"Inventions Invented against Me": The Five Catherines of Aragon at the Blackfriars Trial

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Most scholars who comment on Catherine of Aragon's speech and movements at the annulment trial on 21 June 1529 have overlooked significant discrepancies between the five eyewitness accounts of this day—by an English gentleman, the English king, and the French, Venetian, and Vatican envoys. This essay, in contrast, gives particular focus to discrepancies in these accounts. These contradictions speak to a rhetorical war over Catherine's reputation, one that reflects tensions across Europe that were exacerbated by the trial. Catherine herself may be termed an agent in this rhetorical war, given that her own voice makes itself heard within each account.

INTRODUCTION

THE MOST DISCUSSED moment of Catherine of Aragon's (1485–1536) eventful life is undoubtedly her appearance at the Legatine Trial, which was convened over the question of whether she was legally married to her husband of twenty years, Henry VIII (1491–1547).[1] So compelling was her performance on the second (and last) day on which she appeared at the trial—21 June 1529—that this moment has received extensive coverage by artists, historians,

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[1] Catherine and Henry were married on 3 May 1509. The annulment trial in England consisted of several legislative hearings and distinct trials. These included a secret trial initiated by Cardinal Wolsey in May 1527 and an open, extended trial convened by Cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey in May 1529, of which the hearing on 21 June 1529 formed a part. This second trial is generally referred to as the Legatine Trial, although the proceedings of June 21 are commonly referred as the Blackfriars Trial. I use both designations throughout to refer to this day of the trial.

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biographers, and literary writers over the last 550 years. Notable examples include William Forrest's narrative poem *The History of Grisild the Second* (1558), Raphael Holinshed's historical compendium *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), Laslett J. Potts's painting *The Trial of Queen Catherine* (1888), and Emma Frost and Matthew Graham's miniseries *The Spanish Princess* (2019–20). Representations of this moment persist via extensive web coverage, the seven biographies of Catherine that have appeared since 2000, and the significant number of twenty-first-century scholarly essays on the character Queen Katherine in John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's play *King Henry VIII*.[2] Yet there remains a significant aspect of Catherine's performance at the Blackfriars Trial that has not been fully considered: the distinct, and at times conflicting, perspectives on Catherine in the five eyewitness accounts of this day. The accounts that I examine here are by the gentleman usher George Cavendish (1497–ca. 1562); the Venetian envoy Lodovico Falieri (1478–1548); the papal envoy to England, Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio (1474–1539); the French ambassador to England, Jean Du Bellay (1492–1560); and Henry VIII himself.[3]

Although these five writers attended the same trial on the same day, and although all the accounts except for Cavendish's were written within days of the trial, each writer has left us with a somewhat different idea of what Catherine said and did. Such differences largely reflect the political and personal allegiances of each author, even as all were influenced by their personal knowledge of Catherine.[4] Cavendish—writing of his experience as gentleman usher to Cardinal Wolsey—gives the most sympathetic account of Catherine's speech and actions; Falieri provides a favorable representation of Catherine to the Venetian Senate, which ultimately severed relations with England over the very issue of the annulment. Campeggio—caught between loyalties to both

[2] The twenty-first-century biographies are as follows: Michelle L. Beer, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts of Britain* (2018); Theresa Earenfight, *Catherine of Aragon* (2022); Julia Fox, *Sister Queens* (2011); Amy Licence, *Catherine of Aragon* (2016); Giles Tremlett, *Catherine of Aragon (*2010); Patrick Williams, *Catherine of Aragon* (2013); and Luis Ulargui, *Catalina de Aragón* (2004). This list does not include the six twenty-first-century biographies of Henry VIII's wives. Twenty-first-century scholarship on Fletcher and Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII* includes Appleford; Chalmers; Frye; Gossett; and Moore.

[3] Four of the accounts were written within a week of the trial; the fifth—Cavendish's—was written over thirty years later, based on notes that Cavendish took on the day of the trial.

[4] As Wolsey's Gentleman Usher, Cavendish would have known Catherine from 1522 on; Campeggio was the Vatican ambassador from 1518 to 1519, and then returned as papal legate in 1528; Du Bellay had been the French ambassador to England beginning in 1527; Falieri had been the ambassador from Venice beginning in 1528.

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England and the Vatican—diplomatically (and illogically) presents both Catherine's and Henry's perspectives as legitimate; Du Bellay, writing to Henry's ally, Francis I of France (1494–1547), concludes a largely positive description of Catherine by stating that her apparent benevolence masks self-interested strategies; and Henry VIII casts doubt on Catherine's loyalty to England as a way to promote the annulment of his marriage to her.[5]

With the exception of Henry Ansgar Kelly, scholars and biographers have often ignored the differences between these five accounts; instead, most create a composite rendition of Catherine's speech and actions on 21 June 1529—one that depends on, at most, three of the five accounts. For the biographer Garrett Mattingly, the pattern of ignoring differences between the accounts results from readers' expectations of biographical coherence; hence, he confesses that "there are some inconsistencies [between these accounts] which I have had to resolve rather arbitrarily."[6] This pattern of overlooking discrepancies between the accounts—or of eliding some of the accounts altogether—continues among twenty-first-century biographers. Julia Fox mentions Cavendish, Du Bellay, Falieri, and Campeggio but does not note any discrepancies between their accounts; Theresa Earenfight discusses only Cavendish's account, although she indicates that differences exist between accounts; Patrick Williams uses the accounts by Falieri and Cavendish without mentioning the discrepancies between them; Giles Tremlett refers to parts of Cavendish's, Du Bellay's, and Campeggio's accounts, then comments that "some confusion exists about the exact order of events," without telling us what this confusion is; Amy Licence refers to Cavendish, Du Bellay, and Henry VIII; and Luis Ulargui mentions Campeggio as a source along with unnamed sources in *Letters and Papers*, without noting any discrepancies between these sources.[7]

This pattern persists in biographies of Henry VIII. J. J. Scarisbrick gives an overview of Catherine's movements at the trial but does not name his sources; Alison Weir and Lucy Wooding depend solely on Cavendish's account; and John Matusiak relies exclusively on secondary sources.[8] Among historians of the English Reformation (with the exception of Kelly), scholars either ignore Catherine's presence at the trial or, as G. R. Elton, Richard Rex, and Alec

[5] Henry's desire to annul his marriage to Catherine appears to have emanated from a number of circumstances; on these circumstances, see especially Williams, 234–66.

[6] Mattingly, 459.

[7] Fox, 317–71; Earenfight, 153; Williams, 284–87, 432; Tremlett, 268; Licence, 370–72; Ulargui, 295. Michelle Beer notes that detailed considerations of the accounts are "beyond the scope of this study": Beer, 156.

[8] Scarisbrick, 224–25; Weir, 288; Wooding, 157–58; Matusiak, 174.

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Ryrie do, refer briefly to her performance without noting any source.[9] Peter Marshall does go into some detail about Catherine's speech and movements at the trial but refers only to Cavendish as a source; G. W. Bernard makes extensive use of Cavendish, Du Bellay, and Campeggio as sources but does not discuss their representations of Catherine's speech and actions on 21 June 1529.[10]

This pattern of selecting a few (or none) of the eyewitness accounts and of overlooking discrepancies between them has led to two scholarly problems. First, omissions and elisions can give the impression that the accounts, along with the trial as a whole, rested on agreed-upon facts; instead, as Bernard puts it, the trial was more of "a strikingly theatrical and polemical declaration of the king's purposes. It was a carefully stage-managed royal threat against papal authority in England," one that depended heavily on "play-acting on Henry's part."[11] Furthermore, composite accounts of the trial—or any scholarship that largely ignores Catherine's actions and testimony at the trial—have an often inadvertent antifeminist element, as these writings diminish, or even erase, Catherine's agency not only at the trial but also within Western European political and religious negotiations of the time. Indeed, for a brief period Catherine was both focus and agent of national and transnational political and religious tensions between Spain, England, France, Venice, the Vatican, and their allies. Catherine speaks to these tensions in a 1532 letter to her nephew Charles V (1500–58), in which she refers to the annulment process as a "second Turk" ("segundo turco"), noting that both Turkish incursions into Europe and the annulment process threaten the stability of Europe and the integrity of the Roman Catholic Church; hence, she adds, "I do not know which is the worst, this business [the annulment] or that of the Turk."[12] To a significant degree, the comparison is valid, as the divisive issue of the annulment was one key reason why Pope Clement VII (1478–1534) was unsuccessful in his attempt to create a pan-European crusade against Turkish forces.

By overlooking Catherine's significance during this period and by overlooking the diverse perspectives of the five eyewitness writers, twenty-first-century biographers and historians often unwittingly participate in a Henrician campaign, beginning in the late 1520s, to counteract Catherine's popularity by omitting and

[9] Elton, 103; Rex, 5; Ryrie, 106.

[10] Bernard, 35, 105; Marshall 12, 16, 19, 24–25, 27, 104–05, 171. David Salvato leaves this moment entirely out of his account of the English Reformation.

[11] Bernard, 36, 62.

[12] "Ya no se que es peor, este negocyo o el Turco": Montagu, 1:175 (Spanish), 1:177 (English). This is a rare use of an extended metaphor by Catherine.

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erasing references to her.[13] This strategy probably explains why the detail-oriented Edward Hall omits Catherine's June 21 speech from his *Union of the Two Noble and Ilustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke*, a work that was written contemporaneously with the trial.[14] This same strategy also clarifies why the collected acts of the trial—compiled four years after the event—neglect to mention Catherine's protest lodged in front of witnesses on 16 June 1529.[15] Still other sixteenth-century writers leave Catherine out of their documents entirely, focusing instead on biblical and legal precedents—a pattern that has persisted into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in books by Rex, Ryrie, and Salvato.[16] The effect has often been to foreground Henry's presence and influence over Catherine's, and, in the process, to diminish the ways in which Catherine "played a tactical game. She threatened to produce papal bulls from Spain removing all impediments to the marriage. She revealed the second dispensation for Henry to marry her . . . [she] challenged the authority of the court and the competence of Campeggio and Wolsey as judges."[17] It is by attending to her "bravura performance" on 21 June 1529 that one can discern the significance of Catherine's strategy to maintain her reputation for being Henry's legitimate consort.[18] So successful was this "greatest performance" that it is one key reason why it took Henry and his allies five years to annul his marriage; Catherine's reputation as a conventional, legitimate queen consort appears to have been so strong that it was difficult for Henry to convince people otherwise.[19]

To place Catherine's performance at the trial in light of its depiction by the five eyewitness writers, I begin with an overview of the accounts, then consider some of the larger strategies and issues behind the annulment trial that influenced these accounts, before placing each account in dialogue and conflict with the other four and with Catherine's portrayal of herself as a conventional queen consort.[20] Although there is no known account by Catherine herself of her speech and movements on 21 June 1529, the letters she wrote between

[13] For a detailed study of this erasure, see Earenfight, 6–7, 102–03, 184–86, 188–89.

[14] Hall does record the hearings that preceded this day of the trial and those that ensued.

[15] On this neglect, see Kelly, 79.

[16] Such sixteenth-century documents are numerous; examples include *Articles Devisid by the holle consent of the kynges moste honourable counsayle* (1534); Pedro de Ribandeyra, *Historica Ecclesiastica* (1588); and "Conclusions against the validity of the Papal Dispensation" (1531).

[17] Bernard, 74.

[18] Ryrie, 106.

[19] Matusiak, 174. On ways in which Catherine used the popularity she gained as queen consort to delay the annulment of her marriage, see especially Elston.

[20] On conventional expectations for queens consort, see especially Bucholz, 265; Osherow; Rohr, 46–60; Sadlack, 119–36; and Warnicke, 6, 11, 99–104.

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1527 and 1530 reflect how she worked to bolster her reputation as Henry's dutiful, legitimate consort even as she was actively disobeying him.[21] So successful was this strategy that the more hostile representations of Catherine's voice and actions at the trial—those by Henry VIII and Jean Du Bellay—adopt a somewhat measured tone, as if aware that an openly antagonistic representation would simply not be accepted.

THE FIVE ACCOUNTS—AN OVERVIEW

Before considering the different versions of Catherine articulated by the eyewitness writers, it is important to note what these five writers agree on. All agree that the trial took place on 21 June 1529 at Blackfriars monastery in London, and all agree that the trial had been preceded by a smaller, initial hearing on June 18.[22] All except for Henry VIII (whose account is more of a précis than a detailed description) mention that Henry sat under a canopy, that Catherine sat apart from him, and that "she asked that the trial be sent back to Rome."[23] These same writers also mention that Henry gave a speech about his reasons for having the trial proceed, after which Catherine rose from her chair and, as Du Bellay puts it, "went on her knees before the said king."[24] They all add that Catherine gave a speech in which she affirmed that her marriage to Henry was legitimate and that she was unhappy with key aspects of the trial. Three of the writers—Falieri, Du Bellay, and Cavendish—write that, in this speech, Catherine spoke to her honor. (Henry VIII's brief account gives scant attention to the speech, and Campeggio, who did not understand English, gives only the gist of the speeches.).[25] Finally, three of the accounts —Du Bellay's, Henry VIII's, and Cavendish's—state that Catherine left the trial abruptly. Given the diverse perspectives and allegiances of these last three writers, their common reference to an abrupt departure is probably

[21] For Catherine's letters written during this period, see especially England Hofkorrespondenz (hereafter EH) 1:6, fols. 3^{r}, 6^{r}, 7^{r}, 8^{r}, $9^{r–v}$, $16^{r–v}$; and Real Academia, Sig 2/MS caja 3. See also Earenfight, 61, 94, 100, 102, 119; Prendergast, 2021, 208–09, 218–20; and Prendergast, 2020, 105–10.

[22] Du Bellay refers to Blackfriars as the Jacobins—the French term for the Black Friars.

[23] My translation. The original French reads as follows: "elle avoit demandé la cause estre renvoyee a Rome": Schurer, 2:47.

[24] My translation. The original reads, "elle s'est mise a genoulx devant led. seigneur": Schurer, 2:47. Of the four accounts, only one—Cavendish's—places Henry's speech after Catherine's. For the sake of brevity and focus, I have left out references to a speech by Wolsey made in several of the accounts.

[25] Campeggio wrote to Salviati that he could not give details of the speeches, "non havendo io inteso questi parlamenti." See Ehses, 107.

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factual. What can be culled from these accounts, then, is that the trial was formal, even opulent, in its visual presentation; that it placed Henry VIII as the visual and aural focus of power and authority; and that, after Henry's speech, Catherine directed attention to her own plight by kneeling before Henry and defending her honor, before abruptly leaving the court.

Although the five writers agree on many aspects of the trial, each also strategically highlights, embellishes, or leaves out some aspects to depict his own conceptualization of Catherine's presence. Cavendish's Catherine is a beleaguered, decorous, and popular consort who is forced to speak in her own defense; Falieri's Catherine is a loving, dutiful consort who is sorrowed by the annulment proceedings; Campeggio's Catherine is a competent, articulate consort with a strong sense of propriety and honor; Du Bellay's Catherine is much like Campeggio's until the last sentence of his narrative, in which he depicts Catherine as a manipulative Spaniard; and Henry's Catherine is an intransigent, illegitimate consort whose loyalties lie more with "Imperialists" than with England.[26] Despite these differences, a dominant sense of Catherine's personality and reputation remains—that of a self-assured yet beleaguered queen consort who is popular with the English people and who combines a strong sense of propriety with a willingness to speak and act assertively in defense of her reputation.

Popular opinion seems to have done its own filtering of these viewpoints given that Henry VIII's and Du Bellay's representations of Catherine as a manipulative and disloyal spouse were largely overlooked during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Literary works almost always depict her as a benevolent, compassionate queen who is loyal and loving to Henry and to the English people. This portrayal is evident in such works as the anonymous *Interlude of the Virtuous and Godly Queen Hester* (1561); Thomas Deloney's *Jack of Newbury* (ca. 1596); Richard Johnson's "The Story of Ill May-Day" (ca. 1603–21); and Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1613). These positive versions of Catherine reflect in part the "Englishing" of Catherine of Aragon—a process by which her early associations with foreignness and Roman Catholicism were gradually displaced by an image of her as a pious and loving mother figure to the English people.[27]

[26] See Brewer, 1875, vol. 4, no. 5707.

[27] Hansen. On this positive afterlife, see also Beer, 20–21, 27, 71; and Travitsky, 164. Judith Richards has noted how later Henrician and Edwardian texts represented Catherine as an unwittingly illegitimate queen; however, none of these texts detract from Catherine's reputation for being a benevolent, compassionate, pious, and loyal queen consort. One partial exception is Hall's *Chronicles*, which refers to Catherine as "stubborn" when, after 1529, she refused to sanction the annulment of her marriage; this adjective is also used in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), which draws heavily on Hall as a source. See Holinshed, 1577.

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As I trace the ways in which this positive reputation was at once the product of and an influence upon the five eyewitness accounts, my concern is less with historiographical readings, as this work has already been done by Kelly. Instead, this essay is oriented toward feminist-inflected new formalist analyses, with the aim of drawing out cultural and political resonances in the rhetoric employed by each eyewitness writer.[28] I follow here Sasha Roberts's argument that formalist methodologies can be used to analyze not only rhetorically rich literary texts but also texts with less sophisticated language, and even "non-authored" works—such as miscellanies. Roberts urges the importance of using such perspectives to highlight the aesthetics valued during particular eras, aesthetics that often lie outside the traditional formalist emphasis on tone, imagery, and metaphor. As Roberts notes, early modern readers and writers more often valued other rhetorical figures, such as personification, hyperbaton (inversion of normal word order), and *amplificatio* (expanding a statement).

I find Roberts's argument to be particularly valuable for my readings of these nonliterary eyewitness texts, whose authors make use of popular rhetorical figures to shape their personal ideas of Catherine—even as aspects of Catherine's own voice, along with her curation of her own reputation, can be discerned as well. I suggest here that all five eyewitness accounts can be grouped together as a cultural miscellany that "serve[s] as a powerful reminder of the dialogic dimensions of literary form and culture in the period: contentious, adversarial, provocative."[29] If the result of the miscellany-like nature of these texts is a fragmentary, and probably at times inauthentic, expression of Catherine's voice and movements, these accounts nonetheless perpetuate certain aspects of Catherine via "an act of ventriloquism, her words filtered through men's voices in letters, official documents, diplomatic reports, memoranda, and legal proceedings."[30] Most often, these writers create a voice for Catherine that reflects early modern conventions of speech and writing associated with aristocratic women—conventions that have much in common with Catherine's own written voice. Given that Catherine knew all five writers personally, it may also be that they incorporated her typical oral expressions into their renditions of her speech.

The dialogic, tension-filled nature of these accounts serves as a microcosm for the trial as a whole, which can be viewed as an extended rhetorical battle over which faction could represent itself as having the most claims to the

[28] Kelly, 84–88. For a more fully elaborated discussion of feminist new formalisms, see Clarke and Coolahan; Dodds and Dowd, 2018; and Dodds and Dowd, 2022, 1–22.

[29] Roberts, 257.

[30] Earenfight, 6. On male ventriloquisms of Catherine's voice, see also Prendergast, 2021, 214–15, 219–20.

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truth. Each side claimed that it was speaking for tradition, legitimacy, and authority, established by biblical and legal truths, and each implied that the other party was speaking from a position of novelty, subjectivity, and illegitimacy. In many ways Catherine and her allies won this rhetorical contest, at least on 21 June 1529, as each eyewitness account, except for Henry's, charts how the trial began with a focus on Henry as the seat of power and authority but then shifted focus to Catherine's speech and movements. So successful was Catherine in her self-portrayal that, as Marshall notes, "from Henry and Wolsey's viewpoint [this day was] an unmitigated disaster. It was Catherine's finest hour."[31] Ultimately, then, despite somewhat negative language in Henry's and Du Bellay's accounts, Catherine's self-presentation protected and perpetuated her reputation as Henry's pious, deferential, and legitimate consort, a reputation that made it difficult for Henry and his allies to speak negatively about her in any public venue.

CONVENTION, INVENTION, AND THE RHETORIC OF THE ANNULMENT TRIAL

In this way, the Blackfriars Trial can be read as a contest between spouses over who could appear more conventional—and by extension, legitimate. The importance of this alignment with convention is made patent by Cavendish, who describes the annulment trial, disapprovingly, as "the strangest and newest sight and device that ever was read or heard in any history or chronicle in any region"; he makes this point because, as Mattingly writes, "nothing like it [the trial] had ever been seen in England, or, as far as men could remember, in Christendom: a reigning king and queen appearing themselves in answer to the summons of a court set up in their own land, to plead like private persons."[32] Equally unusual was Henry's decision to seek an annulment from a consort to whom he had been married for twenty years, who had remained faithful to him, and who had given birth to an heir to the throne.[33] Because of the unconventional aspects of the trial, Henry and his allies felt forced to shore up their claim that their position was authoritative and conventional; ironically, they did so by turning to innovative interpretations of legal and religious texts, texts that turned primarily on the issue of consanguinity between Henry and Catherine.

[31] Marshall, 171.

[32] Cavendish, 81; Mattingly, 285.

[33] For detailed readings of these aspects of the annulment trial, see especially Bernard, 1–224; Kelly, 21–240; and Williams, 243–326. There was no legal obstacle, in England, to having a female heir to the throne.

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There were two such issues in Henry's marriage to Catherine. Not only were the two distantly related, but Catherine had also been married to Henry's brother, Arthur (1486–1502), for five months before his untimely death.[34] While numerous laws existed against consanguineous marriages, these were complicated, convoluted, and constantly reinterpreted. Consanguineous marriages were also frequently made licit by papal dispensations. Such a dispensation had indeed been secured for Henry's marriage to Catherine in 1509, as it had for Arthur's marriage to her in 1501.[35] John Foxe, despite being a supporter of the annulment, elucidates why it was so difficult to reverse or rescind a papal dispensation: "For the Pope, . . . seing the mariage was authorised before, by the dispensation of his predecessour, would hardly turne hys keyes about, to vndoe that which the Pope before him had locked: & much lesse would he suffer those keyes to be foyled, or to come in anye doubt."[36] To make matters more complicated, the issue of consanguinity could have prevented Henry from marrying Anne Boleyn, the woman he had selected as his next consort. Anne was not only distantly related to Henry, but she was also the sister of Mary Boleyn—Henry's former mistress.[37] All in all, consanguinity was a somewhat shaky foundation upon which to build a strong legal case for annulling a marriage, particularly one that had received a papal dispensation.

Equally shaky was the linchpin of Henry's argument about consanguinity—Leviticus 20:21. This passage is commonly translated from the Vulgate as "He that marrieth his brother's wife, doth an unlawful thing, he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness: they shall be without children."[38] Henry decided to interpret this passage to mean that a man who marries his brother's widow will have no children; however, as Ryrie notes, the passage, emerging as it does from a quasi-polygamous culture, "originally applied to circumstances where the brother was still alive."[39] In other words, the passage signifies that a man who marries his still-living brother's wife will be childless. As Catherine made sure to remind Henry at the trial, she and Henry had had numerous children, one of whom was still living. To complicate matters further, a passage in Deuteronomy, of which Henry and his allies were only

[34] Unless otherwise noted, all historical and biographical facts about Catherine of Aragon come from the biographies by Earenfight; Mattingly; Starkey; Tremlett; and Williams.

[35] On laws related to consanguinity, see especially Kelly, 24–53.

[36] Foxe, 1079.

[37] On the legal complexities of these relationships, see especially Bernard, 9–10, 14–24; and Kelly, 38–53.

[38] Leviticus 20:21. The passage from the Vulgate is as follows: "qui duxerit uxorem fratris sui rem facit inlicitam turpitudinem fratris sui revelavit absque filiis erunt." All English translations of biblical text in this article are from the Challoner version.

[39] Ryrie, 104.

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too aware, stated the opposite—that a man was, in fact, obliged to marry his brother's widow.[40] Thus, Henry and his allies were forced to be even more innovative. They decided that the passage from Deuteronomy could be discounted as being "no more than a ceremonial law of the Jews," and then scoured Italy to find a rabbi who would confirm this interpretation.[41] In other words, Henry decided to annul his marriage to Catherine first, and then worked with his advisors to find evidence to back up this decision—or, if necessary, invent it.

Further complicating matters—and further challenging Henry's gift for invention—was the fact that Catherine might not have engaged in sexual intercourse with her teenage and apparently sickly first husband. If this was true, it would mean that she and Arthur had never been fully legally married and that, as a result, she had never actually been his brother's widow.[42] Henry's assertion, therefore, that Catherine had lost her virginity to Arthur was, at best, based on anecdotal evidence, given that the only living witness at the time of the trial would have been Catherine herself.

If anything, there is more circumstantial evidence that Catherine and Arthur never engaged in sexual intercourse. During a period when it was considered potentially fatal for a sickly young man to be sexually active, it is interesting that there was quite a bit of concern about the state of Arthur's health, and, thus, concern about whether he should sexually consummate his marriage. Letters written by Catherine's parents—Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452–1516) and Isabella of Castile (1451–1504)—in 1502 and 1503 express strong doubts about whether Catherine and Arthur had engaged in sexual intercourse. Indeed, Ferdinand and Isabella's envoys expressed this very concern, even suggesting that Henry VII wished to delay the consummation of the marriage for the sake of Arthur's health.[43] Catherine further weakened Henry's claim that she had lost her virginity to Arthur when, late in October 1528, she asked Campeggio to hear her confession; at the confession she told Campeggio that she had never had sexual intercourse with Arthur. She then freed Campeggio from the secrecy of the confessional and told him to communicate her confession to Henry.

Of course, Henry's camp had its own evidence to present. A number of witnesses attested to having heard Arthur boast of sleeping with Catherine. However, this anecdotal evidence was not persuasive enough to be readily

[40] Deuteronomy 25:5–10.

[41] Bernard, 18.

[42] On this issue, see especially Kelly, 30–32.

[43] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 1, no. 325; *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 1, no. 370; *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 1, no. 327. On these issues, see especially Williams, 98–99 and 125–26.

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accepted as factual. The lack of firm evidence encouraged Henry and his allies to turn to rhetorical assertions, repeatedly affirming that their position was the conventional, factual, and authoritative one, even as they were becoming increasingly innovative in their search for a licit way to annul the marriage. Already their reading of Leviticus 20:21, as stating that a man who married his brother's widow would have no male heir, was largely viewed as "unusual, interesting and potentially explosive"—indeed, its novelty was not lost on Henry's contemporaries.[44] In a 1 September 1528 letter to Catherine, Charles V termed this reading of Leviticus—and the annulment process as a whole—a "hideous novelty" ("fea novedad").[45] Once the reading of Leviticus turned out to be insufficient, Henry and his allies were compelled to be even more innovative by turning to the "novelty of . . . [the decision] to extend the Levitical Prohibitions" against marrying one's brother's widow to include "unconsummated first marriages."[46] Eventually, the inability to convince Pope Clement VII to sanction the annulment inspired the "novel argument that a king was head not just of state but also of church."[47]

Henry's struggle to characterize his position as conventional even as he was being radically innovative reflects how crucial it was during the early modern period to be aligned with convention, authority, and tradition. As David Quint has noted, this is why Renaissance subjects often saw the opposite of convention—originality, innovation, or novelty—"as a form of idolatry: man worships his own creations rather than his Creator."[48] Those who were seen as "original" were often depicted as selfish, superficial, and threatening to the stability of a community—a key reason why both Cavendish and Charles V chose the word "novelty" to devalue Henry's pro-annulment position. Of course, Renaissance subjects were also aware that originality "valorized the human creativity which . . . [they] had newly come to recognize," but in most legal and theological arenas it remained crucial to represent one's position as thoroughly conventional.[49]

Quint adds that this is certainly the case for Reformers, with whom Henry was essentially, if reluctantly, aligned once he broke from the Roman Catholic Church. Much as Henry and his advisers used innovative readings to shore up

[44] Wooding, 139.

[45] EH 1:4, fols. 3^{r}–4^{v}. My translation.

[46] Bernard, 22.

[47] Rex, 8.

[48] Quint, 10. The word *novelty* does not always have negative connotations during the early modern period, but it does appear repeatedly as a negative term in documents relating to the annulment trial: see *OED*, s.v. "novelty," 3. On early modern debates about originality and authority, see also Bundy; Weinberg.

[49] Quint, x.

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their claims to convention, Reformers often turned to the etymological roots of *originality*, in the word *origin*, to contest claims that they were inventing new religious practices; their theology and rituals (or lack of rituals), they argued, reflected a return to the authentic origins of Christianity. In their view it was Roman Catholicism that was the counterfeit religion, founded upon non-biblical innovations.[50] John N. King has noted how this argument for a return to authentic origins is evident in iconography associated with Henry VIII after his break from Rome in 1533. Much as Henry had displaced traditional readings of the Bible with readings that, he claimed, were the original, authentic ones, so artists often inserted an image of Henry where one might have formerly seen an image of the pope—at the frontispiece to a Bible, for instance. Others used typology to associate Henry with such biblical prophets and leaders as Moses, King David, and Saint Paul. These images enabled Henry to mystify the innovations behind his break from the Roman Catholic Church while suggesting that, rather than deriving from this church, "his authority is transmitted to him symbolically from the heavens above via the Old and New Testament."[51]

If Henry's camp represented itself as conventional by insisting on the biblical and typological origins of its arguments, Catherine and her allies worked just as energetically to bolster her reputation as a conventional queen consort in order to affirm her legitimacy as queen. One key strategy was simply to maintain what she had been doing all along by performing actions that were consistent with those practiced by her sister-in-law Mary Tudor Brandon (queen consort of France from 1514 to 1515) and her mother-in-law, Elizabeth of York (queen consort of England from 1486 to 1503). Like them, she maintained a reputation for benevolence, piety, and deference to her spouse via such public acts as giving money to the poor and interceding for others, acts by which she could simultaneously demonstrate how, despite her Spanish origins, she was a conventional English queen consort.[52] The continued success of her reputation is attested to in a 1528 letter by Don Iñigo Lopez de Mendoza, Spanish ambassador to England from 1526 to 1529, who noted that "whilst passing from their Royal residence to the Dominicans [Blackfriars monastery] through

[50] The term *Protestantism* does not accurately cover the variety of Reformist identities and inclinations during the Tudor period; nonetheless, I follow the practice of most scholars, who use this as a convenient umbrella term. For an overview of issues and problems associated with giving a name to Reformist tendencies during Henry VIII's reign, see especially MacCulloch, 168–69. The same issues hold, of course, for the many expressions of Catholicism during this period, including Roman Catholicism and English Catholicism. On this issue, see Appleford, 168n8.

[51] King, 79.

[52] On these consorts' self-presentations and reputations, see especially Sadlack, 120–21, 132–34; and Warnicke, 100, 101–03, 152–54, and 174–75.

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a gallery communicating with that convent, the Queen was . . . warmly greeted by immense crowds of people, who publicly wished her victory over her enemies, so that this kingdom may be saved from utter ruin."[53] In much the same vein, Falieri wrote in 1531 that "she is so loved and revered that already the people begin to murmur [against the trial], and there is no doubt that . . . the English people . . . would take up arms on behalf of the queen."[54] In 1532, shortly before Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, the Venetian diplomat Mario Sovergnan wrote that "the citizens of the kingdom, as much priestly as secular, and the people . . . do not want . . . another queen for the kingdom."[55] Catherine was well aware that her popularity made it difficult for others to portray her as anything but Henry's dignified, compassionate, and legitimate consort; at best, pro-Henrician chroniclers like Hall could limit the authority of these citizens' accounts by attributing them to "the common people . . . and especial women . . . [in] common rumour and folishe communicacions."[56]

In this way, Catherine used public self-presentations to challenge the regime of power, whose members were attempting to depict her as an illegitimate, even perhaps unchaste, spouse. Such an attempt is implied in a letter that Wolsey wrote to Catherine in 1530, in which he asserts that she tends to "show yourself too much to the people." He adds that she neglects her prayers while "exhorting other ladies and gentlemen [of] the court to dance and pastime."[57] These accusations—which reflect the Renaissance concept that a woman who is often seen in public is an unchaste woman—may explain Wolsey's cryptic remark that Catherine does not "shew such love to his most noble grace, nether in, [ne] yet out of bed . . . as a woman ought to do to her husband," suggesting some sort of conjugal disloyalty.[58] Threatening and rhetorically provocative as this attempt at emotional blackmail was, it was quickly dropped. It appears that Catherine's positive reputation protected her from such damaging insinuations. Certainly no other reference—overt or veiled—implies that Catherine may

[53] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 1, no. 839.

[54] My translation. The original reads, "la quale è tanto amata e reverita, che già il populo comincia a mormorare, e non è dubbio che, . . . la gente inglese . . . pigliasse le armi per la Regina": Falieri, 26.

[55] My translation. The original reads, "li signori dil regno, cosi ecclesiastici come seculari, et il populo . . . non voleno . . . la regina, sia altra regina nel regno": Sovergnan, 54:590. For details of these and other expressions of Catherine's popularity as queen consort, see especially Tremlett, 253–54, 271, 298–99, 307–10.

[56] Hall, 754.

[57] Wolsey, 213.

[58] Wolsey, 213. The early modern concept that a woman who is often seen in public is an unchaste woman has been well established by Renaissance scholars; see especially Stallybrass on this concept.

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have been, in any fashion, unchaste; nor does any English document, outside of Henry's eyewitness account, suggest that she was disloyal. At worst, Hall states that her repeated refusal to accept the annulment of her marriage testifies to her being "stubborn."[59]

Catherine's performance of herself as Henry's pious, deferential wife was so successful that even Henry seems to have felt the need to affirm it publicly. During a speech that he gave at the initial annulment hearing (28 November 1528), he declared, "I assure you all, that beside her noble parentage of the whiche she is discended . . . she is a woman of moste gentleness, of moste humilitie and buxumnes, and of al good qualities appertainyng to nobilitie, she is without comparison, as I this xx. yeres almost haue had the true experiment."[60] This list of the positive traits associated with conventional queens consort includes—as Henry noted in an earlier section of this speech—providing the ruler with an heir. "Gentleness" during the early modern period signified mildness, graciousness, high birth, and refinement, while "buxomness" signified not only attractiveness but also obedience, humility, graciousness, and courtesy.[61] As Henry's comments about Catherine's "gentleness" suggest, such traits were often associated with passivity. They include deferring to the king, being a spectator at courtly pageants, and avoiding a reputation for assertiveness.[62] Catherine's performance as a conventional consort might thus be termed a triumph of passive resistance; by representing herself persistently and repeatedly as a conventional consort, she triumphed over any attempts to depict her as unconventional—and, by extension, illegitimate.

CAVENDISH

Cavendish was certainly convinced by Catherine's self-representation, one that he adopted, developed, and embellished in his account of the trial. While Henry VIII and the three diplomat writers (Du Bellay, Falieri, and Campeggio) sent their reports within a week of the trial, Cavendish took thirty years to turn his notes into an account aimed at a larger readership. Yet if Cavendish's is the last written account, it is in many ways the most important. Not only does it contain the most extensive description of the trial on this day, but it has also been

[59] Hall, 706, 807–08, 814.

[60] Hall, 754–55. (Hall was an eyewitness to this speech.)

[61] *OED*, s.v. "gentleness," 3.a, 3.b; "buxomness," 1, 2. These conventional expectations for a queen consort have been noted by a number of scholars; see especially O'Callaghan, 21–23; Silleras-Fernández, 237, 239–41, 245; and White, 216–17.

[62] On these aspects of Catherine as consort, see Marshall, 170; and Tremlett, 253–54.

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the most influential of the accounts. Along with Hall's *Chronicles*—which do not describe the events of the trial on 21 June 1529—it played a key role in disseminating Catherine's reputation well past her death, particularly as the most influential vehicle for Catherine's posthumous reputation, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, draws almost exclusively from it in describing the events of June 21.[63] At the same time, Cavendish's partisan sympathy for Catherine, along with his evident desire to turn his account into a compelling narrative, may make this not only the last written but also the least reliable of the five accounts.[64]

This issue may explain why there has been almost no scholarly work on Cavendish's *Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars who discuss the work focus on ways in which it influenced Fletcher and Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII*, or they employ the text as evidence for what happened at the trial on June 21. However, scholars have largely neglected the work in its own right, including the narrative structure and rhetorical figures that Cavendish adopts to shape his influential conceptualization of Catherine. One significant exception to this pattern is Richard Sylvester, who notes that the narrative structure of Cavendish's document—which follows the rise and fall of the tragic protagonist, Cardinal Wolsey—is shaped by the larger theme of the "Fall of Princes."[65] Given this focus, it is not surprising that Sylvester largely overlooks Cavendish's portrayal of Catherine and Henry at the Blackfriars Trial, along with the rich rhetorical figures deployed by Cavendish to influence his readers' responses to king and consort.[66]

Cavendish employs these rhetorical figures to portray Catherine as a conventional queen consort—benevolent, deferential, and honorable. This portrayal is in some ways surprising, for it was Catherine's refusal to accede to the annulment of her marriage that was the primary reason for the fall of Cardinal Wolsey. Yet Wolsey's loyal servant, Cavendish, seems not to have

[63] The main sources and writers for 21 June 1529 in the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* are Cavendish, Abraham Fleming, and Polydore Vergil. (There is no mention of the events of 21 June 1529 in the 1577 edition of the *Chronicles*.) See Holinshed, 1587. On Cavendish's inclusion in the *Chronicles,* see Summerson, 82; and Lucas, 211. Raphael Holinshed himself did not write this section of the *Chronicles,* given that it was written after his death; I follow scholarly convention in using the name Holinshed to refer to the many authors of the *Chronicles*.

[64] On this point, see also Earenfight, 156; and Sylvester's introduction in Cavendish, 81.

[65] Sylvester, 44–53.

[66] One scholar who attends to some of these elements is Theresa Earenfight, whose analysis of Cavendish's account I discuss below.

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held this decision against her; instead, he places the blame for Wolsey's fall entirely on Henry's decision to replace Catherine with Anne Boleyn. This focus leads Cavendish to suggest that Henry threatened England with disorder once he attached more importance to his personal passions than to the needs of his nation. In contrast, Cavendish associates Catherine with convention, loyalty, and honor—even when she disrupts the annulment proceedings. This partisan stance, along with his disapproval of Henry's behavior, is made dramatically clear when Cavendish introduces his account of the trial by asking, "Is it not a world to consider the desire of wilful princes when they fully be bent and inclined to fulfil their voluptuous appetites?"[67] This phrase would have immediately caught the attention of early modern readers via its employment of popular rhetorical figures, including apostrophe, *excuscitatio* (moving others to admire or dislike something), and hyperbole. Throughout, Cavendish's generous inclusion of *enargeia* (lively presentation of a scene) reflects a penchant for giving readers a dramatic aural and visual experience built on suspense and titillation.[68]

As he develops his account, Cavendish returns frequently to early modern controversies about the ethics of originality by planting himself firmly on the side of convention. He initiates his description of the trial by suggesting that Henry VIII destabilized civic and religious order once he engaged in the novelty of having a king and queen "judged by their inferiors."[69] The words "strangest," "newest," "inventions," and "newfangled" are employed here and throughout the narrative to emphasize Cavendish's argument that the king threatened convention, order, and stability once he privileged private passion over public duty.[70] In this way, Cavendish's negative perspective on the annulment trial aligns itself with the positions of Charles V, Catherine, and Lopez de Mendoza, the last of whom referred to the Legatine Trial as "novel" and "scandalous."[71] But Cavendish is equally interested in showing how Henry and his allies cloaked the novelty of the trial with a façade of grandeur. He initially portrays Henry as the focus of power and magnificence at the trial, sitting under a "cloth of estate"; he then describes the hierarchically arranged

[67] Cavendish, 81.

[68] Throughout this essay, my definitions of Latin or Greek rhetorical figures are drawn from the more extended definitions presented in Taylor's *Tudor Figures of Rhetoric*.

[69] Cavendish, 81.

[70] Cavendish, 81, 84, 92, 114.

[71] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 1, no. 562, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/spain/vol3/no2/pp793-805.

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seating of the judges, projecting a strong sense of ranking, power structure, established order, and magnificence.[72]

In strong contrast, Cavendish describes Catherine as sitting "some distance beneath the King."[73] This description reflects the sense of isolation, alienation, and vulnerability that Catherine must have experienced. Yet it is Catherine whom Cavendish represents as disrupting convention and hierarchy, particularly as, unlike the other four eyewitness writers, he has Catherine, unconventionally, speak before the king does. No negative inflection accompanies Catherine's disruptions; instead, Cavendish implies that Catherine's assertive behavior was forced upon her when Henry disrupted convention by privileging his private passions over the stability of the state:

> Then he [the crier] called also the Queen by the name of "Catherine Queen of England come into the court etc."; who made no answer to the same, but rose up incontinent out of her chair . . . and, because she could not come directly to the King, . . . she took pain to go about until the King, kneeling down at his feet in the sight of all the court and assembly.[74]

Moving from elaborate rhetorical figures to a fairly straightforward narrative description that highlights Catherine's movements, Cavendish—much like Du Bellay, Campeggio, and Falieri—writes that Catherine knelt submissively at Henry's feet; however, unlike these diplomat-writers, he describes the unconventionally assertive actions that preceded her posture of humility. Catherine's initial silence turns out to be an act of civil disobedience, as she refuses to answer the crier. She follows this silence with a more assertive form of silent disobedience, abruptly leaving her chair and walking toward Henry without having received his permission to do so. She then masks the transgressive nature of this act by humbly kneeling in front of her king and spouse. In doing so, she stretches the bounds of convention, making use of a cultural tradition that—as Beer, Gaywyn Moore, Paul Strohm, and Retha M. Warnicke have noted—gave consorts a means to present themselves as deferential while speaking and acting assertively, so long as they were defending their own honor or that of others.[75] This tradition was often performed by kneeling in front of the king before speaking—an action that four out of the five chroniclers of the trial state that Catherine did. It is also a posture that Catherine was previously

[72] Cavendish, 81.

[73] Cavendish, 81.

[74] Cavendish, 83. On Cavendish's error in presenting the order in which Henry and Catherine spoke, see Kelly, 84.

[75] Beer, 1–3, 5–6, 74–75, 80, 88–90, 103–04; Moore, 29, 33; Strohm, 97–98, 104, 114–15; and Warnicke, 6.

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known to have performed, most notably when she knelt before Henry in 1520 to plead for young rioters who had been condemned to death.[76]

In this particular articulation of the interceding consort, Catherine waits until she is kneeling in front of Henry before she says,

> "Sir, . . ." I beseech you for all the loves that hath been between us and for the love of God, . . . take of me some pity and compassion, . . . Alas, sir, . . . what occasion of displeasure have I deserved against your will or pleasure? . . . I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever confirmable to your will and pleasure. . . . I never . . . showed a visage or spark of discontentation. . . . This twenty years I have been your true wife (or more), and by me ye had had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them out of this world.[77]

Cavendish portrays Catherine as rhetorically elegant and adept: she begins with a rhetorical question and then proceeds via *auxesis* (developing a speech via increasing significance), *dinumeratio* (amplifying a statement with details), *procatalepsis* (anticipating and answering an opponent's objections), *paranomasia* (punning), *cictros* (evoking pity in others), and *paradiegesis* (using a fact as an occasion for further declaring one's meaning). In her analysis of this speech, Earenfight notes how Catherine employs *hendiadys* (expressing one idea via two nouns) to force "the listener to pay close attention to her every word"; Earenfight adds that Catherine employs the informal "ye" to accentuate her close relationship with Henry.[78]

Not content with this eloquent opening, Catherine turns to one of her most-used rhetorical tools in her letters—the language of obligation:

> And when ye had me at the first (I take God to be my judge) I was a true maid without touch of man; . . . I put it to your conscience. If there be any just cause by the law that ye can allege against me, . . . to banish and put me from you, I am well content to depart to my great shame and dishonor. And if there be none, then here I most lowly beseech you let me remain in my former estate and to receive justice at your princely hands. . . . The King your father was in the time of his reign of such estimation through the world for his excellent wisdom; . . . and my father Ferdinand, King of Spain, who was esteemed to be one of the wittiest princes that reigned in Spain many years before. . . . It is not therefore to be doubted but that they elected and gathered as wise counsellors

[76] The list of scholars currently working on practices of assertive deference on the part of queens consort is extensive, but among the most influential to this essay are Beer; Griffey; and Gough, along with the essays in Watanabe-O'Kelley and Morton. On Catherine's intercession for the rioters, see especially *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, vol. 2, no. 887.

[77] Cavendish, 83–84.

[78] Earenfight, 156.

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> about them as to their high discretions was thought meet. . . . who thought then the marriage between you and me good and lawful. Therefore it is a wonder to me what new inventions are now invented against me, that never intended but honesty.[79]

This section returns to many of the earlier-employed devices, while adding, at the end of the speech, the pleonastic "new inventions [that] are now invented against me." This rhetorical turn recalls Cavendish's, Charles V's, and Lopez de Mendoza's suggestions that the novelty of the trial threatens to overturn cultural order and stability because it undermines Henry's authority along with the honor and reputations of both his and Catherine's families and nations.

Cavendish's Catherine is at her most direct in this speech when she affirms that she was a virgin when she married Henry. As Earenfight notes, the word "had" puns on Catherine's loss of her virginity to Henry (rather than to Arthur) and on the multiple ways in which Catherine and Henry have been bound together personally and politically.[80] Cavendish's Catherine then adds rhetorical fuel by means of *auxesis*, which she employs to extend the language of obligation and personal honor to include all others, dead and alive, whose reputations would be negatively affected by the annulment of her marriage to Henry. This last section is a tour-de-force rhetorical piece in which Catherine suggests that Henry has left her with "insufficient counsel." Without actually saying so, she indicates that he is not acting as an enlightened ruler and consort but, rather, as an arbitrary despot. In all, Cavendish's Catherine is almost a case study for how a beleaguered queen consort could best present herself in order to win the sympathy and support of others.

But given that this speech is filtered through Cavendish's project of deauthorizing Henry and of idealizing Catherine, it is unclear to what extent Catherine's speech is accurately quoted. The level of sophistication is certainly plausible for one of the most well-educated women of sixteenth century Europe —someone who would have written her speech with her advisers and who was experienced enough to know how to craft a message that would resonate forcefully with her listeners. And it is true that the holograph letters that Catherine wrote during this period share many traits with Cavendish's rendition of Catherine's rhetoric; these include the language of obligation, religious allusions, and references to herself as both a defenseless woman and a loyal consort.[81] Earenfight has characterized Catherine's letters as "written

[79] Cavendish, 84.

[80] Earenfight, 157.

[81] On Catherine's typical diction and syntax in her letters, see Prendergast, 2021. The fact that there is no known extant letter written by Catherine to anyone outside of Charles V's circle during this period, along with the fact that English archival libraries hold no letters written by

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in the language of someone well-educated with a wide and eloquent vocabulary and a sensitivity to both the form of the letter and the recipient."[82] While I agree that the letters reveal a strong awareness of the recipient, Catherine's diction is more accessible and repetitive than "wide and eloquent." In the letters she wrote during this period, she largely avoids descriptive adjectives, and she often returns to the same abstract or affective nouns and verbs, particularly "supplicate" (*suplyco*), "mercy" (*merced*), "honor" (*honra*), "relief" (*sosyego*), "obligation" (*oblygacyon*), "service" (*servycyo*), and "pity" (*pyedad*).[83]

A letter that Catherine wrote to Charles V around the time of the annulment trial is typical of her writing style during this period. However—like many of the letters that she wrote to Charles between 1529 and 1532—this one, written in June or July of 1529, does not open with her usual extended praise of Charles's honor and majesty; instead, it reflects the urgency of the situation by moving immediately to her main request—that Charles send her a papal bull and legal breve (writ) concerning her first marriage, both of which were in his possession. After reminding Charles of Henry's "scruples over the marriage between his highness and myself" ("escrupulo sobre el casamyento que entre su alteeza y my ay"), she outlines the annulment process initiated by Henry, adding that the pope has "convened here, into this kingdom, a commission on this case to be overseen by two legates; one of whom is based here [Wolsey] and the other sent by his holiness for this purpose."[84] She then tells Charles that she needs the bull and breve. Throughout, the diction and syntax are characteristic of Catherine—direct and to the point, eschewing elaborate phrases and diction, while using *amplificatio* to develop her argument.[85]

Catherine then turns to her typical language of obligation by adding, "may your highness have pity on me for my honor and my service to you" ("vuestra alteza aya pyedad de my honra y servycyo"). Here she reminds Charles of all that she has done for him, as a way of suggesting that it is time for him to do something

her during this period, suggests that a number of her letters to addressees in England were either lost or destroyed.

[82] Earenfight, 82.

[83] For other examples of Catherine's accessible diction, see the following letters by her to Charles V, all housed at the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria: EH 1:6, fol. 3^{r}; EH 1:6, fol. 7^{r}; EH 1:6, fol. 8^{r}; and EH 1:6, fol. 9$^{r–v}$.

[84] EH 1:6, fol. 16^{r}–17^{r}. All translations of this letter are mine. The original Spanish reads, "a conbyado aquy aeste reyno una comysyon sobre este caso a dos legados el uno de ellos el cardenal que esta aquy continuo y el otro enbyado de su sanctydad para este negocyo."

[85] On typical aspects of Catherine's writing style, particularly in her letters to reigning monarchs, see Prendergast, 2020.

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for her. Then, after noting how the annulment would "very much dishonor me" ("mucha deshonra mya"), she moves into the conventions of the modesty topos, presenting, on the twenty-eighth line, her "humble supplication" ("humyl suplycacyon"), again, to deliver the breve, using this phrase to move into further instructions on how to do so. She goes on to combine the language of obligation with that of praise by reminding Charles that the annulment proceedings "touch your honor and wisdom" ("toca a su honra y saber"), and then reminds him of his reputation for "goodness and benignity" ("bondad y benynydad"), before giving him more instructions. She concludes the letter with a sentence that combines a somewhat assertive request with the language of obligation, as she expresses her hope that Charles and his advisors "will consider and accept my petition, beseeching you to do so as quickly as possible to the extent that your highness esteems my honor and peace of mind in this matter."[86]

The letter is not the same kind of articulation as a speech made before a crowd, but it does give some sense of Catherine's typical mode of expressing herself. She is a problem solver—brisk and to the point when she is in this mode. She combines a self-confident and assertive tone with the language of obligation and the modesty topos; she scatters abstract and affective nouns like "honor" and "supplication" throughout her letters; and she rarely turns to elaborate syntax, diction, or rhetorical figures, even as she shows a strong sense of how to build an argument persuasively. All of these traits also fall within typical conventions of letter-writing employed by aristocratic and royal women.[87] The letter is only unusual because it lacks the expected initial praise to a monarch. Throughout—possibly because she was aware that the letter might be intercepted by Henry or his advisers—Catherine avoids any negative reference to Henry VIII, Wolsey, or Parliament. Never expressing despair but always emphasizing her troubles, never questioning her rightful status as queen while emphasizing the determination of the king's allies to take this status away from her, Catherine's letter represents her distress strategically in order to gain the support of Charles V and maintain her reputation as a conventional queen consort.

In all, Cavendish's rendition of Catherine's speech at the Blackfriars Trial has much in common with her writing style in her letters. Both letters and speech

[86] EH 1:6, fol. 16[r]. The original Spanish reads, "Myraran y acepteran my petycyon; suplycandole lo mas presto asy como vra alteza estyma my honra y sosyego en este caso."

[87] On such conventions see especially Couchman, 2005, 168; and Couchman, 2013, 63–70. See also Daybell, 62, 68; and Shemek, 136–38. Catherine's letters are also typical of ways in which aristocratic and royal women felt more licensed than commoners to use somewhat assertive language in their letters, while couching their statements within expressions of modesty: see Couchman, 2013, 65; Daybell, 68; and Shemek, 123–30.

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include a turn to affective and abstract language, an assertion of honor and loyalty, and the language of obligation. There are, nonetheless, some significant differences between her letters and this speech. Cavendish's presentation of Catherine's speech contains more elaborate sentence-level rhetorical figures and a more complex syntax than those she employed in her letters; his version also contains a larger number of adjectives than is common in her letters. However, these differences could reflect the fact that this was a carefully rehearsed speech, composed with the aid of supporters. And certainly the gist of Cavendish's version of the speech seems accurate. Falieri, Campeggio, and Du Bellay also mention that, in her speech, Catherine referred to her honor, to her Spanish allegiances, and to her doubts that a trial in England could be impartial. Whether or not Cavendish faithfully expressed all of Catherine's rhetoric, he did create a speech that sounds quite a bit like the kind one would expect to hear from Catherine at such a moment—in part, perhaps, because Catherine and Cavendish shared the common agenda of portraying Catherine as a benevolent, compassionate, wronged, and legitimate queen consort.

But Cavendish is not content with stopping here; his Catherine takes on a dramatic life of her own with a speech that, despite being frequently quoted by biographers, is not noted by any of the other eyewitness writers: "And even with that she rose up, making a low curtsy to the King, and so departed from thence. . . . The King being advertized of her departure, commanded the crier to call her again, who called her . . . 'On, on,' quod she, 'it makes no matter, for it is no indifferent court for me. Therefore I will not tarry, go on your ways.' And thus she departed out of that court without any further answer."[88] Here, Cavendish's Catherine moves from indirect accusations via the language of obligation to openly unruly language that is lacking not only in the other eyewitness accounts but also in any of the letters that she wrote, as queen consort, to a reigning monarch.[89]

The floutings of conventional behavior for queens consort are indeed numerous here: first, Cavendish's Catherine refuses to return to her designated space, then she refuses to obey the crier, and, finally, she departs the court without receiving permission to do so. Upon leaving, she abandons any pretense of performing the part of a deferential consort by turning to openly aggressive language against all the members present, including Henry himself. Given its uniqueness, this assertive expression of anger may well be an invention of Cavendish's, despite his own condemnation of novelties and inventions; it is also possible, however, that these parting words were a planned response by

[88] Cavendish, 85.
[89] Prendergast, 2020, 94–110.

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Catherine, or even a spontaneous burst of anger from her that, for some reason, the other four eyewitnesses chose to disregard in their accounts.

Despite adding what may have been an invented passage, Cavendish's careful notes on 21 June 1529 appear to have served him in good stead when he wrote his account three decades later. Catherine's voice and movements are for the most part recognizable, and they reflect her typical strategy of presenting herself according to the conventional codes of a virtuous queen consort. At the same time, the extended period between 21 June 1529 and Cavendish's publication of these events seems to have inspired Cavendish to shape a larger overview of the trial's significance, one that prompted him to dwell on how Henry's unruly passion for Anne Boleyn drove him to destabilize his nation by employing "strange, new" devices to annul his legitimate marriage to a conventional queen consort. Although Cavendish depicts Catherine as employing assertive, somewhat unruly speech, he suggests that, at the trial, she confirmed her position as Henry's legitimate spouse by making use of a consort's license to speak assertively when interceding for herself or others. While Cavendish's inclination to support Catherine may have led him to embellish, or even invent, some of what Catherine said and did at the trial, the overall effect is a quite persuasive account of Catherine as a consort who knew how to employ her reputation for benevolence, piety, and loyalty as a means to push against the bounds of conventional female modesty and deference without undermining her image as a loyal, deferential consort.

FALIERI

Cavendish's tour-de-force portrayal of Catherine's speech and action at the trial can make the other four eyewitness accounts seem somewhat dry and terse in comparison. Given that these four writers were just as capable of writing floridly, the far more direct and straightforward syntax they employed may have to do with the fact that they felt the need to send significant news to their recipients as quickly as possible; perhaps, too, the lack of elaborate rhetoric allowed these writers to appear more objective, relaying what Du Bellay would later term "just the story, naked."[90] These four accounts share a tendency to employ a direct subject-verb-complement sentence structure, along with an emphasis on time, place, chronology, and persons attending. All four also include a brief rendition of what Catherine said on June 21. The apparent desire to present a linguistic appearance of objectivity may explain why all four also record Catherine's speech in the third person, which creates something of a distancing effect.

[90] My translation. The original reads as "seullement la narration nue": Petris, 170.

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Of the accounts by the three diplomats, Falieri's comes the closest to following Cavendish's portrayal of Catherine as Henry's conventional, compassionate, and legitimate consort; however, he depicts Henry VIII as being equally conventional.[91] This depiction was probably purposeful, as it allowed Falieri to articulate his account of the trial in a way that would not alienate the Crown of England should his letter be intercepted by Henry's allies. This stance would also satisfy the diverse perspectives within the Venetian Senate—a political body that, despite frequent tensions with the Vatican, eventually chose to align itself with the Vatican and against Henry VIII on the question of Henry's annulment of his marriage to Catherine.

Falieri's portrayal of both Henry and Catherine as legitimate consorts is evident from the beginning of his narrative, which emphasizes Henry as the focus of authority and magnificence. Unlike Cavendish, Falieri never seems to question the veracity of this appearance:

> On the 21st the said most reverend cardinal judges re-assembled in a room on a rostrum, to which, first, her most serene highness came, then his most serene highness, who seated himself first, on the right, below a baldachin of gold brocade; on the left, below him, her most serene highness sat under another baldachin. And then the king spoke a few words to these judges in English, stating that he did not wish to live any longer in a state of mortal sin, as he had done these last 20 years, and that he would have no peace of mind until the marriage had been properly adjudicated, asking these judges to expedite the case.[92]

Much like Cavendish—but with less detail—Falieri dwells on the visual rhetoric that enhances the magnificence and superiority of Henry, heightened by the fact that, unlike Cavendish's Henry, Falieri's Henry speaks first.

Because Falieri's account is so brief, any moment or word that he dwells on is significant, particularly in comparison to Cavendish's account. Cavendish does not include Henry's speech until late in his account—placing it after Catherine

[91] I have not come across any secondary source that considers Falieri's particular slant on the trial. Almost all sources that refer to this account use it as evidence for what happened at the trial without discussing its subjectivities.

[92] All translations of Falieri's letter are mine, although I have consulted Rawdon Brown's somewhat freer translation in *The Calendar of State Papers*; see Brown, 4:1527–33. The original Italian reads as follows: "A di 21 *iterum* ditti revereudissimi cardinali judici se reduseno in una sala in loco eminente, dove prima vene la serenissima regina, poi il serenissimo re, reduti prima il re sotto uno baldachin di restagno d'oro a banda destra et a banda sinistra la serenisima regina sotto uno altro baldachin più al basso. Et poi il re in lengua anglese usoe alcune parole a essi judici, dicendo non voleva star più in peccato mortal come era stà zà 20 anni, et che'l non havea mai ben fin non fosse judicato di raxon di tal matrimonio, pregando essi iudici volesseno expedir la causa, con altre parole": Sanuto, 51:178.

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has departed the court; as a result, this speech appears almost as a postscript to the main events of the day. But, at sixty-seven lines, it is an extensive postscript, contrasting radically with Falieri's three-line rendition of Henry's speech. In Cavendish's version, Henry refers to Catherine as "true, obedient, and as confirmable a wife as I could in my fancy wish," but he then states that he began to wonder about the validity of his marriage after the Bishop of Bayonne raised the question to him, around 1527.[93] He goes on to assert that "these words . . . bred a doubtful prick within my breast," adding that the lack of a male heir suggested to him "the punishment of God."[94] He then states that he sought this trial not only to alleviate his concern that he might be in a state of sin but also to "consider the estate of this realm."[95] How much of this long speech is accurate is debatable, but its length does not necessarily make it less factual than the accounts by Henry and the three ambassadors. Falieri, for example, shows a certain level of subjectivity by leaving out details of Henry's speech, noting only that Henry spoke "with more words" ("con altre parole").[96]

If Cavendish's account stresses Henry's affirmation of Catherine's virtues, his concerns about his conscience, and his desire to protect his nation, Falieri dwells on Henry's possible state of "mortal sin" ("peccato mortal"). Falieri is the only one of the five writers to use so strong a term—one that raises the possible illegitimacy of Henry's marriage to the same level of sin as murder and blasphemy; in contrast, the other writers only state that Henry felt issues of "conscience." The emphasis on Henry as someone who may have spent twenty years wondering if he was in a state of mortal sin gives us a potentially weaker, vacillating, and more tortured characterization than the initial description of visual pomp implies. This reading gains a bit more traction through Falieri's portrayal of Catherine as a suffering consort who experiences no qualms of conscience or doubts about her legitimacy. This sympathy for Catherine is introduced at the very beginning of the narrative. Falieri is the only eyewitness writer who notes that "her most serene highness" ("la serenissima regina") entered the room before her husband—thus reversing the normal hierarchical order. He is also the only one who mentions that it was not just Henry but also Catherine who sat under a canopy. Falieri's Catherine thus appears—initially, at least—to be more majestic than Cavendish's Catherine, even as she is also deferentially seated "below" Henry ("più al basso"). With just a few carefully chosen words—and, perhaps, by leaving out some of Henry's "more words"—Falieri subtly shifts his narrative toward sympathy for Catherine,

[93] Cavendish, 86.
[94] Cavendish, 85, 86.
[95] Cavendish, 86.
[96] Sanuto, 51:178.

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while his reference to her entrance and to the canopy above her endow her with traditional attributes of a recognized queen consort.

This attention to Catherine is heightened when Falieri writes that, after the king's speech,

> the queen rose and came through the middle to the king, and, throwing herself on her knees, she gave a speech saying that she had lived 20 years with his majesty as his lawful wife, that she had faithfully served him, and that she did not deserve to be repudiated and disgraced without good reason, asking the judges to judge in her favor; and she said nothing else.[97]

The largely unembellished diction in the earlier part of Falieri's account gives way here to more elaborate rhetorical figures, such as *cictros* and *hendiadys*, along with dramatic verbs and adjectives that add emotional resonance to Falieri's Catherine. Catherine does not just kneel at Henry's feet—as the other accounts state—she throws herself ("buttandosi") at his feet. She does not just affirm the importance of her case; she states that she has served Henry "faithfully" ("fede"). Similarly, she does not just refer to the annulment trial but, instead, states that she is being "repudiated and disgraced" ("repudiata et . . . vergogna"). Other details of the speech are also slanted in Catherine's favor, particularly the emphasis on the fact that she and Henry had been married for twenty years before any doubt was cast on the validity of their marriage. Furthermore, while Falieri states that he did not write down all that Henry said, he does state that he presented Catherine's speech in full, thus implying that there is more significant content in Catherine's speech than there is in Henry's. This rendition of Catherine's speech and actions presents a suffering and innocent, yet also regal and self-assured Catherine, whose speech is important enough for Falieri to render it fully, and who, much like Cavendish's Catherine, assumes verbal agency only because she is forced to intercede on behalf of her own honor.

By means of a few adjectives and adverbs Falieri quietly makes Catherine the protagonist of his narrative and, by extension, the person upon whom most of the readers' sympathy is to be projected. Perhaps because of this sympathy, or because of his desire to present a clear account to his letter's recipients, Falieri's rendition of the speech—although in third person—is quite faithful to Catherine's letter-writing style. Like Catherine, Falieri employs accessible language, affective diction, uncomplicated syntax, a combination of an assertive

[97] The original reads as follows: "Da poi si levò la rezina et vene per mezo il re, buttandosi in zenochioni, dicendo alta voce alcune parole, che l'era stata 20 anni con Soa Maestà per soa moier legittima, et servatoli fede, et non meritava senza alcuna causa esser repudiata et fattoli tal vergogna, pregando essi judici li desseno favor, et non disse altro": Sanuto, 51:178.

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tone with the humility topos, the language of obligation, and a carefully built argument. The result is a more idealized Catherine than the Catherine presented in Cavendish's account, given that Falieri's Catherine never actively disobeys orders by Henry or the crier, nor does she give a final retaliatory speech. In fact, she does not even appear to leave the room after her speech. Instead, Falieri's Catherine appears throughout as an intelligent, anguished, loyal, and deferential consort who is forced by circumstances that have been thrust upon her to defend her personal honor. The impression left by the letter is that Falieri—given his status as a diplomat—wished to encourage the Venetian Senate to view Catherine's case sympathetically without openly asking it to do so.

CAMPEGGIO

Campeggio's version of what Catherine said and did at the trial is more subtly sympathetic than Falieri's; this is not surprising given Campeggio's delicate diplomatic duties and allegiances. Although Campeggio was a papal envoy, he also owed allegiance to Henry VIII, who had given him the bishopric of Salisbury in 1518. Yet Campeggio clearly felt a stronger allegiance to Pope Clement VII—an orientation made evident by the fact that Campeggio wrote two letters on the day of the trial to his friend Cardinal Jacopo Salviati, a close adviser to Pope Clement VII. Interestingly, the second letter—the only one of the two that describes Catherine's speech—was written in cipher, reflecting Campeggio's knowledge that his correspondence "had been tampered with."[98] Campeggio would have been well aware that a letter containing a sympathetic representation of Catherine's speech at the trial would be of concern to Henry, who hoped that Campeggio would rule in favor of the annulment of his marriage. Campeggio himself seems to have held no strong opinion on the matter of the annulment; instead, he clearly felt that his office was to follow any directives given to him by Pope Clement.[99]

As one would expect, the nonciphered letter avoids material that might offend Henry. Campeggio begins by noting that

> their majesties the king and queen appeared at the trial this morning, and the king sat down above us below a canopy of brocade, and we sat to his left, and beyond us the queen. The king—before any other matter could be broached—spoke copiously and with gravity and much passion, justifying the processes of this trial, and showing the great reverence and confidence that he has in our

[98] Cardinal, 127.

[99] On Campeggio's attitudes toward the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine, see especially Cardinal, 114–34.

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> Lord, and in the Apostolic See, protesting that he wished for nothing else except to disburden himself of his pangs of conscience and to discover the truth of this case, demonstrating how much he had confidence in our judicial process . . . and all of this he said in English.[100]

Beginning with largely accessible language and unsubordinated syntax, Campeggio, like Cavendish and Falieri, focuses on Henry's power and magnificence, noting that Henry sat above others and below a "canopy of brocade" ("capiciclo di brocato"). Campeggio then moves to more descriptive language once Henry begins speaking; at this point he adds *epitheton* (qualifying adjectives) to his otherwise direct syntax and diction. The effect is a portrayal of Henry as a king who speaks with a commanding, impassioned delivery ("con gravità et molta vehmentia"). Yet Campeggio's only specific comments on the content of the speech are about Henry's "conscience" ("conscientia") and Henry's stated reverence for, and confidence in, the Holy See. While the former statement recalls, in less dramatic language, Falieri's allusion to Henry's possible state of mortal sin as well as Cavendish's reference to Henry's "weighty burden of scrupulous conscience," the latter statement, about Henry's confidence in the Vatican, does not appear in any of the other eyewitness accounts.[101] This reference may be a diplomatic gesture, and perhaps invention, on Campeggio's part to assure Clement VII of Henry's ultimate loyalty to him. The overall effect of this first letter is, therefore, complex; Campeggio begins with a largely objective tone, but then employs *enargeia*—probably to make up for Campeggio's ignorance about what was actually said—rendering Henry as a king who acts with gravity and strong emotions. Throughout, this version presents Henry as a loyal supporter of the Vatican.

If the first letter is focused on Henry, the second letter, written in cipher, is far more focused on Catherine. Again, Campeggio's poor command of English leads him to foreground spectacle, movement, and tone over words: "She knelt

[100] My translation. The original reads as follows: "La maestà del re et de la reina questa mattina comparsero in iudicio, et sedeva il re sopra di noi sotto un capiciclo di brocato, et noi gli eramo a man sinistra, et dopo noi la reina; et il re innanzi che si cominciasse a trattare altro, parlò molto copiosamente et con gravità et molta vehementia in iustificare lo trattamento di questa causa, mostrando molta reverentia et confidentia, che haveva havuto in N. Signore et alla Sede Apostolica, et protestando ch'egli non cercava altro che di sgravar la sua conscientia et la verità di quella iustitia, mostrando, quanto nel iudicio nostro si confidasse . . . et tutto disse in Anglese": Ehses, 107. While there are many scholarly studies of Campeggio's diplomatic missions, I have come across no scholarly work on this particular letter, except for works that use it as evidence for what happened at the trial.

[101] Cavendish, 86.

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there before the seat of judgment, although the King twice raised her up, asked permission of the King that, as it was a question which concerned the honour and conscience of herself and of the house of Spain, he would grant her full permission to write and send messengers to the Emperor and to his Holiness."[102] Catherine appears here as a conventional consort who moves modestly and who kneels twice before Henry. Yet this account, much like Cavendish's, reveals how Catherine used a strategy of assertive deference to compel Henry to raise her up—essentially forcing Henry to submit publicly to her will. And while the account presents few details of Catherine's ensuing "very full appeal and supplication" ("amplissima appellatione et supplicationem"), Campeggio's Catherine speaks using diction licensed to women who were interceding on behalf of their own honor and the honor of others—in this case the honor of Spain—while also demonstrating respect for Clement VII.[103] Campeggio subtly highlights the significance of this appeal by having Catherine speak in *hendiadys*, echoing the turn to *hendiadys* in Cavendish's rendition of Catherine's speech. In this way, Campeggio's Catherine reflects what is also implied in Falieri's and Cavendish's renderings—that she parried Henry's performance as a conventional, authoritative regent by performing herself as a conventional, virtuous consort. Indeed, Campeggio's Catherine is even more conventional than Cavendish's, as Campeggio does not show Catherine to be acting in defiance of any courtly convention. At the same time, Campeggio avoids the kinds of adjectives that Cavendish and Falieri employed to inspire sympathy for Catherine. Instead, he predominantly depicts Catherine as a consort who is concerned with the practicalities of protecting her honor and of entering into correspondence with empowered men. English-comprehension issues may also be involved here, for while Cavendish and Du Bellay, like Campeggio, register Catherine's stated unhappiness with having the courtly proceedings take place in England (rather than Rome), none of the other accounts speak to what, according to Campeggio, was Catherine's request to engage in correspondence with others; indeed, the request would have seemed somewhat unnecessary, given that Catherine had been engaged in just such correspondence from the moment that she heard about Henry's plan to annul their marriage.

[102] Brewer, 1884, 2:491. The original reads as follows: "Ibi coram tribunal genuflexa benchè il re due volte la sollevasse, dimandò licentia al re, che per trattarsi del honore et conscientia sua et de la casa di Spagna le volesse concedere libero addito di scrivere et mandar messi a Roma a N . Signore, et Sua Maestà glela concesse": Ehses, 107. The passage reflects Campeggio's tendency to slip between Italian and Latin in his letters to Salviati.

[103] Brewer, 1884, 2:491; and Ehses, 107.

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Overall, Campeggio's two letters present a strong sense of Henry's desire to dominate the judicial proceedings, of Catherine's strategic use of assertive deference, and of Campeggio's awareness of the delicate relationship between the Vatican and England. This last issue was complicated by the enormous power that Catherine's nephew and ally, Charles V, wielded over the Vatican. Campeggio's somewhat vague account of what Catherine articulated in her speech makes it difficult to ascertain to what extent his rendition is accurate or not, but—without ever questioning Henry's authority, and without adding the kinds of affective adjectives employed by Cavendish and Falieri—Campeggio ultimately presents just as strong a case for Catherine's point of view as he does for Henry's by emphasizing how Catherine defends her marriage not just on behalf of her own honor but on behalf of her birth nation's honor as well. At the same time, Campeggio's letters, particularly the second one, recall Cavendish's tendency to portray Catherine as someone who dramatizes her deference to her husband, who claims obedience to him (while actually disobeying him by refusing to accede to the annulment of the marriage), and who employs whatever legal means possible to defend her marital status. It would seem that, at least on 21 June 1529, Campeggio, Falieri, and Cavendish all saw Catherine as making a strong case for being Henry's conventional, legitimate spouse, and all appear to have seen any assertive speech or movement on her part as fitting within conventions allowed for queens consort interceding on behalf of their own honor. All three also portray her speech and movement in ways that, for the most part, reflect her typical diction (in her letters) and gestures. In all—with the possible exception of Cavendish's "On, on . . ." speech—they disseminate an idea of Catherine of Aragon that is consistent with Catherine's own self-presentations throughout her consortship.

DU BELLAY

That Cavendish, Falieri, and Campeggio all largely agree on what Catherine said and did at the trial gives credence to much of their accounts. Most of these areas of agreement are affirmed by Du Bellay as well, until his account's last sentence. Here, Du Bellay qualifies the idea that Catherine is a conventional consort by implying that she only appears to be so but is, in fact, manipulative and disloyal. Given the absence of this perspective from the other three accounts, this last sentence suggests that Du Bellay, too, seems to have embellished, invented, or purposefully left out key moments of the trial to reflect his—or what he knew to be Francis I's—preferred view of the trial. Certainly, this negative slant is related to the fact that Francis I had recently

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entered into a political alliance with Henry VIII in which Francis agreed to support the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine.

If no clearly negative language appears throughout most of Du Bellay's account, his initial sentences indicate, at the very least, some irregularities:

> The King asked and required of them [the judges] to determine the validity or illegitimacy of his marriage, about which—from the beginning of the marriage up until the present time—he had experienced continual doubts, asking them to render their judgment not only out of their own deliberations but also based upon analyses made by worthy and wise men as to whether the marriage was without legitimacy or efficacy. At that, the Queen responded that now was not the time to say this and that she was astonished that he would have kept this to himself for so long without saying anything.[104]

Despite being known for his elegant rhetorical style, Du Bellay narrates this moment of the trial in a fairly direct manner, although he represents Henry's speech via *hendiadys*.[105] Yet even as the diction and syntax convey an impression of objectivity, this exchange between Henry and Catherine is unlikely to have occurred. It is true that Catherine and Henry had lively quarrels during the annulment period—most notably after Henry raised his illegitimate son to the peerage and after he announced to her that their marriage might be invalid. Nonetheless, it is difficult to believe that they would engage in marital bickering during a formal, public proceeding.[106] Perhaps Du Bellay is reporting a repartee that actually took place but that the other writers chose to leave out of their accounts, or perhaps he invented or embellished the exchange to set his readers up for the more strategic and calculating Catherine that he refers to later in the letter. While there is no negative language associated with Catherine here, the implication that she would immediately respond, in public, to her husband without receiving his permission might suggest that she was an unruly spouse. However accurate or invented this interchange may have been, it does highlight the he said–she said aspect of the trial, along with the spirited nature of Catherine's speech on this day. Equally interesting is the fact that Du Bellay is the only eyewitness writer besides Falieri to present Henry as stating that he

[104] All translations of this letter are mine. The original reads as follows: "Le Roy leur a requis et demandé de voulloir congnoistre la bonté ou nullité de son marriage pour avoir esté dèz le commancement d'icelluy jusques a present en perpetuel scrupule, jugeant tant par soy-mesmes que par rapportz de bons personnaiges et sçavans qu'il soit de nulle valeur et efficace. A cela, la Royne respondit qu'il n'estoit temps a ceste heure de le dire et qu'elle s'esbayssoit que si longtemps il l'avoit gardee sans rien en declairer": Schurer, 2:47.

[105] On Du Bellay's rhetoric, see Petris, 165–69.

[106] On these quarrels, see Whitelock, 28–29; and Williams, 266.

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had doubts from the "the beginning of the marriage" ("dez le commancement d'icelluy"), a statement that gives Catherine the rhetorical upper hand when she asks Henry why it took him so long to articulate his doubts.

The ultimate reason for narrating this moment of discord between Henry and Catherine is hard to assess, as Du Bellay drops all reference to it once he turns to Henry's extended speech, in which Henry states that he remained silent about his marital doubts due to "the great love he had and continues to have for her [Catherine]" ("la grand amour qu'il luy portoit et porte encores a present").[107] Du Bellay then has Henry state, "and as to her request that the cause be sent to Rome, he remonstrated with the judges that this was an unreasonable request . . . and that, in this kingdom, which is a nation that is safe and where she is loved and esteemed as is reasonable, she cannot be oppressed."[108] This rendition of Henry's speech contains a greater arc of emotions than do the accounts by the other eyewitness writers—from asking and requiring ("requis et demandé"; "remonstré") to personal doubts ("scrupule") about the marriage to pangs of conscience ("descharge de sa conscience") to the "great love" ("grand amour") for his queen. This affective diction gives the impression of a monarch who is in command of the trial proceedings but who is experiencing personal anguish about the possibility that his marriage to his beloved consort might be illegitimate. If, then, Cavendish's Henry "unkings" himself by placing his personal passion for Anne Boleyn over his conjugal love for Catherine, Du Bellay's Henry seeks to maintain his regal authority by placing his national and religious obligations over his personal love for Catherine.

Up to this point, Du Bellay seems far more interested in Henry than in Catherine: he gives Henry the first and last words in his exchange with Catherine and grants him eleven spoken lines to Catherine's two. However, once Du Bellay turns to Catherine's speech, Catherine steals the focus of the trial away from Henry, much as she does in Cavendish's, Falieri's, and Campeggio's versions.

> At the end, she went on her knees before the said king, supplicating him to keep in consideration her honor and also that of his daughter, along his own reputation, . . . and that he respect the reputation of his nation and that of his parents and friends, who would feel marvelously affronted by this trial, and that . . . she had, from the beginning, appealed this matter repeatedly for the

[107] Schurer, 2:47.

[108] The original reads, "Et a ce qu'elle avoit demandé la cause estre renvoyee a Rome, il a remonstré aux juges estre chose desraisonnable . . . et qu'en ce royaulme, qui es pais de seureté et la ou elle est aymee et estimee comme la raison le veult, elle ne peult este foullee": Schurer, 2:47.

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> aforesaid reasons. Because the trial should already have been taking place in Rome, where it would be reasonable for it to take place.[109]

Like Cavendish, Campeggio, and Falieri, Du Bellay notes that Catherine knelt deferentially before her consort; like them, too, he depicts her as someone who employs assertively deferential speech to defend her honor. Throughout, Du Bellay—much like Cavendish—intersperses Catherine's somewhat assertive phrasing with the conventional gestures and diction of deference. She kneels ("s'est mise a genoulx"), she employs words like "supplicating" ("suppliant"), and she refers to her honor ("honneur, reputation") as well as to her duty ("debvoir"), reflecting the diction that she frequently employed in her letters. This version of the speech also reflects Catherine's tendency, in her letters, to avoid subordinated clauses and to couch requests in the language of obligation.

So far, then, Henry and Catherine are portrayed as a king and consort who speak and act within their conventional roles; however, at the very end of the narrative, Du Bellay describes Catherine's exit from the court in a way that questions her legitimacy as consort:

> The plea, sire, was made in a public venue, there being a large number of people present. . . . Indeed, if judgement were placed in the hands of women, he [Henry] would soon lose the battle, because they do not fail to shout loudly to the queen, as she exits and enters: "May the good queen Catherine stand fast! May she have no worries" and plenty of other such foolish words. Also, she does not forget, on her part, to reveal from which nation she derives, as she commends herself to their good prayers and orisons, along with many such other "castillianisms."[110]

This rendition of Catherine's speech recalls Du Bellay's earlier comment that Catherine is "loved and esteemed" ("aymee et estimee") in England. Yet, at the end of this statement, Du Bellay confines this popularity to "foolish"

[109] The original reads, "A la fin, elle s'est mise a genoulx devant led. seigneur, le suppliant qu'il voulust avoir l'honneur d'elle, pareillement celluy de sa fille et son bien en recommandation . . . et qu'il eust esgard a la reputation de sa nation, de ses parens et amys qui se sentiront merveilleusement offensez en cest affaire, et que . . . elle avoit dès le commancement de la matiere appellé et encores de rechief en appelloyt tant pour les causes de suspition dessusd. Que pour estre desja la cause a Rome, la ou il estoit raisonnable qu'elle se trouvat": Schurer, 2:47.

[110] The original reads as follows: "Le plaidoyé, Sire, se faisoit a chamber ouverte, y estant infiny peuple en la presence. . . . Toutesfois, si elles estoit remise au jugement des femmes, il perdroit bientost la bataille car ells ne faillent a bien cryer a la Royne, sortant et entrant: 'Qu'elle tienne bon la bonne Catherine et qu'elle ne se soulcye de riens!' et assez de sottes paroles de memes. Aussi elle n'oublye de sa part montrer de quel pais elle est venue, se recommandant a leurs bonnes prieres et oraisons, et faisant assez de telles castellanneries": Schurer, 2:48.

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women; then he uses what is apparently a negatively inflected neologism, "castillianisms," to describe Catherine's words of thanks to these citizens.[111] This neologism signals Du Bellay's radical swerve from naked summary to personal opinion, suggesting that Catherine's popularity is the product of her scheming Spanish nature, employed here to manipulate gullible women. In this way, Du Bellay implies that Catherine is an illegitimate and disloyal consort whose intransigence threatens to undermine English cultural order by shifting power and authority from men to women, from aristocrats to citizens, and from England to Spain. In the last two sentences, Du Bellay engages in a tactic that is the opposite of Cavendish's, as he associates blame, disorder, and irresponsibility with Catherine rather than with Henry.

What does one make of an account that is largely positive toward Catherine until its last lines? Perhaps this ending suggests that Du Bellay approved of Catherine's performance during most of the trial while he reserved disapproval for what appeared to be a histrionic and populist move on her part as she left the court; or perhaps Du Bellay was largely convinced by Catherine's self-presentation but felt the need to insert negative language at the end of the letter—language that would align with his sovereign's alliance with Henry VIII and against Charles V's aunt in this Great Matter. What does stand out is how, even in this negatively coded letter, the account, with the exception of the words "foolish" ("sottes") and "castillianisms" ("castellanneries"), is largely positive. It is also consistent with Catherine's own self-presentations throughout her reign as queen consort, and it is consistent—to a significant extent—with Campeggio's and Falieri's accounts. Ultimately, however, Du Bellay's decision to portray Catherine's popularity in a negative light gestures to a concern that she may represent a carnivalesque threat to France's most powerful ally, whose authority is built on male, English aristocratic power. It is worth keeping in mind that Du Bellay was not wrong in his assessment of Catherine. While she clearly believed that she was Henry's legitimate consort, she also made use of some strategies that Du Bellay refers to here: she consistently employed rhetoric that would help her maintain her popularity among the English people, and she frequently turned to Charles V and his ambassadors in London for advice.

HENRY VIII

The accounts by Du Bellay, Falieri, Campeggio, and Cavendish have certain elements in common: all refer to the pomp and ceremony of the proceedings, all state that Catherine knelt before Henry, all depict Catherine as someone who

[111] On Du Bellay's interest in inventing words, see Petris, 165.

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considered herself to be Henry's legitimate queen, all represent her as moving and speaking with assertive deference, and all note that Henry spoke in defense of the annulment trial. In strong contrast, Henry VIII refers to none of these points in his letter to his envoys at the Vatican, a letter written two days after the trial. Instead, he gives a précis of Catherine's speech, which—far more than even Du Bellay's account—represents Catherine as a stubborn and unruly queen who is more Spanish than English in her loyalties. Here is the complete letter:

> The Queen, trusting more to the Imperialists than the justice of her cause, put in her protest, and appealed to the Pope, alleging the avocation of her cause. The judges allowed her [Catherine] till the 21st [to prepare her appeal], when we both appeared, and her protestation was refused; but she persisted in her appeal, and, when they proposed to proceed, left the court. Being thrice summoned to appear without effect, she was pronounced *contumax*, and cited to appear on Friday next.[112]

Of the five accounts, this one shows the least attempt to replicate any of Catherine's typical language or gestures. Instead, the first sentence slants the narrative against Catherine via *excusitatio*. Henry takes the negative implications of Du Bellay's "castillianisms" a step further by using the word "Imperialists." The term refers not just to Spain but also to the many territories throughout the world claimed by Catherine's nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Hence, Henry suggests, Catherine is allying herself with a major power that is threatening English autonomy. By alliterating "Pope," "protestation," "protested," "pronounced," and "persisted," Henry associates Catherine's imperialist allegiances with her refusal to accept the annulment proceedings. "Persisted" gives particular emphasis to her intransigence, as it reflects how she had already asked for, and had been denied, her appeal. This insistence on Catherine's stubborn disobedience, along with her disloyalty to England and her stated desire to have the trial take place at the Vatican rather than in England, intimates (much as does Du Bellay at the end of his account) that Catherine's loyalty to Spanish interests and her refusal to obey her king and husband threaten patriarchal authority and English national integrity. Without ever saying so, Henry, not unjustly, suggests that Catherine's resistance to the annulment is an active political threat.

Henry's brief account thus concludes a kind of arc of depictions of Catherine—from Cavendish's legitimate, loving, and deferentially assertive Catherine; to Falieri's legitimate, suffering, and deferential Catherine; to Campeggio's

[112] See Brewer, 1875, vol. 4, no. 5707. I have come across no secondary sources on the significance of this letter outside of a mention by Kelly.

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sympathetic, benevolent, and practical Catherine; to Du Bellay's apparently honorable and legitimate but actually disloyal Catherine; to Henry's illegitimate, stubborn, and obstructionist Catherine. Of these accounts, Henry's is clearly the outlier. His version of events leaves out references to his own speech, to Catherine kneeling before him, and to her references to her honor. These elisions, along with the patently subjective language in his account, reinforce the point made by Cavendish and contemporary scholars that Henry was willing to employ innovative ideas and arguments to ensure that his marriage to Catherine would be dissolved.

CONCLUSION

What emerges, then, from the varied perspectives of the five accounts? All agree that the trial took place at the Blackfriars Monastery on 21 June 1529; all note that Catherine appeared at the trial and gave a speech in which she mentioned some sort of unease with the trial; and all five portray Catherine as a spirited, articulate, and assertively deferential woman who fought to maintain her status as Henry's legitimate and conventional queen consort. All of the accounts also employ elements of writing that are similar to Catherine's writing style, such as abstract terms like "honor" and "duty," words of request like "supplicate," and —with the exception of Cavendish's account—largely unsubordinated syntax. While differences between the accounts make it clear that none of the eyewitness accounts holds the ultimate truth about what Catherine said and did at the Blackfriars Trial on 21 June 1529, each nonetheless contains a significant degree of apparent accuracy—including the negative characterizations by Du Bellay and Henry, for Catherine was, in many ways, an unruly woman who strategically portrayed herself as a conventional queen consort. The other three eyewitness writers also have a point in portraying Catherine as a conventional queen consort with the license to speak and act assertively on behalf of her own honor.

The differences between these accounts gesture to apparent inventions, embellishments, and elisions that are almost inevitable given the many subjective elements of the trial. Since neither party at the trial could provide incontrovertible evidence to prove its main contentions, the trial unfolded as a competition over which side could render its interpretation of Catherine and Henry's marriage most persuasively via visual and aural rhetoric. No matter how persuasively Catherine argued that the marriage had been legitimately sanctioned by a papal dispensation, the messy history of laws of consanguinity and marital dispensations meant that there would always be some means by which a dispensation could be interpreted as faulty. Henry's position was even harder to present persuasively once he based much of it on a premise

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that was impossible to prove—that Catherine had lost her virginity to his brother Arthur during their five months of marriage. Even more problematic was his attempt to have the dispensation of his marriage to Catherine proved erroneous, given how reluctant popes were to pronounce that an earlier dispensation had been erroneous.

The five eyewitness accounts can, in this way, be seen as factual insofar as they accurately reflect the many subjectivities inherent in the annulment trial. Perhaps, then, these accounts are most valuable when they are read together, as a kind of miscellany that reflects the varied responses to Catherine's speech and movements at the trial. As such, they also anticipate the many rumors about and popular accounts of the trial that made their way into Elizabethan and Jacobean literature and into much of Catherine's posthumous reputation. Twenty-first-century biographies continue to present Catherine in diverse ways, characterizing her as Henry's tragic "unfortunate" wife (the subtitle of Williams's 2013 biography), as an assertive, unruly consort (in David Starkey's 2003 biography), and as at once a conventional and actively resistant consort (in Earenfight's 2021 biography).

Eventually, of course, Catherine lost the battle to remain recognized as the legitimate queen consort of England. Henry's superior political power led him to his most radically innovative move—particularly innovative for someone who prided himself on the title of Fidei Defensor that he had received from Pope Leo X in 1521. Rather than faithfully defend the Roman Catholic Church, Henry created a new, English church, which, characteristically, he presented as grounded in convention, tradition, and authority. As a result, Catherine lost almost all of her power, wealth, and influence. Nonetheless, in the pitched battle over her reputation as queen consort, her iconic performance at the trial captured much of the imagination of early modern Western Europe and continues to dominate her posthumous reputation to this day. Even her contemporaries who believed her to be an illegitimate spouse depicted her in a largely positive light; at worst they stated that, after the events of 21 June 1529, Catherine acted stubbornly by refusing to accede to the annulment of her marriage. From this perspective, the male writers who first recorded Catherine's speech and actions at the trial—with the possible exception of Henry VIII—worked within their own personal, national, and masculinist prejudices even as they consciously or inadvertently collaborated with Catherine to perpetuate her voice, movements, and self-curated reputation as a benevolent, deferential, and loyal queen who turned to assertive language and actions only when forced to defend her honor. These writers did so in part because Catherine had created such a beloved persona for herself that no one—including Henry VIII—could write openly against her. It is by looking back to the deferentially assertive manner in which she performed this

reputation at the trial, and in which those who wrote about her first recorded her, that one can recover her spirited voice and movements—one of the few aspects of Catherine at the trial that all five writers agree on. If, then, these male authors made use of Catherine's voice and movements at the trial to shape their own particular Catherines, they nonetheless passed on to posterity her direct, rhetorically canny, and assured yet deferential voice. In contrast to a historical tendency in biographies of Henry VIII and histories of the English Reformation to elide Catherine's presence and influence, these eyewitness accounts recuperate the ways in which Catherine herself appeared as an active agent at the trial, who, despite the many attempts to declare her an illegitimate queen, never stopped using her title as queen consort and never lost her reputation for holding all the expected traits associated with a conventional, legitimate, and regal queen consort.

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