Anne Boleyn as a Protestant Martyr: Historiographical Approaches to John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*

Emily Lane Russo

Received November 25, 2024
Accepted December 07, 2027
Electronic access March 15, 2025

John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563) is a popular source used to study Anne Boleyn. The author's religious identification as Protestant is evident throughout the text, as its depiction of her is exceedingly positive. Bias in primary sources is therefore a relevant concept when studying Foxe's work. Two scholars, Thomas S. Freeman and G.W. Bernard, explore this source and its role in the historical study of Anne Boleyn. The present paper seeks to answer the question, "How do Bernard and Freeman's interpretations of John Foxe's depiction of Anne Boleyn in *Actes and Monuments* compare, and what are the broader implications of religious bias in historiography?". I intend to address this question by breaking down their respective arguments- analyzing each piece of evidence they employ and have differing perspectives on, as well as the nuances of their singular point of agreement. The points of contention between Freeman and Bernard are their interpretations of historical evidence which, depending on their respective stance, either confirms or denies Foxe's reliability in his portrayal of Anne Boleyn. These pieces of historical evidence are Sir Edward Bainton's letter, charges of adultery, comments that Boleyn made while imprisoned, as well as Latymer's biography. Moreover, I speculate in the paper's conclusion about whether bias should diminish a primary source's value in historical scholarship. My personal stance on Anne Boleyn is that she has been unfairly categorized as a villain throughout history. When one considers the power dynamic between her and King Henry VIII, it's evident that her decisions were based on maintaining the safety of her and her family. I will not claim that the perspective I have developed is true; however, I will acknowledge that my stance on her characterization is evident throughout the present paper.

Introduction

Rumors about Anne Boleyn have circulated over the years: that she had a sixth finger on her right hand, a grotesque "wen" under her chin, and a tooth that protruded under her upper lip[1]. Nicholas Sanders, a Catholic scholar and historian of the English Reformation, disseminated these outrageous rumors in his book *Schismatic Anglicani* (1585). Sanders also detailed Boleyn's supposed promiscuous behavior, which he alleged began at the age of fifteen when she was said to have had intercourse with her father's butler[1]. The author even claimed that Anne Boleyn was King Henry VIII's bastard daughter, born from an affair with her mother[1].

Sanders did not base his claims on factual evidence. Therefore, this begs the question if fact did not motivate his writing, then what did? Put simply, religious discontentment with England during the Reformation. Sanders, a staunch Catholic, disagreed with England's shift to Protestantism in the Reformation (1517-1648; in this paper, I will be focusing on the period under King Henry VIII's reign, 1509-1547)[2]. Boleyn played a pivotal role in transitioning the country to this new religion. Sanders' differing political and religious beliefs on this matter influenced his depiction of her in *Schismatic Anglicani*.

Characterizations of Boleyn generally categorize her into the role of either a victim or that of an oppressor. Therefore, two critical questions that historians must answer when reading primary sources on Boleyn are the following: what role did the author place her in, and what motivated them to make that decision? Clearly, in the case of Sanders' work, religion triggered his hateful portrayal. However, it is important to note that while we have an idea of Sanders' political and religious aims, scholars do not have access to his exact intentions, only his work and the discourse it created. I only mention Sanders' work as a segue into a concept this paper investigates: the influence of religious bias in historiography.

This is particularly relevant with regards to Anne Boleyn, as very little of her own writing survived. Consequently, to understand her, we can only rely on the stories written about her. Circumstances in which primary source documents written by the subject are still available promote a more nuanced understanding of the person and their motivations. Without access to such sources, historical figures can become one dimensional. Anne Boleyn's rigidly binaristic characterization as either a victim or oppressor reflects this flattening. The absence of personal writings results in studying this historical figure not through her own words, but through the words of others. And, due to the controversial nature of her reputation, the work that historians must rely on is not unbiased. To navigate this, I argue that his-

torians should analyze a variety of sources from a number of different perspectives. If historians are to look through these depictions and see where they align, perhaps we will be able to unearth the truth.

In *Divorced, Beheaded, Survived* (1995), Karen Lindsey touches on this concept[3]. Lindsey notes how Boleyn has been placed strictly into either role, thereby ignoring the possibility that she could have been a complex mix of both victim and oppressor, or even that she could have been neither[3].

Here, consider emphasizing the second of the two aforementioned questions: what motivated an author's decision? Whether it was religion, politics, personal interests, or something else entirely, the motivation itself reflects an aspect of that time period's history. Therefore, the reasoning behind a piece's categorization of Bolyn is particularly informative. Sanders, for example, chose to depict her as an oppressor due to his conflicting religious perspective. This understanding reflects the ideological divisions that tore England apart during the Reformation.

One of the main primary sources used to study Boleyn is John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563). This source, as many others written about Boleyn, is marked by bias. Two scholars, Thomas S. Freeman and G.W. Bernard, explore this source and its role in the historical study of Anne Boleyn. The present paper seeks to answer the question, "How do Bernard and Freeman's interpretations of John Foxe's depiction of Anne Boleyn in *Actes and Monuments* compare, and what are the broader implications of religious bias in historiography?". I intend to address this question by breaking down their respective arguments-analyzing each piece of evidence they employ and have differing perspectives on, as well as the nuances of their singular point of agreement. Moreover, I speculate in the paper's conclusion about whether bias should diminish a primary source's value in historical scholarship.

This paper seeks to synthesize and place into conversation the two primary answers to this question, specifically Thomas S. Freeman's "Research, Rumour, and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'"[4], and G.W. Bernard's "The Fall of Anne Boleyn"[4,5]. In these scholarly articles, the authors take contradictory positions on the validity and role of Foxe's depiction of Boleyn in *Actes and Monuments*.

Freeman argues that Foxe's work is minimally influenced by bias; further, he asserts that, even if it was heavily influenced by bias, *Actes and Monuments* is still vital to Boleyn studies because it reflects the Protestant perception of Boleyn. Conversely, Bernard claims that Foxe's book is pure political propaganda and that, rather than use *Actes and Monuments* to study Boleyn, scholars should place more value on firsthand accounts, such as letters or diaries, written by those who knew her[4].

I propose to continue using Foxe's work, while maintaining awareness of the role bias may have played in his writing process. Furthermore, I argue that bias in a piece of historical writing is something to value, not ignore; by understanding the biases of a book's author, we can develop a more robust understanding of how that bias reflects an aspect of cultural history.

Historical and Scholarly Context of the English Reformation

During the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church was integral to western European politics[6]. With the ability to tax, create alliances, and wage war, the Roman Catholic Church was more than a spiritual institution—it became a political powerhouse[7]. However, with this power, the Church became deeply corrupted[6]. This kindled the Protestant Reformation, as the movement's initial goal was to mitigate this corruption.

By the 1520s, the movement was spreading rapidly throughout western Europe, leaving a number of religious revivals in its wake. However, each revival came about under unique circumstances. As such, it is critical that historians concentrate on the factors that led to the English Reformation in particular.

John Merriman, historian of modern Europe, asserts that the impetus for the English Reformation was a power struggle between the Pope and King Henry VIII[8]. This conflict arose out of marital issues between the King and Catherine of Aragon, his wife of 24 years[8]. During the course of their marriage, she had given birth five times[8]. The only child to survive was their daughter, Mary[8]. As the King became increasingly desperate for a male heir to secure the Tudor line, he began searching for another woman to have his son, namely Anne Boleyn[8]. To ensure the legitimacy of their future children, the two must wed[8]. However, in order to remarry, Henry would first need the Pope to grant him an annulment from his first wife[8].

Catherine of Aragon was previously married to Henry's older brother, Arthur, who died 5 months after their wedding. According to a passage from the Old Testament, a man who married his brother's widow would be cursed with childlessness[8]. Since Catherine was his brother's widow, King Henry VIII used this passage to justify annulment in his trial[8]. Moreover, the king argued in favor of the authority that English ecclesiastical officers hold, specifically that the power to grant an annulment resides with English religious leaders, rather than with the Pope[8].

Despite the lengthy legal battle that ensued, the Pope still refused to grant an annulment. In response, King Henry VIII cut out the Catholic Church entirely[8]. After marrying Anne Boleyn in 1533, King Henry VIII called Parliament into session[8]. Quickly thereafter, they used the legislative process to swiftly sever the English Church from Rome's jurisdiction[8]. England was officially independent of the Catholic Church, with King Henry VIII in charge of his own sect, the Anglican Church.

John Foxe's Actes and Monuments

Introduction to Thomas Freeman and G.W. Bernard's Boleyn

John Foxe's book, *Actes and Monuments*, published in 1563, is a well-known Protestant retelling of the English Reformation. The text includes a particularly positive depiction of Anne Boleyn, emphasizing her piety and good nature. To better understand Foxes' characterization of Boleyn in this text, I will concentrate on the scholarly debate between early modern historians Thomas S. Freeman (author of *Research, Rumour, and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs',* 1995), and G.W. Bernard (author of *The Fall of Anne Boleyn,* 1991).

Foxe's religious identification as a Protestant led him to portray Boleyn in a more positive way than his Catholic counterparts, such as Sanders. This bias may diminish the reliability of his narrative, as it may have resulted in his decision to choose evidence or stories that will support his notion, rather than seek out contradictory ones. However, due to the turmoil of this time period, it's difficult to find a source that is completely objective. Therefore, we must employ what sources are available, even if they are biased. Which should be permissible, as long as scholars are critical of that bias and use it as a tool for further exploration of a time period's cultural history.

While Freeman and Bernard disagree on a number of issues, their fundamental point of contention lies in the extent to which bias diminishes the book's accuracy and role in historical scholarship. However, in the process of demonstrating their respective positions, both scholars employ a similar method: utilizing primary, contemporaneous sources to authenticate Foxe's work.

In his writing, Freeman asserts that *Actes and Monuments* is not significantly biased, as contemporaneous sources corroborate Foxe's anecdotal evidence[4]. Comparatively, Bernard maintains that *Actes and Monuments* is significantly biased. This disagreement is a result of contradictory interpretations of a few, key pieces of historical evidence.

Furthermore, the two scholars disagree on the extent to which *Actes and Monuments* should be used when studying Anne Boleyn. While Freeman asserts that the piece is not significantly biased, he argues that, even if it was, that does not necessarily mean it deserves to lose its role in historical scholarship[4]. In stark contrast, Bernard argues that scholars should prioritize firsthand accounts (letters, diaries, or transcribed conversations) rather than Foxe's book, in order to develop a more accurate understanding of her as a historical actor[5].

The historian's discussion primarily focuses on how Anne Boleyn managed her household: was it "virtuous" or "sinful"? Determining the answer to this question is crucial because it is thought to indicate the accuracy of Foxe's account. John Foxe painted a pious picture in *Actes and Monuments*, particularly when it comes to Boleyn's household and management of her ladies-in-waiting. If this picture proves to be inaccurate, then how credible is the rest of his depiction? For this reason, Bernard and Freeman dedicate substantial time to discussing the implications of contemporaneous sources related to this topic.

The remainder of this paper is organized by each point of contention between Freeman and Bernard. Namely, the contemporaneous sources which they have contradictory interpretations of. The points of contention between Freeman and Bernard are their interpretations of historical evidence which, depending on their respective stance, either confirms or denies Foxe's reliability in his portrayal of Anne Boleyn. These pieces of historical evidence are Sir Edward Bainton's letter, charges of adultery, comments that Boleyn made while imprisoned, as well as Latymer's biography. To better understand the specificities of their disagreement, this paper will take an in depth look at the differences in interpretation of each source and its respective role. Finally, I will discuss Freeman and Bernard's similar method of substantiating their claims: the use of contemporaneous sources.

Sir Edward Bainton's Letter

A quote from Sir Edward Bainton's letter is the first point of contention between the two scholars, as they disagree on what that quote indicates about Anne Boleyn's court.

Bainton was Anne's chamberlain, the person held responsible for managing a royal household[9]. Therefore, his position allowed him to develop a comprehensive understanding of the court's inner workings. This letter was written in 1533 to George Boleyn, Anne's brother:

> As for pastime in the queen's chamber, there was never more. Yf any of you that bee now departed have any ladies that ye thought favoured you, and somewhat would moorne att parting of their servauntes, I can no whit perceyve the same by their daunsing and passetyme they do use here but that other take place, as ever hath been the custome.[5]

Bernard understands this quote to indicate that Anne's court was more "pleasure-loving" than virtuous, consequently disproving Foxe's depiction of a pious household under her reign[5]. While at first glance Bernard may be correct, it's important to consider this quote within its historical context. Doing so may change one's initial perception of Bainton's letter and, in effect, its implications for the accuracy of Foxe's characterization of Anne.

Freeman utilizes this alternative approach, analyzing it within the wider societal tradition of courtly love. Courtly love was "a highly conventionalized medieval tradition of love between a knight and a married noblewoman," and "the love of the knight for his lady was regarded as an ennobling passion and the relationship was typically unconsummated".

Given this context, Freeman argues that Bainton's letter does not indicate that Boleyn's ladies in waiting were sinful or adulterous; perhaps they were innocently participating in the tradition of unconsummated courtly love. Therefore, contrary to Bernard, Freeman's interpretation indicates that there is no reason to doubt Foxe's depiction of a pious household[4].

Charges of Adultery

The charges of adultery that King Henry VIII brought against his former wife is the next point of disagreement between Freeman and Bernard. Bernard believes that these accusations have some truth to them, and, as a result, demonstrate that Foxe was incorrect in describing Anne Boleyn's household as pious[5]. After all, how could a "sinful" woman lead a virtuous court?

For Freeman , however, charges of adultery are not relevant to the discussion of how Anne Boleyn managed her court[5]. For the historian, these are two separate discussions; the accusations brought against her should not be used to diminish the piety that Foxe ingrained in the management of her household[4]. Moreover, he asserts that "it would be in her best interest to maintain a respectable household and pious facade, if only to conceal her illicit activities"[4].

By interpreting the charges of adultery in this way, Freeman is further supporting his thesis that Foxe's depiction of a pious Anne Boleyn was factual. While Freeman's reasoning is logical, it neglects to consider the ways in which piety (or lack thereof) is intertwined with adultery. It could be true that her pious household was a tool used to mask infidelity. The societal tradition of courtly love should also be considered in Anne's defense, as these charges may be pure speculation regarding innocent flirting.

However, if infidelity did occur, then it is difficult to separate the behavior of a queen and the behavior of the court she manages; if she were to demonstrate that adultery is permissible, then that may have signaled to the members of her household that it is acceptable, thereby infusing her court with sinful behavior. In this way, the queen's charges of adultery, if they were true, should not be considered a separate matter from the management of her court. Moreover, it's likely that one's public and personal behaviors are intertwined, making it difficult to argue that her household remained pious while she was having an affair.

Comments Made While Imprisoned

After being married to King Henry VIII for three years, Anne Boleyn was beheaded for charges of adultery and treason. While Anne Boleyn was imprisoned in the Tower of London, awaiting her execution, she made a few comments to her gaoler, Sir William Kingston. According to Kingston, she was making flirtatious comments about other men at court, namely the courtier Henry Norris[5].

To Bernard, Anne's remarks support the notion that there is at least some truth to the allegations of adultery. He wrote that these comments "suggest at least a good deal of flirtatious talk with friends not chosen for their religious zeal"[5].

However, Freeman came to a different conclusion about these comments. Similar to Sir Edward Bainton's letter, Freeman analyzed these remarks in the context of courtly love. He argues that, in this societal tradition, it was common for women at court to engage with men flirtatiously[4]. While these relationships and interactions were flirtatious, they were not consummated and were generally innocent. Moreover, Freeman asserts that even if Anne did engage in courtly love, we should acknowledge her "emotional state when she made her remarks, after her arrest, ... [and] the possibility of misrepresentation when they were reported" by Kingston[4]. To Freeman, her emotional state and Kingston's potential misrepresentation of her remarks most likely diminish the accuracy of the comments she made.

Use of Contemporaneous Sources

Freeman and Bernard both utilize primary sources to substantiate their respective arguments. However, they disagree on the role of firsthand accounts in relation to John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. While Bernard argues they should be prioritized over Foxe's work, Freeman asserts they should be used in tandem with *Actes and Monuments*. A great deal of the evidence in *Actes and Monuments* is anecdotal; therefore, if determining the accuracy of Foxe's book, scholars must first determine the validity of the sources that his evidence is derived from.

Throughout his paper, Freeman primarily uses firsthand, or contemporaneous sources, or both, to determine the validity of Foxe's depiction of Anne Boleyn as a pious, good natured woman. In this way, he is using contemporaneous sources in conjunction with *Actes and Monuments*.

Freeman references several influential Protestant contemporaries, including John Aylmer, who became the bishop of London in 1577[10]. Freeman notes that, in 1559, Aylmer advocated for Anne Boleyn's good character, saying that "'God endowed [her] with wisdom that she coulde, and given her the minde that she would do it'"[4].

Freeman also used Rose Hickman's writings to further support his point that the pious, good natured portrait of Boleyn that Foxe paints is accurate. Lady Rose Hickman, daughter of Sir William Locke, was, along with her family, one of England's earliest Protestants[11]. Freeman explained that Protestants, such as Hickman and Aylmer, generally saw Henry VIII's second queen as a pious, generous, and wise woman[4]. While these cannot be considered as sources for Foxe's book, their perception of Anne Boleyn is similar to the portrayal of her in *Actes and Monuments*, therefore indicating that it is an accurate representation of how Protestants saw her[4].

However, it's likely that many English Protestants perceived Boleyn similarly to how Foxe did. So, while corroborating Foxe's depiction with contemporaneous sources is beneficial, it's also critical to look beyond the Protestant perspective. Their view may be flawed out of a preference for Boleyn, indicating that their judgment may not be entirely accurate.

To determine that, Freeman turns to a conversation from 1539, in which George Constantine advocated for Boleyn's piety and good character, effectively corroborating Foxe's depiction of her in *Actes and Monuments*[4]. Critically, this corroboration was not from someone who supported Boleyn; in fact, Constantine fully believed that she was guilty of the charges brought against her[4]. Therefore, his defense of her character is even more valuable and adds substantial credibility to Foxe's assertions[4]. If Constantine's perspective wasn't influenced by a Protestant bias, then perhaps the Protestant perspective that Hickman, Aylmer, and Foxe profess was not incredibly fabricated.

While writing *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum… Commentarii* (1559), Foxe frequented the same Protestant circles as Aylmer and Hickman[4]. *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum* is a Latin martyrology, or a catalog of a church's martyrs and saints, and contains Foxe's first depiction of Boleyn[12]. This portrayal of Anne Boleyn was probably influenced by Aylmer and Hickman. As Freeman writes, "Foxe did not create the portrait of Anne Boleyn that he painted in the *Rerum*, he inherited it, and it served as the basis for all of his later depictions of her"[4]. It's important to consider this depiction of Boleyn in Rerum because that served in part as the basis for his depiction of Boleyn in *Actes and Monuments*[4].

Another of the sources that Foxe relies on for *Actes and Monuments* was Joan Wilkinson, Anne Boleyn's silk woman[4]. From Wilkinson, Foxe discovered the "decorum" of Anne's court[4]. According to Freeman:

> Foxe also praised Anne for the good order and decorum she maintained among women of her court, keeping the ladies about her occupied in sewing clothing for the poor so that 'neither was there seene anye idlenes then amonges them, nor anye leasure to folow such pastimes as daily are sene now a daies to raign in princes courtes'[4].

By including this anecdote, Foxe is conveying Anne Boleyn's commitment to fostering good character and piety within her court.

Freeman noted that Joan Wilkinson was close to Anne Boleyn, and probably worked with her in obtaining heretical texts[4]. And while Foxe never met Wilkinson personally, her relationship with Boleyn validates the information that he gleaned from her. Freeman wrote that Foxe's reference of Wilkinson as a source for his book indicates that he invested a substantial amount of time and energy into finding legitimate sources for information on Boleyn[4].

However, we cannot take Joan Wilkinson's word for absolute fact, as her relationship with Boleyn could have influenced the way Wilkinson discussed her. The silkwoman was likely a co-conspirator of Anne's in obtaining radical religious texts. As such, she would likely portray Boleyn in a more positive way, effectively skewing the picture Foxe painted of her. Ultimately, while I agree with Freeman's assertion that Foxe's use of Wilkinson as a source adds credibility to his depiction of Boleyn, it's important to remain critical of her as a source because Wilkinson's relationship with Anne could have swayed her portrayal of the queen.

The Role of William Latymer's Biography

While Freeman and Bernard are in agreement about the use of contemporaneous sources as a method of corroborating Foxe's work, there is one source whose role they disagree on. Namely, William Latymer's short biography published during Elizabeth I's reign and its role in confirming Foxe's depiction. Freeman asserts that scholars should employ Latymer's biography to confirm Foxe's anecdotes when they parallel each other; Bernard, however, disagrees with this approach.

William Latymer was Boleyn's chaplain, which allowed him to develop a personal relationship with her. Therefore, seeing as he obtained his information on Anne himself, historians generally value his depiction. Comparatively, Foxe gathered evidence from secondhand sources. In effect, the accuracy of Foxe's evidence could have been hindered by "memory, hindsight, and profound prejudice", as he was getting it second and third hand[4].

Foxe claimed in *Actes and Monuments* that Anne would instruct her ladies in waiting to sew clothes for the poor[4]. This anecdote contributed to the narrative that the queen was a generous, kind woman. According to Freeman's approach, this is an accurate story because Latymer corroborated it in his own book. Its accuracy therefore indicates that Foxe's depiction was not exceedingly fabricated.

Conversely, Bernard argues that corroboration does not indicate accuracy[4]. Essentially, he does not believe Foxe's nor Latymer's kind depiction of Anne's household because he does not believe an "adulterous" woman could lead a virtuous court[4]. Therefore, Bernard argues that by using stories such as this, Foxe is misleading his audience[4].

Their scholarly disagreement on the nature of Anne's household is significant, as the scholars understand this to indicate the accuracy of Foxe's and Latymer's works as a whole. And, in effect, their role in Tudor historiography. To Bernard, if there is reason to doubt the accuracy of their depictions of Anne's household, then there is reason to doubt other aspects of their depictions of Boleyn; particularly her lack of engagement in sexual behavior[5]. Conversely, Freeman asserts that the biases in Foxe's and Latymer's writings does not automatically indicate they are wholly untrue[4]. This assertion considers that the evi-

dence on Boleyn's household can be corroborated, and comes from sources who were either members of that household or worked closely with it[4].

Conclusion

From Nicholas Sanders' *Schismatic Anglicany* to John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, primary source descriptions of Anne Boleyn illustrate a striking disparity between Catholic and Protestant depictions. However, at a fundamental level, Sanders and Foxe actually share an important similarity: both authors allow their religious biases to impact their depictions of Anne Boleyn.

Extreme bias could correlate with inaccuracy, yet even if it does, that does not diminish the value of a primary source. For the case of Anne Boleyn, this concept is evident in the fact that, as an author's societal context changes, so does the way they depict her. Susan Bordo explored this when she wrote, "In postwar movies and on television, Anne has been animated by the rebellious spirit of the sixties (Anne of the Thousand Days), the "mean girl" and "power feminist" celebration of female aggression and competitiveness of the nineties (The Other Boleyn Girl), and the third-wave feminism of a new generation of Anne worshippers, inspired by Natalie Dormer's brainy seductress of The Tudors to see in Anne a woman too smart, sexy, and strong for her own time, unfairly vilified for her defiance of sixteenth-century norms of wifely obedience and silence"[13].

This paper contributes to understanding Anne Boleyn's historical portrayal by proposing a different approach for studying her character. Because biased work is typically assumed to be less valuable, historians may emphasize studying a historical actor through the lens of personal writings. However, where personal accounts are not available (such as in the case of Anne Boleyn), I argue we should continue utilizing primary sources and perceive their bias as a tool for deeper exploration of Boleyn as well as of the historical context in which she lived.

Bias is technically acceptable to any extent, as long as historians remain critical of the ways in which it may impact a source. Furthermore, prejudiced writing deepens one's understanding of the author's society; the religious turmoil of this time motivated Foxe, a Protestant, to write an exceedingly positive portrayal of Boleyn. However, the same historical context triggered Sanders to write a tremendously harsh depiction of Anne. In this way, I argue that bias is always acceptable, as long as we are aware of the ways it may affect a source's reliability. Foxe's Protestant leaning does impact the reliability of his depiction of Anne Boleyn, as it led him to portray her in a more positive light. However, seeing as his anecdotes were corroborated by a number of other sources, I argue that there is merit in Freeman's stance.

Their prejudices are informative to historians, as each provides insight to how their respective group viewed Boleyn. Therefore, I argue that scholars should maintain value for primary sources- not despite their historical bias, but rather because of it. Through Foxe's depiction, students of history are able to develop a comprehensive understanding of Protestants' positive perspective. Whether that perspective can be considered an accurate characterization is a separate question, and one which this paper has committed to exploring through the dichotomy between Freeman's and Bernard's answers to that very question.

References

1 N. Sander, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, archive.org/details/risegrowthofangl00sandrich/page/24/mode/2up, Accessed 7 Aug. 2023.

2 S. Russo, *The Afterlife of Anne Boleyn: Representations of Anne Boleyn in Fiction and on the Screen*, 2020.

3 K. Lindsey, *Divorced, Beheaded, Survived: A Feminist Reinterpretation of the Wives of Henry VIII*, Accessed 9 Aug. 2023.

4 T. S. Freeman, *Research, Rumour, and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'*, www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2640090.pdf, Accessed 18 Aug. 2023.

5 G. W. Bernard, *Anne Boleyn's Religion*, 2000, www.jstor.org/stable/2639513.

6 *Reformation*, 2023, www.britannica.com/event/Reformation, Accessed 8 Aug. 2023.

7 *The Protestant Reformation*, www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/reformation-counterreformation/beginner-guide-reforrmation/a/the-protestant-reformation, Accessed 8 Aug. 2023.

8 J. Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present*, Accessed 8 Aug. 2023.

9 *Chamberlain*, dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/chamberlain, Accessed 10 Sept. 2023.

10 *John Alymer*, www.britannica.com/biography/John-Aylmer, Accessed 20 Aug. 2023.

11 *Lady Rose Hickman*, historytheinterestingbits.com/tag/lady-rose-hickman, Accessed 20 Aug. 2023.

12 *Martyrology*, 2023, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/martyrology, Accessed 31 Aug. 2023.

13 S. Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 2013.