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Imagery and Objectification:
A Study of Early Modern Queenship

A thesis

presented to

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by

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ABSTRACT

Imagery and Objectification:
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by

Heather Geiter

Queen Anne Boleyn (~1507-1536) failed to meet social norms during her time as Queen Consort to Henry VIII (1491-1548). By tracing concepts of queenship through the works of Chrétien de Troyes, Andreas Capellanus, Thomas Malory, and Juan Luis Vives this thesis demonstrates how Anne united the office of queen and mistress to bring her downfall and introduce a new construct of queenship.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. COURTLY LOVE AND QUEENSHIP.....	10
3. ANNE BOLEYN AND QUEENSHIP.....	40
4. CONCLUSION.....	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	55
APPENDIX: Images from the Life of Anne Boleyn.....	61
Figure 1. National Portrait Gallery painting of Anne Boleyn.....	61
Figure 2. 1533 Coronation Medal.....	62
Figure 3. Apollo and the Nine Muses on Mount Parnassus.....	63
VITA.....	64

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Early modern queenship studies understand women in relation to their husbands, fathers, and brothers. This definition of queenship marginalizes women's roles in history and removes their agency. Patriarchal dominance over the centuries paints politically active women negatively even when primary evidence of their lives differs from the textbook narrative. After the rise and fall of the courtly love tradition, Anne Boleyn (~1507-1536) showed the deadly combination that masculine rhetoric and femininity formed. Her use of sexuality, adoption of masculine rhetoric, advancement of her family, and open expectations of her husband set her apart from her predecessors. Through these actions, her narrative offers an early modern redefinition of the concept of queenship based on the unification of the roles of mistress and queen. Without Boleyn's crucial creation of a third approach to queenship, England would not host queens like Elizabeth I, Victoria, and Elizabeth II.

Inquiries on early modern queenship face a number of source issues. Due to the subject's controversial nature, most primary sources, such as, personal artifacts, letters, and papers no longer exist. Images form the first step to understand the early modern noblewoman's world. Through artifacts of coronations, christenings, possessions, and contemporary opinions, these women's actions and interactions show political agency. Thankfully, leaps in archaeology and preservation open access to more artifacts and documents than ever before, as the oblivion these women faced ebbs away. Each woman's use of her individuality in the pursuit of influence and alliances stands out through the extant official records, letters, and diaries. In place of personal

documents, masques, literature, and instructional pamphlets illustrate the constructs women learned to use and rebel against.

The English lack even more sources on women than their peers on the Continent. At this time, England did not host an institutionalized *maîtresse-en-titre* system. Without this system, Boleyn could pursue higher ambitions than the station of a mistress. Conversely, in France, this role allows scholars to trace women's political movements and formation of noble lineages. Though it locked women away from matrimony with their royal lovers, it allowed them to create and manage their own roles of power and family management. England offers virtually no trace of royal mistresses until the reign of Henry II. With no chartable influence of these women, they find themselves placed in the confines of their husband's image. This complicates divination of female agency before the twelfth century in England.

Through the courtly love cultural shift in the twelfth century, women began to dominate social arenas at Court. Male courtiers historically made up the majority of artists, poets, and authors, but their key inspiration lay in the institutions noble women introduced. Prior to the twelfth century, women's political strengths lay in the value as barter good for the arranged marriage market. Beginning with the patronage of Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) and Marie of Champagne (1145-1198), women found an exit in the courtly love movement that promoted discretionary extramarital sex.

Tudor women receive fewer inquiries on their actions than they do with their experience. This diminishes the period as they show agency best through their use of their femininity. If femininity allows enlightenment and agency, then, these women find themselves free of the confines of their relevance to marriage and birth. Margaret added masculine action to a feminine

role. Boleyn reunited romance and rhetoric to the equation. Boleyn's case takes this formula one step further as she established herself as Henry's rival. Rather than complement her male peers, she outperformed them. Her agenda reflects not only in the harsh rhetoric male Catholics used against her, but also, in the praises her chaplain and prominent English Reformers wrote about her.

Despite relative silence on women's agency, the field does offer many examinations of women's roles in the sixteenth century. The classical perspective of women from 1300-1550 A.D. stems from Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* paints a rather egalitarian and problematic image of women in the period. Only in the 1960s and 1970s as women's history grew in popularity did the conversation become far more nuanced. Current historians of early modern women either agree with Joan Kelly's 1977 *Did Women Have a Renaissance?* or reject it. Kelly's argument expands against women's advanced presence in the early modern period with Margaret King's 1991 monograph, *Women of the Renaissance*. Other more even more dismal views, like that of Christine Klapisch-Zuber consider women and children merely as "passing guests".¹

The argument that the early modern period marks a time "when women were... despised, disordered, unstable, cold and wet, 'hysterical', they were all womb, the Greek *hysteros*", represents an antiquated view.² While motifs of Amazons, masculine virgins, matrons, and crones definitely do describe many artistic representations, they do not consider the complexity

¹ Christine Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 117-118.

² Margaret King, *Women of the Renaissance*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 191.

of humans.³ While one must acknowledge early modern women's chief roles as mothers, daughters, wives, widows, and workers defined chiefly by male sexual and benefit, that does not eradicate the reality of their potential for advancement and tangible power.

Similarly to this examination of queenship, other scholars face the challenge of feminism paired with history. Reactionary arguments that prove the potential for women's advancement through intellect and family structures prove increasingly accepted. Works like *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* by David Cressy and *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* by Sarah Gwyneth Ross refute Kelly's argument. As the discipline continues down interdisciplinary lines, the use of contemporary fiction, pamphlets, and other alternative sources proves helpful in researching women during a time in which illiteracy soared.

In the nineties, this movement picked up in its consideration of women's personal power and agency in alternative manners. Cressy's *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* considers these concepts through rites of passage. He focuses on each stage of life as a distinct ritual formed to bridge cultural and religious frameworks to natural processes. His work differs from works reliant on primary sources, as he realizes to find the female voice one must look at alternative sources. High theology, popular ballads, church court records, private correspondence, sermons, and the texts of dramatic comedies build a less biased vision of women's experiences. Cressy argues that ritual coexists intricately in English daily life and the disagreements in practice distinctly mark the unresolved issues of Anglicanism, especially as each successive monarch allows more diversity than the last.

³ King, 159.

By his argument, one can see the social power English women could gain through control of rituals and public events.

Within the past few years, the conversation delved even deeper to demonstrate women's access to traditionally masculine activities. Ross' work *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* explores a tripartite definition of feminism seen between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both genders fit into one of three molds of feminist practice: "explicit" feminism, which actively critiques patriarchal order and seeks total equality, adapted by Ross from Siep Stuurman, Karen Offen, and Nancy Cott; "celebratory" feminism, in which women emphasize their roles and equality as intellect through self-writing and education; and "participatory" feminism, which while indirect, stems from women directly engaged with their male peers.⁴ By this split concept of feminism, early modern women and their supporters regain agency and power.

The next turn in women's history lies in a new conversation centered on early modern women's acceptance and use of their femininity as a tool to gain power. Works like Ross' develop the definition of feminism further and allow for more diverse interpretations of historical figures. Combined with the acknowledgement of the cultural shift in the late fifteenth century, scholars now understand women's involvement at Court as multi-faceted and complex. By this adjustment, the next few years of scholarship should further develop women's political, social, and sexual history in their own perspective.

⁴ Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 132.

CHAPTER 2

COURTLY LOVE AND QUEENSHIP

Over the course of five hundred years from 1100 until 1600, methods of female agency in gaining political power changed drastically. A focus on the revival of the past, medieval love games, and the dying throes of chivalric tradition, allowed feminine political agencies to expand rapidly. The key developments in queenly tactics involved the introduction of sexuality as a political tool; the use of masculine rhetoric and actions; the addition of familial influence and favors at Court; the reintroduction of romance to marriages; and the growth of the mutual expectation of fidelity between royals. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, these traits proved not only necessary for success, but their practice needed to occur silently unless one applied to a king's paternalistic side. Careful examination of courtly love traditions, Arthurian lore, and instructional pamphlets establishes an ideal noblewoman who gradually could encompass these traits. As the royals struggled to cement legitimacy during these tumultuous centuries, legends and customs proved necessary to sustain dynasties built from a streak of royal blood in one's veins.

Courtly love and Arthurian legend formed the basis for noble society as long as divine right ideology prevailed and the period faced instability. Political ceremonies and masques took cues from legends set forth in the twelfth century troubadour movement. Coronation rhetoric utilized imagery lifted directly from Arthuriana. This heavy usage of legend makes Arthurian lore necessary to understand royal power levels through its omnipresence in the English tradition. The methods of courtship involved poetry, debate, and small tokens as the trend of courtly love continued throughout the sixteenth century. As inspiration for their works and art,

men sought out the highest women in the land as patronesses and correspondents which led to the rapid gain of English queens.

Correspondence with queens on state affairs and love allowed scholars to access to their direct patronage. Eleanor of Aquitaine's direct role in the introduction of courtly love to England shows the influence that one small move made on culture and courtship. Introduction of tracts that formed the basis of the culture noblewomen faced allowed agency in the development of new social norms formed through one's own ideas. Due to these types of intercessions in the patronage system, love and the place of women constituted an *en vogue* topic. The topic's popularity held its own dangerous consequences for any players who dared to publicly change their lines as each work equates success in masculine terminology.

Love for twelfth century courtiers implied an entirely different experience than what the word now indicates. Eleanor worked with her daughter, Marie of Champagne, to develop and introduce the work of Andreas Capellanus in the twelfth century. An instructional treatise on noble romance, *De arte honeste amandi*, or *The Art of Courtly Love*, offers a formula for love and lists multiple approaches to relationships. Capellanus' title, now translated as "courtly love", actually addressed what he described as "honest love".⁵ By his rules, honest love indicates extramarital affairs with little commitment beyond sexual intercourse after a length chase dictated by a woman's acceptance of her capture. His instructional manual considers extramarital courtship as the pinnacle of romance and held strict rules for its proper performance. Marie and Eleanor directly assisted him in the project and he cites them often as sources of higher knowledge on the topic of love.

⁵ Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1941), 4.

Capellanus began his treatise with strict definitions of love and its players. Love only naturally occurs within the middle class, the lower nobility, and the higher nobility. Romantic relationships embody “inborn suffering”.⁶ Love can only emerge from a man’s hope to conquer a beautiful woman who can hold her own in wit.⁷ Both parties needed to adhere to the hope that the woman can “be captured”.⁸ No unnatural attractions support love, specifically homosexuality and large age discrepancies.⁹ Furthermore, players must be within the age range of fourteen to sixty, for men, and twelve to fifty, for women.¹⁰ The queen, as the foremost woman in the kingdom, faced many suitors from Capellanus’ encouragement to pursue women who fit into these parameters who consented to follow twelve major rules,

- I. Thou shalt avoid avarice like the deadly pestilence and shalt embrace its opposite.
- II. Thou shalt keep thyself chaste for the sake of her whom thou lovest.
- III. Though shalt not knowingly strive to break up a correct love affair someone else is engaged in.
- IV. Thou shalt not choose for thy love anyone whom a natural sense of shame forbids thee to marry.
- V. Be mindful completely to avoid falsehood.
- VI. Thou shalt not have many who know of thy love affair.
- VII. Being obedient in all things to the commands of ladies, thou shalt ever strive to ally thyself to the service of Love.
- VIII. In giving and receiving love’s solaces let modesty be ever present.
- IX. Thou shalt speak no evil.
- X. Thou shalt not be a revealer of love affairs.
- XI. Thou shalt be in all things polite and courteous.
- XII. In practicing the solaces of love thou shalt not exceed the desires of thy lover.¹¹

⁶ Capellanus, 29.

⁷ Capellanus, 33.

⁸ Capellanus, 31.

⁹ Capellanus, 30.

¹⁰ Capellanus, 32.

These rules and multiple fictional conversations demonstrated love's principles in action. Out of the eight case studies, the *Seventh* and the *Eighth Dialogues* most contribute to the general expectations royal women encountered in their relationships. As a queen, women faced concerns as both a lower noble pursued by a higher noble and as equals after marriage. *The Seventh Dialogue* instructs a higher nobleman who desires a lower noblewoman through the pair's repartee. From their conversation, the man must treat her the same as any middle class woman, except he can now compliment her on her birth into a noble lineage.¹² The reader discerns from her actions and her suitor's words that a woman should embody prudence, beauty, modesty, and passion. Ultimately, though she denies him, the noblewoman referred to as "A." submits to "Count G." under the advice of Marie of Champagne.¹³

The rules change when a nobleman addresses a woman of higher or equal status. *The Eighth Dialogue* pits a woman and man of the high nobility against one another. Throughout the book, the woman of a lower class than the suitor seems preferred to a woman of his own class. This inequality seems doubly so in the discussion between the two. Capellanus states that women of the high nobility take pleasure in ridicule and use bold words in their censure of advances.¹⁴ Each time the suitor approaches his intended, she sharply reproaches him. She believes in chastity, unlike the lower noblewoman. She cites Biblical examples to counter his advances and needs no interference from a higher noblewoman. Each turn in the conversation lasts far longer,

¹¹ Capellanus, 81-82.

¹² Capellanus, 92.

¹³ Capellanus, 106.

¹⁴ Capellanus, 107.

and the lovers reach no agreement. This ultimate acceptance of disagreement shows a mindset of women the decisive voice in relationships.

Within both of these dialogues, the refrain remains centered on the impossibility of matrimonial love. Through a series of narrative measures, including lists, descriptions, and correspondence, Capellanus explained the inner mechanisms of a system built to foster romantic attachments – most importantly, outside of marriage and relative sexual liberation. By his example, scholars can see how these did not expect love in arranged marriages. Capellanus' encouragement of men and women engaged in discrete relationships outside of their marriages offers the earliest look at sexual liberation for noblewomen. Both sides of the players recognized the goal as casual monogamous sexual encounters.

Twelfth century fiction also explored women's roles in the construction and management of social culture. Chrétien de Troyes created a collection of Arthurian tales under the guidance of Marie that gained massive popularity at Court. Complementing Capellanus, these reimagined legends continued to discuss adultery, sex, and women's intercession. His key poems introduced the character Lancelot of the Lake and the tale of Queen Guinevere's adultery. With tracts and fiction written about romance for the first time in a serious manner, this period holds massive influence on culture. His influence proves itself through the numerous copies of his stories preserved.¹⁵ The translation of Arthurian legends into French allowed those who could only read the vernacular to dream of Camelot and learn lessons from its Court. Women constituted the largest majority of that category, as Latin remained the realm of scholars.

¹⁵ Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William Kibler and Carleton Carroll, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 4.

Chrétien's characters drastically differ from their former incarnations. Each tale offers romance as a knight's goal, rather than material goods. Echoes of Capellanus sound through Chrétien's heroes' struggle with self-inflicted hurdles and journeys on their path to romance. This masochistic tendency proves true in his five most famous legends: *Eric and Enide*; *Cligès*; *Yvain, the Knight of the Lion*; *Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart*; and *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*. Their shared guidance from Marie of Champagne forms the basis seen in *Lancelot* where love's strength multiplies outside of marriage. Queen Guinevere appears in all of the stories, but she stands out as complex character for the first time in *Lancelot*.

Guinevere's agency shows in her intercession to keep knights at Court and her sacrifice to save her captive people. She opens the narrative in a side story about her intercession to keep knights at Camelot after Arthur failed to do so. Meanwhile, Prince Méléagant, son of King Bagdemagus of Gorre, visits Camelot to boast of the many people kidnapped from Arthur's land, Logres. Guinevere agrees to parlay with him per his terms of release for the captives. Sir Gawain presents his suspicions of the Prince's motives to Arthur. In agreement, the knights ride after the pair. Upon their arrival, the escort's bloodied horse greets them. Far ahead of everyone else, Gawain encounters an unnamed knight, Lancelot. Upon news of Guinevere's capture, he takes off on a new steed to save a queen uninterested in external assistance.

Chrétien breaks the narrative to show the inborn pain Lancelot's obsession causes. By this external judgment on Lancelot's behavior, Chrétien places the blame on him for their relationship issues. After he hesitantly accepted a ride to Gorre in a pillory cart, Lancelot faces scrutiny of his honor by the author and the object of his desire. Rebuked by Guinevere, Lancelot leaves. Worried until his return, Guinevere eventually admits her love and her anger at his hesitation to sacrifice his honor for her. They consummate their relationship, which opens

Lancelot's injuries. On the next morning, his blood alerts Méléagant, who accuses Guinevere of adultery. Lancelot vows revenge on Méléagant through his challenge to a duel scheduled for a year later at Camelot. None of the three inform Arthur of the cause for the duel.

Chrétien's equal attention between the capture and imprisonment of the two lovers shows a new turn in rescue epics. While Chrétien does not admire infidelity as much as Capellanus, he does show the importance of partnership in any relationship. Arthur does not show passion, he shows instead camaraderie and partnership in his relationships with both Guinevere and Lancelot. Through the formulaic approach from *The Art of Courtly Love*, Lancelot and Guinevere reach the logical end of their extramarital courtship: sex. Ultimately, both genders must work together for a resolution.

Guinevere again displays agency developed from the courtly love tradition in Lancelot's arc. After Lancelot becomes Méléagant's captive, Guinevere and Gawain plan to destroy Méléagant. While Gawain offers himself as a substitute for the absent Lancelot, Guinevere organizes a tournament to draw their antagonist out of seclusion. News spreads fast and his captor's absence allowed Lancelot to convince his jailer's wife to grant him temporary freedom. Disguised, he arrives at the tournament to finally face Méléagant. Guinevere recognizes him and instructs him to lose so that he can remain hidden, but Lancelot acts against her advice. Lancelot ultimately defeats Méléagant and the romance comes to a close. Throughout the entire ordeal, Guinevere receives praise for her ingenuity in her attempts to free her lover and receives no consequences for her extramarital affair.

Only Chrétien's antagonist censures Guinevere for her promiscuity. Lancelot's tale marks a new turn in Arthuriana as it accepted the radical new social construct of courtly love. The text's

representation of the courtiers' disregard for their Queen's chastity and the lack of a response from Arthur create an atmosphere similar to Capellanus' depiction of the perfect courtly tryst. Marie's request for a new *Knight of the Cart* allowed Guinevere gain recognizable character and spread their philosophy further. While scholarship on work focuses on his introduction of Lancelot, even more credit needs to lie in the depth added to Guinevere and the subtle spread of courtly love as a social norm.

Through the introduction of a complex female character, the proponents of courtly love show their placement of increased importance for women in English society. Perusal of Peter Noble's 1972 article, "The Character of Guinevere in the Arthurian Romances of Chrétien de Troyes" shows a gradual change in Guinevere's presence. She originated as silent and virtually did not exist before Troyes. After Troyes work, she changed to fulfill the role of consort, independent lover, and a manager of love affairs. Troyes' writings show respect and deference to the Queen from the various knights, even when she only skims the surface in a poem. This reaction marks a drastic change in observance of queens and their place at Court. No hypothesized Camelot afterwards could work without Guinevere beside Arthur and Lancelot.

In order for courtly love to work, lovers needed to show discretion and deference in regards to one's spouse. The first recognizable rift between the social roles of mistress and queen lies in Eleanor's interactions with her husband's mistress Rosamund Clifford (1157~1176). Henry II's reputation for extramarital affairs peaked with as his obsession with Clifford clashed with his extreme estrangement from Eleanor in her last pregnancy. The extremity of his relationship with Clifford remains in few legitimate sources; however, Eleanor raised his former mistress' bastards alongside her own before this affair and conducted numerous affairs herself. Henry II's concerns about possible infidelity remain unrecorded, despite her patronage of texts

supportive of adulterous relationships. Their marriage marks the key to extramarital affairs and flirtations as discretion. Without discretion, the royal relationship resulted in Rosamund's entry into a cloister near Woodstock and Eleanor's return to her 'Court of Love' at Poitiers.¹⁶

The breakdown of Henry II's Court from the feud between Eleanor and Clifford demonstrates deep differences between the role of a mistress and a queen. Both women held a reputation as beautiful and as highly eligible partners in their social spheres. Wives existed for dynastic and diplomatic reasons, while mistresses took care of pleasure and romance. When mistresses appear present in royal relationships, they best serve to express the expectations placed on a King's virility or as barriers in times of spousal estrangement. Eleanor's introduction of courtly love to England left a literary and cultural legacy that embraced this division, but struggled to escape rumors of her possible involvement in Rosamund's death from her open jealousy.¹⁷ By her agency in an unveiled attempt to ignite sexual openness, Eleanor encouraged the idea that "man is the property, the very thing of woman."¹⁸

Eleanor used her newfound power in France to further pursue political agency under a feminine and sexual mantle. This use of power established the first hallmark of early modern queenship and female political agency. Acceptance of mistresses to the historical record stems from Eleanor's normalization of extramarital affairs as a fringe effect of its greater cultural influence. Under this form of influence she turned her sons against their father and incited her

¹⁶ Thomas More, *The Unfortunate Royal Mistresses, Rosamond Clifford, and Jane Shore, Concubines to Henry II, and Edward IV, with Historical and Metrical Memoirs of those Celebrated Persons*, (London: William Cole, 1825), 5.

¹⁷ Suspicions that Eleanor killed Rosamund exist in numerous sources throughout history, such as poems like *Roman de la Rose*. Such popular legends receive assessment in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Thomas More's *The Unfortunate Royal Mistress, Rosamond Clifford, and Jane Shore, Concubines to Henry II, and Edward IV, with Historical and Metrical Memoirs of those Celebrated Persons* as false.

¹⁸ Amy Kelly, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Courts of Love", *Speculum*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Jan., 1937), 12.

men to defend her honor after her son's revolt in 1173 which encouraged a war both in England and France.¹⁹ Courtly love placed women in power over the men who hoped to capture them. This description of gender politics shows a deep reversal of the relationship power dynamics her predecessors faced.

Centuries later, the use of sexuality to gain agency faced new issues due to the Treasons Act of 1351. Updated high treason laws included condemnation of queens for adultery, the men who might sleep with them, and any thought of a King's death. Margaret of Anjou (1430-1482) married the king in 1445, but their reign barely took off before he lost his mind. After the loss of Bordeaux and many of his other lands, Henry VI revealed his schizophrenia and estranged himself from his pregnant wife.²⁰ The Lancaster family relied on Margaret to keep the newborn Edward safe and to keep Henry VI's position secured. However, the lengthy absence of a blood heir placed Richard, Duke of York as heir to the throne. His appointment as Lord Protector drove Margaret to determine the Court needed to change in order to preserve the dynasty's legacy through their infamous rivalry. Henry VI's return to sanity ousted Richard from office permanently and allowed Margaret to seize power.

For Margaret, the strict confines of queenship represented a struggle to represent the variable feminine ideal with heightened judgment from the position's visibility.²¹ For the first eight years of her reign, she referred to herself in feminine terms and orchestrated a pseudo-deferential relationship with her husband and son. Her usage of motherhood and marital duty

¹⁹ William of Newburgh, *English Historical Documents, 1042-1189*, eds. David Douglas and George Greenaway (London and New York: Routledge, 1981), 358.

²⁰ Nigel Bark, "Findings: Henry VI: parts one and two, *Medical Hypothesis*.

²¹ Helen Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England*, 12.

steered power away from male courtiers, most notably from Richard.²² By her avoidance of blatant sexuality, Margaret technically heeded the Treasons Acts through this form of appeal. She used sexuality in a different form than Eleanor to submit gendered applications, and escaped to her midland estates when she felt any discontent. When her husband joined her after Richard's loss of the protectorate, she influenced him to change the Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Treasurer, and the Chancellor.

To secure the throne for herself and her son, Margaret changed from a prototypical wife to a queen who used masculine actions to gain power and legitimize her claim to the regency. As early as 1449, the King's letters to Margaret show his deference to her through his report to her of a transaction and his request for her supervision in the affair of the transferred "oks after th'entent of oure saide grante".²³ Her letters after 1454 show possession and the adoption of a stylistic manner of talking in the plural seen most often in letters from kings.²⁴ Her use of masculine terms and action in order to preserve familial order dictates an important second aspect of early modern queenship as she took her husband's place in the family.

Margaret seized the reigns of her husband's Court through his mental illness, which protected Lancastrian pride as she acted as a king. While on a visit to Coventry in September 1456, the queen enjoyed a series of pageants in her honor, yet her husband did not receive this

²² Maurer, 139.

²³ *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington and Others, Written in the Reigns of Henry V and Henry VI, from a MS. Found at Emral in Flintshire*, ed. Cecil Monro, vol. 86, (London: Camden Society, 1863-1864), 98.

²⁴ Margaret's main sources come from a collection of eighty two letters. For this examination, the letters' reprint in *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington and Others, Written in the Reigns of Henry V and Henry VI, from a MS. Found at Emral in Flintshire*, ed. Cecil Monro, vol. 86, (London: Camden Society, 1863-1864).

welcome upon his earlier arrival.²⁵ Margaret received social recognition again in a masculine manner when she rode north after the loss the First Battle of St. Albans, she rode north to gather allies in Scotland. She bartered Berwick-upon-Tweed for allies as her troops won the Battle of Wakefield and killed Richard, Duke of York.

Upon her return in 1461, she personally commanded the troops from the field and recaptured her husband at the Second Battle of St. Albans. This victory allowed a degree of stability to return to her throne, but Edward IV chose to rebel. Her treatment of prisoners of war enraged the nobles, who joined his cause. Despite a forced escape to France, Margaret continued to conspire. Her actions and belief in her role as queen could not relegate her to a dowager queenship while her husband lived. Joined by the estranged Kingmaker, Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, the Lancaster royals returned to claim their dynastic right.

Their return, though ten years after the last battle, cost them their strength. Warwick fell in an early Battle at Blarnet. Without her ally, Margaret rode at the head of her own army at the Battle of Tewkesbury. Despite her best efforts, her son fell in battle and her husband remained imprisoned in the Tower. With the royal Lancaster family murdered or dead, Margaret's political schemes disappear from the historical record. Captive herself, she transferred between different custodians and the Tower of London until 1475 when Louis XI ransomed her. Her death comes in France in relative poverty. The fragmented remains of courtly love kept her safe in the Tower until an intercessor could free her.

Margaret's influence on Arthuriana appears in multiple disciplines for the direct similarity between her reign and Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Stephen Knight and

²⁵ Maurer, 139.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks' *Arthurian Literature and Society* depicts the key similarities. Lancelot and his party represent the Yorkists, Henry VI played Arthur, and Guinevere, locked in a tower, represents Margaret as she defended herself from outside attack and dealt with her actual imprisonment.²⁶ These conclusions rewrite the period's major source of Arthurian legends as supportive of the Lancastrian cause. As the fifteenth century came towards a close, Malory's English canon of Arthurian lore held preserved a strong political message and morality developed in response to Margaret's reign and the Treasons Act.

Le Morte D'Arthur contains eight books of adventures that warn both genders of the cost of adultery – a marked change from his predecessors. The book opens with a discussion of Arthur's youth and his adventures until his battles in Rome. In book three, however, the introduction of courtly love and its consequences change the tone of the work. Upon his return from Rome, *The Tale of Sir Lancelot du Lac* finds Sir Lancelot trapped in a bewitched slumber. Four sorceress queens from North Galys, Estelonde, the Outer Isles, and Queen Morgan le Fay of Gorre confront him over his affection for Queen Guinevere. Throughout battles with their champions, giants, and the sorceresses, themselves, he remains unshaken in his dedication. Malory foreshadows the consequences of Lancelot's obsession through the actions of a servant who kills his wife for her lust towards another man. Malory's morals continue to perpetuate book V, *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones* as he openly shows the pain adulterous relationships offer.

The origins of the tale of *Tristram and Iseult* pre-dates *Lancelot and Guinevere*, but the message remains the same as Tristram's trials as a knight stem from his own actions. When

²⁶ Stephen Knight and Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Arthurian Literature and Society*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 138.

Morholt, the brother of the Queen of Ireland, demands Cornish slaves from King Mark, Tristram faces him in one-on-one combat. Burdened by a fatal poisoned wound, Tristram boards a ship and eventually washed up on the shores of Ireland. There, the Irish princess, Iseult the Fair, heals him. Upon his return to Cornwall, his lord requests his assistance in his search for a queen. His only stipulations lie in her provable royal blood and that a bird must drop a strand of her golden hair before him. Tristram departs in search of this woman and lands again in Ireland. His success seems impossible as he struggles with a dragon. The skirmish leaves him mortally wounded.

The linked fate between the lovers appears again as Iseult chances upon him and offers her medical abilities. Unexpectedly, her parents offer her as a reward for his defeat of the dragon. Tristram announces that instead of this match, he intends to give Iseult to King Mark. Worried for her daughter's happiness, the Queen creates a love potion that she instructs Iseult's maid to give to the future royal couple on their wedding night. Through an innocent blunder, the maid gives the love potion to Tristram and Iseult on the voyage back to Cornwall. The two sleep together, unaware of any impropriety. In a plan to fool the King, they convince Iseult's maid to take her place on her wedding night. The plan succeeds, and Iseult later takes her place as queen.

The courtiers become suspicious of Tristram and Iseult. After they presented their suspicions, Mark sent Tristram away from the palace. His absence from Court does not stop the affair as they continue their trysts in secrecy inside the palace garden. A dwarf named Frocin informs Mark of these encounters and instructs him to hide in a tree. As the lovers approach the tree, they notice Mark's shadow and play as if they are not lovers, but friends hurt by Mark's mistrust. Convinced, Mark invites Tristram back to Court. The nobles retain their suspicions, and pour flour on the floor between the Queen and Tristram's beds. Based on the evidence of blood

on the floor and bed, Mark finally condemns the two for adultery. Tristram escapes on his way to the pyre by leaping to the seashore below. He rescues Iseult and flees to the Forest of Morrois.

Iseult and Tristram do not learn from their mistakes and it costs them their lives. Tristram kills two barons as he flees to Brittany. For his service, the King offers his daughter, Iseult of the White Hands, in marriage. But on his wedding night, Iseult the Fair's ring reminds him of his love for her, and he refuses to consummate the marriage. He disguises himself as a fool and travels to Cornwall. After Mark goes out hunting, Tristram attempts to reveal his true identity to Iseult. She does not believe him until he shows her the ring. His stay only lasts until Mark returns, then he flees to Brittany. Tristram asks Iseult the Fair to heal him, again, after helping his brother-in-law's extramarital affair. With the instruction to raise a white sail if he brings Iseult with him and a black sail, otherwise, the messenger races off. Jealous of the Iseult the Fair, Tristram's wife lies about the sail's color. In the belief that love failed them, the two die.

Malory explicitly links Tristram and Lancelot in their desire for the unattainable and their correspondence as contemporaries confined to new ideas presented as high treason.²⁷ Elizabeth Kay Harris describes the changes the textual alterations signify in her 1995, "Evidence Against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*: Treason by Imagination". By using a background of law, she argues that the process in *Tristram* demonstrates the inverse of *Lancelot* and represents a uniquely English reading of the two. However, Lancelot admires Tristram until he weds a woman other than Iseult the Fair. Capellanus' argument should allow these relationships to work, as long as, singular attachment does not form the goal. Both men overstep

²⁷ Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. Keith Baines and Robert Graves, (New York: Penguin, 2001), 197.

Capellanus' ramifications, finding themselves falling from their lord's graces and ostracized from society.

With these warnings in mind, book VII, *Lancelot and Guinevere*, sees the public behavior of Guinevere shame Arthur after the knights' return from the quest for the Holy Grail. Lancelot tries to break off the relationship, only to be confronted by Guinevere for his perversity. Distracting herself from her grief, she orders an elaborate banquet of apples. Haphazardly, the apples poison one of the knights and she is accused of treason. Arthur seems aware of their relationship as he confronts Guinevere for the truth and the location of Lancelot so that he may champion her. Another knight steps forward, under the threat of the Queen being burned alive if he fails. Arthur defends the Queen against the allegations made by the men who almost were poisoned.

Lancelot continues openly romancing Guinevere. The second section opens with Guinevere staying behind as the men leave to see a great tournament. Lancelot delays his departure to stay with her. The next day he prepares to fight in disguise against Arthur. Desiring Guinevere so much, he decides to defeat the King. The tournament carries on and the unrecognized Lancelot makes a mistake, that not even Tristram made, by his attempt to kill his beloved's husband and his king. Lancelot's injuries cause him to retreat as news travels to Guinevere of his involvement. Jealously enraged by his wearing of a token from a woman, she receives equal blame for the breakdown of the relationship. Guinevere openly reproaches Lancelot's favor to Elaine, the Fair Maid of Astolat. After this response, he refuses to marry the young girl. With his rejection, she eventually dies of a broken heart. As the King and Queen visit

the girl's body, Arthur's remarks sting, "...the knight who puts his heart in bondage loses himself."²⁸

Finally, Malory's *The Knight of Cart* shows an important change in the queen's nature and the nature of romance. Built off of the change he shows in *Tristram*, Malory warns against love during his own time as it cannot match Arthurian standards.²⁹ The familiar tale begins in May, as Guinevere rides out with a small retinue of knights. However, a knight, Mellyagraunce (formerly Méléagant) turns against the party due to his secret love of the Queen. Though the tale remains much the same as Chrétien's, several key elements change. None of the other knights ride out to save Guinevere, for she sends her page to only inform Lancelot. Waylaid in an ambush, Lancelot's horse faces mortal injury forcing him to jump into a prison cart to sneak into the castle.

Early Arthuriana depicted Lancelot and Guinevere as the ideal courtly lovers, but Malory reflected a new morality that condemned them for their actions. Malory's *Lancelot and Guinevere* details the lover's quarrels during their time off stage and realigns the awareness of the other courtiers to acknowledge Lancelot's impropriety with the Queen. Malory's Guinevere appears overly jealous and often scolds Lancelot, thus breaking the standard of courtly love that Chrétien's characters accepted. Though Guinevere's imprisonment mirrors her imprisonment in Chrétien's book, Malory's editorial changes revealed the changed social status and value of women at the end of the fifteenth century. In *The Death of Arthur*, he further shows the revelation of the affair and condemnation of the Queen.

²⁸ Malory, 453.

²⁹ Malory, 458.

Acknowledgement of the variable nature of courtly love over time proves the change in queenship after Margaret's reign in Malory's titular final chapter. Malory began the tale of Guinevere's arrest and trial for high treason based on adultery. Two knights decide to report to Arthur the extent of Lancelot and Guinevere's relationship. Guinevere demands to remain behind in hopes of calming Arthur, but the breach seems unsurpassable as Lancelot sets up a rival kingdom. Normally, Guinevere's role consists of developing a male narrative through her position as a desirable object the hero must attain. However, Malory's work shows more concern for women's regulation and political silence as the fifteenth century closed. *Lancelot and Guinevere*,

Imprisoned in the Tower of London, Guinevere's silence offers her salvation. As one of the last to know of Arthur's death on the battlefield, convicted of treason, and sentenced to a death by fire, she immediately renounced her worldly goods and honor to take holy orders. Throughout this ordeal, Guinevere speaks little, eventually earning a pardon for her silence, which compares to advice given later by Juan Luis Vives' through the example of Saint Susannah, a story recorded by Saint Ambrose. Susannah keeps silent, as well, on her accusations. Through this resolute silence, Vives echoes Malory in confirming the necessity of silence on the behalf of a condemned woman and the graciousness of a man to pardon her of her crimes.³⁰ Guinevere's silence opens her up to escape to a nunnery and Lancelot's compliance buys him solitude as a hermit directly in opposition to the case of Tristram and Iseult.

Paired with the effects of Margaret's rule and the Treasons Act, Malory showed silence as a new decisive factor in the determination of an ideal women's worth. The structure of

³⁰ Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, c. 1524, ed. Charles Fantazzi, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 134.

Guinevere's adultery showed direct alteration in the English translation to avoid direct description of an English queen's sexuality and political agency.³¹ Though sexual liberty ebbed over the previous time, the literature of the courtly love movement ensured the sanctity of noblewomen's bodies as they held the ultimate choice in partner selection. Without this decisive power, male courtiers regained power in relationships and regulated women's involvement in their affairs. As a result, Guinevere loses her autonomy in her courtship with Lancelot and only survives through inaction and silence allows her to escape. Guinevere's narrative shows the secularization of the female body and opens the opportunity for equality in punishment for crimes of high treason.

Juxtaposed between the love between a lord and his vassal and the love between a woman and a man, *Tristram* and *Lancelot*'s popularity shows a change in interest for the period in the shift of matrimony from a contractual relationship into a love based relationship. Pairs of illegitimate lovers now faced condemnation and negative consequences. While courtly love worked for marriages not based on emotion, the concept could not survive a cultural shift towards the inclusion of love into matrimony. As Malory's legends circulated, the ideas of royal love elevated the next queen, Elizabeth Woodville (~1437-1492), from the lower English nobility. Woodville's refusal to become Edward IV's mistress and the presence of love in the royal marriage kept Malory's lore fresh on the courtiers' minds.

As Edward proved himself triumphant, replicative of Arthur's deeds, he opened the door for queenly power and the ambition of anyone who held a degree of royal blood in their veins. Woodville used his new shaky status and her sexuality to become queen in the spring of 1464

³¹ Elizabeth Kay Harris, "Evidence Against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*: Treason by Imagination", *Exemplaria*, 1995, 7:1, 179-208

after she organized a romantic scene to meet him. Widowed by the wars, she waited under an oak tree in Potterspurty with her sons for the new Yorkist king to ride by.³² Known for his promiscuity, the King sought her as a mistress, but she refused until they married.³³ Precedent dictated the marriage of a King to a foreign princess for the sake of diplomacy and to avoid consanguinity. By this precedent, the Earl of Warwick organized negotiations to marry Edward to a foreign noblewoman. Sure of his own power, Edward bucked tradition and married an English noblewoman for love which led to the queen's deposition of Warwick from his power over the young King.

Legends played a key aspect of Woodville's appeal and interactions with Edward. While Malory's Arthurian legends supported the Lancastrian cause, a Yorkist king now ruled. Her positions as a Lancastrian widow loosely combined the houses and allowed Edward to utilize Arthurian lore for his own shaky rule by her ancestry. The importance of lore to this time in monarchy shows strongly throughout her interactions with Edward and her family. Her usage of the oak tree in spring in her appeal utilized heraldic imagery to represent courage, power, growth, fertility, and steadfastness. Between the setting and implications of it in artistic terms, it seems unlikely she did not plan the effect beforehand.

In conjunction with her romantic appeal, her family stressed their descent from the fairy-serpent Melusine from her ancestral House of Luxembourg to preserve a longer line of nobility.

³² Margaret Hall-Townley, *Northamptonshire Gardens Trust*, The UK Association of Gardens Trust, June 1999, <http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/7-archive-queensoak-northantsgt.html>.

³³ Due to the large public silence on their marriage for five months, the exact circumstances of their marriage cannot be ascertained. Europe enjoyed the playboy King's desperate attempt to sleep with the beautiful widow, as described by Antonio Cornazzano in *De Mulieribus Admirandis*, or *Of Wonderful Women*, but the sources that mention her largely remain silent beyond the king's determination to marry her despite huge public dissatisfaction *News Letter from Bruges*, Oct. 5, 1464, *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts in the Archives and Collections of Milan 1385-1618*, ed. Allen B Hinds, (London, 1912), 137.

Melusine, a cursed noble fey of Avalon in Arthurian lore, turned into a lamia or mermaid every Saturday evening. Under the promise of Count Siegfried of Luxembourg to never approach her room on Saturday, she agreed to marry him. His nobles place doubt in his mind after years of marriage and seven children, and he breaks their promise twice. Melusine disappeared and cursed the city forever. Woodville's subtle stress of trust and connection to the nobility of the mythical Avalon promoted Arthurian romance as a legitimate source for nobility for herself and her husband, the royal usurper.³⁴

Elizabeth used the popularity of legends to carve out an important new aspect of early modern queenship focused on the promotion of family. This new system of favors overstepped the King in establishing his household by an insistence on familial strength, as well as, ensured herself a place at Court. Woodville worked to fill the Court with her family and filled the royal hierarchy with wholly English blood. This English heritage opened up drastic new possibilities for a support system and personal power as she did not face the issues foreigners at court met through language, alliance, xenophobia, or exposure to foreign concepts and traditions rejected in England.

The significant amount of trust and respect for a fellow English person shows in the existence of a record of her coronation, despite her marriage's massive unpopularity. Her predecessors certainly participated in one, but their respective reputations leave the historical record silent on the events beyond its occurrence. Woodville received her crown in a small celebration at Westminster. For Woodville, the unwanted Queen, *Hall's Chronicle* briefly

³⁴ Jonathan Hughes, *Arthurian Myths and Alchemy: The Kingship of Edward IV*, (Stroud: Sutton, 2002), 110.

mentions the event in an offhand remark, “And in the next yere after, she was with great solempnitie crowned queen at Westmynster”³⁵

As Richard III ousted the Woodville clan after Edward’s early death and took the throne for himself, Woodville reacted through her support of another claimant, Henry Tudor. While confined to an abbey she plotted with Margaret Beaufort push Henry’s claims. Her last action relies again on her greatest strength, her dedication to her family. The Anglicization of queenship opens new issues that her non-English successors face that mirror Tristram and Lancelot’s internal dilemmas. The division between natural and marital family always underlined royal relationships, however no precedent in England allowed for a queen to come from her own country until Woodville. English familial power increases set up the internal Court struggles. The country that Henry brought out of the Wars of the Roses faced the reality that a King could now meet a wife before marital negotiations even began and that her family could depose any noble while she reigned.

With the end of the Wars of the Roses, the union of the Houses of Lancaster and York established clearer legitimacy for the Tudor dynasty. As a final act of familial solidarity, Woodville permanently united the split factions and legitimized both the Tudor and Woodville claims to the throne by marriage of her daughter, Elizabeth of York (1466-1503) to Henry VII. Henry did not pursue legitimacy through his new wife’s blood, despite the fact that she directly descended from a legitimate royal union.

³⁵ Hall, 264.

Only when she gave birth to the heir, Arthur, did,

the kyng for the perfyght loue and syncere affection that he bare to his queene and wife lady Elizabeth, caused her to be crowned and enonyted queen on saynt Catherine's day in November with all solempnytie to suche a high estate & degree apperteigennyng.³⁶

Her coronation lasts briefly in the record, but it shows a glimmer of fear in regards towards a woman's rival claim to the throne. Elizabeth marks a change from her predecessors who received their crowns at the time of marriage. The record stated the coronation came out of love, which implies she, and Henry loved one another, but it does not mention her right to the crown. She held the largest claim to the throne in England, and Henry's delay attempted to minimize her legitimacy through the use of established power to delay another monarch's coronation. Woodville and Margaret set massive examples of women's use of influence, and the King of England did not want to see it again.

Though Elizabeth maintains little recorded political influence, she introduced the fourth change in the development of early modern queenship: an expectation of fidelity. Henry held no recorded mistresses, which marks a drastic change from his predecessors Richard III and Edward IV. Henry's willingness shown in the delay of her coronation to control his wife shows a space safe only for a woman aware of her role. Her identity as a woman driven by motherhood and her husband affected Henry enough to leave a record of the King's unusual extravagance on her funeral.³⁷

³⁶ Hall, 438.

³⁷ Richard Grafton, *Grafton's Chronicle Or, History Of England to Which is Added His Table Of The Bailiffs, Sheriffs, And Mayors, Of The City Of London from The Year 1189, To 1558, Inclusive*, vol. II (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 226.

Elizabeth's reward for her silence shows a movement towards a new morality and an obsession with virtue throughout the sixteenth century and its ramification to queenship. Her silence mimics Guinevere's, but leaves her political involvement and ambition absent. A fifth key to early modern queenship lay in the expectation of fidelity between spouses. With the change in women's the use of their sexuality for agency, Elizabeth replicates Margaret's dedication to her husband and son. Her husband's fidelity and the word pattern to describe her coronation make the match seem to hold a degree of love, though no sources claim either way. Her English descent promised her loyalty to her country. Out of the queens examined, Elizabeth succeeds best in her role as the ideal queen as she pieces together the examples laid before her for the past four hundred years. Despite her skillful adherence to social expectations, popular instructional pamphlets circulated with an agenda to further restrain women.

A key pamphlet that limited educated noblewomen, especially the queen, Juan Luis Vives' *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, or *The Education of a Christian Woman*, focused on his belief that women's education relied on virtue, inner strength, highly trained household skills, and a watered down version of her potential suitor's interests. While the two sexes hold similar mental abilities, women must avoid romance, history, mathematics, and dialectic.³⁸ Instead, their chief focus should remain on morality and the calming of one's spirit.³⁹ This conflict with the established tradition of courtly love corresponds with the escalating religious strife to form the perfect environment for women to pursue their own ambitions.

Vives' book one, *Which Treats on Unmarried Women*, details women's educations beginning as early as their suckling. He offers a unique sentiment for the period, as he begins by

³⁸ Vives, 15.

³⁹ Vives, 78.

stating the need for every mother to feed her children by her own breast.⁴⁰ Until her teenage years, she should not be around any males, as attachments form the strongest bonds in childhood. Through isolation, a girl remains compliant, and he warns that the vulgarities a girl might learn through her natural desire to be pleasant will be repeated throughout adulthood.⁴¹

At age seven, girls must learn the ways of behavior and hard work to avoid misbehavior throughout her life. He references princesses when he states that women who do not find constant ways to work with their hands run the risk of incessant talk with men.⁴² Idleness continues throughout the book as a danger of which working with wool and the practice of refined culinary skills cures and heals. Vives warns that ignorance leads to sin as the woman who holds no knowledge of good will fall for any evil. He states, besides ancient examples, only the daughters of Isabella I of Castile and Thomas More fit the scruples he deems necessary for virtuous women.⁴³

Book two, *Which Treats on Married Women*, focused on the necessity of partnership; the need for women to avoid amusements and fame; and the importance of love and chastity.⁴⁴ Vives' work includes many female ideals across all stages of life. His work glares at mistresses from the page as he states, "Young men praise to her face a young woman who is loquacious,

⁴⁰ Vives, 53.

⁴¹ Vives, 55.

⁴² Vives, 59.

⁴⁴ Vives, 65 – 175.

skilled in dancing, witty and carefree; they call her unaffected, congenial, well-bred but only to deceive and corrupt her, not to marry her”.⁴⁵ Vives pointedly paints eloquent wives as vipers.⁴⁶

The work concludes with a discussion *On Widows* where Vives winds down his polemic against individuality through eradication of grief and emotion. Instead, she becomes an “annihilated” nonentity that must grieve precisely enough for those grieving too much or too little are “shameless and cruel”.⁴⁷ Adultery no longer appears acceptable by his reproach on a cultural standard for over four hundred years. Even upon her husband’s death, the wife holds only one real chance at expressing emotion and sexuality. Vives even recommends that widows send their child to the care of a sensible man, as she cannot gauge her own thoughts and feelings enough to take care of them.⁴⁸

In order to honor their husbands and families, widows needed to sacrifice their physical and social life. Widows should cling to their mother-in-law, reduce their staff to older ladies, and not mix too freely with members of her household.⁴⁹ It as if Vives would ban widows from any contact with any male. No longer able to confess to priests from fear of seduction, visit the marketplace, crowds, or any place men’s eyes might see her, the widow seems to die alongside her husband in the ideal world.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Vives, 169.

⁴⁶ Vives, 169.

⁴⁷ Vives, 299.

⁴⁸ Vives, 316.

⁴⁹ Vives, 316-317.

⁵⁰ Vives, 318-324.

Strikingly, Vives unintentionally eradicates queenship. He states, “the mind of a true noblewoman remained uncontaminated in its essential purity if after losing her virginity in the marriage bed she would no longer show herself in public.”⁵¹ A queen’s station required huge publicity, yet, she did not enjoy the same religious rhetoric her husband could. Even so, she often headed religious events and received praise for her moral actions. To live as a female with power in the period one must accept paradox as natural and confusion as the norm. Within itself, Vives’ work seems contradictory, as he dictated women’s right to an education while he limited their potential. For Vives’ ideas and the alternating periods of Tudor conservatism to remain so powerful, the strides political women took clearly left an effect through its controversy as the work printed over nine times in the sixteenth century.

Despite Vives’ rejection of women in power, his dedication to Catherine of Aragon correlates philosophy to actual practice. Her primary education split into two different spheres. The first, instructed her in household skills, the same as any commoner, with notable encouragement to cook evening meals for her future husband. Her second sphere of reference came through a thorough humanist education, notable for its inclusion of Latin. Through her own education and her time as queen, Catherine not only continues the established mold of early modern queenship, but sets an extremely high standard for her successors.

The heavy extant documentation of Henry VIII’s reign allows much more insight into the rites and the role of queenship. Catherine enters history as proud, solemn, and accompanied by a vast dowry in 1501 as she leaves Spain to marry Prince Arthur. His untimely death troubled the possibility of another marriage for the Princess through concerns over her widowhood and her

⁵¹ Vives, 322-323.

virginity. Catherine waited for seven years in relative poverty while the Spanish ambassador himself covered her expenses, which left her unable to pay for her household. Yet, she shows the behaviors royal women needed to display in an early personal letter to her father on the subject of his lack of financial support:

...since I came into England, I have not had a single maravedi, except a certain sum which was given me for food, and this such a sum that it did not suffice without my having many debts in London; and that which troubles me more is to see my servants and maidens so at a loss, and that they have not the wherewith to get clothes...⁵²

Her metered appeal to her father harnessed all of the key aspects previously established of early modern queenship. The application's form follows the standard set forth by Margaret of Anjou's adaptation of Eleanor of Aquitaine's use of sexuality in her reference to the King's paternalism. This articulated appeal shows the persona Vives praised and that Henry VIII expected from his wife. Catherine focused not on herself, but her servants in this excerpt. She showed the accepted change in the role of royal women through her direct appeal to her father for monetary aid rather than elaborate complaints. The appeal worked, as her father soon requested her as his ambassador to England.

Henry VIII wed Catherine on June 11, 1509. Second born and second to wed her, their romance promised a new Camelot even after its king, Arthur, died. After seven years

⁵² Catherine of Aragon to King Ferdinand of Spain, in *Catherine of Aragon and the Sources of the English Reformation*, ed. Albert du Boys, trans. Charlotte Yonge, (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1881), 89.

Her coronation retinue receives only a brief paragraph, her relative invisibility focusing the event on Henry,

The Quene then by name Katheryne, sitting in her litter, born by twoo White Palfereis, the Litter couered, and richly appareled, and the Palferies trapped in White clothe of gold, her person in white Satyn Embrodered, her heire hangyng doune to her backe, of a very great length, bewetfull and goodly to behold, and on her head a Coronall, set with many riche orient stones.⁵³

Despite Catherine's revival of the tradition of foreign princesses as brides, this first coronation of Henry's reign includes no detail of foreign presence, instead focusing on the presence of the King's virtues and Katherine's jewels.⁵⁴ Englishwomen as consorts seemed to instill caution in their husbands, which led to their receipt of a crown in minimized circumstances. Also notable in this particular record, is that in no place does the author claim Catherine's divine right to her position, as he does Henry's. Blanketed with jewels, pure white satin, and her adopted heraldic badge of a pomegranate, Catherine's part of the coronation promised fertility, life, virtue, and regeneration.

Her mother taught her to pursue her coronation promises as personal duty. She needed to bear children and push forward a pro-Spanish agenda due to the increased expectation for women's presence at Court. By the example of her mother-in-law, Catherine remained deferential and silent on affairs other than religion. Her silence did not equate timidity or lack of interest in affairs of state, but instead, a realization of the effects of the women before her. Catherine conceived many times, ignored Henry's dalliances until the 1520s, and spent her

⁵³ Hall, 438.

⁵⁴ Hall, 508.

efforts evenly across religion and scholarly patronage. Yet, the issue of legitimacy present since the rule of Edward IV plagued the Court.

Catherine's popularity, long line of royal blood, and use of the public persona of a good wife kept her safe from Henry's later more lethal tendencies. Henry pursued a divorce, citing Leviticus 20:21 on the grounds of accidental incest.⁵⁵ Catherine never accepted the divorce and continued to style herself as the queen until her death. Her resistance split the Court in half and cost early modern society many good men, such as Sir Thomas More. Exiled to Kimbolton, she refused to go to a nunnery due to her belief that she remained a married woman by the statutes of the Catholic Church; only death or papal annulment could change that. Catherine's resistance showed a sixteenth century example of women's evasion from execution even when in direct opposition to the King through her own claims to nobility and virtuous reputation.

Catherine proved that queens needed to embody the ideal feminine virtues; the use of sexuality and gendered actions; familial ambition; and ultimately, the ability to keep their husband in love and faithful to them to succeed. If that failed, she needed to rely on ancestral links and religion to keep control. Each early modern queen faced new consequences for her behavior. These consequences eventually resulted to social death by some form of isolation and later, the threat of high treason and imprisonment.

⁵⁵ Leviticus 20:21 states, "If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." (English Standard Version)

CHAPTER 3

ANNE BOLEYN AND QUEENSHIP

Early modern queens faced high stakes that only an early education in its management and a strict youth that ensured a pure reputation could prepare one for. Another young woman of the middle nobility, Anne Boleyn, faced the same challenges as her predecessors, but had only been groomed to succeed in the role of a mistress due to the King's marital status. Anne's inability to reconcile her former public persona and reputation as a mistress with the rhetoric of masculine divinity used in her coronation ultimately estranged her from both her husband and family. This third model of queenship in which the King held a relationship with his bride before their marriage marks a novelty for early modern royal relationships. Her new model of queenship attempted to add the appeal and personality of a mistress to the office of the queen. By her access to both roles, she gained the power to rival Henry's on her own in three short years which led to her death. Many of her predecessors equally deserved execution for their rival power to their husbands, so the question remains, why did it occur suddenly in this period?

Anne unconsciously began the development of this model in her education on the Continent. Her time in France with royal patronesses of reform and humanism, like Marguerite de Navarre, Marguerite d'Autriche, and Queen Claude built the foundation on direct female involvement and a more present system of courtly love. While Henry VIII's courtiers lived lives represented in Capellanus' treatise, courtly love and the popular Arthurian legends remained demoralized in comparison to those in England. This would affect Anne greatly, as "none would have judged her for a moment as an Englishwoman by her ways, but a Frenchwoman born "for

the entirety of her life.⁵⁶ Not only did Anne closely interact with powerful royal women, she could not avoid some knowledge of the *maîtresse-en-titre* system due to its prominence in early modern French society. She remained abroad until 1522, and retained a lifelong preference for French translations of popular work, illegal French religious works, and her own LeFevre bible.

Her participation in Court events and the clothing style she adopted while she lived abroad began to define her role as a young noblewoman. Upon her return to England, Anne joined several courtiers in a masque entitled *Le Chateau Vert*, which portrayed an assault of on the “castle of love”⁵⁷ Dressed as *Perseuerance*, Anne participated beside numerous other controversial women in the English court in a mock battle that utilized Capellanus’ theories and imagery of love as a battleground. The main action of the act relied on the defeat of the negative aspects of love by male virtues in order to gain the best aspects of love.⁵⁸ Notably, Catherine of Aragon did not participate in the jest, while Henry and his sister played the leads.

Within a few short years, Anne received two drastically different matches that responded to the image of a cultured flirt she portrayed in masques and her interactions. Similar to her

⁵⁶ «*que ne l’eussiez oncques jugée Angloise En ses façons, mais naïfve Françoisse.*» «Anne Boullant, Epistre contenant le proces criminel faict a l’encontre de la royne Anne Boullant d’Angleterre» in *La Grande Bretagne Devant L’Opinion Française Depuis la Guerre de Cent Ans Jusqu’à le Fin du Xvie Siècle*. ed. Georges Ascoli, (Paris: J. Gamber. 1950), 5.

⁵⁷ Hall, 631. Other references for the expenses and named women involved can be found in Richard Gibson’s accounts for the revels on December 29 and January. Richard Gibson, February 19, 1520, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer, vol.3, 1519-1523, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1867), 1548-1559.

⁵⁸ The other named participants of the captured aspects of love were the King’s sister, Mary Tudor as *Beauty*; the Countess of Devonshire as *Honor*, Jane Parker as *Constancy*, and Mary Boleyn as *Kindness*. Unnamed virtues of love are *Constance*, *Bounty*, *Mercy*, and *Pity*. Negative aspects of the pageant correspond to the dangers of one’s disregard to Capellanus’ rules: *Danger*, *Disdain*, *Jealousy*, *Unkindness*, *Scorn*, *Malbouche*, and *Strangeness*. Male participants disguised themselves as *Amorous*, *Nobleness*, *Youth*, *Attendance*, *Loyalty*, *Pleasure*, *Gentleness*, and *Liberty*. The King entered under the disguise of *Ardent Desire*. Hall, 630-631.

involvement in *Le Chateau Vert*, Anne's initial interactions with courtiers revolved around romantic love. Her first occasion to consider a role as a mistress came from a flirtation with Sir Thomas Wyatt, a married man. Despite countless poems and promises of love by Sir Thomas Wyatt, she shows a sense of awareness of the Court's cultural shift against extramarital affairs in her rejection of his suit. By the culture's standards, his lower status and his marital status pushed her to reject his advances.

The case differed with her other major suitor, the Duke of Northumberland's heir, Henry Percy. In secret marital discussions, Anne subverted her family's permission to pursue her own ambition to join the peerage. Percy presented a more socially acceptable match, as he was single and above her station. Compared to Wyatt, Percy fit into the courtly love narrative and offer far more prestige in a match. Unfortunately, the couple's families called the match off when they discovered it and the affair left rumors of a pre-contract.⁵⁹

Sent back to her family home in an attempt to keep her reputation intact, a woman "more really handsome"⁶⁰, "...of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised... and her eyes...black and beautiful..."⁶¹ not only attracted her peers' attention, but the King's interest as well. The French opinion reads quite differently in Lancelot de Carles' *Epistre contenant le proces criminel faict a lencontre de la royne Anne Boullant d'Angleterre*, who considered Anne "beautiful, dressed elegantly, and her eyes were even more

⁵⁹ Earl of Northumberland to Cromwell, May 13, 1536, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ed. James Gairdner, vol.10, January-June 1536 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 864.

⁶⁰ Louis Helwighen, Councilor of the Emperor, *Helwighen's Report concerning the man of Louvain*, June 25, 1532, *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol.4 pt. 2, 1531-1533, ed. Pascual de Gayangos (London, 1882), 967.

⁶¹ Francesco Sanuto, Oct. 31. Sanuto Diaries, v. lvii. p. 279, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ed. James Gairdner, vol.10, January-June 1536 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 824.

attractive”.⁶² The disparity in these reports comes from her use of sexuality and its loss of a place in society, but every report includes a description of the darkness of her eyes and hair.

Anne’s embrace of her dark looks developed her image as a royal hind desired by all “whoso list to hunt”.⁶³ While this proved popular among her male peers, it excluded her from accepted roles for noblewomen in England even at this early stage in her career. Two extant contemporary portraits offer a clear glimpse at the constructed Anne Boleyn, who beat the odds to capture the King’s interest in the late 1520s.⁶⁴ The first work, currently at the National Portrait Gallery, features a dark background framing a pale woman with olive skin, sunken black eyes, and long dark hair.⁶⁵ Her dark features match her apparel, as her gown and French hood almost blend into the background. The only brightness in the work shines in her skin and famous initial necklace. Overly dark in tone, the piece promoted mystery, a charm that directly conflicts with the principles of courtly love Anne encouraged. The second portrait, hangs in her familial castle, Hever Castle.⁶⁶ This image copies the portraiture seen previously; however it uses darker tones and dates itself later by Anne’s grasp of the Tudor rose.

⁶² « *S’elle estoit belle et de taille ellegante, estoit des yeulx encore{es} plus attirante Lesquelz savoit bien conduyre à propos, En les renant quelquefys en repos*», Carles, 3.

⁶³ Thomas Wyatt, 1557, *Selected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Hardiman Scott, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 21.

⁶⁴ Other key physical artifacts that can be related to Anne’s time as mistress and queen include a portrait medal (see figure 2), many unverified and reproductions of paintings, a cameo style ring worn by Elizabeth I, and many personal books, including three *Books of Hours* in which she has written in.

⁶⁵ See figure 1.

⁶⁶ Anne’s Hever portrait differs from the former image in her grasp of a Tudor rose between her thumb and forefinger. This acknowledgement of her influence on Henry place the portrait as later, either during her time as his mistress, or posthumous.



Figure 1 - Artist Unknown, *Anne Boleyn*, 16 c., NPG 668 ©National Portrait Gallery, London

A deep self-conflict appears in her presentation as both mysterious and involved in the courtly love tradition. Malory's work showed an English preference to steep the queen's sexuality in mystery when he removed Guinevere's explicit scenes from *Le Morte D'Arthur* and Vives' aimed to erase women from society after the loss of virginity. Mystery implied innocence through ignorance, while the courtly love tradition acknowledged sex as the end goal of a Courtly flirtation. Capellanus' argument that the key to courtship lies in the lovers' knowledge of the woman's eventual submission illustrates best in Chrétien's quick reconciliation between Lancelot and Guinevere. In 1527, this conflict shows best in her gift to Henry of a jewel that depicted a storm tossed maiden.

Anne turned the hunt of the dark hind into a capture based on her own terms by her push for advantages at Court. Through previous queens' lives, women used masculine actions to define a default state and achieve nobility. Anne not only sought favors for her family, but she also began to develop recognized nobility for her own power. Anne's pursued influence at Court doggedly, which led to Hall's remark that, "the Lady Anne Bulleyne was so moche in the

Kynges fauour, that the common people which knew not that Kynges trew entent".⁶⁷ She used this influence to adopt a personal set of arms that promised new life through a white falcon with a crop of new Tudor roses on top of a barren stump. In heraldry, falcons represent relentless pursuit. The white falcon also represented the arms of Ormonde, an ancient and highly disputed estate split between the Boleyns and the Butlers. Her new badge sealed the issue and further antiquated her noble lineage. The promise of an endless pursuit of her objective would not escape notice.

One of the largest results of her perseverance came through her receipt of a male title in 1529. As she gained power at Court and factions emerged, the King gave her the Marquisate of Pembroke, in her own right and its right of primogeniture for heirs of her body. This position holds a female equivalent, but the ceremony's use of male terminology, marquis, instead of the related feminine title, marchioness, stands out. Previous English queens used their femininity to gain agency, or used masculine actions. Anne appeared to use her femininity until she reached the cusp of power, and turned it around. This masculine title gave her rights as a member of the landed nobility. Her title made her a lord and masculine adjectives occur often in her description.

Anne's break with gender boundaries in her pursuit of royalty preserved several references to her masculinity. The initial description of Anne as handsome reads differently when paired with William Latimer's *Chronicklle of Anne Bulleyne* and George Wyatt's *Life of Queen Anne Boleigne*. Both of these portray Anne as a prince, or a "princely lady" and that her work exceeded that of a queen.⁶⁸ Defined in masculine terms, Anne held the opportunity to grasp at real power. Her struggle between a princely reputation and the Court's expectations of

⁶⁷ Hall, 788.

⁶⁸ George Wyatt, "Life of Queen Anne Boleigne", reprinted in Norton, 19.

the Queen as the ideal virtuous woman mirror her struggle between her interest in courtly love and the reintroduced morality. ‘Princely’ implied agency and that ultimately set her as a rival monarch. As an Englishwoman, her time as a mistress lost her the respect foreign born queens held when they entered a marriage virtually unknown. Women were needed as complements, but when she overstepped her boundaries, she opened the possibility of equal punishment.

Henry’s personal life needed to surpass any reproof, so Anne’s pregnancy, *pre nuptias*, offered dangerous consequences for their public image. To counteract this, the two crafted a lavish affair for Anne’s coronation and she adopted the motto of “the moost happi” on her coronation medal. On May 23rd, 1533, the Archbishop officially proclaimed Anne’s marriage valid. With a valid marriage, coronation rhetoric removed Henry’s role from her promotion as it declared her new role came “from God, and not of man”.⁶⁹



Figure 2 - Coronation medal, 16c. - ©Trustees of the British Museum

Anne’s new role of queenship shows strongest in the details of her coronation ceremony. Planned after the Appeals Act, that declared England an independent empire, Anne faced the

⁶⁹ Nicholas Udall, *English Verses and Ditties at the Coronation Procession of Queen Anne Boleyn*, ed. Edward Arber, *An English Garner: Ingatherings from our History and Literature*, (London, 1877), 53.

need to legitimize this claim, herself, and alter her status from a mistress to a queen.⁷⁰ Her procession received extreme detail in its various records. The royal procession constructed each aspect of the ceremony to ensure that the Queen's divinity and legitimacy rang true. She sailed down the Thames surrounded by at least one hundred and twenty large barges, and some two hundred smaller ones. Anne's coronation would mark the last of Henry's reign

Flanked by the foremost peers, Anne,

...then came... in a litter of white cloth of golde not couered not bayled which was led by ii. Palferies clade in white damaske doune to the ground head & all, led by her foteman. She had on a circot of white clothe of Tyssue & a mantle of the same furred with Ermyne, her here haged doune, but on her head she had a coyffe with a circlet about it ful of riche stones.⁷¹

Four key aspects of her coronation stand out: her entry to the city with over three hundred barges; the French involvement; her garments; and the similarities to Henry's own coronation through Hall's record set her apart from her predecessors. The level of detail recorded on her ceremony presents a huge difference as Anne's coronation record builds off of Elizabeth's few lines and Catherine's brief paragraph. Anne, like Woodville and Elizabeth of York, enjoyed singular attention on the event, but the detail of her coronation outstripped even the King's before her.

Anne's entry to the city progressed through a series of attractions, poetry readings, music, and pageants that use imagery of youth, divinity, and fertility. As she neared Westminster, Apollo and Calliope waited on Mount Parnassus to sing her praises while flanked by the other muses. The presence of these two major figures from Antiquity imbue the ceremony with hints

⁷⁰ The Appeals Acts, 3 24 Hen. VIII, c. 12, in Statutes, III, 427–29 (p. 427), found in Stewart Mottram, "Royal Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Empire: Anne Boleyn's 1533 Entry", *Empire and Nation in Early English Renaissance Literature*, 2008, 67.

⁷¹ Hall, 802-803.

of prophecy and truth, and Calliope, the head muse, represented Anne's favorite pastime, wisdom, and assertiveness.⁷² Next, her procession continues to a scene of a castle built under a heavenly sky.⁷³ From this visage, a white falcon – Anne's device - descends to a stump growing white and red roses, followed by an angel who crowns the bird.⁷⁴ The procession ends with further references to her fertility in a choir a third scene which displayed Saint Anne, the Virgin Mary's mother, surrounded by her children .

The second key aspect of Anne's coronation correlates with evidence from another document on the foreign involvement in the affair. *The manner of the tryumphe of Caleys and Bulleyn: and the noble tryumphaunt coronacyon of Quene Anne, wyfe unto the most noble kynge Henry VIII*, marked not only Frenchmen in Anne's procession, but also Venetians.⁷⁵ For the coronation of a woman born in England, the level of French involvement in the ceremony stands out in the *Chronicle's* pages. Neither Woodville, York, Henry, nor, Catherine's coronation records preserve any foreign presence. Catherine, who logically held the most foreign representation, does not enter the *Chronicle* as heralded by Spanish envoys. While possible that Hall considered Catherine's Spanish dignitaries' presence obvious, it seems odd that he would choose to include the French presences in Anne's retinue.⁷⁶

⁷² Hugh Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homeric Hymns*, (London: William Heineman, 1920), 85.

⁷³ See appendix, figure 3.

⁷⁴ Worde, 28.

⁷⁵ Wynkyn de Worde, *The manner of the tryumphe of Caleys and Bulleyn: and The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon of Quene Anne, wyfe unto the most noble kynge Henry VIII*, 1533, ed. Edmund Goldsmid, (Edinburgh, 1884), 25.

⁷⁶ Hall, 800.

Anne's clothing, though similar to all queen's coronation robes, stands out in its fabric and the crown used in the ceremony. Catherine's dress largely consisted of white satin, a costlier material than Anne's damask, represents a traditional gown that does not stand out. Anne's choice of white damask gave depth to the white fabric, which constituted a fashionable choice that marked her as a different type of ruler from her predecessors. To add extra value, ermine lined Anne's dress. Ermine fur represented purity due to its rarity and its white color. While the crown used in her predecessor's ceremonies go unrecorded, Anne and Henry both entered the monarchy with the crown of Saint Edward the Confessor.⁷⁷ This last detail highlights the rhetoric in her coronation even further as she wore the crown used to crown kings since William the Conqueror. Anne's coronation marked the first time a woman ever wore the traditional crown.

The key conclusion from these aspects of Anne's coronation lies in her coronation's similarity to Henry's coronation, not her queenly predecessors'. His entry into London came flanked by the country's top peers. Behind him, Catherine followed in a litter with the lower lords, knights, esquires, and gentlemen. Anne entered the city with the same peers as Henry, and she entered with even more grandeur. Throughout both events, servants lined the streets with precious cloth. However, Anne entered with a retinue of barges that outmatches even Henry's own entry. Inside of Westminster, the ceremonies between Henry and Anne align again as the narrative focuses on their divine right as monarch and they receive Saint Edward's Crown. Catherine's actual ceremony within Westminster entirely disappeared into the narrative of Henry's coronation.

⁷⁷ Hall, 803.

Anne's uncanny similarities to Henry VIII in royal presentation set her up as a rival in power. His contribution to her public persona through her elaborate coronation compounded with her own image as a French *demoiselle d'honneur* to clash against his own representation. The coronation records go into far further detail about her coronation than Henry's and she seemed to hold a strong amount of foreign support despite her Englishness. The personal growth and personal connections she forged in Brussels and France easily could create envy from the ease she gained favor from the French when Henry faced losses of lands from the same people. Similarly, Anne's family experienced legitimization issues in their deal with Ormonde. Though these events occurred well before her coronation, her unreconciled behavior and reputation between mistress and wife in her reign

In conjunction with radical laws and policies, Anne's tenure as Queen also shows new religious involvement. Former queens, like Catherine, focused on self-improvement, alms, women's issues, Catholic rites, and prayer. Anne adopted these aspects and more. Her preferred religious activities focused on education. Her circulation of translated religious texts and the New Testament; dictation of high standards of behavior similar to Vives' instructions; and worked to aid imprisoned and exiled reformers through intercession, repeatedly show up in sources on her time at Court. She pushed forward, involving herself in the affairs of several reformers condemned to death. Nicolas Bourbon would write higher praises of her, Butts, and Cromwell than anyone else in England.⁷⁸ Bourbon named the famous Reformers he encountered during his time in England: Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Cranmer, William Latimer, William Butts, and another more peculiar name, Anne Boleyn.⁷⁹ The involvement of these French and

⁷⁸ Nicolas Bourbon, *Nugae (Bagatelles)* ed. Sylvie Laigneau-Fontaine. (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2008), 26.

English reformers and courtiers drew a faction which Anne easily fits into. In addition, the Court's most vehement Catholics, Thomas More, Eustace Chapuys, and Bishop John Fisher detested her.⁸⁰

Anne's efforts to conform to the period's standards came far too late as early another young girl at Court used Anne's tactics against her in 1536. Jane Seymour orchestrated a public image that cast her as the direct opposite of the Queen. An externally submissive wife proved easier to manage than an established rival. With Anne's help in the simplification of divorce in England, she eased the process Henry could use to remarry even while his current wife lived. Their arguments escalated both in private and public, which made Anne's public rivalry with the King bar her from the same grace extended to the resistant Catherine.

The "Frenchwoman born" did not reconcile her new role and her former.⁸¹ As shown with both the courtly love tradition and Arthurian lore, passion came from disposable mistresses. Wives needed to offer stability and partnership. Prior to Henry's divorce, marriages seemed impermeable and mistresses remained disposable. Anne did not fit either role afforded to her, so she created her own. Whereas previous queens challenged their husbands privately, Anne's public conflicts realized her quip of *Anna sans tête*.⁸² Perhaps the record most telling of her

⁷⁹ Eric Ives, *A Frenchman at the Court of Anne Boleyn*, *History Today*; Aug 1998; 48.8, 21.

⁸⁰ Wyatt, 19.

⁸¹ Lancelot de Carles, *Epistre contenant le proces criminel fait à l'encontre de la royne Anne Boullant d'Angleterre*. 1546. Bibliothèque Nationale de France Gallica. Res. Ye-3668. 3.

⁸² Eustace Chapuys to Granvelle, June 6, 1536, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ed. James Gairdner, vol.10, January-June 1536 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 1070.

involvement in the affairs of states comes from October 24, 1536 as Henry threatens her successor Jane Seymour to “not medle in my affairs”.⁸³

The events of the trial cement the rejection of her approach to queenship. Greeted with kindness, Anne soon found herself abandoned by her husband and her allies imprisoned without a reason. Determined to wipe out the Boleyn circle from Court, Henry Norris, Francis Weston, Marc Smeaton, William Brereton, Thomas Wyatt, Richard Page, and her brother, George, entered the tower without any knowledge of the charges against them. All but Wyatt and Page died from the charges of adultery, high treason, and incest. For Anne, however, hope remained. Though she seemed hysterical in the Tower, the surety on the scaffold seemed as if she was awaiting pardon, as Arthur pardoned Guinevere.

For a queen depicted as a ‘prince’, isolation by going to “anonre” proved impossible.⁸⁴ The possibility of Boleyn’s escape to a nunnery cropped up and she held out hope for it until her final moments.⁸⁵ By assuming masculine traits, individualized power, unique personal imagery to construct her own narrative of divine right, and by raising her family above even his own, she became Henry’s rival. Anne’s death leaves English history the record of a queen depicted by male terminology by her peers when writing about her and by her place in the peerage with a

⁸³Edward, Earl of Derby to Cardinal Du Bellay, October 24, 1536, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 11, July-December 1536. Ed. James Gairdner, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888), 860.

⁸⁴ William Kingston to Cromwell, May 3, 1536, 'Henry VIII: May 1536, 1-10', in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 10, January-June 1536, ed. James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 329-349. See also, William Kingston to Cromwell, May 16, 1536, 'Henry VIII: May 1536, 16-20', *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 10, January-June 1536, ed. James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 371-391.

⁸⁵ William Kingston to Cromwell, May 3, 1536, 'Henry VIII: May 1536, 1-10', in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 10, January-June 1536, ed. James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 329-349.

male title. However, her alliance's shared fate wiped out positive portrayals of her time as queen and allowed Henry VIII to strong-arm his rival from history.

Anne failed to adhere to silence or the expectations of a queen. Imprisoned in the same chamber that she previously waited in for her coronation, Anne chattered nervously and Sir William Kingston's letters depicted what seemed like a nervous breakdown. Despite the tension, she calculated a careful scaffold speech that would allow time for Henry to stop the swordsman.⁸⁶ Accusations against Anne mirrored those against Guinevere, however Anne addressed the judges directly. As she waited in the Queen's chambers in the Tower, her jailor Kingston recorded her as steadfast in her belief that she could escape.⁸⁷ Precedent sets that as the norm, women like Eleanor, Margaret, Woodville, and even Elizabeth of York faced isolation as their power waned or they became inconvenient. Anne's unique approach to ruling by approaching a female office with masculine rhetoric established a Court that intrigued many scholars in the period. By means of her efforts to better England and the Court, she established herself not as a Queen Consort, but as a rival monarch to be reckoned with.

Why did the Tudor dynasty open the death penalty for women? As courtly love normalized it created a tension in marital relationships. Through its ripple effect women gained power in a patriarchal Western society through their use of sexuality; adoption of masculine rhetoric; addition to love in marriage; and insistence on marital fidelity. Anne marks a new

⁸⁶ "Good Christen people, I am come hether to dye, for accordyng to the lawe, and by the lawe I am iudged to dye, and therefore I wyll speake nothyng against it. I am come hether to accuse no man, nor to speak any thyng of that whereof I am accused and condempned to dye, but I pray God saue the king and send him long to reigne ouer you, for a gentler nor a more mercyfull prince was there neuer: and to me he was euer a good, a gentle and soueraigne lorde. And if any persone will medle of my cause, I require them to iudge the best. And thus I take my leue of the worlde and of you all, and I heartely desyre you all to pray for me. O Lord haue mercy on me, to God I comende my soule." Hall, 819.

⁸⁷ Kingston, 371-391.

change as she bends the rules to remove a queen for herself, and her ability to do so sets her power against Henry's. The lessons Anne offers on queenship would not escape her successors. Each successor acts directly to avoid comparison with her, despite enjoying the progress she made for their tenure as Queen. Until Elizabeth I, England would not see such pageantry and strength asserted in masculine terms to gain equality. Anne's passions, involvement, and intelligence altered queenship to form it into an office noted for its self-drive and craftable socio-political persona. Queens no longer could return to an existence as mere tools for legitimacy.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Anne's failure to reconcile her sexuality, public representation, her family, marital expectations both set her apart from her predecessors and condemned her to death. Her identity as a mistress eliminated the chance for her long term role as queen, due to her lack of a virtuous image. To pursue her potential, she crafted a third approach to bypass her lack of royal blood and tarnished reputation. Unfortunately, Henry rejected her for her efforts. Though the roughly four hundred and forty years between the courtly love movement and Anne's death, women developed means of agency that kept them safe from execution that did not survive the English Reformation of the sixteenth century. By her internal conflict of social roles, she faced the reality of her disregard for the slowly developed concept of early modern queenship.

By joining the conversation centered on early modern women's acceptance and use of their femininity as a tool to gain power, scholars effect a massive body of academic research done over the past forty five years. This examination calls for further research on these women for their accomplishments and ambition in terms of their own agency and actions against many pieces that still argue early modern women only achieved by means of a close male source. Early participants in women's history centered on the many extant Tudor sources, successfully restored women to the early modern historical conversation. Further additions to the dialogue that give credit to these women's accomplishments allows the discipline to grow more metered and creates a better research environment to "iudge... the best".⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Hall, 819.

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APPENDIX



Figure 1 - Artist Unknown, *Anne Boleyn*, 16 c., NPG 668 ©National Portrait Gallery, London



Figure 2 - Coronation medal, 16c. - ©Trustees of the British Museum



Figure 3 - Hans Holbein the Younger, *Apollo and the nine Muses on Mount Parnassus*, 1533,
©Berlin State Museums (ArtStor 29680 ART300818)

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