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DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

ANNE BOLEYN: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

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2015-2016

ABSTRACT

Anne Boleyn, the second wife of king Henry VIII, was one of the most controversial queens of the English crown. Historians and writers from all over the world have been trying for decades to depict a reliable historical approach in order to understand the character of Anne Boleyn and her influence on Henry and his reign. With the purpose of portraying a credible image of Henry's second consort, this dissertation covers an analysis of three books from three renowned historians in order to validate if it is possible to know who Anne Boleyn was.

Keywords: Anne Boleyn, queen, Henry VIII, historical, image, analysis.

RESUMEN

Ana Bolena, la segunda mujer de Enrique VIII, fue una de las reinas más polémicas de la historia inglesa. Historiadores y escritores de todo el mundo han intentado durante décadas proporcionar una visión histórica lo más auténtica posible para lograr entender la figura de Ana Bolena y su influencia en Enrique y su reinado. Con el objetivo de representar una imagen fiable de la segunda mujer de Enrique, este trabajo empieza con un análisis de la sociedad y la política presentes en el siglo dieciséis, prosigue con una breve explicación del reinado de Enrique VIII y una biografía de Ana Bolena, y termina con el análisis de tres libros escritos por tres historiadores reconocidos para poder verificar si es posible saber quién fue Ana Bolena.

Palabras clave: Ana Bolena, reina, Enrique VIII, histórica, imagen, análisis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
STATE OF THE ART	6
1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	7
1.1. Tudor England	7
1.1.1. Society.....	7
1.1.2. Politics.....	8
1.2. The reign of Henry VIII	9
1.3. Anne Boleyn	10
1.3.1. Who was Anne Boleyn?	10
1.3.2. Anne's Life in the English court	11
1.3.3. Anne's marriage and motherhood.....	11
1.3.4. Anne's fall.....	12
2. <i>Enrique VIII y sus Seis Mujeres</i>, by Francis Hackett	13
2.1. Anne's childhood	13
2.2. Anne's life in the English court	14
2.3. Anne as queen of England.....	17
3. <i>The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn</i>, by Retha Warnicke	21
3.1. Anne's life in the English court	22
3.2. Anne as queen of England.....	26
3.3. Anne's fall.....	29
4. <i>The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: the Most Happy</i>, by Eric Ives.....	31
4.1. Anne's life in the English court	32
4.2. Anne as queen of England: motherhood.....	35
4.3. Anne's fall.....	35
CONCLUSIONS	37
WORKS CITED.....	39

INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of years have passed since the government of the Tudors was established in England and even nowadays people are still conscious of their power. However, among all the renowned kings and queens that belonged to this dynasty, there is one that has become the most popular: Henry VIII. The reason that makes him so memorable is not only related to his kingship, but also to his private life and the several wives he had.

One of them, Anne Boleyn, has attracted historiographers' attention in all the ages. As his second spouse she had an important influence in both the king and the English court. However, her personality and her manners still remain controversial and hard to portray although her figure has captivated the interest and imagination of historians and writers over time.

Several well-known biographical books about Henry VIII have been written. Some of them cover deep investigations about his government and influential people around him, but some others prefer to focus on his controversial love life. Nevertheless, Anne remains historians' favourite wife, a fact that leads us to an extensive collection of books related to her life and personality, like *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (2009) and *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (1991) by Alison Weir; *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII*, by David Starkey (2004); or *The Wives of Henry VIII*, by Antonia Fraser (1992). And let's not forget novelistic books like *Mademoiselle Boleyn* (2007) and *The Secret Diary of Anne Boleyn* (1998) by Robin Maxwell; or *The Other Boleyn Girl* by Philippa Gregory (2003). Despite all these thorough works and research, historians do not seem to agree in order to depict the figure of Anne Boleyn, her life, and her influence in 16th century England, so the question remains who Anne Boleyn was.

Thus, the objective of this paper is to look critically at several works and analyse the way Anne is depicted in them. My purpose is not to prove which one is right and which one is wrong, but to offer different points of view and examine them in order to verify if there is a possibility of getting to know the real Anne Boleyn.

To accomplish the aim of this dissertation, I have selected three different books that were published in three different decades: Francis Hackett's *Henry VIII (and His Six Wives)*, written in the thirties; Retha M. Warnicke's *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, written in the late eighties; and Eric Ives's *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, written in

the 21st century. Since Hackett's book is an old one, I have not been able to access an original copy and I have had to work with a version in Spanish.

The reasons why I have selected these authors are their professional careers and the period in which their books were written.

Francis Hackett (1883-1962) was a famous Irish writer who became an expert in politics, religion, diplomacy and wars of the 16th century. Retha Warnicke (1939-?) is an American historiographer and professor of History at Arizona State University. Professor Eric Ives (1931-2012) was a famous historian specialized in political, religious and legal aspects of the Tudor period, specifically in Henry VIII's government. Since they were written in different decades, it is important to take into account that the approaches of each book might differ.

To conclude this introduction I am going to explain the structure of my dissertation.

Firstly, I am going to develop a theoretical framework in which I am going to discuss briefly 16th century England, the figure of King Henry VIII, and Anne Boleyn's biographical profile.

Secondly, I am going to develop three sections, one for each of the authors I have selected and I am going to analyse the most important features of the Anne Boleyn they show.

Finally, I am going to develop a conclusion, which will include a brief comparison of the three different authors in order to provide an answer to the previous question: is it possible to know who Anne Boleyn really was?

STATE OF THE ART

The Tudor dynasty government has turned into a particularly interesting period for historiographers. As a result, there is plenty of bibliography related to the entire Tudor period and its consequent changes in government, politics, and religion. *Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I*, by Peter Ackroyd (2014); *The Tudors: Kings and Queens of England's Golden Age*, by Jane Bingham (2012); *Tudor England*, by John Guy (1988); and *The Tudor Regime*, by Penry Williams (1981) are some of the books that include great research about the different governments and politics established during the Tudor era, and the impact caused in England.

Nonetheless, because of his continuous love affairs and his peculiar manners concerning the government of his reign, most part of the bibliographical material is dedicated to Henry VIII. Some of the most remarkable ones are *King Henry VIII*, by G.W.O Woodward (1969); *Henry VIII: man and monarch* by David Starkey (2009); and *Henry VIII: The King and His Court*, by Alison Weir (2002). These three books cover not only Henry's personality, but also his government and everything related to his life in terms of politics and religion. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the enormous quantity of books related to his love life and wives. *The Six Wives & Many Mistresses of Henry VIII*, by Amy Licence (2015); *The Wives of Henry VIII*, by Antonia Fraser (1993); and *The Wives of Henry the Eight and the Parts they Played in History*, by Martin Hume (2015) cover the lives of Henry's consorts and mistresses and their influence both in the king and the English court.

As I have mentioned before, above all Henry's wives, Anne Boleyn remains the most interesting. On the one hand, because of the lack of information about her, a lot of books have tended to focus on her controversial love life, resulting in surrealistic novels like *The Kiss of the Concubine: a story of Anne Bolen*, by Judith Arnopp (2016), in which the character of Anne Boleyn tells her own story, or *To Die for: A Novel of Anne Boleyn*, by Sandra Byrd (2011), in which the main character is Meg Wyatt, Anne Boleyn's best friend. On the other hand, several authors' have tried to reproduce her life as faithfully as possible, resulting in books like *Anne Boleyn: A Chapter of the English History 1527-1536*, by Paul Friedmann (2016); or *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, by Susan Bordo (2014). Finally, books like *Je Anne Boleyn (Vol. 1, 2)*, by Sandra Vasoli (2016), try to recreate her love life using a realistic point of view.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anne Boleyn is destined to be the main subject of this work but in order to get to that specific point, it is necessary to provide background information by having a look at the historical period in which she lived.

1.1. Tudor England

We consider Tudor England the period in which the Tudor family governed England. It started in 1485 after the War of the Roses and the first Tudor monarch was Henry VII . His eldest son, Arthur Tudor, died in 1502, seven years before him, so Henry VII was succeeded by his younger son, Henry VIII, after his death in 1509. Henry VIII died in 1547, year in which his only legitimate son, Edward VI, became king being barely ten years old. Edward died in 1553 and was succeeded by Mary I, Henry VIII's eldest daughter, who ruled England until her death in 1558. The last Tudor monarch was Henry VIII's second daughter, Elizabeth I, who governed from 1558 until her death in 1603, leaving no offspring.

1.1.1. Society

Three main activities occupied the lives of sixteenth century people: economy, marriage and childbirth, and the three of them were inevitably connected. It is important to know that “the word economy described the running of the household, not the commercial behaviour of the nation” (Erickson 90). Marriage was an institution destined to cover every issue concerning the economic life of the couple. This means that a marriage was only arranged according to the benefits provided from both parts, who “were obliged to bring property -a ‘portion’, sometimes for women called a ‘dowry’” (Erickson 90). Nevertheless, even though marriage was the most common goal, it does not mean that it was necessarily obligatory. As a matter of fact, there were two options available. Firstly, they had the religious alternative, as Erickson points out: “In the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the religious life was still a possibility, although the monastic population was declining” (96). Secondly, they could simply choose to remain single:

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both men and women who never married lived in households of their own, as well as sometimes in the households of siblings (...) For some this may have been a permanent arrangement, for others only a stage in the life cycle before they moved on to marriage (Erickson 96).

Regarding childbirth, Erickson claims that it was completely directed towards women since they had to be in charge of everything related to the children: "Child-rearing, like labor, delivery, and nursing, was a female domain. Changing, cleaning, spoon-feeding, minding, toilet training, and early education were all undertaken by the mother, elder sisters, or servants" (102).

1.1.2. Politics

Before specifically analysing the kingship of Henry VIII, it is necessary to have a brief look at the political changes that took place in the period.

During the sixteenth century,

Renaissance monarchy was personal and patrimonial. It was personal because it centred on the king and his Court. Nothing is more vivid than images of Henry VII and Henry VIII sitting in their chamber and Privy Chamber, governing their dominions with the assistance of their household servants. It was patrimonial because it was financed primarily by income received from the Crown lands. (Guy 219)

According to Guy, the medieval conventions of "the duties of the king were threefold: to defend the realm, to uphold the Church, especially against heresy; and to administer justice impartially" even though "they were given a new lease of life by early sixteenth-century humanists who took them over and refashioned them to their own ends" (219). Among the characteristics of this new interpretation, which included "dynastic security, territorial centralization, the subordination of the nobility, increased revenues, control of local 'franchises' and feudal privileges, and the augmentation of regal power", the most important ones concerned the king and the Church (Guy 219). According to the new conventions, the humanists claimed that "their [the rulers'] clergy were as much an integral part of their kingdoms as the laity and that they had the right to regulate Church

and clergy in the interests of policy of government" (Guy 219-220). This not only meant that the king could have control over the Church, but also implied that "the clergy's jurisdiction was confined to purely 'spiritual' affairs" and that "the Pope had no authority to legislate for the kingdom" (Guy 220).

1.2. The reign of Henry VIII

Henry's ascent to throne took place in 1509 when he was barely eighteen years old. He decided to marry Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow, just to keep his father's last will (Elton 70). Contemporaries were ready for the change of king and had higher expectations. Henry VII might have been a great king and it would not be appropriate to doubt his methods were necessary to restore the country. After all, he managed to reign over a country that had gone through 150 years of war. However, people missed to live in a country to be proud of in matters of glory and fame. Henry VII was a peaceful king and people expected Henry to be more willing to battle (Elton 70). According to Starkey, he had, in fact, the appearance of a strong and magnificent leader, not only because of his physical attributes, but also his well-known intelligence (11). Nevertheless, one of his multiple defects was his lack of interest in the political and administrative matters of his kingship. According to Starkey, "even in an ordinary court day Henry was usually willing to apply himself seriously to business in the mid-morning while he heard mass, and again late at night after supper" (13). He preferred to have his own group of close subjects to do all those activities in his place, for he barely read or wrote any letter or put some interest in the administrative matters of the kingship (Starkey 13). Because of that, it is necessary to mention that the English government's forces that helped the king were "the administration, centering on the Council, and the royal household or court" (Starkey 17). The administration was in charge of the financial issues and the court was, literally, "the King's eyes in the counties, in the army, and in diplomacy" (Starkey 20). Nevertheless, the most important force during the early years of Henry's kingship was gathered in the Council, managed by cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Henry proclaimed him not only member of the council, but also his one and only minister, which means that he had the power to rule the country in the name of the king. A position as prominent as this only made his arrogance grow up, and

he took no time in investing all the money he could in luxury and vice (Elton 74-75). Basically, Wolsey had control over all the important tasks of the country in matters of administration and politics and he proceeded to follow the example of the previous king, Henry VII, monopolizing and guarding the royal favour (Starkey 29). His position only lasted until Henry encountered his real great matter: the issue of the divorce.

Going back to his ascent to the throne, Henry married his brother's wife, Catherine. He had a daughter with her, Mary, but years went by with no sign of a male heir who lasted more than a few days. In addition, she had several miscarriages. Generally, the topic of Henry's divorce is directly related to Anne Boleyn, which means that she became the one to blame, but the truth is that the biggest concern of the king was having a male heir, and this was probably his biggest desire during his entire life. Maybe Anne accelerated the process, but it does not mean she was the centre of it, at least not in Henry's view. Between 1525 and 1527, Henry fell in love with Anne, who was at that moment one of Catherine's ladies in the court (Elton 100). Henry began again to consider if his marriage was completely valid. He had already questioned what was wrong when his wife could not give him a son, but the appearance of Anne seemed a good excuse for him to start wondering if he should really do something to solve the problem (Elton 101). For the first time, it looked like Henry had a real purpose to accomplish but this decision was the one that ended with Wolsey's days of glory. Basically, the cardinal was in charge of obtaining the consent of the pope to dissolve Henry's marriage with Catherine. The main issue was that Emperor Charles V, Catherine's nephew, had a good alliance with the pope, which made him deny Wolsey a papal dissolution. Wolsey's failure and the pressure of his enemies were enough for the king to lose his trust in the cardinal and he was immediately replaced by Thomas Cromwell, "Wolsey's former legal factotum" (Starkey 101).

1.3. Anne Boleyn

1.3.1 Who was Anne Boleyn?

From a general perspective Anne Boleyn is recalled as the second wife of Henry VIII, the king of England, and the mother of Elizabeth I, who became the famous Protestant queen several years later. Anne's specific date of birth is still a topic of discussion among

historiographers but most of them agree that she was born sometime between 1501 and 1509 (Toscani). When she was just a child, her father, Thomas Boleyn, set an arrangement to send her to the French court for she could obtain an appropriate education until 1521 or 1522 when she had to go back to England and became part of Henry VIII's court (Woodward 8).

1.3.2 Anne's life in the English court

In 1522, Anne was called to England for marriage and business purposes and during that time she did not catch the king's attention. Her father was planning her marriage with an Irish young man named James Butler, which would have implied political advantages for him and the king, but the bond never succeeded and Anne then started to feel attracted to Lord Percy, the son of the Earl of Northumberland. Some records claim that the relationship was an inconvenient that her father solved by sending her to Ireland until she was called again to go back to the English court to be one of Catherine of Aragon's ladies (Toscani). By 1526, when Anne was serving Catherine, her sister Mary was Henry's mistress but Anne refused to follow the same path and did not give up on Henry until he guaranteed their future marriage (Woodward 8). This only encouraged him to hurry up looking for the divorce from Catherine but the pope, pressured by Emperor Charles V, Catherine's nephew, denied Henry the annulment. Finally, on January 1533, Henry decided to marry Anne anyway, for she was already pregnant (Toscani). Catherine and Henry's marriage was dissolved three months later by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and in June Anne was crowned queen of England (Toscani).

1.3.3 Anne's marriage and motherhood

Anne and Henry's first and only child, Elizabeth I, was born on 7 September 1533. He could not hide his disappointment because the main reason that had pushed him to seek the divorce was the possibility of marrying a woman who could give birth to a male heir (Woodward 9). From that moment the relationship between Anne and Henry worsened. Anne's famous temperament and savage tongue annoyed the king and he began to look for a mistress, which only aggravated Anne's nature and insecurities. Nevertheless, as Woodward states, her greatest failure was the miscarriage of a son in January 1536 (9).

1.3.4. Anne's fall

The miscarriage was the last straw and Henry, thinking of marrying his new mistress, Jane Seymour, accused Anne of witchcraft, adultery and incest. Five men including her own brother were declared guilty and executed and Anne was beheaded on 19 May 1536 (Toscani). Nowadays Anne's guilt remains doubtful and some support the possibility of false accusations so Henry could marry again and finally have a male heir. Accepting this theory, Anne would have been executed for not being able to give birth to a male child.

2. *Enrique VIII y sus Seis Mujeres*, by Francis Hackett

As it has been previously mentioned, Anne Boleyn is commonly represented as the trigger for the divorce between Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII but Francis Hackett's investigation is not focused on the role of Anne Boleyn during this issue. His research covers the different periods of Anne Boleyn's life, not from the perspective of the activities of a manipulative or influential woman in the English court, but more like Anne Boleyn's personality and love life. To achieve that aim, Hackett analyses each period to explain the temperamental nature that she developed through the years and the reasons that pushed her to grow up into the unusual woman she was. For Hackett, the most decisive and influential periods were three: her childhood, her life in the English Court (excluding the divorce issue), and her life as queen of England. This does not mean that Hackett does not consider Henry's divorce and Anne's fall as something important, but these three specific periods are the ones which shaped Anne's character, and these are also the ones that had a major influence in the woman she became.

2.1. Anne's childhood

The first important fact that Hackett takes into account is the date of Anne's birth. As it has been mentioned before, historians are still trying to figure out the year in which Anne Boleyn was born, but Hackett favours 1503, 1505 and 1507 as Mary, George, and Anne's dates of birth respectively (135). According to Hackett, the age gap between the Boleyn siblings might have been important at some point during their childhood, especially the age gap between Mary and Anne. Both sisters were sent to the French Court around 1517 when they were sixteen and twelve years old. Soon, Mary found out this new world full of young, passionate and fascinating men and developed a coquettish personality that allowed her to intimate with a lot of these gentlemen:

La mayor –María- era una criatura alegre y expansiva, aficionada a intimar con los hombres y concedora desde muy temprano de la conveniencia de atraer y agradar a los hombres o a resignarse a un completo aislamiento (...). La mayor de las hermanas Boleyn era, sin duda, una de esas mujeres dulces y atrayentes, para las que resulta difícil la negativa, que son dúctiles y amables, se enredan como la hiedra; pero se desprenden fácilmente. (136)

In Hackett's words, Mary's flirtatious behaviour possibly provoked some kind of influence in the young and intelligent Anne, who took the failure of Mary's reputation as an example of something preventable in the future: "El afán de ser amada, tantas veces demostrado por la mayor de las hermanas Boleyn, sirvió de ejemplo a la pequeña, que era, además, de una gran perspicacia e inteligencia" (136).

A couple of years later, Mary returned to England and caught Henry's attention, but Anne stayed, feeling more and more comfortable with her life in the French Court. She considered life in England too monotonous and bucolic for a young girl like her and she definitely was influenced by the Renaissance period in which France was involved: "El Renacimiento vibraba en sensaciones y tonalidades distintas. Ana hallábase saturada de las impresiones adquiridas en Francia y no podía aceptar el punto de vista monótono y algo bucólico que distinguía a la nobleza de Inglaterra" (137). However, she had to return to England two years later, when she was fifteen. According to Hackett, in the 16th century, it was considered the age in which women seemed more provocative but taking into account that Anne had already learned the lesson from her sister's behaviour, it was not something she was willing to waste so hastily (138).

2.2. Anne's life in the English court

When Anne arrived to the English Court, her sister was having an affair with Henry. While Mary's charms and reputation gained his attention, Anne, on the other hand, did not cause the same first impact on the king. He wanted to use her as a pawn for his political interests, which caused him to try to plan a successful marriage between Anne and an Irish man called James Butler (138). However, Anne was not interested in this possible bond and Hackett claims she was the one who rejected marrying him: "Para ella era preferible mil veces seguir siendo dama de la Reina y quedarse soltera o ingresar en un convento que casarse con James Butler, el pelirrojo irlandés. Decidió, pues, quedarse en la Corte y aprovechar lo que la vida tuviera a bien ofrecerle" (138).

From the author's perspective, this period was particularly crucial regarding Anne's young spirit. After rejecting marrying Butler she met a young man named Percy, who was the son of the duke of Northumberland, and they fell in love. However, cardinal

Wolsey and Henry, disposed to keep using Anne to favour their own interests, did not allow them to go on with their relationship and obliged Percy to marry Mary Talbot, for she had been Percy's previous fiancée before he met Anne (138-140). The news of Percy's marriage caused Anne a pain she had never suffered before. After all, she had fallen deeply in love with the young Percy and as Hackett remarks, it was her first contact with the ambitious world of the English court. For someone like Anne, so young and temperamental, it was a blow hard to forget:

Aquel primer choque con el mundo de la ambición brutal y de la religión del poder no podía por menos herir en lo más hondo a una criatura de la edad, el temperamento y el espíritu de Ana Bolena. Todos sus amigos sabían que ella había entregado su corazón al presumido, soberbio y ligero galán que algún día había de ser el noble más poderoso del norte de Inglaterra, y que ahora se le ordenaba a ella que abandonase la Corte y se marchara a vivir con su padre una temporada.(141)

Basically, Anne Boleyn was told that the love of her life, whom she probably had intentions to marry sooner or later, was already engaged and had to leave her for good. That can be considered a lesson as important as the one she received from her sister when they were living in the French court, and Anne Boleyn grew up into the strong and intelligent woman who got to marry the king of England:

Y en aquel momento dejó de ser una niña para convertirse en una mujer endurecida por la lucha y dispuesta a no olvidar jamás el sacrificio que la vida le había exigido, ni la desventaja que suponía el tener por padre a un "simple caballero", ni la fuerza arrolladora de los mandatos de Su Gracia el Cardenal.(141)

After having been sent to France again until the end of the Battle of Pavia, she came back to England and met the poet Thomas Wyatt, who was one of the men accused of being involved in an extramarital relationship with the future queen. A previous relationship between them cannot be considered as something that truly happened, and according to Hackett, the passion that Wyatt felt towards Anne was something

completely unilateral. In the eyes of the poet, she was a fascinating human being, but she did not seem to have felt the same towards the young man: “A través de cierta composición, ejemplo de la modalidad poética de la época de los Tudor, lógrase adivinar el estado de ánimo a que había conducido a Wyatt su pasión por la irresistible doncella, que le había fascinado para abandonarle luego” (141).

Apart from the fact that Wyatt was probably deeply in love with the young Boleyn, he does not seem to have caused any kind of influence in her life.

The king noticed Anne’s presence for the first time in 1526 (142). Once he got tired of Anne’s sister, the young girl became his new obsession. At this point of her life, Anne had already learned the hard way to play her cards properly. Probably Henry thought that he could use her as his new love toy but Mary’s flirty behaviour towards men and her consequent loss of reputation had become a fruitful lesson for the youngest Boleyn: “El hecho de negarse Ana Bolena a ser amante de Enrique fue el motivo de que variase totalmente el curso de la historia de Inglaterra” (145). If she had given up to his persistence, he may have never left Catherine. But the king himself and cardinal Wolsey taught her well the ambitious political game that was present in the English Court, so she seemed to have developed some kind of thirst for power too: “Pero Ana no era ninguna ramera; era una chica audaz y autoritaria que exigía el matrimonio a cambio de suser y a la que el destino arrastraba a una catástrofe” (145).

Anne and Henry exchanged letters for almost a year and in each one of them the king seemed to be more and more obsessed with her, but she kept on refusing to accept his love unless he was willing to break up any other relationship he had. The king was obstinate, but Anne was even more stubborn and her purposes were very clear. She had to be the only one for him and being the concubine of the king was definitely not one of her future plans. One day the king finally gave up on her and wrote a letter claiming that she would be his only one if she were willing to do the same for him:

Esta incertidumbre me ha privado últimamente del placer de llamaros dueña mía, ya que no me profesáis más cariño común y corriente; pero si estáis dispuesta a cumplir los deberes de una amante fiel, entregándoos en cuerpo y alma a este vuestro leal

servidor, si vuestro rigor no me lo prohíbe, yo os prometo que recibiréis, no sólo el nombre de dueña mía, sino que apartaré de mi lado a cuantas hasta ahora han competido con vos en mis pensamientos y mi afecto y me dedicaré a servirlos a vos sola.(146)

Anne's strategy worked as she had planned and Henry finally stopped trying to make her his new mistress. She wrote back her answer assuring the king that she would be his once he kept his promise, and this was the beginning of the great change in the English court and the entire kingdom (149).

The next step was to obtain the divorce, which was a tricky matter and hard to get in the 16th century. Even though Anne was one of the keys involved in the issue, Hackett focuses on the king and his struggle to be with his beloved woman. Anne had already used all her weapons to win the king's heart and the next step should be exclusively taken by her lover. The only fact that Hackett mentions about Anne and the matter of the divorce is related to her impatient nature. Since it was a long process and Anne was a temperamental woman, the slowness in its resolution originated more than one outburst:

La tensión sexual y mental en que ambos vivían estaba convirtiendo sus deseos de ver el fin de aquella interinidad en esa ansia de avanzar que siente al cabo de algún tiempo el combatiente encerrado en una trinchera- Tan desesperante lentitud provocaba en Ana súbitas explosiones de ira. (180)

2. 3. Anne as queen of England

The third and last stage that Hackett considers the most important and influential is the short period in which Anne was Queen of England. She was in the peak of her career thanks to her nonstop ambition and now the only thing she needed to do was to give Henry the male heir he always had wanted. He had already moved heaven and earth to marry Anne and prove that his previous marriage was invalid. Now he needed God to verify that he had made the right choice:

Enrique hallábase, a la verdad, en una tensión de espíritu intolerable. Dios iba a revelarle si aprobaba o no lo hecho. El nacimiento de un hijo saludable sería la declaración del mutuo valer. Cuando el Rey se había enamorado primero de Ana, había creído que ella completaría su existencia; ahora sabía que para lograr tal perfeccionamiento era preciso que le diera un hijo. Si le daba solo una hija ya no sería lo mismo (201).

This period turned out to be the beginning of Anne's fall for several reasons.

First of all, the fact that Anne gave birth to a female heir was a shock for both of them. On the one hand, Henry had put all his faith in Anne and he was convinced that the divorce had been the right solution. On the other hand, Anne was expecting to give him the only thing he was craving for. As Hackett claims, Henry knew somehow that giving birth to a daughter would change his adoration towards Anne.

Second, her incessant temperamental nature turned into something irritating for the king. She was determined to give her daughter the place she deserved, which made the Queen worsen her already evident hatred towards Henry's first daughter, Mary: "Tuvo la imprudencia de decir que si Enrique se iba en el mes de junio a Francia para ver a Francisco y ella se quedaba como Regente buscaría una razón poderosa para mandar matar a Mary" (205).

Third, her jealousy and lies. According to Hackett, in 1534 Henry was captivated by the young Jane Seymour and Anne lied to the king telling him she was pregnant again. The strategy worked until she had to tell him the truth and he simply continued with his flirtatious behaviour (207).

During the first months of 1535, Anne realized that her position was not as favourable as it had been before and she knew that, in the end, she was there thanks to the king and she could be kicked out as soon as he pleased (211). What she did not know was that her situation was even worse. Apparently, Henry had already talked to some of his counselors looking for advice if he decided to divorce again, but he dismissed the idea almost immediately when he was told he would need to go back to Catherine in a hypothetical case of divorce because she was still alive (212).

Finally, the fourth reason that contributed to Anne's fall was a miscarriage which took place in January 1536 (220). Maybe it would have been different if the baby she was

carrying had been a girl, but this time the baby was a boy, and Henry could not hide his disappointment anymore: “Ahora veo bien claro que Dios no quiere darme hijos varones” (221).

After all these fateful events during the three years that Anne spent as queen of England, the real trigger in the end was Cromwell, who was cautiously preparing a truly convincing plan to dethrone Anne (224).

3. *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, by Retha Warnicke

Retha Warnicke offers the reader a completely different perspective of Anne Boleyn, trying to reveal a political side of her. As she claims, it is “difficult to penetrate all the contemporary and modern verbiage to find the historical person that Henry’s new love was” (57), probably because she was portrayed differently depending on the person who wrote about her: “Later protestant writers regarding her as the mother of Queen Elizabeth approved of her actions, but Catholic writers who viewed her as the destroyer of the sacrament of marriage disparaged her and her relationship with the king” (57). Apart from the historical facts mentioned before getting into the analysis of these specific historiographers, the author goes a step further to show a young woman from the 16th century whose interests were not merely related to love. As she claims in the preface of the book: “This study of Anne is not a biography but an analysis of the crucial phases of her life and more specifically of her role in the politics of her day, with particular emphasis on the rules and conventions of the society in which she played her part” (ix). According to her, Anne’s image has been reduced to a temperamental and manipulative woman whose purpose in life was manipulating the king and breaking up his marriage with Catherine, and she tries to change that perspective offering a different point of view (xi).

Besides Warnicke’s political interest in the life of the young Boleyn, she has something in common with the previous author: both date Anne’s birth in 1507 though Warnicke concludes Mary was born in 1508, thus being the youngest. Warnicke argues that it would be logical that Anne was the elder sister because she was required to travel to the Netherlands to become a maid of honour in 1513 and according to the sixteenth century conventions, it was the elder sister the one to receive an opportunity like that (9). Apart from this information, the author is not very concise in terms of Anne’s childhood and the importance of her life in the French court. During her stay, “as a part of her training, Anne learned to play the lute and other instruments well, to dance pleasantly, to converse fluently in French, and to do needlework exquisitely” (21). But apart from the conventional activities that a young lady was supposed to learn in the French court, her stay did not provide Anne any influence regarding the political issues in which she became interested later.

3.1 Anne's life in the English court

Warnicke claims that the focal point of Anne's success occurred when she was required in England for business purposes. The attempts on the part of Anne's father to look for a successful marriage for her might have been the key point of her interest in political matters (30). None of those attempts were successful, but the second failure might have been the most influential since the first one had purely business purposes and the second one implied a romantic interest. Firstly, as Anne "believed that it was Wolsey rather than the king who had broken up her romance [with Percy], she waited patiently for the day she would be able to punish the Cardinal for his interference" (42). And secondly, "one lesson that Anne must have learned from this courtship was that in contemplating marriage to a nobleman, satisfying personal and family needs was not enough. Community and royal interests also required consideration" (43). This implies that even if Anne was hurt by her failed bond with Lord Percy, she had learned to look at the future with a different perspective and to seek success independently. It is important to know that "by 1526 the marriages of everyone in Anne's immediate family except hers had been finalized" (47). However, regarding the previous events, according to Warnicke's words this fact can be explained with her seek for independency:

In selecting a spouse, she was far too independent to suit the tastes of her family. That she must have been acting without their knowledge in 1523 is indicated by the disappearance of her and not her Boleyn relatives from the official documents for more than three years. But when she reappeared in the records in 1527, the evidence makes it clear that she was once again marking an independent course in her drive to marry well for her family and her lineage. It was a course that would ultimately bring her to the throne and would bring great power and influence to her relatives. (47)

Before getting into Anne's relationship with the king, Warnicke considers important to reject the possibility of portraying Anne as the main reason of Henry and Catherine's divorce. Firstly, "by late 1526 he had been recognizing publicly for over a year that Mary was his heir, thus conceding that Catherine and he would have no more children. He had also been struggling with the difficult question of what would happen to Mary

and his lineage after his death” (53). Secondly, “there is no reason to believe that as he was coming to grips with his momentous decision he had as yet seriously considered the obvious next step in ending the crisis of the Tudor nursery: the selection of a new wife” (55). Finally, according to Warnicke, their first encounter took place on 5 May 1527, which does not make possible to consider Anne as the key point of his decision. But, of course, by 1527 “having concluded to his satisfaction that his union with Catherine was invalid, he surely had begun to observe the ladies around him in a new light, that is, from the perspective of an unmarried man” (57).

Henry’s interest in Anne was probably caused by her confidence and skills shown in the English court:

Anne’s charms arose primarily from the deep-seated confidence with which she was able to handle herself in courtly surroundings. She was the perfect woman courtier, for she had learned her lessons in France well: her carriage was graceful and her French clothes were pleasing and stylish; she danced with ease, had a pleasant singing voice, played the lute and several other musical instruments as well, and spoke French fluently. She is also reputed to have written a masque and to have composed music. A remarkable, intelligent, quick-witted, young noblewoman with a personal knowledge of many of the players in European politics (qtd. 59).

By June 1527, Henry was seriously considering the marriage with Anne as the solution for both his passion for her and his unceasing concern about having a male heir (63). Taking this into account, to think that Anne might have had an affair with Thomas Wyatt, the famous poet, would be illogical. First of all, as it has been already mentioned, Anne was looking for a successful life for herself and her family. Secondly, “no record linking Anne’s name to Wyatt’s has survived prior to the date of his imprisonment in 1536 when five other men were executed for committing adultery and incest with her” (65). As the intelligent and keen woman she was, it would have been a terrible mistake to risk her new favourable position for a brief romance with a poet. Thirdly, “the courts of Europe were seedbeds of rumors, for observers regularly spread erroneous statements about the deaths of rulers and even of the pope, momentous events

which were far easier to verify than the fact of whether Anne ever had a secret love affair” (66).

Anne is not left behind in Warnicke’s account of the divorce issue. It is her view that the fact that other authors and historians do not specifically focus on her presence during the tricky period Henry had to go through does not mean that she was not aware of what was going on. As a matter of fact, there was a “tangible evidence of the deep feelings that the king had for Anne and his desire to reassure her that his ministers were doing all they could to make it possible for the two of them to be married” (71). As Warnicke claims, Henry informed her constantly of the consecutive negotiations by sending her letters or telling her personally every time he could (71).

Despite Anne's previous seek for revenge due to the Cardinal’s denial to give her in marriage to Lord Percy, it seems that Henry's trust in Wolsey made her act in consequence. As the cautious woman she had become, she knew that obtaining a permission from the pope would not be easy, and accepting to establish some kind of cordial relationship with the people that could help her would be a wise decision. And so, “Far from displaying any overt hostility to Wolsey during the early months of 1528 (...) Anne sought to reassure him that she would consider him or anyone else who made it possible for her to marry the king as a friend”(74). However, it was not a secret that many people did not approve Henry’s intentions of marrying Anne and, in favour of Catherine, some “interpreted Wolsey’s fall as the culmination of a conspiracy that was rooted in Anne’s deep hatred for him” (86). The fact that Anne considered Wolsey as a tool to achieve her aim could always be a possibility, but planning a conspiracy against him remains doubtful. On 6 June 1528, Wolsey was informed that “Anne, who had recovered from some unspecified illness, sent her commendations and said that she thought it had been a long time since they had spoken” (75). In addition, in August of the same year, she wrote a letter to the Cardinal “in which she promised to reward him if he would help her marry Henry” (87). The problem was, once again, the rumours that circulated among the people in the court that “assumed that if Anne could only be separated from Henry, who was ‘by nature kind and generously inclined,’ he would become once again a dutiful husband to Catherine” (87).

As other authors are deeply interested in emphasising Anne's jealousy towards Catherine, Warnicke depicts a rational Anne who does not exactly show jealousy but more concern towards her current situation:

In early December 1529, Chapuys reported that someone had overheard an argument between Anne and Henry about this solicitude for Catherine. Apparently fearful that her lover would return to his wife, Anne was said to have worried aloud that her time and youth would all be spent for nothing. (95)

In the hypothetical case this anecdote really happened, we can deduce that she loved him but she was more concerned about her life being a waste of time than about Henry being still in love with Catherine, which leads us to the original political purposes of Anne. But then again, none of that can be considered either true or false.

To understand Anne's political intentions it is also necessary to have a look at her interest towards religious topics. As Warnicke claims, "it is not surprising to learn that she was interested in religious writings. In addition to her specific education, she was born into a culture just becoming accustomed to the advantages of having material available in print. But more specific than that, "besides her personal inclination and the impulse of her culture, there was another reason for her desire to read divine books. From her childhood she had studied how to achieve success for her family and lineage" (109). According to Warnicke,

Anne must have studied to please her intended bridegroom and to prove to him that she would be a suitable queen. An intelligent, quick-witted lady who was already interested in religious topics, she would have made every effort to become knowledgeable about new books and religious commentaries in order to discuss them with the king (110).

The opinion of Warnicke is that using her interest for religious topics as an evidence of a conspiracy against the church is quite a weak argument. Nevertheless, it is true that

between 1527 and 1533 the extant evidence indicates that she shared with Henry two outlawed books. It was also known that she read French religious material. This information is sufficient to prove that she was interested in religious topics and that she understood well the king's reading tastes, but it is not enough to prove that she was working independently of him in a conspiracy to restructure the Church. (qtd. 113).

3.2. Anne as queen of England

Anne's coronation in 1533 was not only the most important event in her career, but also "the public recognition and religious confirmation of her elevation to the queenship" (131). To understand Anne's achievements when she became queen of England it is necessary to have a look at her patronage. As queen she obtained several privileges, for example "the major part of her income was derived from her estates (...) the greater part of them was obtained after her marriage" (132). It is important to emphasize that "following the royal custom, Henry also approved a statute that made Anne a *femme sole*, permitting her to conduct her business transactions without reference to him as her husband" (qtd.132). This means that even married to the king, she could still count with independency. Apart from that, "in addition to her rents Anne could claim the goods of certain felons and fugitives and had the customary right to the *aurum reginae* or queen's gold. This last source was one tenth the value of voluntary fines, such as licenses for the alienation of land or pardons for enclosures" (133). Besides, as her position required, she had to dress properly, that is why she "gained access to enormous quantities of personal property" (133). Finally, all those privileges were added to the previous ones she obtained when she was Henry's bride and mistress, such as palaces, manor houses, and hunting lodges (131).

Of course having certain revenues could not solve her responsibilities and even if she had worked hard to achieve what she had already attained, new targets needed to be taken into account. As the new queen of England she had two main purposes: to be a good example to the English citizens and to maintain her power.

To reach the first goal, "in the conduct of her queenship she attempted to follow the examples of Claude of France, Margaret of Navarre, Catherine of England, and even of her husband's pious grandmother, the countess of Richmond" (149). Following these women's examples, she tried to leave proof of her reputation by attempting to

set not only a high moral and charitable standard but also a religious example, for she wanted her household to serve as a Christian “spectacle” to others: “She required her attendants to hear divine service daily and reportedly presented each of them with a book of devotions that contained some prayers and a few English Psalms.” (151)

Some writers and scholars do not consider her devotion as something truthful because, following the basis of Anne as the muse of Wyatt’s poetry, they believe that Anne was just a king’s mistress who died accused of incest and adultery (152). Nevertheless, that is something that would require a profound analysis because one of Anne’s virtues was determination and she knew that a wrong step could damage everything she had been fighting for. As Warnicke claims:

Even if her education and the cultural impulse of her society had not led her to treat religion seriously, her elevation to the queenship would have. A highly motivated and ambitious lady like Anne would have wanted, as Henry’s consort, to have the reputation of a Christian woman. Since rulers then believed that they gained legitimacy through God’s blessing and that the security and peace of their kingdoms depended on their support of the Church, she had political reasons for emphasizing her devotion to spiritual manners. (152)

To reach her second goal she had to carry on with an even more important mission: giving birth to a male child. As Warnicke says, “the dispense of her patronage and the governance of her household were backdrops to the more serious business of motherhood that Anne had agreed to undertake when she became queen of England”(163). Having a son was Henry’s main purpose, which meant that it had to be Anne’s main purpose too. After all, she had assured him that she would give birth to a male child and now she had to prove it, “for no consort was ever really secure in her position until she had accomplished that important task” (163).

Anne and Henry’s first child was a girl, Elizabeth I, born in 1533. Some authors consider the baby’s birth as Anne’s first failure and the beginning of Anne’s fall. But

even if Henry's disappointment was not a secret, technically Elizabeth was his only legitimate child and until the birth of a male child, she was considered to be his only heir so she had to be treated and respected as any other female of her rank (168). Apart from that, there is no clear evidence that he had already given up on Anne. After Elizabeth's birth, at Christmas, the king and his consort held a court in which he "referred to Anne's virtues, among them for chastity, her noble descent and parentage, her education, and her ability to procreate children" (173). The fact that Anne gave birth to a female child does not mean that she could not have another opportunity to keep her word.

Francis Hackett believed that her second pregnancy was a lie with the purpose of controlling the king and his love affairs. Warnicke supports the possibility of Henry having extramarital relationships because "by the standards of the day, a gentleman's honor would be diminished by several actions but a simple adulterous affair with a woman was not one of them" (167). However, this second pregnancy issue remains a mystery with no clear evidence, and it is quite possible that she truly believed to be pregnant again, but since there is "no contemporary statement referred to a miscarriage or a stillborn child, it is possible that Anne was never pregnant" (175). Apart from that, she had given birth just a few weeks ago, so it would be unreasonable to consider she was physically ready to conceive again (175).

Going back to Henry's extramarital relationships, rumours claim that by September 1534 he already had a mistress. According to Warnicke, it would not be surprising due to the disappointment he must have felt when Anne gave birth to a baby girl, for he probably blamed her because contemporary women were considered guilty of pregnancy and conception failures (177). Nevertheless, Eustace Chapuys' (the imperial ambassador) records from 1535 prove that she was still powerful, as "Henry did not dare to contradict Anne, who ruled over all and governed the kingdom" (186).

3.3. Anne's fall

The true event that led Anne to become a failure as wife and queen of England was the miscarriage she suffered in January 1536. According to Warnicke, Anne's miscarriage could be considered as unusual because it was not kept in private as royal miscarriages usually were (191). The reason that could explain the open statement of Anne's failed pregnancy can be found in Chapuys' records, where he claims that he had heard rumours of Henry accusing Anne of bewitching him (191).

That Henry and his contemporaries could consider Anne to be a witch and accuse her of doing witchcraft was not surprising because "virtually all early modern Europeans believed in the existence of evil spirits" and, more specifically, witches (192). As a devoted believer, Henry might have considered the existence of evil forces equally powerful guiding him the wrong way. After all, he was the king, and he needed something to excuse his committing errors and taking wrong decisions. In addition to Henry's own concerns, his councillors also tried their best to protect the king's honour by claiming that Anne had been using witchcraft and had been "unable to bear male children" (201). The fact that his own councillors incremented Henry's beliefs can be considered as something crucial in Anne's fall because even after becoming the king's consort, she had had a lot of enemies. She was still considered as the woman that broke Henry's first marriage apart (188) and even after being crowned queen of England, "many of the king's subjects continued to describe her as an adulteress" and after the wedding, the protests only increased because Catherine was still alive (189). Since witches were considered to be lustful and manipulative women, it is not surprising that these statements were enough evidence for the king and Anne's enemies to take her for such, and together with the miscarriage of their only male child, the only thing that was left for her was a dead end.

4. *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: The Most Happy*, by Eric Ives

The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn was published in 2004, which means that it is one of the most recent works and analysis available of the second wife of Henry VIII. Throughout the previous ones we have encountered an overly emotional and temperamental woman, a wise and independent Anne whose interest in politics helped her built her own career by herself, and now we are about to encounter a third point of view.

The critical stages of Anne's life according to Eric Ives are her life in the English court and Anne's fall. Nevertheless, since her life in the French court and her life as queen of England held important events, it is necessary to explain briefly the author's view of both periods.

Ives supports 1501 as Anne's date of birth. Taking into account that several historians point 1507 as her date of birth and considering that her father sent her away around 1513, it would be illogical to think that at the age of 5-6 she would have been ready to accomplish such an important task as forming herself in a foreign court (14-15). According to Ives, when she was around 11-12, Anne was sent to "the Habsburg court at Mechelen in Brabant, where Margaret of Austria ruled the Low Countries as regent for a 13-year-old nephew, Charles of Burgundy" (18). The fact that she entered the court of Margaret was not something that occurred by chance. Her father, Thomas Boleyn, had planned it because "Henry's wife, Katherine of Aragon, was sister-in-law to the regent", which means that he was probably expecting a profitable future for Anne in the English court (19). Thomas was not wrong, for she saw in Margaret a role model:

The Regent Margaret was a meticulous chaperone. Deportment and conversation had to be correct at all times, and Madame, as Margaret was called, kept a specially strict eye on the maids of honour, forbidding gossip and any by-play with the pages or gentlemen of the court. Adept as she was herself at the game of courtly love, in her household it was to be played according to the conventions. It was an attitude Anne was to imitate when she ad maids of honour of her own. (21)

What is more, "as well as absorbing the best education Europe could offer, Anne learned by observation, and learned quickly" (25). After serving Margaret she entered "the household of Francis I's wife, Queen Claude" but although she spent several years with her, the lack of information makes it impossible to describe this period as influential as the previous years with Margaret (29). Once she finished her education abroad, she was ready to take the next step: the English court.

4.1. Anne's life in the English court

Before analyzing the presence of Anne in the English court, it is important to point out a statement made by Ives concerning Henry VIII: "In the sixteenth century, power was exercised by the ruler in person, or by direct delegation. This was the reality in England and in the rest of Europe alike. Policy was what the prince laid down; advancement and honour were in his gift" (5). This statement means that "the king gave executive authority to the men he trusted" (5). By claiming this, Ives describes Henry as impressionable enough to be controlled by every person he entrusted, and that included his second wife.

Anne made her debut in the English court in 1522 (37) and, as we already know, she caused a deep impact. But what was the reason of this profound interest in the young Boleyn? According to Ives, she had no "outstanding natural beauty", but "she radiated sex" and it was obvious that she was aware of that sexual impact (44). Nevertheless, "what made her stand out was sophistication, elegance and independence" (45). Dismissing the theories claiming that Henry wanted to use Anne as part of his political game, Ives believes that Anne might have also caused an impact on the king, because he claims that Henry was the one who prevented Anne's marriage with Percy (63). Despite Henry's presumed interest in Anne, Ives considers that this is not enough to label her as the reason for the divorce, and to support his theory he provides two linked explanations: "The rejection of Katherine had begun in 1524 when Henry gave up sleeping with her" (83) but "where did Anne fit in? The one certain date we have is the end of August 1527, when the king applied to the pope for the dispensation to allow him marry again" (84). By the time he was trying to seduce the young Boleyn he had already given up on Catherine. But even more important is the fact that at the beginning of the flirtatious game they played he was not thinking of Anne as a possible future wife.

Then, "what was Henry asking and offering? Clearly more than a conventional courtly love pose but certainly not marriage. He appears to be offering a recognized permanent liaison, perhaps like the French *maîtresse en titre*" (85). Besides the fact that she was not the main reason for divorcing, Ives declares that "in all this Anne Boleyn had no place -or not officially" (97). But going back to the previous statement of Henry's impressionable character, even "if Anne was out of sight -at least when convenient- she was not out of mind. The king's letters in 1528 show how significant was the pressure she exerted towards a divorce" (97). And what about Catherine's position in all this mess? Apparently, some Catholic resources claim "that she [Anne] was loyal to the queen and that Katherine tried to help her to resist the king's advances, which could be true at the stage of his 'courtly love' attack" (qtd. 100). Even if Anne and Catherine became enemies later, Ives does not consider their rivalry as striking as other authors claim to have been. If there was a war between them, it was certainly silent.

Once Anne was officially considered as Henry's intended bride-to-be, both of them had to handle several issues. As we already know, Henry was in charge of pressuring the pope to get the dispensation. But what about Anne? Even if she was carefully watching from the shadows she also had to deal with some issues and the most important was the general opposition towards the marriage. On the one hand, "even among those recognising the need for a divorce, some looked for a more suitable second queen: most probably a foreign princess who could do what royal brides were expected to do - cement international alliances, not satisfy royal passions" (101). And what did Anne do to fight the pressure? She "was beginning to collect allies among existing members of the king's immediate entourage" (107). On the other hand, Henry was finding obstacles to obtain the papal dispensation and once again, Anne was working in the shadows.

Some months earlier Anne had shown him something even more significant, a treatise which demonstrated the coherent political expression of his feelings about royal authority which Henry had been groping after. This was *The Obedience of the Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern*, published in October 1528 by the exiled William Tyndale. (132)

The importance of Henry reading *The Obedience of the Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern* falls on the statements which "set out to demonstrate 'the obedience of all degrees [in society] by God's word' and to show that 'all men without exception are under the temporal sword, whatsoever names they give themselves'" (qtd. 133). Basically, "the belief that the pope, the prelates and the clergy possessed separate power and authority was clean contrary to scripture" (133), which meant that "Henry was already in possession, an emperor answerable only to God for the conduct of every aspect of his life in his realm" (137).

Anne's intervention was particularly crucial because it led Henry to a reformation of the Church. The previously mentioned medieval ideas about monarchy and the consequent view in the Renaissance period are the key to understand the Reformation. The attempts to accomplish a reformation took place in 1529 and 1532. The first one "had launched a vigorous attack on a range of clerical 'abuses', particularly ones which touched the pocket of the upper classes" but "lost both energy and direction" (Starkey 106). Nevertheless, in 1532, "parliamentary pressure forced through the Submission of the Clergy, which robbed the English Church of both the will and the capacity to resist Henry" (Starkey 106). With that purpose, in 1533, "a novel and comprehensive theory of monarchy was announced by the Acts of Appeals and Supremacy" in which Henry "argued, first, that the kings of England from the second century AD had enjoyed secular *imperium* and spiritual supremacy over their kingdom and national Church; and, secondly, that the English Church was an autonomous province of the Catholic Church independent from Rome and the papacy" (Guy 226). This means that "by exercising his *imperium* the king could redefine the duties of 'his' clergy, summon church councils within his dominions, revise canon law, dissolve the monasteries, and even expound the articles of faith. In particular, he could require Convocation to rule on his matrimonial affairs" (Guy 227).

Anne had already proven to be intelligent, meticulous and determined, but above all, she had proved to be "where she was because of her own character and merits, a self-made woman who saw no percentage in bloodless simpering" (145).

4.2. Anne as queen of England: motherhood

The last stage to achieve the peak of her career was marrying Henry and being crowned queen of England. Ives supports the idea of Anne's pregnancy as the main reason for the hasty marriage: "If there was a possibility that Anne was pregnant, Henry had to secure the sanction of the Church, pope or no pope" (170). Once they were married, the only important task Anne had to deal with was, as we already know, having a male child, which means that Elizabeth's birth was not what they were expecting: "The sex of the baby was some disappointment to Anne and Henry. The pundits (all but one) had been predicting a son, and Chapuys made the most of this. There is, however, no evidence of the crushing psychological blow that some have supposed" (184). Nevertheless, Elizabeth's birth was a tricky question concerning the external context. It did not matter if she "had won her way by education, personality and courage, but now she had to accept that success as an individual was unimportant against biological success or failure" (189). There is no evidence of Henry's unhappiness before 1534, year in which, according to Ives, Anne was pregnant again but had a miscarriage (192). From that point on, Anne's life began to change drastically.

4.3. Anne's fall

Many authors have pointed out Anne's second miscarriage in 1535 as the main reason of her failure as wife of Henry VIII. However, Ives notes a series of consecutive events which, in his opinion, led her to a death sentence. This does not mean that the second miscarriage was not one of the reasons. In fact, "the loss -and above all the loss of a son- was a huge psychological blow to Henry" (298). Nevertheless, many of the reasons of Anne's fall are related to political issues and the opposition she had despite being already the queen of England.

Anne's great enemy was the nation itself, accusing the queen of interceding in political matters concerning her husband, emperor Charles V and the French king Francis I:

Henry's principal reliance continued to be on his 'good brother Francis', but he was never confident that England's interests were wholly safe there. (...) The result was a great deal of suspicion, one of the other, and with Anne personifying to the English the French connection, the opprobrium fell on her. (203)

The tension between Henry and Francis, together with Anne's disappointment towards the French king for proposing Henry's first daughter -instead of Elizabeth- to marry his third son placed her in a disadvantageous position (203). Besides, it is important not to forget that "much of the hostility to Anne was (...) associated with a dislike of Henry's recent (...) interference with the Church" (200).

Nonetheless, Boleyn's closest enemy was Mary, Henry and Catherine's only surviving daughter, because "she was adamant in refusing to recognize Anne and her child" (197). Some authors consider Jane Seymour as one of the reasons for Henry's desire to divorce Anne, but the truth is that "Jane was a willing tool whose personality it is more than kind to describe as 'pliable'" and whose sudden appearance in the life of the king was more than convenient, for the Seymour family was a clear supporter of princess Mary (305).

The third and last enemy that made it possible to condemn her was Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell was interested in an alliance between Henry and Charles, but since one of Henry's conditions was the recognition of his marriage with Anne and Charles was Catherine's nephew, they did not seem to have come to an agreement. Cromwell realized that

A hostile Anne threatened both his standing with the king and his key financial achievement, as well as encouraging the king in demanding diplomatic impossibilities. Henry must be brought to want someone else. Despite the risk, despite all his past debts, Cromwell's very survival no longer coincided with the survival of the queen. She must go. (316)

Taking all these events into account, Ives does not only consider Anne's miscarriages as secondary motives, but also contemplates the possibility of Anne being a subject matter of political plotting and internal and external disagreements. This would mean that the accusations concerning alleged infidelities may have been hiding much more maneuvering than other authors have ever been disposed to contemplate.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to analyze three different depictions of Anne Boleyn and verify if there is a possibility of discovering who the second wife of Henry VIII actually was.

The results show that the three authors differ a lot in the Boleyn they show.

Firstly, Francis Hackett portrays Anne as a passionate young woman with a great temperamental nature, whose ambition allowed her to rise and, at the same time, made her fall. Secondly, Retha Warnicke provides the image of an intelligent and independent woman with political interests, whose purpose was to build a successful career by herself and whose only failure was her inability to give birth to a male heir. For his part, Eric Ives shows a cautious Anne, also interested in politics, who made moves discreetly thanks to her influence on the king, and whose death was due to several political matters.

Because of this lack of coincidences between them, to create a true depiction of Anne is really hard. Hackett thought Anne was too emotional and temperamental; Warnicke considers that she was very independent; and Ives claimed that she was working in the shadows, implying that she was intelligent enough to manipulate the king. Taking all this into account, was Anne as temperamental as Hackett thought? Could a 16th century woman be as independent as Warnicke claims? Was she manipulative enough to become the centre of internal and external disagreements? The answer is we cannot know for sure.

It may be that the findings offered by these three researchers were affected by the decades in which their books were written, and, possibly, by the lack of information that most of them admit there is. However, since their works are written under three completely different perspectives, each of them can still be considered hypothetical.

Nevertheless, the present study offers clear evidence of at least two coincidences: on the one hand, the three of them agree that Anne was extremely intelligent and, on the other hand, both Warnicke and Ives agree that Anne was interested in political matters, even though their explanations concerning her interventions clearly clash. This leads us to believe that Anne Boleyn was an intelligent sixteenth-century woman interested in politics, but it is definitely not enough to give an answer to the question: who was Anne Boleyn?

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