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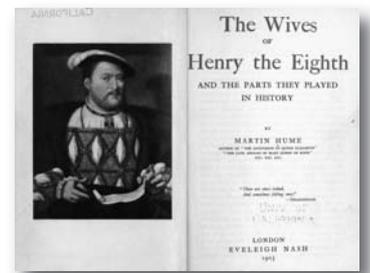
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## **BOOK REVIEW**

# ***The wives of Henry the Eighth and the parts they played in history***

**by Martin Hume**

*Eveleigh Nash & Grayson: London; 4th edition, 1905; 467 pp.; Ursula Davidson Library  
call number 501.2/8237*



This book, now more than a century old, is another of the gems in the Institute's Ursula Davidson Library. It is a study of 16<sup>th</sup> century European statecraft and of the way princesses from many lands were used as part of the political bargaining of the time. The position of wives, mistresses, lovers, *etc.* in the French and English courts is discussed. Hume shows that each of Henry's wives was an instrument of politicians hoping to move the king in one direction or another.

For example, Cardinal Wolsey had his own reasons to wish Henry's marriage to Katharine of Aragon ended. Anne Boleyn, chosen to replace her, was a niece of the Duke of Norfolk, the leader of the party of nobles, and this enhanced her position at court. Her sister, Mary, however, had been Henry's mistress and this com-

plicated the proposed marriage, even though canon law prior to 1533 made no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate intercourse. Katharine fought back, employing the power and resources of a queen to resist attempts to set her aside. She even appeared in person before a special court in England which examined her marriage to Henry.

The story itself is easily readable. The careful referencing, footnotes and research make this book a useful record of the evolution of various key players at a crucial time in English history. Despite having read much about this era, I learned a great deal by reading this insightful book.

**Priscilla Leece**