

Extended Essay
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Sexology in Early Modern England:

Was the marriage between Catherine of Aragon and Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales, consummated?

**An Extended Essay in
History**

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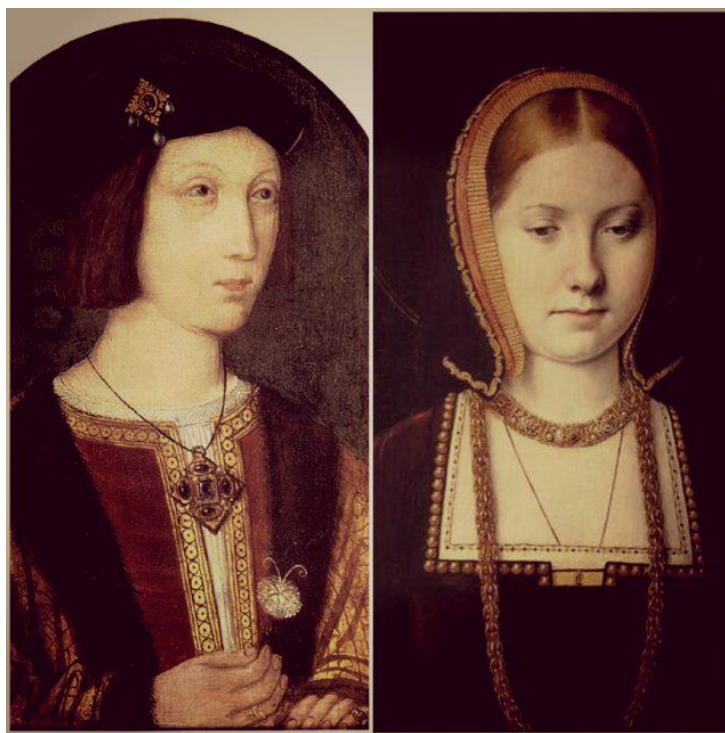


Fig.1 Arthur Tudor and Catherine of Aragon¹

¹ Tudors Dynasty. Accessed October 14, 2022. <https://tudorsdynasty.com/>.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Methodology</i>	5
<i>Investigation</i>	7
Immediate reasons for failure	7
Education and upbringing	9
Reasons for an unsuccessful consummation in retrospect	11
Anxious masculinity and sexology	13
Conclusion	14
<i>Bibliography</i>	16

Introduction

In the morning of November 15th, 1501, the day following his wedding night with Catherine of Aragon, the freshly married Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales emerged, making the remark that he has been lost “in the midst of Spain.”² On November 14th, the young couple married in St. Paul’s Cathedral.³ They were arranged to stay in Ludlow before Arthur could become the king of England, and Catherine the queen.⁴ Unfortunately, in the end of March 1502, after only four months of marriage, Arthur and Catherine both fell ill, and Arthur passed away on April 2nd.⁵ Catherine had to remain in England while her parents Ferdinand and Isabella negotiated her a new marriage to Arthur’s brother Henry but reached 7-year-long impasse. The death of Henry VII on April 21st, 1508 finally allowed this second marriage to be arranged.^{6 7} Catherine was frequently pregnant with Henry VIII’s children, but due to miscarriages and stillbirths, only Princess Mary, who was born on 18th February 1516, lived.⁸ Henry “had been brooding on” nullifying the marriage as “it became apparent that he would have no son” from this marriage.^{9 10} In 1533, when Henry began to seek a divorce, Catherine adamantly claimed that “she had come a virgin to her second marriage bed,” disclosing that she and Arthur never consummated their marriage.¹¹

The answer to the thusly raised question of whether Catherine and Arthur consummated their marriage was significant. Their marriage carried considerable political significance at the time. When Catherine of Aragon was only two, Henry VII of England conceived her marrying his eldest son, Arthur, to secure Spanish friendship for Tudor Dynasty. Meanwhile, Spanish

² Starkey, David. *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003. Digital file. Page 23.

³ Horrox, Rosemary. "Arthur, Prince of Wales (1486-1502)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sept. 2004. PDF. Page 2.

⁴ Tremlett, Giles. *Catherine of Aragon: Henry's Spanish Queen, a Biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 2010. Digital file. Page unnumbered.

⁵ Licence, Amy. *The Six Wives & Many Mistresses of Henry VIII: The Women's Stories*. E-book ed., Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2014. Page unnumbered.

⁶ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. "Katherine [Catalina, Catherine, Katherine of Aragon] (1485–1536)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004. Digital file. Page 7.

⁷ Tremlett, Giles. Page unnumbered.

⁸ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 8.

⁹ Johnston, Hope. "CATHERINE OF ARAGON'S POMEGRANATE, REVISITED." *Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2005, pp. 153-73. Page 161.

¹⁰ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 11.

¹¹ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 12.

monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella had always intended to arrange marriages for their children to “raise the prestige of their Castilian and Aragonese monarchies in Europe.”¹² In late 1487, they sent ambassadors to England to negotiate the marriage of their youngest daughter, Catherine, and Henry VII’s oldest son Arthur.¹³ Catherine and Arthur’s marriage was of considerable political significance at that time, not to mention that the state of their marriage later became a heated debate between Catherine and Henry VIII.

The debate over Catherine and Arthur’s consummation is also historically important both as a factual investigation and a lens to study early modern English culture. Historian Patrick Williams points out that the question of their consummation “came to have an extraordinary - and bitterly divisive - importance in the development of English [history].”¹⁴ Yet, no published piece is devoted solely to this critical question. This investigation aims to contribute to early-modern European sexology. English and Spanish narratives of Catherine’s wedding are vastly different. The strong tension between these views create a duality in Catherine that remained disputable even today, whether she was the “pious victim of a cruel, selfish husband” who is Henry VIII, or a “consummate liar hiding behind an apparently saintly exterior.”¹⁵ Therefore, this investigation can also help develop more informed and comprehensive understandings and insights of historical figures like Catherine of Aragon, Arthur Tudor, and Henry VIII—their personalities, sexualities, historical representations, and political considerations. One can also unravel the cultural artifacts that influenced people’s perception of dynamics between gender.

This essay focuses on examining the state of this marriage through several contributing factors and in context of early-modern England’s culture. Whether the marriage has been consummated is no longer factually knowable as there is no solid, conclusive proof for either side of the debate. The marriage was of huge political significance, and both were educated enough to perform the sexual intercourse. But existing evidence suggests more plausibly that Catherine and Arthur had not been able to consummate their marriage. Therefore, we can argue that the consummation of Catherine and Arthur, though certainly attempted, had not been successful.

¹² Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

¹³ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

¹⁴ Williams, Patrick. *Katharine of Aragon: Henry VIII's Lawful Wife*. Stroud, Amberley, 2013. JSTOR.

¹⁵ Tremlett, Giles. Page unnumbered.

Methodology

This investigation has not been particularly focused by historians. Contemporary historical accounts such as chronicles tend to avoid directly discussing the state of Catherine and Arthur's marriage, while almost all more modern studies conducted in the last century argue that their marriage probably went unconsummated.

There was no concrete, physical proof of the consummation such as bedsheets, so this investigation relies heavily on primary sources like historical accounts and records. Notably, contemporary historical accounts often treat the consummation as a default, for it is a required procedure for a marriage to be legitimate.¹⁶ For example, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors* simply notes that "Prince Arthure was married at Paules Chuche, to the King of Spaynes third daughter, named Katheryne."¹⁷ In *Harleian's Miscellany, Love Letters from King Henry the Eighth to Anne Boyelyn*, Catherine and Arthur's marriage is also only discussed briefly as backstories for Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn, his second wife: "Prince Arthur, being past fifteen years of age, was married to the Princess Catharine of Spain, who was elder than himself; that they lived together as man and wife for several months."¹⁸ Overall, Prince Arthur seemed to have attracted little interest. Neither of these primary sources declared or denied the consummation. Considering the social norms of consummation being a procedure to make a marriage legal, it was perhaps treated as default that the consummation took place on Catherine and Arthur's wedding night.

The secondary sources, on the other hand, demonstrates that the dominant view in the last two centuries is that on their wedding night, the consummation was probably attempted but ended up unsuccessful. Some of the historians this investigation consulted are Amy Licence, Karen Lindsey, David Starkey, Giles Tremlett, Patrick Williams, and Aysha Pollnitz. In secondary sources, historians have unpacked several reasons for the failure that mounts to a considerably high possibility for the marriage to have gone unconsummated. Viewing primary and secondary sources together and throughout time, it is evident that the discussion of the

¹⁶ Licence, Amy. *The Six Wives & Many Mistresses of Henry VIII: The Women's Stories*. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2014. Digital file. Page unnumbered.

¹⁷ Herald, Windsor, and Charles Wriothesley. *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors: from AD 1485 to 1559*. Edited by William Douglas Hamilton. Vol. 1. Digital file. Page 4.

¹⁸ Earl of Oxford's Library. *The Harleian Miscellany*. Digital file. Page 183.

debatable state of Catherine and Arthur's marriage has become more explicit. Even though the attitude towards the consummation or the lack of it has changed, historians like G. A. Bergenroth seem to agree that Katherine is a virtuous woman with integrity, who has a hardly debatable good historical reputation that makes her account believable.

This investigation approaches the question "Was the marriage between Catherine of Aragon and Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales, consummated?" by discussing reasons for the failure of consummation, the couple's respective education and upbringing, other reasons for an unsuccessful consummation, and the notion of anxious masculinity that led to Arthur's braggy acknowledgement and people's avoidance to discuss this question. To study this topic, I took an analytical approach consulting both primary and secondary sources. Admittedly, this investigation has limitation because it lacks reference to sources on Catherine and Arthur's physical anatomy and sexology, and thus could not develop an analysis regarding physiology. To make up for the deficiency of physiological information, this investigation also examines the cultural artifact such as education, the idea of anxious masculinity, and power dynamics of sex in Early Modern England.

Investigation

Immediate reasons for failure

There are several reasons for arguing that the consummation was a unsuccessful. Due to exhaustion, their young age, and the lack of urgency, the possibility of Catherine and Arthur failing to consummate their marriage is non-negligible.

Exhaustion was one possibility that the marriage went unconsummated. In her book *Divorced, Beheaded, Survived*, historian Karen Lindsey argues that the wedding ceremonies probably worn out the young couple, that “[it is hardly surprising] that the inexperienced girl and the delicate boy failed to consummate their marriage that night.”¹⁹ Arthur has been described as physically unfit, which also concerned his father Henry VII, who even suggested that the young couple live separately after the consummation. Historical records unanimously recognize that he was physically unwell. Historian Patrick Williams notes that as early as 1500, Ferdinand wrote to his ambassador in which he “expressed his concern that Arthur’s reputation for being sickly might not make it possible for the marriage ever to be consummated.”²⁰ How Ferdinand developed such a concern was unclear. But Arthur’s father Henry VII shared the concern about his physical wellbeing, wanting the couple to live separately for three years after they consummated on their wedding night to ensure Arthur’s health. Which strengthens the idea that Arthur might have encountered difficulties such as fatigue, failed arousal on his wedding night with Catherine. With hindsight, one could also postulate that like Arthur, there could be physical barriers Catherine could not overcome on the wedding night. Catherine might have experienced discomfort such as vaginal spasm because she was young, inexperienced, and probably nervous. Without access to corresponding documents, this essay is rather limited in regard of the physical aspect of sexology.

Moreover, the contemporary conception of the danger of teenage sex, combining with the frailness of Arthur, consolidate the idea that their marriage had never been consummated. Arthur and Catherine were both teenagers by the time they marry, so their sexual intercourse was restricted for reasons that prevailed at the time, which was made even more necessary

¹⁹ Lindsey, Karen. *Divorced, Beheaded, Survived: A Feminist Reinterpretation of the Wives of Henry VIII*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub., 1995. PDF. Page 17.

²⁰ Prendergast, Maria Teresa Micaela. "For the Debt of Blood." *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*. PDF. Page 114.

considering Arthur's ill health. Early and too much intercourse for a teenager could be harmful. For instance, Catherine's brother Prince Juan of Castile and his wife, Margaret of Austria, only had a six-months marriage. The contemporaries cited "their overenthusiastic lovemaking as the cause of his decline."²¹ Juan was described by observer Martire of being "pale" and "consumed with passion" and later urged by his doctors to "seek a respite in the incessant acts of love."²² According to historian Amy Licence, "while many aristocratic marriages were forged before the children came of age, and required consummation in order to be legal, paradoxically, the pair was often permitted to spend the wedding night together then abstain for several years for the sake of their health."²³ Catherine would have been "too isolated in Ludlow" because Arthur's "administrative commitments would require him to travel and leave her for long periods of time."²⁴ Therefore, if Catherine and Arthur have failed to have sex on their wedding night, the remainder of their marriage until Arthur's death could not provide them much chance of making up for the failure. Their time spent as Ludlow was limited, and Henry VII's decision to keep the couple separate also contributed to the possibility that their marriage was never consummated.

Besides tiredness, a lack of urgency elucidates why they might have left their marriage unconsummated on their wedding night. To them, they were committed to a life-long partnership. Historian Karen Lindsey argues that, "if Catherine and Arthur were not yet ready to consummate their marriage, they at least appeared, in the weeks following their wedding, to be developing the affection that would make the eventual consummation pleasing to them both." Historical records suggest that there was an affection between Catherine and Arthur as they have forged life-long relationship. Spanish court members also wrote about "the warmth between the two." Arthur himself wrote to Isabella of Castile, Catherine's mother, that he would be "her true and loving husband all his days."²⁵ Therefore, both Catherine and Arthur might just consider the matter as non-urgent, for they were in a binding, stable relationship which involved inevitable consummation in the future to produce heirs to the dynasty. Nevertheless, Lindsey did not consider the importance of consummating their marriage. The political weight of their marriage

²¹ Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

²² Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

²³ Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

²⁴ Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

²⁵ Lindsey, Karen. Page 18.

and the procedural significance of consummation were evident to Catherine and Arthur, which means that they would not give up entirely on having sex simply because they were tired.

Education and upbringing

Nevertheless, neither Catherine and Arthur lacked the knowledge or the awareness of consummating their marriage as they were both sufficiently educated and well-informed by their respective royal upbringing and expectations. Plus, the political weight of their marriage justifies their knowledge and readiness, thus excluding ignorance as a hinderance to their consummation. Marriage in early modern England requires the couple's consummation to be legal.²⁶ Since Arthur was the heir to the throne, the legitimization of this marriage was utterly important, and it was impossible for either of the couple to go into the wedding night without knowing what should be done and how. Moreover, this royal marriage carried huge political significance that binds the Tudor with the Castilian-Aragonese monarchies. With its consummation being the necessity to legitimize it, Catherine was certainly expected to know what to do on her wedding night albeit her relatively young age of fifteen.

Education was sufficient for Catherine to be aware of her marital duty. Her mother, Isabella of Castile, is described to be “especially insistent on a proper education for her daughters.”²⁷ Besides receiving “the domestic arts thought suitable for a princess” and “the usual instruction for women,” she also had leading humanists to tutor her in classics.^{28 29} She was taught Latin and modern languages “within a Catholic Christian context based on the Bible and liturgical texts.” The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives and of Erasmus of Rotterdam regard her as “a model of Christian womanhood”.³⁰ In addition, according to historian Amy Licence, Catherine's education extended beyond “the traditional feminine accomplishments of embroidery and dancing”; she studied “similar topics to Arthur, including religion, canon and civic law.”³¹ Cliff Davies and John Edwards found she: “received an education fitting for one who was intended for marriage with foreign rulers, bearing children for them and thus linking

²⁶ Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

²⁷ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

²⁸ Kinney, Arthur F., and David W. Swain, eds. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Tudor England*. N.p.: Routledge, 2011. JSTOR. Page unnumbered.

²⁹ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

³⁰ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

³¹ Licence, Amy. Page unnumbered.

Castile and Aragon to neighboring powers by ties of blood as well as friendship.” Therefore, it is evident that Catherine had been educated to be prepared for her role as a Christian woman, and more importantly, a future queen. Although sex education in royal households remains undefined, given the nature of Catherine’s education and the importance of this marriage, she must have known how to make her marriage with Arthur legal and binding through consummation.

Similarly, there is no strong evidence to suggest Arthur’s ignorance. He had also received more than enough education that had taught him courtly love when he reached the age of the marriage, suggesting that he knew what to do on the wedding night. Arthur’s education was rigorous. He studied Latin and Greek in depth. It was said that Arthur had learned “sufficient Latin grammar and rhetoric” to write “neo-Latin love letters” to Catherine.³² In the letters that survived, Arthur “[confirmed] the ratification of the marriage treaty” and “[urged] Catherine’s departure for England.”³³ The couple married by proxy in 1499 when Catherine was fourteen and Arthur thirteen.³⁴ While Catherine remained in Spain for another two years or so, the two exchanged solemn love letters. Arthur told his “dearest spouse” of his “ardent love” and begged that “your coming to me be hastened.”³⁵ Therefore, it is evidenced that Arthur’s education, just like Catherine’s, was a sufficient one that prepared him to become a Christian man and the future king.

Moreover, considering the importance of their marriage, it becomes rather unlikely for Catherine and Arthur to be ignorant of sexual intercourse despite their relatively young age. Making the marriage official via consummation was a “mighty marital, sexual and dynastic [obligation].”³⁶ Their marriage went under a lot of considerations and negotiations, finally finalized in 1498. Both sides of their parents were adamant, because for both Ferdinand and Isabella and Henry VII, this marriage would secure the English-Spanish alliance against France.³⁷ *Hall’s Chronicle* noted that for both families: “there was nothing more desired nor wished then by the conjunction of marriage betwene Arthure prince of Wales.”³⁸ Essentially, one

³² Pollnitz, Aysha. *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Page 36.

³³ Pollnitz, Aysha. Page 36.

³⁴ Low, Sidney, and F. S. Pulling. *The Dictionary of English History*. London: Cassell, 1911. JSTOR. Page unnumbered.

³⁵ Lindsey, Karen. Page 14.

³⁶ Tremlett, Giles. Page unnumbered.

³⁷ Kinney, Arthur F., and David W. Swain. Page unnumbered.

³⁸ *Hall’s Chronicle*. Accessed October 14, 2022. <https://archive.org/details/hallschronicleco00halluoft>. Page unnumbered.

can almost certainly exclude the lack of knowledge or awareness as the cause of the consummation have not taken place. Catherine and Arthur's education has prepared them for Christian womanhood and manhood respectively, so that they knew to make this politically significant marriage legitimate.

By extension, when considering the implications of consummation and why it is so important, one has to take into account the physical bodies and the desires within. To Catherine, being the queen means that her body carries "enormous political potential" because her physical sexuality contributes to "intimacy and influence with the king and their potential role as mothers of the heir to the throne."³⁹ In the pre-modern period, theories of kinship equated the control and command of a king over his queen's body with his capability of governing his kingdom, a connection that adds to the "symbolic power and cultural capital" to the queen's body.⁴⁰ Therefore, the consummation of a royal marriage involving the future king and queen carries a huge weight of political implications embodied to the pair's sexuality.

Reasons for an unsuccessful consummation in retrospect

Despite their upbringing that prepared them for their wedding night, there are several reasons for arguing that the marriage was unconsummated after all. Historical records of Catherine's personalities suggest that she was a virgin until marrying Henry. Catherine is described as a pious, devout Catholic, a faithful wife who is unlikely to lie about not consummating her marriage with Arthur just to prevent the already determined Henry VIII from divorcing her. She enjoyed a good reputation, an undoubtedly adequate, if not excellent queen. She was regarded as a model of Christian womanhood by Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives and of Erasmus of Rotterdam.⁴¹ Lindsey claims that Catherine's "less splashy piety showed womanly modesty," and that her religious faith was "deep and internal" as she "loved her God with a personal passion, and the externals of religion served merely to symbolize that love."⁴² In his work *Calendar of letters, despatches, and state relating to the negotiations between England and Spain*, Historian G. A. Bergenroth states that: "Whatever the opinions on the merits of the

³⁹ Beer, Michelle L. "Material Magnificence, Royal Identity and the Queen's Body." In *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts of Britain*. Digital file. Page unnumbered.

⁴⁰ Beer, Michelle L. Page unnumbered.

⁴¹ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 2.

⁴² Lindsey, Karen. Page 27.

divorce case of Queen Katharine may be, no historian, as far as I am aware, has impeached her private character.”⁴³ Essentially, the pious, responsible image of Catherine makes her claim of her coming to Henry’s wedding bed as a virgin more believable.

The papal dispensation used ambiguous language to describe the state of Catherine and Arthur’s marriage, which reflects how, due to the lack of physical evidence, the contemporary authorities such as the Pope also viewed this matter as tricky. One of the central questions of their consummation is why Catherine did not reveal her marriage with Arthur was unconsummated until Henry wanted a divorce. Nor did people question the absence of the display of bedsheets, or other solid, conclusive proof of consummation. In the treaty that agrees on Catherine’s marriage to Henry, the consummation of her first marriage was treated as default.⁴⁴ In the Bull, the Pope was informed that Catherine had “contracted a marriage with Arthur, Prince of Wales and that this marriage had, perhaps, been consummated.”⁴⁵ “Perhaps” was translated into “forsan,” word which has a usual meaning of “perhaps,” expressing “a strong doubt about the marriage having been consummated.” However, “forsan” can also be used to state a fact, which changes the statement’s meaning into the opposite: “this marriage happens to have been consummated.”⁴⁶ Note that the Papacy was trying to maintain the Spanish English alliance. To protect their interest from the alliance, the bull bluntly stated that the marriage has been consummated and granted dispensation for the new marriage 'even if' ('forsan') the previous one had been consummated. The use of deliberately circumspect, ambiguous language in the Bull suggests that the Pope was also uncertain of the state of their marriage, hoping that it would be another Pope’s problem in the future, which raises further doubt on the marriage’s consummation.⁴⁷ The consummation was again viewed as default not unlike other historical records’ ambiguity or avoidance. If it was successful, there would be no need to involve such ambiguity, so the consummation should still be treated with doubt.

⁴³ Bergenroth, G. A., ed. *Calendar of letters, despatches, and state relating to the negotiations between England and Spain*. Vol. 1. JSTOR. Page 13.

⁴⁴ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 6.

⁴⁵ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 6.

⁴⁶ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 6.

⁴⁷ Davies, C. S. L., and John Edwards. Page 6.

Anxious masculinity and sexology

By approaching the idea of masculinity as a cultural artifact, one could argue that its brittleness and the dependence on consummation to have a marriage legitimized created a cultural atmosphere in Early Modern England, in which such issues are not easily or outrightly questioned. It was also the weight of a royal marriage, made heavy by the public expectations and perceptions of the king and queen, that to an extent hindered such inquiry to take place openly.

The anxiety over sexual potency was pronounced in early modern England, and in this case, hindered both Arthur's performance in his wedding bed and people's inquiry on the subject. Historian Martin Breitenberg claims in his book "Anxious Masculinities in Early Modern England" that masculinity, supported and perpetuated "by a patriarchal culture" is "inherently anxious" as the male members of a patriarchal community are "[endangered]."⁴⁸ He points out that despite potential differences "signs of anxiety among those whose privilege might have seemed inviolable are widespread" in any power structure and is "as ubiquitous as E. M. W. Tillyard's discoveries of 'order'" in early modern England.⁴⁹ Overall, Breitenberg maintains that the unequal power distribution in patriarchal models caused them to produce distress and disequilibrium for privileged individuals who "[must have] incorporated [anxiety] about the preservation or potential loss of that privilege." The indispensable anxious nature of masculinity thus serves as an influential social characteristic.

Therefore, Arthur's bragging of having been "lost in the midst of Spain" the day after his wedding night exemplifies an overcompensation of his anxiety.⁵⁰ His bravado confirms that he has received enough sex education so that he saw the necessity to affirm the consummation and felt the need to demonstrate it to solidify his masculinity. Arthur was described by Giles Tremlett as:

"At which thing one of his chamberlains, marvelling, inquired the cause of his drought [thirst]. To whom he answered merely saying: 'I have this Night been in the midst of Spain, which is a hot region, and that journey maketh me so dry, and if thou hadst been under that hot climate, thou wouldst have been drier than I.'"⁵¹

⁴⁸ Breitenberg, Mark. *Anxious masculinity in early modern England*. JSTOR. Page 2.

⁴⁹ Breitenberg, Mark. Page 1.

⁵⁰ Starkey, David. Page 23.

⁵¹ Tremlett, Giles. Page unnumbered.

Tremlett, who consulted multiple manuscripts, calendars, and document, refers to primary sources for this description. One could argue that Arthur was bounded by the social expectations of consummating the marriage and could not have responded otherwise. Since his verbal bravado is not a sufficient solid proof, it could be viewed simply as a newly married teenager's brag, instead of any constructive evidence that supports the consummation. Considering that Arthur was only fifteen years old and Catherine sixteen, it would be hard to conceive that these two teenagers at their first sexual encounter could attain such proficiency to express passion of lovemaking. Historian Shannon McSheffrey and Julia Pope argues that "aristocratic conceptualizations of marriage, sex, and Chivalric culture had become a crucial defining feature of gentility in England in the fifteenth century."⁵² Even for the elite, whose marriages largely concerns "money, power, and politics," marriage was also about sex and "use of a woman's body as well as her lands."⁵³ There was a close relationship between the king and queen's body and the governance of the realm.⁵⁴ Additionally, the emergence of the Galenic theory—that male and female bodies "are on a single continuum," and the sexual body is instable—injects an imperative for men to "behave in an overtly 'manly' style" to reassert their masculinity.⁵⁵ Overall, Arthur himself was probably incapable of expressing such a bravado genuinely, but rather learned from the anxious environment and the political connotation of sex to deliberately demonstrate his dominance over Catherine's body.

Conclusion

In summary, both Arthur and Catherine were educated enough to be well aware of their duty to consummate this politically significant royal marriage. They received an education that prepared them for the gender roles they needed to shoulder as future kings and queens. Judging from the historical records on Arthur's physical fitness and the secondary sources' analysis, fatigue, their young age, and the lack of urgency illustrates a high possibility that they have failed to consummate their marriage despite their attempt. In other words, Arthur was unable to

⁵² McSheffrey, Shannon, and Pope, Julia. "Ravishment, Legal Narratives, and Chivalric Culture in Fifteenth-Century England." *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 4 (October 2009). PDF. Page 820.

⁵³ McSheffrey, Shannon, and Pope, Julia. Page unnumbered. Page 835.

⁵⁴ Beer, Michelle L. Page unnumbered.

⁵⁵ Capp, Bernard. "'Jesus Wept' but Did the Englishman? Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern England." *Past & Present*, no. 224 (August 2014): 75-108. PDF. Page 79.

penetrate Catherine due to ill health and anxiety; his boast the morning after their wedding night was an overcompensation. The Chivalric culture surrounding masculinity and marriage fostered Arthur's inauthentic bravado, as well as stopped contemporaries from directly questioning the state of their marriage. Other factors such as the ambiguity of the Bull, and peoples' unanimous trust of Catherine's integrity further cast doubt on whether the consummation was completed. Ultimately, Catherine and Arthur's consummation was attempted at best, and Catherine was able to truthfully claim that she was still a virgin when she married Henry VIII.

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