife without producing a son.

Anne also failed the populace by her inability to produce a son. Because it was considered the responsibility of the queen to produce a male heir, Anne was blamed for neglecting the health of her body during pregnancy. She failed the populace, however, due to something completely out of her control. Thus, in the mind of the English people, she was not an ideal queen and her inability to control her body was part of the reason for her downfall.

Anne’s inability to produce a son led Henry to despise her. Anne further irked the populace by her failure as stepmother to Mary. Anne did not care for Mary and should have kept those feelings private. She could have ignored Mary’s existence but instead made threatening comments about Mary that caused even more Catholics to hate her. The people loved their dear princess Mary and did not appreciate Anne speaking out against her. Anne’s harsh treatment of Mary fueled Catholic animosity.

This paper has amplified the historiography of Anne Boleyn by portraying Anne as her own enemy. Previous scholars have claimed that Anne’s fall was the main responsibility of Henry, Cromwell, or the Catholic faction. I believe that all three had a role in Anne’s ruin but that, primarily, the sources of her downfall were her own personality, actions and, however illogical, her inability to control her reproducibility that evoked the hatred of Henry, Cromwell, and the Catholics.
The logic behind the gender norms of the 16th century are complicated and flawed. A woman’s body never belonged to her, yet she was held responsible for any of its failures. When it became clear that Catherine would not produce a son, she was sent away. Similarly, Anne was blamed for her inability to produce a son, which led to her downfall; the illogical strands of the gender system can certainly be identified as a contributor.

The research and writing of this paper has brought up more questions for which there may never be definitive answers. Why could Anne not simply conform to gender norms when she knew her position was precarious? Why could she not be a meek and doting wife to Henry? How and where did she learn to be a woman who stood by her beliefs and to speak her mind? If scholars had more extant documents by Anne herself, these questions might be answered. Unfortunately, these documents were all destroyed in the years proceeding Anne’s death. Today we can only glean the answers from documents written to or about her. From the existing evidence, we know she was an extraordinary woman for her time, boldly living according to her heart until her death.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


**SECONDARY SOURCES**


APPENDIX

WYATT’S LOVE POEMS

The following poems by Thomas Wyatt are thought to be attributed to Anne.298

I. What word is that that changeth not,
   Though it be turned and made in twain?
   It is mine answer, God it wot,
   And eke the causer of my pain.
   It love rewardeth with disdain:
   Yet is it loved. What would ye more?
   It is my health eke and my sore.299

II. Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
   But as for me, hélas, I may no more.
   The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
   I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
   Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
   Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
   Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,
   Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.
   Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,

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298 Norton, 33-35; Ives, Life and Death, 67-77.
As well as I may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about:
_Noli me tangere_, for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.\(^{300}\)

III. If waker care, if sudden pale colour,
If many sighs, with little speech to plain,
Now Joy, now woe, if they my cheer disdain,
For hope of small, if much to fear therefore;
To haste to slack my pace less or more,
Be sign of love, then do I love again.
If thou ask whom; sure, since I did refrain
Her that did set our country in a roar,
Th'unfeigned cheer of Phyllis hath the place
That Brunet had; she hath and ever shall.
She from myself now hath me in her grace:
She hath in hand my wit, my will, my all.
My heart alone well worthy she doth stay,
Without whose help, scant do I live a day.\(^{301}\)

IV. Sometime I fled the fire, that me so brent,
    By sea, by land, by water, and by wind;
And now the coals I follow that be quent,

\(^{300}\) Ibid., 77.
\(^{301}\) Ibid., 85.
From Dover to Calais, with willing mind.
Lo! how desire is both forth sprung, and spent!
And he may see, that whilom was so blind,
And all his labour laughs he now to scorn,
Meashed in the briers, that erst was only torn.\textsuperscript{302}

V. After great storms the calm returns,
And pleasanter it is thereby;
Fortune likewise that often turns
Hath made me now the most happy.

The Heaven that pitied my distress,
My just desire, and my cry,
Hath made my languor to cesse,
And me also the most happy.

Whereto despairèd ye, my friends?
My trust alway in her did lie
That knoweth what my thought intends:
Whereby I live the most happy.

Lo, what can take hope from that heart
That is assurèd steadfastly?
Hope therefore ye that live in smart,
Whereby I am the most happy.

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., 96.
And I that have felt of your pain
Shall pray to God continually
To make your hope your health retain,
And me also the most happy.\textsuperscript{303}

\textsuperscript{303} Ibid., 148.