

Who Was Anne Boleyn?

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In the *Encyclopedia Britannica*¹ we are informed that Anne Boleyn (or Bullen) was the "daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn" ... "and of Elizabeth."² Notice that this *Encyclopedia* does not inform us that Anne Boleyn was the "biological" daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn but rather only that she was the "daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn." Why is this important? If Anne Boleyn was not the biological daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn then she must have had a different biological father. Who her biological father was is an important, albeit little documented, fact of history and this fact, once revealed, may very well alter --- or even drastically change --- our conception of English history during an important time of that history, the English religious Reformation in the 16th century; that is the breaking away of England from the Roman Catholic Church.

It is important to note that the distinction between a "biological father" and a "sociological father" would not have been made in the 16th century for Herbert Spencer who introduced the notion of a sociological father had not given us his *Descriptive Sociology* until 1873. While the division of labor in applied knowledge had been in use since the beginning of civilization, the conception of a division of labor as an important economic concept was only articulated in the 18th century by Bernard Mandeville. The division of labor in knowledge itself would take another two centuries. William Graham Sumner addressed the issue in 1884 in his "Our Colleges before the Country,"³ when the curriculum at Yale as well as many universities across the country was being heatedly debated as the division of labor in knowledge itself began to manifest itself. He wrote, in response to this debate.

No college can possibly take any such place if it "clings to the classics." In face of the facts it is ludicrous to talk about maintaining the old classical culture. We might as well talk of wearing armor or studying alchemy. During the last fifty years all the old sciences have been reconstructed and a score of new ones have been born.⁴

And, he continues,

History does not any longer mean what it meant twenty years ago. As a disciplinary pursuit it has changed entirely from any exercise of memory to an analysis and investigation of relations and sequences. Constitutional history has grown into a great branch of study of the highest importance to the student of law, political science, jurisprudence, and sociology. It has totally altered the point of view and mode of conceiving of those subjects since the days when the study of them began with the classical authors. The years spent on Greek grammar and literature would be priceless to the whole mass of our youth if they could be spent on this study. Sociology is still in its infancy. Only its most elementary notions are, as yet, available for purposes of education. It is sure to grow into a great science, and one of the first in rank as regards utility to the human race. It is plain that progress in other directions is producing problems in society which we cannot meet because our social science is not proportionately advanced. Biology is a science which is still young and new, but, with its affiliated sciences, it holds the key to a number of our most important problems and to a new philosophy destined to supersede the rubbish of the schools. Physics in all its subdivisions, dynamics, anthropology, archaeology, and a host of other sciences,

¹ *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, The Encyclopedia Britannica Company, New York, 1910, p. 159.

² Buckle has the sir-name spelt "Boleign." Cf *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Work of Henry Thomas Buckle*, Volume 1, Edited with a Biographical Notice by Helen Taylor, Longmans, Green, And Company, London, 1871, p. 459.

³ Reprinted in *War and Other Essays*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1911, pp. 355-373.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 370.

with new developments in mathematics, offer just the stimulus which is proper and necessary to draw out youthful energies and to awaken youthful enthusiasm.⁵

Given the division of labor in knowledge itself, especially in our own time with the introduction of computer technology, lasers, nano-technology, 3 D printing, and smart phones --- to identify only a few of the many innovations that have occurred --- during the last fifty years, it should not surprise us to learn that, as Andrew Dixon White informs us, there was no Department of History during the years 1857 - 1864 when he was at Michigan University.

So far as I can remember, there was not at that time a professor of history pure and simple at any American University. There had been courses of historical lectures but they were, as a rule, spasmodic and perfunctory.⁶

In the 16th century to suggest that there might be a distinction between a biological and a sociological father would be, to quote Lucian's often invoked phrase "a distinction without a difference."⁷ If Sir Thomas Boleyn was only the sociological father of Anne Boleyn then some questions immediately arise. Who was her biological father and what evidence can be produced to prove it? The answer to the first question is that Henry VIII was Anne Boleyn's biological father. If this claim can be proven --- and I will argue below it can be proven -- - then one reason for the English Reformation --- the break of English religion from the Roman Catholic Church - -- was the incestuous marriage of Anne Boleyn to her biological father, Henry VIII.

I first encountered this incestuous claim in the works of William Cowper Brann. He wrote, in response to a letter he received, "Anne Boleyn was the daughter of Henry VIII of England. This is so well known to every student of history that "giving citations" seems superfluous."⁸ He then proceeds to offer such citations. I have researched all the citations he gave and will reproduce them below.

We know that Anne Boleyn could not have been the biological daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn for the King had sent him on a two-year mission in France. It was during his two-year absence that Anne Bolen was conceived. Nicholas Sander informs us that

ANNE BOLEYN was the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn's wife; I say of his wife, because she could not have been the daughter of Sir Thomas, 'for she was born during his absence of two years in France on the king's affairs.' Henry VIII. sent him apparently on an honourable mission in order to conceal his own criminal conduct; but when Thomas Boleyn, on his return at the end of two years, saw that a child had been born in his house, he resolved, eager to punish the sin, to prosecute his wife before the delegates of the archbishop of Canterbury, and obtain a separation from her.⁹

While Sir Thomas Boleyn may have wanted to prosecute his wife for her infidelity, he did not do so. After learning from his wife that "it was the king who had tempted her to sin, and that the child Anne was the daughter of no other than Henry VIII,"¹⁰ he sought an audience with the king.

Sir Thomas then, having obtained the audience, told the king everything; how Anne was born when he was in France, and how he for that reason would have sent his wife away if he, the king, had not interfered, and if his wife had not confessed without hesitation that Anne Boleyn was the king's child. Henry replied, "Hold your tongue, you fool, hundreds are compromised; and be her father who he may, she shall be my wife. Go back to your embassy, and do not say a word of this." The king went away laughing, Sir Thomas being still on his knees.¹¹

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 371-372.

⁶ *Autobiography of Andrew Dixon White*, Volume 1, The Century Company, New York, 1905, p. 255.

⁷ *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, Translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1905, p. 141.

⁸ *The Complete Works of Brann the Inconoclast*, Volume X, The Brann Publishers, Inc., New York, 1919, p. 115.

⁹ Sander, Nicholas. *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, Translated, with Introduction Notes by David Lewis, Burns and Oates, London, 1877, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 24.

¹¹ *Ibid*. pp. 27-28.

Anne's older sister, Mary Boleyn, knew that Anne was the daughter of Henry VIII. She says, in a conversation with Queen Catherine before the divorce, that although the King was "in love with her sister, he could never marry her, for the relations of the King with the family were of such a nature as to make a marriage impossible by the laws of the Church."¹² While the formal so-called "laws of the Church" may have impeded such a marriage between father and daughter we shall demonstrate, later, that such marriages were more common than most people know about.

Dr. David Lewis, who wrote the "Introduction Notes" to Sander's book, after considering some possible objections concludes that "nothing remains but to accept the fearful story told, neither by Dr. Sander only, nor by him before all others, and say that, at least by the confession of the king and both Houses of Parliament, Anne Boleyn was Henry's child."¹³

Cobbett, in his history of the time, informs us that "in Dr. Bayley's life of Bishop Fischer, it is positively asserted, that Anne Boleyn was the king's *daughter*, and Lady Boleyn, her mother said to the king, when he was about to marry Anne."

Sir, for the reverence of God, take heed what you do in marrying my daughter, for, if you record your own conscience well, she is *your own daughter* as well as mine. To which the king replied, Whose daughter soever she is, she shall be my wife.¹⁴

Cobbett informs his readers that he believes this claim to be true but, he says,

though I believe this fact, I do not give it as a thing the truth of which is undeniable. I find it in the writings of a man, who was the eulogist, (and justly) of the excellent Bishop Fisher, who suffered death because he stood firmly on the side of Queen Catherine.¹⁵

That a contingent proposition can be denied does not mean that the claim that Anne Boleyn was the king's daughter is not true. All the evidence we have seen thus far supports the truth of the claim. Anne's mother knew it to be true, Anne's father was told that it was true by Anne's mother, Anne's sister knew it to be true, and the king was told by Anne's mother that it was true.

Recall the time that these events were taking place, the 16th century in England. The vast portion of the population of Europe at this time was illiterate. McCabe places the figure at 90 per cent.¹⁶ Logic, the science of correct reasoning, was discovered by Aristotle (384 -322 B.C.), the ancient Greek philosopher. While logic was understood by some, it was not fully endorsed except by the philosophers; that is, logic was only known by the exceptional men --- there were no female philosophers at this time --- of the 16th century. Evidence for the truth of this claim can be easily produced so we only cite a few examples.

Lucian, who lived in the 2nd century A. D., in writing about what some of his contemporaries had to say about the creation of the universe writes as follows:

Some say it had no beginning, and cannot end; others boldly talk of its creator and his procedure; what particularly entertained me was that these latter set up a contriver of the universe, but fail to mention where he came from, or what he stood on while about his elaborate task, though it is by no means obvious how there could be place or time before the universe came into being.¹⁷

A second example will also prove our claim that only philosophers understood logic. This example is from the 19th century and concerns a claim made by some Christians. In a question and answer format on what Christians ought to believe about their religion we find the following question and answer:

¹² *Ibid.* pp. 32-33.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. xlv.

¹⁴ Cobbett, William. *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland*. John Doyle, New York, 1832, p. 29. This quote is verified: Cf Dr. Baily, *The Life and Death of That Renowned John Fisher Bishop of Rochester*, London, 1655, p. 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 29.

¹⁶ McCabe, Joseph. *A Rationalist Encyclopedia*, Watts & Co., London, 1950, p. 486.

¹⁷ Lucian. *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, Translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, Clarendon, 1905, Volume 3, p 130.

Question 185: Did the Most Holy Mary remain, in fact, ever a virgin? Answer: She remained and remains a virgin before the birth, during the birth, and after the birth of the Savior; and therefore is called *ever-virgin*.¹⁸

Logic tells us that any woman who has had a child is not a virgin. The third law of logic, the law of non-contradiction, tells us two propositions cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same respect. We could go further to illustrate the point, thus tying our two examples together. Where and when did a god have sex with this so-called "ever virgin"? How long did he have sex with her? Did she consent? If not, it was rape, a holy rape to be sure, but nonetheless a rape. When it comes to having sex, some men set aside their reasoning. An amusing story is told about Aristotle. As the story goes, it seems Aristotle was smitten by a young woman. He pleaded with her to go on a date with him. She kept refusing him. Finally, he said: "If you go on a date with me I will do anything you want." She is reported to have replied: "Anything"? Aristotle is reported as saying: "Yes. Anything." She then told him to strip naked, which he did. She put a bridle and saddle on him and rode him around the *agora* (the modern equivalent being our farmer's markets). He put up with this humiliating venture for a short while but then quit. It has been said --- I know because I said it --- he then went and discovered logic.

That a king in the 16th century might want to have sex with someone who was his biological daughter should not surprise us. Putting out "the sacred fire," to use the modern vernacular,¹⁹ is an age-old tradition. Cleopatra kept herself busy putting out the sacred fire with "no less than one hundred and six men in one night."²⁰ Think about Lucy, whose skeletal remains are estimated to be 3.2 million years old.²¹ What would she have done when the sacred fire started burning in her loins? She would find some appropriate male to put the sacred fire out. But note that she would not think about it, for early humans had not yet developed language. She would simply feel the burning in her loins and act in whatever way she could to end the burning sensations.

It is important to understand that not only animals evolved, everything evolves from our development of language to Aristotle's discovering logic. It is also important to note as well the phenomenon of cultural lag. That is, not all people are equal in the development of thinking logically. Some people lag way behind a given culture's development. For example, a few years ago in Ohio a man was charged with kidnapping 3 young women. He held them captive in his home for over a decade and used them to put out the sacred fire whenever the burning in his loins demanded it. This is a modern day example of marriage by capture, an institution that evolved early in man's history. That is, he serves as an example of how much cultural lag there can be, even in the 21st century and in the United States of America, the most advanced culture on earth. If this can happen in the 21st century, in America, it is not too much of a leap to believe that a king in the 16th century would want to put out the sacred fire with a young woman who happened to be his daughter.

In addition, laws are made --- in some, but not all, cases --- to prevent certain behaviors from occurring, such as bestiality and incest. In our modern society such violations of law are punished with free room and board for a number of years courtesy of the state. However, in earlier times, especially if you followed the Catholic religion -- and Henry VIII was a Catholic --- you knew that the sins of bestiality and incest could be absolved simply by paying the proper amount to the Catholic Church. I have found, in my readings of history, what might best be called a "Price List for Sins Committed" but is formally called "Tariff of the Roman chancellors for the absolution of all crimes." This document informs the reader what he would have to pay to the Catholic Church for having committed certain sins. We cite several examples to both illustrate that incest was not considered to be a serious sin and that bestiality, and even murder, were also not considered to be serious sins even for ecclesiastics --- men of the church. I quote as follows:

If an ecclesiastic commits the sin of the flesh --- putting out the sacred fire ---, whether with nuns, his cousins, nieces, goddaughters, or with any other women, he shall be absolved for the sum of sixty-seven francs, twelve sous.

¹⁸ Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom*, Harper & Brothers, New York, Volume 2, pp. 471-472.

¹⁹ Goldberg, B. Z. *The Sacred Fire: A History of Sex in Ritual, Religion and Human Behavior*. Horace Liveright, New York, 1930.

²⁰ Stone, Lee Alexander. *The Power of a Symbol*. Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1925, p. p. 112.

²¹ See the following link for information about Lucy and an even older set of skeletal remains.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/10/091001-oldest-human-skeleton-ardi-missing-link-chimps-ardipithecus-ramidus.html>.

If, in addition to the sin of fornication, he asks for absolution from the sin against nature, or bestiality, he shall pay two hundred and nineteen francs, twelve sous. If, however, he has not committed this sin but with young men or beasts, and not with women, the fine shall be reduced to one hundred and thirty-one francs, fifteen sous.

For every sin of luxury committed by a layman, the absolution shall cost twenty-seven livres, one sous. For incest, four livres shall be added.²²

That a king, in the 16th century, should be deterred from committing incest knowing that he would only have to pay "four livres" is absurd. The absurdity is even more manifest when we consider that at this time in history there existed the doctrine of the "Divine Rights of Kings." That is, the king's reign was understood to have been appointed by God himself.

The problem with this doctrine of the Divine Rights of Kings --- as logic informs us --- is that there can only be such a doctrine if there is a God. Since no one, in the history of human existence, has proven that God exists the doctrine is as absurd as the claim --- and for the same reason --- that the Bible is the word of God.

We continue with two final examples, a discount for murder and accidental murders, drawn from this Price List for Sins.

If a murderer has slain several priests, in different encounters, he shall pay one hundred and thirty-seven franc, six sous for the first assassination, and half of that for the rest.

He who would buy absolution in advance for every accidental murder which he may in the future commit, shall pay one hundred and sixty-eight francs, fifteen sous.²³

That one could buy "absolution in advance" for any crime let alone "for every accidental murder" is as absurd as the complaints of Tetzal to the King after he sold such an indulgence --- for absolution in advance --- and later found himself robbed and naked on the side of the road. That people of all ages believe absurdities especially when it comes to putting out the sacred fire, such as the existence of twelve foreskins of Jesus²⁴ or that one of these foreskins became aroused at the sight of a young naked girl and "ascended, like Jesus himself, and expanded into one of the rings of Saturn."²⁵

Penultimately we end this account of Anne Boleyn being the daughter of Henry the VIII with a ribald poem about this king's attitude about his incestuous relationship with his own daughter. After hearing from Anne Boleyn's mother that Anne was his daughter:

"Tis Incest in the highest Nature,
For you, Great Sir, to wed your daughter,"
"The King replies, Upon my Life
She shall for all that be my Wife.
A knight there was, call'd Francis Bryan,
As Monkey cunning, bold as Lyon
An arch Buffoon, as Stories tell,
Nicknam'd the King's Vicar of Hell:
Of him the demands in Laughter
What Sin it was to take the Daughter
After the Mother was worn out?
Hell's Vicar quickly solve the Doubt.
He tells him, 'tis no more a sin,
Than eating Chicken after Hen:
Thus having wisely solv'd the Case,
He to his Daughter wedded was,
And had by her his Daughter Bess:

²² De Cormenin, Louis Marie. *A Complete History of the Popes of Rome*, J. & J. L. Gihon, Philadephia, 1851, Volume 2, p. 54.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 54.

²⁴ Stone, *op cit.*, p. 32.

²⁵ Foote, G. W. and Wheeler, J. M. *The Crimes of Christianity*, Progressive Publishing Company, London, 1887. p. 94.

Hence 't may be said, and very true,
He was her Sire, and Grand-Sire too."²⁶

Having commenced this essay with a quote from William Cowper Brann it seems fitting to end it with his conclusion. One reason, among many others,

The Anglican Church came into being [was] because the Pope would not divorce Henry VIII from a virtuous wife that he might marry Anne Boleyn --- his own daughter by a disreputable drab. Because the Pope would not play Pandarus to Henry's unholy passion, the latter proclaimed himself the head of the Catholic Church in his Kingdom, made Cranmer his primate and Thomas Cromwell his vicar-general or chief gyasticutus.²⁷

²⁶ England's Reformation, (from the Time of K. Henry VIII. to the End of Oates's Plot.) A Poem in Four Cantos by Thomas Ward, 1719. Found in Google books. See https://books.google.com/books?id=li748OXJ4q4C&dq=Whose+daughter+soever&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

²⁷ Shaw, J. D. (Editor). *Brann, The Iconoclast: A Collection of the Writings of W. C. Brann*, Herz Brothers, Waco, TX, 1898, Volume 2, p. 342.