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Wives of Henry VIII: Historiography in the concepts of modern cinema

Abstract. The research relevance is determined by the variety of myths and legends formed around the historical personality of Henry VIII, which are not true, yet are repeated in the context of contemporary cinema. The study aims to analyse each of Henry VIII's wives, using literature as a primary source, analyse modern cinema and attempt to introduce an innovative view of the historical situation in the history of the British monarchy. The artistic and stylistic method and the method of comparative analysis were used. Aside from the rapid change in the paradigm of personal life, the second monarch of the Tudor dynasty is also known for several significant reforms that were demonstrated only in a few films and TV series, and then in passing, leaving a bad impression of the English crown. Under the Tudors, England became the "mistress of the seas" and established the Anglican Church independent of the Pope, from a period of turmoil to stability. The work combines the embodied images with portraits of Henry VIII's wives' contemporaries, namely those of Hans Holbein the Younger. General information on the establishment of the English monarch, their origin, as well as the circumstances at court after the marriage, namely the death of the heirs to the throne, which, as recent studies have proved, was related to the health of the monarch, not his wives, was analysed. The study examines the external features, behavioural patterns, and influence on the internal politics of medieval England. The following films were analysed: "The Other Boleyn Girl" (2008, directed by Justin Chadwick), the TV series "The Tudors" (2007-2010, directed by Michael Hirst), "Henry VIII and His Six Wives" (2016, directed by Chris Holt), establishing that cinema does not accurately convey the era, the character and appearance of the girls. This study may be useful for researchers, history buffs, specialists in the Tudor dynasty, students of history and amateurs

Keywords: Church of England; heirs to the throne; analysis; domestic politics; historical facts

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INTRODUCTION

In cinema, discrepancies between reality and historical facts and what is shown in films are very common. The research relevance is determined by the need to dispel the myths surrounding the portrayal of women associated with the famous historical figure of King Henry VIII. The research relevance is also determined by the desire to correct historical distortions in film, offering a deeper understanding of Henry VIII's reign and making it a useful read for anyone interested in Tudor history, regardless of their level of knowledge. A broader study of this area was conducted, highlighting historical inaccuracies common in cinematic depictions by comparing fact and fiction in films.

L. Wooding (2023) noted that Henry VII had three sons, but Arthur, Prince of Wales, ascended the throne first in 1489. He started looking for a partner unconsciously at the age of two. It was a profitable engagement to Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of the Spanish ruler Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Unfortunately, not the mythical but the real King Arthur of England died six months after this alleged marriage. Since Catherine of Aragon never had sexual relations with the heir, which determined her as not married by the church standards. Henry VII had a son with the same name, Henry, who became king in 1509. From that moment on, the monarch's exhausting personal and political life began, leading to the loss of many heirs and even the beheading of two subsequent queens, Anne Boleyn (1536) and Katherine Howard (1542). The author described each of the wives and the monarch in detail. A. Norrie (2022) noted that his marriage to Jane Seymour was the most successful, which is depicted in the movies and demonstrates the image of an ideal wife in her, according to the researcher throughout the study.

The prehistory of the House of Tudor as the ruling dynasty is described in the entertaining work of R. Rex (2023), depicting a deeper understanding of the toughened character of Henry VIII and his fear of being left without an heir to the throne, for Henry himself was second to the ascent to the English throne. High child mortality required rulers to have several sons "in reserve". The wives of Henry VIII were portrayed in different ways in different movies, such as "The Other Boleyn Girl" (2008, directed by Justin Chadwick), "The Tudors" TV series (2007-2010), "The Six Queens of Henry VIII" (2016, directed by Chris Holt). Wives had an influence on political affairs in the country, as seen in the history of the formation of the Anglican Communion during the active Protestant movement in Western Europe and the desire to legally marry Anne Boleyn a second time, as can be seen in the work of C. Fairbanks and S. Lane (2022).

The study aims to contribute to acquainting young people with the art of cinema and highlighting nuances in the appearance of historical personalities and costume history to fans and researchers, as well as ensuring no erroneous conclusions from available sources. Artistic method and stylistic analysis provided basic information for further research, analogies were made with the image in the picture and with the game, the originality of the costumes, and the coincidence of real events with fictional ones. The comparative analysis gave a wide range

of possibilities, based on the biographical data of the chosen women. The comparative analysis along with the stylistic analysis and artistic method helped to establish ties, for example, with the costume of Catherine of Aragon on the portrait of an unknown artist in 1525 and the actress in the series "The Tudors".

CINEMATIC COSTUMES AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION OF ARTISTIC AND STYLISTIC CHOICES IN PORTRAYING HENRY VIII'S QUEENS

The analogies were made with the image in the picture and with the game, the originality of the costume, and the coincidence of real events with fictional ones. For example, in the 2008 film adaptation of "The Other Boleyn Girl" the colour gamut of the costume of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of the English monarch, was green-blue, which referred to the ballad "Green sleeves", the authorship of which does not belong to Henry VIII. Any viewer who is not familiar with the work of Tudor may memorize the "beautiful legend" without the context of the Irish origin of the composition, which is unrelated to the musical formation of the King. Even if the story of the costume is concise, the age categories in the documentary film "Six Queens of Henry VIII" in 2016 do not reflect the selected actress for the role of Catherine of Aragon, who is six years older than the monarch, leaving a false impression.

The story in the background negates the notion of the older and more experienced first wife, who looks half as young as the king. The costumes were made mainly on the works of Hans Holbein the Younger, as seen in all three films. It is possible to deny their authenticity as flattery of the artist, but this image first appeared on the screens in 1933 in "The Private Life of Henry VIII". The author also assessed the divorce, execution, death, and subsequent life of Catherine Parr in all three films, which was true. During the execution of Anne Boleyn, a sword was manufactured, which iconographically corresponds to archaeological materials from the history of weapons of the 16th century. The ties with the costume of Catherine of Aragon on the portrait of an unknown artist in 1525 and the actress in the series "The Tudors" were established. Her clothes are often dark and composed with a strict gamut, allowing her to read the behaviour of the heroine, based on external representations, without depicting the unhappy fate of the Spaniard. Jewellery and headgear are also authentic, appreciating the intricate details of the ordinary viewer. In addition, a monarch's ageing can be seen, following the facts of a real personality biography. In none of the three films was the age canon broken.

According to G. Owen and R. Probert (2019), the change of wives was not without reason, always found material evidence, even based on the Bible (in the case of Catherine of Aragon) to end the marriage bond. Tracing moments in modern cinema and connecting them to actual history holds particular value for those who may not have the opportunity to delve into an extensive bibliographic list. Competent historians might question the selection of complex art comparative and artistic-stylistic methods for such a topic. However, these methods appeal to individuals interested in exploring a

narrow-focused subject without specialized education. Additionally, they prove useful for recreating the external characteristics of English queens. It is important to note that the topic of Henry VIII's six wives is closely related to the Reformation of Western Europe and the establishment of the Anglican Church, which combines some rites of both Catholicism and Protestantism. Therefore, the history of marriage to Anna Boleyn (1533-1536) had a significant place in the article.

THE VISUAL PORTRAYAL OF HENRY VIII'S WIVES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY IN FILM AND TELEVISION

S. Byrne (2021) studied the years of life of Henry VI-II's wives: Katherine of Aragon (1509-1533), Anne Boleyn (1533-1536), Jane Seymour (1536-1537), Anne of Cleves (1540), Katherine Howard (1540-1542), and Katherine Parr (1543). They are shown in different ways in films and by artists in paintings whose names are not always known. The most important artist for the court of Henry VIII was Hans Holbein the Younger, who introduced people to the very appearance of the monarch. However, from the proposed list of television series "The Tudors", it is impossible to accurately approach the true nature of the English monarch and reveal the psychotype of six wives, "divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived". A famous mnemonic technique used to describe the fates of six completely different women.

The documentary film "Six Queens of Henry VIII" by Chris Holt is filled with valuable information, reinforcing the historical material with the acting. The historical drama of the director-debutant Justin Chadwick "The Other Boleyn Girl" further pushes false information on the second wife, that is, Anna Boleyn, as real historical studies confirm that Anna was not originally a contender for the English crown, since her sister could have succeeded. During the research of Catherine of Aragon, the Spanish wife on the Tudor throne, in all three film adaptations, her fate is depicted in the same, tragic way. Her advantage is not in external data, as she is far from beautiful in a 1525 painting by an unknown artist. Being older than Henry, she suffered many miscarriages and was unable to give him a son, or heir to the throne, which was the main objective of each queen to keep her husband close and not be exiled to a monastery. However, she managed to give birth to the future queen Maria Tudor. Twenty-four years of marriage led to the exhaustion of the marriage, even though in Chris Holt's adaptation, the woman did not look tired or even age-appropriate. The actress had brown hair, but according to the descriptions that survived, she had long golden-brown hair and was short, which is incorrectly depicted in the film adaptation of the television series "The Tudors", as written in the book of P. Ackroyd (2012).

G.R. Elton (1977) noted that the Dowager Princess, in the dawn of her life, with the young face of the Old Neiderlander of Revel, Michael Zittov, painted around 1503-1504, corresponds to the descriptions of appearance. It was only in Chris Holt's adaptation that the Infanta of Spain's long alliance with the very painful King Arthur, their chaste alliance, was not considered a marriage for the church. Henry

was convinced that he could not get the long-awaited heir from Catherine of Aragon and decided to break ties even with the Pope to conclude an "illegal", from the point of view of Christian dogma, union with Anne Boleyn, Marquise of Pembroke. The picture of the unknown artist depicts the girl with brown eyes, light brown hair and a defining necklace that occurs in all the movies, with the letter "B" and three pendulous oblong white beads, probably of pearls. According to M. Merck (2016), "The Other Boleyn Girl" faithfully conveys the appearance, but an excessive fascination with the ballad "Green Sleeves", which is not of Henry's authorship, despite his talent for composition and music, lacks the entourage of the 16th century. In the series "The Tudor" Anna is depicted with light blue eyes, although the audacious character and coldness of the temperament of the young girl were successfully played by the actress. Henry's marriage to Anne and her subsequent execution made her a key historical figure in political and religious upheaval, inextricably linked to the Reformation in England.

FROM FAITH TO SCANDAL: ANNE BOLEYN'S ROLE IN HENRY VIII'S MARITAL DRAMA AND THE CINEMATIC DEPICTIONS OF TUDOR INTRIGUE

D. Sandbrook (2021) highlighted that the predecessor of the Reformation in England was John Wickliffe, who translated the Bible into English, and criticized the sale of indulgences to atone for sins, but he was not a key figure in the scandal. This role belongs to Anne Boleyn, and not specifically to the marriage union with the English monarch. Singling out any of the wives is challenging, as the fate of each is marked by tragedy and drama, making them perennial subjects in the realms of art and film. The title of "Defender of the Faith" that Pope Leo X gave to Henry did not pay off, but the English and British monarchs retained this title to this day, even after the Anglican Church separated from Catholicism, partly because after the split the title was re-conferred, this time by Parliament. It took a good reason to dissolve the marriage.

Biblical teaching (Leviticus 20:10) was the way out of this atypical situation in Western Europe. More precisely, paraphrasing the text of the Holy Scriptures, Catherine was the wife of his late brother, which contradicted divine lines. The maid of honour of Catherine of Aragon arrived at court in 1522. According to John Barlow, one of Thomas Boleyn's chaplains, the girl was far less beautiful than her sister Maria or Bessie Blount's mistress, but at the same time, according to H. Nolan (2019), "very eloquent and gracious and quite attractive". Hans Holbein Jr.'s drawing shows a girl in three-quarters with a very long nose, thin lips, and no expression in the eyes, confirming the words of John Barlow. Anne Boleyn commands significant attention in cinema, particularly her triumphant execution portrayed using a finely crafted metal, intended to symbolize Henry's purported leniency towards adultery.

Following P. Snow and A. Macmillan (2022), Anna's appearance was often "demonized", as Nicholas Sanders did almost half a century after her death, as she was involved in the Reformation. "The Tudors" shows how the

girl rejects the fate of the favourite and claims to the English throne and is not troubled by the presence of Catherine of Aragon as a legitimate wife. In 1532, Henry VIII and Anne were secretly married. Elizabeth was the only heir to the union. The doctors were convinced that a son would be born, but unfortunately, a girl was born, cancelling the rushed birth of the heir as depicted in the "Six Queens of Henry VIII". Meanwhile, in 1536, Catherine of Aragon died. After Catherine's death, Henry would be able to remarry without the risk of a controversial marriage. At this time, Henry VIII began to pay excessive attention to Queen Jane Seymour. It was either a failure or a coincidence at a difficult time for the Crown that Anne Boleyn's miscarriage ended the marriage. It is not known what caused the next loss of the heir, but a common belief is either due to the fall of Henry from the horse or to the death of Catherine since the wife was very worried about the monarch. Further failed pregnancies are attributed to genetic problems only in Henry himself, not related to new queens. In the series "The Tudors" Boleyn's miscarriages are dramatically shown, as her position falls with each new attempt to get pregnant.

Historian Eric Ives believes that Anne's fall and execution may have been planned by her former ally Thomas Cromwell. The study author believes that the unstable psyche of the monarch, who was prone to cruel and harsh actions, was the cause. Several historians do not support Eric Ives and consider the execution of the girl a way to remarry. To remove Anne and bring Jane Seymour closer, the Queen was accused of high treason and adultery to the King, for which she faced the death penalty. The lovers were revealed to be Queen Henry's friends Norris, William Brereton, Francis Weston, Mark Smeaton, and Anne's brother George, Viscount Rochford, which also implies an accusation of treason, which is contrary to Christian dogmas. High treason, according to the Acts of Treason of Edward III, was punishable by hanging, gutting, or quartering for a man and burning alive for a woman, which was an incredibly painful public death. Henry felt some affection for his beloved and changed the burning to beheading with a sword. Sometimes the executioners were inexperienced in their work and cut off their heads with a coarse axe, which caused suffering not only to the condemned man but also to the public. For Anna's decapitation, an experienced executioner from Saint-Omer (France), an experienced swordsman, was called. As Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn became sworn enemies for reasons understandable to the royal court, their daughters Mary and Elizabeth would wage religious wars, as Catholicism and Protestantism were opposed.

JANE SEYMOUR: THE BELOVED QUEEN AND THE BIRTH OF THE HEIR

D. Starkey (2004) noted in his book that Jane Seymour is considered Henry's favourite wife, having given him the long-awaited heir, Edward VI. Henry became engaged to Jane Seymour on 20 May 1536, shortly after the execution of his ex-wife. In the 1536 portrait of Hans Holbein, she had light skin, blond hair, thin lips, and emerald eyes. The Seymour's were once considered a well-known and ancient family, and the blood of the Plantagenet was flowing in their veins thanks to Edward III. At the time of

the wedding, she was already 27 years old, which by medieval standards was considered "old-born". Henry VIII delayed his betrothal to ensure that the newly wedded wife was fertile. Comparing the appearance of Jane Seymour in the series "The Tudors" and in the documentary film "Six Queens of Henry VIII", she does not have as attractive appearance as Anna, but she was able to earn the great attention of the King at the expense of the male heir. "The Tudors" shows Anna catching Jane sitting on her husband's lap, which is addressed by the director for the transmission of a possibly authentic story about a miscarriage. Indeed, Seymour's attention predates Anne's execution, making Henry an adulterer in the eyes of the church, according to H.W. Bernard (2011), S. Russo (2020), and L. Pet'ko (2022).

In 1537, Henry's dream came true, and a male heir was born. Edward was baptized on 15 October. In the mystery took part Lady Elizabeth, who carried holy oil, and Lady Maria, who became his godmother. A portrait of Hans Evert depicts a young man with similar facial features to those of Jane Seymour. However, the childbirth was difficult, which entailed the loss of the "beloved wife", Jane Seymour. The King went into mourning so much that he willed to bury not only his wife but himself after he died in the chapel of St. George at Windsor Castle.

The series "The Tudors" and the film "Six Queens of Henry VIII" show the suffering of the monarch, who was in no hurry to conclude a new marriage, as he already had an heir. However, he was persuaded to seek a new wife, which the monarch could not do. Many European candidates renounced the union, as they were aware of the situation with the beheading and exile of their first two wives. A new marriage was needed from a political standpoint: Thomas Cromwell wanted to ally with England and the Protestant Empire.

COURTLY ALLIANCES AND TRAGIC ENDS: PERSPECTIVES ON ANNE OF CLEVES AND KATHERINE HOWARD IN HENRY VIII'S REIGN

Anne of Cleves was a suitable candidate. Her portrait, painted by Hans Holbein, Jr., was first commissioned and Henry VIII consented to the union. The marriage contract was signed in 1539. At the meeting of 1540, the monarch was disappointed in the appearance of Anne of Cleves, and she was remembered in history as the "sister of the king". The series "The Tudors" magnificently portrays disgust, capturing the not-very-attractive appearance of Cleves as well, according to A. Strickland (1853). In Anne of Cleves's entourage, a pretty young girl Katherine Howard was depicted, although it was distorted in "The Tudors", as on the portrait of Hans Holbein the Younger, she has brown hair, a pointed chin and brown eyes, and not a light curly hair with a light-looking house. Henry VIII allied with Kate Howard in July 1530, but their wedding was not very lavish.

The court noticed how the young girl influenced the monarch, he became more active and resumed tournaments and other entertainment. In addition, the girl was killed by levity. "Friends of Youth" became her entourage and plotted behind the back of a more successful friend. Not even the young king could not satisfy all needs with the ardent "roses without thorns". She had a relationship

with Thomas Culpepper, who served on the court as the King's page. On the page, love affairs did not end. Her former lover, Francis Dereham, was also called upon. She surrounded herself, seemingly, with her closest relatives, with many enemies at court. This is not the reckless life of a young girl, but rather the authority of her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk. It is not known whether the young beauty cheated on the king, but the series "The Tudors" shows the bed scenes and flirtations of the queen.

"The Six Queens of Henry VIII" omits intimate details but focuses on palace gossip and indiscretions in Katherine Howard's sayings. Another problem was the pregnancy, which did not occur, and this, despite the presence of Prince Edward, caused the king's anger. The young queen could give birth to many boys, as was mentioned by N. Clark (2019) and S.E. James (2021). The monarch first shed tears when he learned of Katherine's affair, which was not lost on the directors of the aforementioned works. On 13 February 1542, she was beheaded, and a few days earlier, Thomas Culpepper and Francis Dereham were killed by hanging and quartering. It would sound rather cynical, but Lady Catherine's body was buried next to that of King Anne Boleyn's second wife.

CATHERINE PARR: HENRY VIII'S LAST WIFE

Henry's last choice was Catherine Parr, who had three husbands besides Henry, namely Thomas Seymour after his death. She is remembered in the history of the English crown as a Protestant woman who survived the infamous husband of Tudor. In the second half of the 1530s, the Latimers, whose clan was the result of the marriage union of John Neville and the witty Catherine Parr, increasingly visited the court of the king, and Henry was very respectful of the couple. The King was no longer young, and Catherine herself was thirty-one years old at the time of their meetings. As a widow twice, in 1543 the King began to consider her a potential wife.

In Hans Holbein the Younger's portrait, her face lacked the glow of youth, and noticeable bags were evident under her eyes. The woman had a thin nose and brown hair, pale skin, and thin lips. She was depicted in "The Tudors" differently: green eyes, white hair, plump lips, and radiance of the face. Henry VIII was also out of his age and looked quite young, with no signs of old age. In 1543, they were married in the royal chapel of Hampton Court. She had a close relationship with Princess Elizabeth, as their religious views coincided. With Lady Mary, the communications remained cold, and less friendly due to Catholic beliefs, as can be seen in the work of D. Loades (2009).

As far as Edward is concerned, she was able to transfer the only heir to the throne to her side, still as a stepmother, by focusing on his education. In 1545-1546 the health of Henry VIII significantly deteriorated, and in 1547 he died, according to D.F. Weaver (2021). In May of the same year, Catherine Parr married her fourth true love, Thomas Seymour. His sixth wife survived a tyrannical monarch, but, unfortunately, died after giving birth in August 1548, giving birth to a daughter by Thomas Seymour. Her magnificent tombstone with her remains is at Castle Sudeley in Gloucestershire.

CONCLUSIONS

The research of film costumes and historical narratives related to King Henry VIII and his wives compared cinematic art and historical accuracy. The analysis of various film adaptations and documentaries showed how filmmakers interpret and portray the lives of these historical figures, combining artistic and stylistic choices. The article emphasized that Henry VIII's change of wives was always due to important reasons. These reasons often have their roots in political interests, the need for a male heir, etc. The fate of each of the wives was analysed in the context of contemporary cinema, namely in three works: "The Tudors", "The Six Queens of Henry VIII", and "The Other Boleyn". Paintings by unknown artists and Hans Holbein the Younger, which proved the lack of cinema depiction accuracy, were also used. The comparative analysis determined "The Tudors" series to be less close to reality.

Jane Seymour is emphasized as Henry's favoured wife, credited for providing him with the long-awaited male heir. The differences in her appearance in "The Tudors" compared to other film adaptations were highlighted and the importance of her role in securing the Tudor line was emphasized. The portrayal of Anne Boleyn in cinema reflects her key role in the political and religious upheavals during the Reformation in England. The article described the path of Catherine of Aragon, who ended her fate tragically, whose advantage was not her appearance but the birth of the future Queen Mary Tudor. It is noted how the young Catherine Howard influenced the monarch by restoring tournaments and other entertainments, but also by succumbing to frivolity. The differences in the appearance of Catherine Parr in Hans Holbein's portrait and the "The Tudors" series were noted. Catherine Parr's role as a Protestant survivor of her marriage to Henry is also considered in the context of her religious beliefs and relationship with Henry's children. Having caused Henry's disappointment in her external attractiveness, Anne of Cleves went down in history as the "king's sister" despite her refusal to marry. The study also noted that the "The Tudors" series effectively depicts Anne of Cleves' unattractive appearance and Henry's reaction.

It is necessary to address the correspondence of the outfits, the source of which was the canvas, except Anne Boleyn's dress in "The Other Boleyn Girl" due to the ballad "Green Sleeves". The description of Christian traditions and the colour scheme are reflected in all three works of the entourage. Everything described in the study is not previously unknown information, but using the methods of analysis, one can see new details in the images of women. Directions for further research could include the following topics: historical accuracy in cinema, studies of the lives of Henry VIII's wives, comparisons between literature and cinema, portrayals of the Tudor era in cinema, cultural influence of the Tudor dynasty, etc.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Дружини Генріха VIII: історіографія в концепціях сучасного кіно

Анотація. Актуальність цієї статті зумовлена тим, що навколо історичної особистості Генріха VIII сформувалися різноманітні міфи та легенди, які не відповідають дійсності, але повторюються в контексті сучасного кінематографу. Стаття має на меті дослідити особистості дружин Генріха XVIII та порівняти правдиві та неправдиві факти у різних фільмах. Були використані художньо-стилістичний метод та метод порівняльного аналізу. Виявлено, що окрім стрімкої зміни парадигми особистого життя, другий монарх з династії Тюдорів відомий також кількома значними реформами, які були продемонстровані лише в кількох фільмах та серіалах, і то мимохідь, залишивши погане враження про англійську корону. За Тюдорів Англія перетворилася на «володарку морів» і заснувала незалежну від Папи Римського англіканську церкву, почавши з правління смути і закінчивши стабільністю. В роботі поєднано втілені образи з портретами сучасників дружин Генріха VIII, а саме з портретами Ганса Гольбейна Молодшого. Проаналізовано загальні відомості про обрання англійського монарха, їхнє походження, а також обставини при дворі після одруження, а саме смерть спадкоємців престолу, яка, як доведено останніми дослідженнями, була пов'язана зі станом здоров'я монарха, а не його дружин. Розглянуто зовнішні риси, моделі поведінки та вплив на внутрішню політику середньовічної Англії. Проаналізовано такі фільми, як: «Інша дівчина Болейн» (2008, режисер Джастін Чедвік), телесеріал «Тюдори» (2007-2010, режисер Майкл Херст), «Генріх VIII та його шість дружин» (2016, режисер Кріс Холт), і встановлено, що кінематограф неточно передає антураж епохи, характер і зовнішність дівчат. Проведене дослідження може бути корисним для дослідників, любителів історії, вузьким фахівцям з династії Тюдорів і студентам історичних факультетів та аматорам. Дружини Генріха продовжують залишатися недослідженими істориками

Ключові слова: англіканська церква; аналіз; внутрішня політика; історичні факти