Faces of a Queen

Depiction and Perception of Mary, Queen of Scots Through Sixteenth-Century Art and Literature

**John Knox and Christopher Goodman play the trumpet to Queen Mary Tudor,
1566, British Library.**

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Abstract

This project aims to explore the sixteenth-century debate of women and their legitimacy as monarchs in the British Isles, which for this purpose uses Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (1542-1587) as an example. By analyzing her contemporary literary perceptions and visual depictions, an apparent lack of connection between the two disciplines is detectable. By juxtaposing and considering together anti-female polemics and images made of Mary generally in the same period, the project sheds light to a correlation between the two disciplines. Close observation of anti-female polemics and various types of visual material show the different tools the authors and artists relied upon to justify their arguments. The project will ultimately find that both perceptions of Mary through written word and image aim to communicate a shared political purpose, either to defend the rule of women or to preach against it.

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Introduction

"Where a woman reigns and Papists bear authority, that there Satan must needs be president of the council."[1] This statement and several similar ones appeared in a 1558 pamphlet written by the Scottish priest John Knox, one of the most vocal opposers of female authority in politics. The sixteenth century unleashed many men's fears by producing several female rulers reigning over Europe, such as Isabella of Castile, Margaret of Austria, Anne of France, Caterina Sforza, Catherine de' Medici, Mary Tudor, Marie de Guise, Elizabeth Tudor, and Mary Stuart. The strict Protestant attitude, which occupied the British Isles by mid-century, applied a lifestyle based on a dichotomy between right and wrong, along with literary interpretations of the Bible. While this left little room for women to practice authority, a number of them inherited the royal throne, and therefore exercised the highest level of authority possible.

This was particularly visible in the British Isles, as both the north and the south were ruled by women. As a response, several pamphlets, like Knox's, were written against female rule, all tackling the physical and mental capabilities of women. As it will be argued in this thesis, next to such polemics visual material appeared, which both essentially promoted the same agenda, resulting in a powerful combination of political weapons pointed at female monarchs. Focusing foremost on polemics written by anti-female voices attempting to prove women's inaptness for government, the present thesis seeks to survey the political, cultural, and religious arena of the sixteenth century, which enabled the mobilization of different tools functioning as proof for the alleged defective nature of female authority.

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[1] John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558), 32.

The aim of this project is to explore both secular and religious tools used by humanist thinkers and religious polemicists to underpin such anti-female arguments. This will be demonstrated through the lens of Mary Stuart's case, whose public perception dramatically changed in the second half of her reign compared to the first. This phenomenon is equally visible in contemporary literature as in her visual depictions. Perceptions of Mary were determined by political, cultural, and confessional factors. When her sex joined to these factors in an era when debates over women were blooming, resistance against her escalated. Mary's public image eventually transformed from a respected queen to an adulteress and murderer, whose alleged political and moral tyranny made her unsuitable for rulership in the eyes of her Protestant opposers.

Mary Stuart: historical figure and myth

Mary Stuart, most often referred to as the Queen of Scots, was one of the most captivating British rulers in history, whose dramatic life is re-visited and subject to popularity even after 400 years. It does not come as a surprise, then that literature on her is vast. Born at Linlithgow Palace in the winter of 1542, to her father, James V King of Scotland's disappointment, as he sought a male heir. According to one of Mary's eminent biographers, Lady Antonia Fraser, upon the news of Mary's birth, James stated in devastation, "it came with a lass, it will pass with a lass,"[2] referring to the beginning of the Stuart dynasty via the marriage of Marjorie Bruce and Walter Stewart.[3] As shortly after and quite unexpectedly James fell in the battle at Solway Moss, the six-day-old Mary became one of the youngest monarchs Europe ever produced. Mary, the 'instant' queen has never known otherwise but to be a queen, in fact her coronation was the event that created multiple threats to her and Scotland's well-being.

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[2] Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), 12.
[3] Ibid.

Immediately upon her coronation, Mary became a significant figure, entering the political games of Europe's greatest players. Henry VIII, having his eyes on Scotland for a while, now saw an opportunity to acquire his northern neighbor. He proposed a marriage between his only son, the sickly Edward VI and the infant Queen of Scots. A group of Protestant Scottish lords agreed and signed the Treaty of Greenwich stating the union between the prince and Mary. The Catholic Scots, fearing English suzerainty posed by the possibility of Mary's English marriage, upon the influence of Mary's mother, the French Marie de Guise, a secret engagement was made between Mary and the Dauphin, Francis II. As a response to the French engagement, Henry VIII invaded Scotland, which was according to John Guy's award-winning biography on Mary, later was known as the "Rough Wooing."[4] To escape it, when five-years-old Mary was sent to France where she spent the next twelve years, which turned out to be half of her life. After the dauphin's death, Mary decided to return to Scotland and start her individual reign in 1561.

By the time Mary returned, Scotland had gone through a number of changes. Most significantly the nobility made the Protestant faith the official religion of the kingdom following Knoxian Presbyterianism. It also became English-friendly, which was far from James V's efforts made in 1542 at Solway Moss in resisting Henry VIII's force to break from Rome. Thus, the political and religious environment that Mary found herself in was immensely different from what she was used to in France. Several factors merged and the tension between Mary and her subjects escalated to the point where Mary's fate turned to a dark path ending in her forced abdication after only six years in Scotland. When she was exiled to England in the spring of 1568, to seek her sister queen, Elizabeth I's help in her reinstatement, instead she was incarcerated for nineteen years. Upon the so-called Babington plot in 1586, an attempt to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and replace

[4] John Guy, *My Heart is My Own: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004), 33.

her with Mary, the forty-four-years-old Mary was sentenced to death for treason and was executed shortly after the trial in 1587 in Fotheringhay Castle, Northamptonshire.[5]

Literature overview

As mentioned before, the secondary literature on Mary is extensive, as historians have been fascinated by the early modern queen's eventful and rapidly changing life and reign. To our purposes, the most significant biographical works serve as a starting point. More relevant to the project is sixteenth-century literature that discusses Mary. Her literary appearance was most famously explored by James Emerson Phillips in *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature*.[6] In this study, Phillips claims that literature produced during Mary's lifetime can be considered as pure propagandistic effort, either attacking or defending Mary. Contemporary discussions of the Queen of Scots, thus are twofold, where her Catholic faith and claim to the English throne serve as foundations for contemporary accounts. However, around the mid-sixteenth century, Mary was often referred to as the biblical queen Jezebel, unfit for rulership.

From the contemporary literary perceptions of Mary, this project is especially focusing on polemics arguing against female rulership and women in general. John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women*[7] and George Buchanan's *De Maria Scotorum Regina*[8] published around mid-century will serve as foundations in representing anti-female pamphlets. Studies which attempt to interpret such pamphlet's content, purpose, and

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[5] For further biographical information on Mary besides Antonia Fraser and John Guy's works see Jennifer Wormald, *Mary Queen of Scots: A Study in Failure* (London, 1991); A. Weir, *Mary, Queen of Scots and the Murder of Darnley* (New York: 2003); and R.M. Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2006).

[6] James Emerson Phillips, *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley, 1964).

[7] John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558).

[8] George Buchanan*, A detection of the actions of Mary Queen of Scots concerning the murther of her husband, and her conspiracy, adultery, and pretended marriage with the Earl Bothwell and a defence of the true Lords, maintainers of the King's Majesties action and authority* (London: Richard Janeway, 1689).

reception are also essential. Contributions particularly by Patricia-Ann Lee, Cathy Shrank, Robert M. Healey, and Tricia A. McElroy[9] provided the most useful interpretations on the two eminent polemics this thesis engages with. The gender aspect of such polemics and the general place and role of women in the early modern society were most helpfully explained through the studies of Joan Kelly and Constance Jordan.[10]

Since this study places more emphasis on the second half of Mary's life, particularly from her return to Scotland in 1561 until her deposition in 1568, the studies exploring early modern Scotland's state at this specific period were essential during the course of writing. The study of Kristen Post Walton (2007)[11] is greatly valuable to this project, since it gives an overview of the cultural, political and religious circumstances of Scotland upon Mary's return, as well as her struggles to fit into such a different environment, which is the period in Mary's life this project has the most interest in. Furthermore, Roger A. Mason, Colin Kidd, and Patrick Collinson's[12] contributions were most essential for understanding the religio-political state of Scotland in the

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[9] Patricia-Ann Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe: Aylmer, Knox and the Debate on Queenship." *The Historian* 52, no. 2 (1990); Cathy Shrank, "This fatall Medea," "this Clytemnestra": Reading and the Detection of Mary Queen of Scots," Huntington Library Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 3 (2010); John Knox and Robert M. Healey, "Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens," The Sixteenth Century Journal, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer, 1994); Tricia A. McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics in George Buchanan's Ane Detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes." In George Buchanan. Political Thought in Early Modern Britain and Europe ed. Caroline Erskine and Roger A. Mason (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012).

[10] Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the 'Querelle Des Femmes', 1400-1789," *Signs* 8, no. 1 (1982); Constance Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists: The Case of Sir Thomas Elyot's Defence of Good Women." *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1983).

[11] Kristen Post Walton, *Catholic Queen Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Kristen Post Walton, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, a sentiment or a creation?," *International Social Science Review*, 2006, Vol. 81, No. 3/4 (2006).

[12] Roger A. Mason, "Usable Past: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland," *The Scottish Historical Review*, Apr., 1997, Vol. 76, No. 201, Part 1: 'Writing Scotland's History': Proceedings of the 1996 Edinburgh Conference (Apr., 1997); Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Patrick Collinson, "Protestant culture and the cultural revolution," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

late medieval and early modern period, as well as the long-standing traditions, customs, and the nature of polity Scotland has nurtured since antiquity.

Since this project is twofold, in investigating both literature and visual depictions, artistic approaches to Mary's sixteenth-century portraits, miniatures, and even defamatory placards are indispensable. While I have not discovered any contemporary in-depth visual analyses of Mary's visual depictions, the Victorian era created the first attempts in this matter. Agnes Strickland already in her 1859 publication[13] endeavored analyzing Mary's portraits. She was especially interested in Mary's facial expressions on royal portraiture. The first significant literature on the visual representation of Mary, however, emerged when the founding director of the National Portrait Gallery, Sir George Scharf and his successor Sir Lionel Cust took on the challenge of cataloging authentic images of the queen published in 1903.[14] This research remains the most prominent literature in the field identifying and describing twenty-eight authentic artworks of the queen including paintings, coins, drawings, miniatures, engravings, a woodcut, and a bust. Though largely formal and descriptive, this work is an invaluable resource. A continuation of Cust and Scharf's research was published a year later (1904) by Joshua Foster on further authentic portraits of Mary.[15] Andrew Lang's monograph (1906)[16] which aimed to add to the above-mentioned existing study, identified Mary's authentic portraits based on the jewelry she wears. Lang's study is relevant to the project when encountering the visual materials, the crayon sketches, portraits, and the satirical placard.

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[13] Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of Scotland and English Princesses Connected with Regal Succession of Great Britain* (New York, 1859).
[14] Lionel Cust, Notes on the Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots: Based on the Researches of the Late Sir George Scharf, Rewritten in the Light of New Information (London & Edinburgh: Ballantyne Press, 1903).
[15] Joshua Foster, True Portraiture of Mary, Queen of Scots, 1904.
[16] Andrew Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels of Mary Stuart," *The Scottish Historical Review* 2, no.10 (Jan. 1906): pp. 129- 156.

Accounts on Mary's portraits from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries tend to focus on assembling and authenticating the known depictions of Mary. The discussion fails to go beyond the investigation of the identity of the artists, identifying copies, and mentioning the frequent aesthetic features and personal characteristics Mary became associated with. Such a focus on Mary's images perhaps can be explained as the Victorian era saw the first attempt to catalog Mary's known images for the first time, thus further analysis on their purposes and such aspects awaited later generation of art historians. What is certain is that the negative representations of Mary are generally overlooked. The recent works of Michael Bath and Malcolm Jones (2015) and Debra Barrett-Graves (2013)[17] have invested great effort to analyze the symbolic meaning of such defamatory material. Building on their interpretations, the project will aim to take their analysis a step further by investigating the possible reception of the placard as well as its physical characteristics. When the eminent example of Mary's depiction during her English captivity, the *Sheffield portrait* will be discussed, Jermey L. Smith's studies[18] (2010) were especially relevant to our purpose, as Smith is the only scholar who showed interest in connecting Mary's polemical presence with her visual, therefore it served as a great example for the nature of approach the thesis is applying.

From this overview, it is clear that literature on Mary Stuart's life and reign is extensive along with the accounts discussing her artistic depictions. It lacks, however, a multidisciplinary bridge between Mary's literary presence and visual representation. Building on the existing

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[17] Michael Bath and Malcom Jones, "'Placardes and Billis and Ticquettis of Defamatioun': Queen Mary, The Mermaid and The Hare," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 78, (2015), pp. 223- 246; Debra Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary, Queen of Scots: Icons of Wantonness and Pride," in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (New York:Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[18] Jeremy L. Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna in Catholic Propaganda," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 73 (2010), pp. 209- 220; Jeremy L. Smith, "Revisiting the origins of the Sheffield series of portraits of Mary Queen of Scots," *The Burlington Magazine* 152, no. 1285 (2010): pp. 212-218.

literature, this project aims to bring historiography on literature and images together to discover correlation between Mary's perception in word and image. This is an aspect that has not been researched in-depth and rarely taken as the approach to explore Mary's political presence. Considered together, they reflect how sixteenth-century society translated certain political conditions, and how word and image work in harmony to produce meaning. Investigating Mary specifically, will not only provide a better understanding of sixteenth-century queenship as well as an insight of power relations in the British Isles, but it will also shed light on the role of women in sixteenth-century Europe.

Sources and methodology

This research aims to provide a literary and visual analysis and to bring together these two worlds in which political representation of female monarchs play a major role. While the first half of Mary's life will serve as a starting point, the second half, after her return to Scotland, will receive more in-depth analysis, since around mid-century is the point when the most controversiality and the most prominent changes both in her visual and literary representation take place. This way, a clear shift in her image will be observed against the background of the simultaneously changing social, political, and ideological conditions.

The project showcases a multidisciplinary approach, evoking ideas from the fields of Renaissance literature, semiotics, art, religion, and gender. A synthesis of recent scholarship in these different academic fields will be used as a starting point on which this project builds on when analyzing both sixteenth-century literature and art. When approaching polemics, this study relies on a history of the book approach combined with an approach to history of ideas, especially visible when the perceived ill-nature of women and their malfunctioning authority is discussed, but it does not exclude a social historical perspective either. A similar production-consumption approach is

taken when analyzing Mary's depictions, which is most directly seen in the defamatory placard's physical analysis and speculations on its function and reception.

The sources on the basis of which the analysis was conducted are sixteenth-century published treatises tackling female government. John Knox's *First Blast*, which claims that female authority is 'unnatural' based on God's will, and George Buchanan's *De Maria Scotorum Regina* that can be considered as the main tract that enabled Mary's defamation are two polemics in focus. John Leslie's apologetic tract, titled *A defence of the honour of the right highe, mightye and noble Princesse Marie Quene of Scotlande*[19] will be brought forward as a counter-example of the anti-female polemics. In the course of writing this thesis, the Early English Books Online (EEBO) was used to access these texts. In terms of Mary's visual depictions, two crayon sketches depicting her in her girlhood and two miniatures showing her as part of the French royal family tree, and the other commemorating the moment of her engagement to the dauphin are used. These early French portrayals were made by the hand of the French court painter, Francois Clouet. The two remaining depictions this thesis used are from Mary's time in Scotland and during her English captivity. An anonymously sketched defamatory placard, most often referred to as the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard promoting Mary's moral tyranny, and the quite opposite full-length *Sheffield portrait* projecting Mary as the biblical Susanna likewise made by an unknown artist. Such sixteenth-century art of different mediums portraying Mary were accessed through the online collections of the National Portrait Gallery (London), Musée Condé (Chantilly), Scottish National Gallery

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[19] John Leslie, *A defence of the honour of the right highe, mightye and noble Princesse Marie Quene of Scotlande and dowager of France with a declaration aswell of her right, title & intereste to the succession of the crowne of Englande, as that the regimente of women ys conformable to the lawe of God and nature* (Eusebius Dicæophile: London, 1969).

(Edinburgh), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Musée du Louvre (Paris), The British Museum (London), and The National Archives (UK).

The first chapter will place Mary into the Scottish environment, where her confessional and cultural otherness will be discussed compared to the Scots'. It will find that her Catholic faith and aesthetic features – main components of her otherness – can be detected in her depictions as well. Through personal items, such as seals and signets, Mary projected an identity of herself as a Catholic queen. The chapter aims to show that in such a challenging environment, Mary had little chance to control her kingdom. The second chapter explores the different factors that served as pillars for arguments against female rulership demonstrated through the lens of two infamous anti-female polemics. In the zenith of such discourses surrounding queenship and women in general, Mary faced an additional challenge. Finally, the third chapter will survey the iconography of two different portrayals of the Queen of Scots. The 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard and the *Sheffield portrait* both serve propagandistic purposes. While their iconography is complicated and suggests layered meanings for which multiple explanations exist, we will ultimately find that they were part of a group of existing sources that were either defending or opposing the rule of women.

Chapter 1: Political loyalty in late medieval and early modern Scotland

Mary Stuart, a monarch with immense potential and influence, by the mid-sixteenth century was celebrated as the queen of no less than three kingdoms. Within two years of turmoil, her sole remaining title was Queen of Scots. This chapter focuses on the late medieval and early modern Scottish socio-cultural, political and confessional circumstances as foundations against which the persona of Mary – a young, beautiful, Frenchified Catholic queen – is compared, enabling the realization of her otherness amongst the Protestant Scots. Such a juxtaposition portrays the continuous struggle that the female monarch faced while attempting to fit into such a Scottish "constitutionalist" environment. This chapter aims to show that Mary hardly had a chance to properly reign over her native land, since important decisions concerning Scotland were made before her arrival and without her consent. Scottish nobles already established a hold over the government based on a structure rooted in long-standing traditions making it impossible for the queen to gain political control. This chapter heavily relies on Kristen Post Walton and Colin Kidd's studies which explain the state of Scotland upon Mary's return. It will also bring images to Walton's arguments to illustrate Mary's confessional and personal otherness by contemporary visual portrayals. Two crayon sketches and two miniatures will be used from Mary's girlhood and adolescence, painted by Francois Clouet, and a sketch of various seals and signets belonging to Mary by John West.

Scoto-Celtic *mythistoire* and constitutional history

Reactions to different mythical origins of Scotland in late fifteenth and through the sixteenth century are of interest, since they give an insight into how myths were seen contemporary to Mary and especially after her return to Scotland in 1561 to rule in her own name for the first time. Scotland was often considered as a less significant and isolated land, far from the interests

of continental political games. As distant as it might have seemed, its pride in a shared sense of belonging, constant fight for independence, and governmental polity is perhaps more remarkable than any other kingdom. The Scots' diversity is well-emphasized by historians, as the Scots were formed by the union of a different ethnic groups, the Picts and other Gaelic people from the Dal Riada – northern part of Ireland and Scotland's western shoreline – throughout the antiquity to whom the Vikings and Normans joined during the Middle Ages. Such a diverse population turned into a society, which by honoring the member's traditions ultimately created a universal myth referred to as the Scoto-Celtic community. In addition to diversity, many languages were spoken throughout Scotland, which instead of dividing its population, according to many historians, by the fourteenth century created the spring of nationalism.[20]

When attempting to understand the myths of the emergence of Scottish unity, first an examination of the same in England is beneficial as Scottish myths appeared as a reaction to their southern neighbor's.[21] An analysis of such is conducted by Scottish historian Colin Kidd in *Subverting Scotland's Past*,[22] a primary study on Scottish "national identity" and projection of its use and abuse in late medieval and early modern period. Kidd states that until the late fifteenth century, great dynasties – Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor – proudly embraced the Geoffrey of Monmouth-constructed Roman myth of origins and their first king, Brutus. With Sir John

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[20] Kristen Post Walton, "Scottish Nationalism Before 1789: An Ideology, a sentiment or a creation?," *International Social Science Review*, 2006, Vol. 81, No. 3/4 (2006): 113. Next to Walton Scottish historians Colin Kidd and Roger Mason's names are notable.

[21] Ibid., 119; Colin Kidd, "Prologue: national identity in late medieval and early modern Scotland," in *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18.

[22] Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Fortescue, to this myth another joined, that above all emphasized the English constitution upon which the so called, 'whig' historians based their ideology.[23]

The Scoto-Celtic community, according to Kidd, was established on royal lineage through which pride was transmitted showcasing an ancestry that went back to antiquity to the legendary founder of Scotland, Fergus Macerch, who led the Scots to the Dal Riada from Ireland. This myth was well-cherished in medieval minds as King Alexander III's ancestry, who ruled Scotland until the late thirteenth century was connected to Macerch.[24] It was Alexander's death in 1286 and the succession crisis that added another version of myth on Scottish origin due to the absence of a direct heir. The most notable claimants to the throne were John Baliol and Robert Bruce. To them joined Edward I of England according to Kristen Walton, he was asked to participate in the decision, but instead formed his own agenda. Edward declared that the new king must acknowledge English supremacy, moreover he claimed the Scottish crown based on the Roman myth of the English, where Brutus was the first king of not only England but the Isles, hence the king of England was as per Edward the king of Scotland.[25] The Scots referred to their long line of ancestry as an indicator of their independence, through which a counter-myth was formed. As Kidd explains, the new myth was based on the union of Gatheus, a Greek prince and Scota, the daughter of the pharaoh of Egypt – after whom Scotland was allegedly named – whose successor migrated through Spain to Ireland and then to Scotland. This legend places Scotland's origins at 330 BC under the rule of Fergus MacFerquhard, an earlier founder than the previously mentioned Macerch.[26] Edward furious of the Scots' resistance threatened to invade Scotland.[27] John Baliol,

[23] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 12.
[24] Ibid., 15.
[25] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 114; Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 16.
[26] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 18.
[27] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 114.

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who became king based on primogeniture, eventually agreed to Edward's terms, but regardless tried to act as an independent monarch.[28]

Alexander III's death next to myth-reconstruction also emphasized the authority of both elite and popular culture. It defined a particular moment in late medieval Scotland when its constitutional structure was strongly visible. Kidd explains that the handling of the succession crisis resembled ancient Celtic customs of the seven earls whose participation in choosing the new king was mandatory, now six 'guardians' were selected to govern until the next king of Scotland was selected.[29] This ancient custom was crucial now in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century as we see that that roots in constitutionalist polity was cherished and in use. Kidd claims that this was further enhanced by the outbreak of the Wars of Scottish independence emerging from Edward's violation of his agreement with Baliol. In failing to keep English forces out of Scotland, Baliol fled to France, which led to the community taking the kingdom's government into their own hands in 1295-6.[30] Walton states that this war enabled the recognition of both William Wallace, a commoner who emerged as a leader and Robert Bruce the future king as well as emphasized unity amongst the nobility and the community. A war fought by both the low and noble classes indicated that late medieval Scots collectively distinguished themselves from invaders, especially but not only English. Moreover, Walton references the recent consensus of England's constant desire to conquer Scotland, in fact, amplified the development of Scotland to become a stand-alone political unit that defined itself as a nation.[31]

The presentation of *mythistoire* in contemporary literature has to start with Scotland's first humanist, Hector Boece (1465-1536) who according to Kidd, next to emphasizing the Greco-

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[28] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 16.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 114-115.

Egyptian myth of origin stressed morality. Noteworthy the work of John Major (1467-1550) who although disfavored English overlordship, rejected both myths of England and Scotland. Instead, Major supported the idea of union of the two kingdoms, for it was, according to him, the highlanders and Scottish nobility who disrupted the tranquility of the Isles. Even more relevant is the Scottish intellectual George Buchanan, who constructed his standpoint from both Boece and Major. Like Major, Buchanan dismissed the mythical aspects of Scottish origin but disagreed with his statement on the nobility. As for Boece, Buchanan agreed with the moral aspect.[32] Kidd adds that Buchanan's political thought utilized Scotland's long constitutional history (such as the Celtic customs mentioned above), which relied on the power of nobles whose help later was essential in Buchanan's agenda to forcefully abdicate Mary, based on her alleged moral and political tyranny. This *Buchananite* idea of monarchy, although was occasionally banned depending on the present monarch's political ideal, Kidd concludes that it was continuously favored by Presbyterians and 'whig' historians until the mid-eighteenth century.[33]

So far, it was visible that myths of Scottish origin were often developed as a response to English myths that claimed Scotland, through which Scotland utilized their long genealogy to demonstrate Scottish distinctiveness. It was also made evident by Kidd, that history in early modern Scotland was the main catalyst for communicating independence, pride, and authority of the people who protect the kingdom from tyranny even from their own monarch.[34] It was likewise also illustrated that England, in fact, by attempting to invade and conquer their Scottish neighbors only enhanced the Scots' convergence and the unification of the low born and the elite, which planted the seed of nationalism within the Scottish community. Although hostility towards the

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[32] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 18-19.
[33] Ibid., 20-21.
[34] Ibid., 27. Kidd refers to this as "history-as-ideology."

English did not disappear, Walton points out that religious struggle at the beginning of the sixteenth century altered Anglo-Scottish relations.[35]

Religious transformation and Protestant rational

Myths of origin were not the only factors that helped shaping Scottish belonging. The Reformation was likewise a significant event for it not only redefined what it meant to be a Scot but as Scottish historian Roger Mason states, it also enabled the reinterpretation of the Scottish past.[36] Aligning with Mason, Kidd further claims that the Reformation initiated a collective self-awareness on the British Isles, where the new faith acted as the revival of the original purity of both kingdom's churches – the *ecclesia anglicana* and the Celtic Church.[37] This is where the turning point happens between Scotland and England's relationship, as England broke with Rome three decades prior Scotland,[38] and English support in officializing Protestantism in Scotland created a bond between the two kingdoms who shared ancient origins in a more Protestant than Catholic Church as well as their desire to reinstate Christian purity.

Proto-Protestant and ancient roots of Christian purity

The reformed Church of England at the beginning of the sixteenth century as Kidd claims was based on the structure of ancient British churches, which lost Christian purity when Augustine introduced Roman doctrine to Britain.[39] Walton points out that the Scots had their own but similar religious origins, arguing that the Celtic Church was based on a Presbyterian-like polity which was again transformed by St. Andrew's arrival.[40] Religious rebellion was not an entirely new

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[35] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 117.
[36] Roger A. Mason, "Usable Past: History and Identity in Reformation Scotland," *The Scottish Historical Review*, Apr., 1997, Vol. 76, No. 201, Part 1: 'Writing Scotland's History': Proceedings of the 1996 Edinburgh Conference (Apr., 1997): 54.
[37] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 12, 14-15.
[38] Ibid., 21.
[39] Ibid., 13.
[40] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 120.

phenomena, as Kidd states that resisting papal control was already shown in Norman times.[41] Mason, to illustrate the same in the Scottish environment took it a step further by noting the presence of a proto-Protestant group in medieval Scotland who longed for the Reformation.[42] While England and Scotland shared similar religious origins different from the Catholic Church's structure, Walton emphasizes, when they were reformed, the two kingdom's churches differed. While the Elizabethan Settlement preserved episcopal governance, Scotland's was Presbyterian led by John Knox, integrating both low born and noble members.[43]

While the Reformation in Scotland was triggered by the rationale of unionism of the Isles and its spread was driven by such an ideology,[44] Kidd claims that reforming their own church was possible for Scotland as they did not lack resources. Instead, it was the result of Scotland's disadvantageous situation compared to England's advantage in breaking from Rome thirty years prior, which steered Scottish reformers towards unionism.[45] Walton also states that union with England was rooted in assisting Scotland in their religious cause,[46] which only strengthens Kidd's argument on the tactical nature of Scottish reformers' sudden favor toward England.[47] But even among Protestants there was a dispute on how reformed their church should be.

<u>Puritan thinking</u>

Patrick Collinson argues that there was no such as Protestant culture of its own but rather Protestantism that "[…] made an iconoclastic holocaust of the culture which already exited."[48] The Bible alone, according to Collinson can be considered as the 'culture of protestants,' as its

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[41] Kidd, "Prologue, national identity," 13.
[42] Mason, "Usable Past," 54.
[43] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 120.
[44] Kidd, "Usable Past 21; Walton, "Scottish Nationalism,"120.
[45] Kidd, "Usable Past," 22-23.
[46] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 120.
[47] Kidd, "Usable Past 21.
[48] Patrick Collinson, "Protestant culture and the cultural revolution," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 34.

teachings meant the only truth Protestants accepted and based their lives around, hence all non-biblical literature was incorrect in their eyes.[49] Protestant loyalties fully developed during the reign of Elizabeth I from late 1560s,[50] yet according to A. G. Dickens, it already spread to a significant part of England by 1553, where individuals possessing political power embraced it.[51] Perhaps due to the realization of the number of Catholic supporters during the Marian Counter-Reformation prior her accession, Elizabeth I formed a church that was outstanding amongst the reformed. Its difference in structure compared to Knoxian Presbyterianism was already mentioned, since Elizabeth, according to Peter White, attempted to create a Church of England satisfactory for both conservatives still loyal to Catholicism and for the "hottest sort of protestants"[52] as Collinson referred to the Puritans, leading to a *via media* settlement.[53] This was a top down structure with episcopal government and medieval element of worship combined with Protestant doctrine of grace (strong essence of Calvinism) an encouragement of reading the English Bible.[54]

Although Protestantism in England was a definite break from Rome starting in 1530 in the Henrician period, later the Elizabethan Settlement caused a further divide between Protestants. According to Margo Todd, up until 1640, Protestantism was divided between conformists who were satisfied with the Elizabethan *via media* and the Puritans who claimed it was not protestant or reformed enough. The latter lobbied for the elimination of all popish elements, and for a strict

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[49] Collinson, "Protestant culture," 35.

[50] Cristopher Haigh, "The recent historiography of the English Reformation," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 23.

[51] A.G. Dickens, "The early expansion of Protestantism in England 1520-1558," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 160.

[52] Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* Collinson (Oxford Scholarship Online: 1990), DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198222989.001.0001, 28.

[53] Peter White, "The *via media* in the early Stuart Church," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 80.

[54] Margo Todd, *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England,* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 33.

and highly controlled community.[55] Collinson further claimed that Puritanism was, in fact, not a separate group, but a branch that grew out of Protestantism as a response to semi-Catholic traditions that remained in the *via media*.[56] Peter Lake notes that although Puritanism experienced its heyday in early seventeenth century during Charles I, Elizabeth's reign produced a moderate sort of Puritans who later developed into the "hottest sort."[57] Although in Edwardian times before his exile, John Knox was a chief promoter of Puritanism in England, thus Puritan influence within the Presbyterian structure of the Church of Scotland Knox founded in 1560 was extremely unwelcoming for the Catholic Mary.

Mary, Queen of *Scots*?

When Mary arrived to Scotland in the summer of 1561, the turbulent circumstances of her travel from France, which was her home for twelve years, matched the nature of the young queen's reign-to-be in her motherland. Her foreign upbringing characterized Mary as the Frenchified Catholic amongst her Scottish subjects, who only a year previously rebelled against French control and officialized Protestantism without Mary's consent. This environment was significantly different compared to when the five-year-old Mary was sent to France to avoid her betrothal and at once Scotland's subordination to the future king of England. Scotland's subtle friendship with England could not be further from Mary's departure when the Scots "sacrificed" her to the French. To her confessional difference joined Mary's personal otherness. Her refinement acquired from French education stood out from the Scots who were often perceived as simple and robust.

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[55] Margo Todd, "Introduction," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England,* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.

[56] Collinson, "Protestant culture," 35.

[57] Peter Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* ed. Margo Todd (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 180.

Mary's far-reaching influence and the Scottish nobility

Compared to 1558 when Mary was celebrated as Queen of Scotland by her own birthright, Queen of France via her husband, Francis II, and the rightful heir of England as Mary Tudor's death caused the Succession Crisis. Many acknowledged Mary over Elizabeth Tudor, particularly the conservative Catholics, who saw a hope in Mary to reinstate Catholicism to England. Walton notes that ever since the death of Mary Tudor, Mary Stuart used the title and arms of England, by which she not only gave hope for English Catholics but Catholics on the Continent who refused to accept Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn, hence considered Elizabeth I illegitimate.[58] In 1560, however, Mary became a widow, which resulted in losing her title as Queen of France and with the succession of Elizabeth potentially her second title she was using unofficially as Queen of England. Mary was still Queen of Scots, the only secure title she had at this point. Her decade-long absence in Scotland, however, took its toll on Mary's seemingly certain status as the political and confessional arena altered.

While Mary's situation was complicated amongst the Scots, her impact and reign were still significant in shaping Scotland's relations for several reasons. As was already seen, the Scots valued royal genealogy, within which Mary fit not solely as the legitimate heir of James V but as part of the Stuart line consequent to the Bruces. While the suitability of women for rulership was popularly debated in mid-century, Walton notes that her right to the throne as a week-old queen was never doubted nor contested.[59] Although, Mary's reputation in Scotland was unsure upon her

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[58] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 164.

[59] Kristen Post Walton, "Introduction," in *Catholic Queen, Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion*, ed. by Kristen Walton Post (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 11.

unannounced arrival,[60] along with the surfacing power of the *noblesse de robe*, Walton notes that blood and longevity in royal ancestry was supreme.[61]

Although her birth was not significant as James V sought a male heir, his death at Solway Moss transformed Mary's status and placed both her and Scotland into a powerful position. Scotland prior Mary was perceived as a rather insignificant, distant kingdom, a minor player in the political games of Europe. As rapidly Mary's status changed as did Scotland's. Suddenly, Mary had a kingdom of her own, which made her the potential monarch who through her English marriage would unite the two kingdoms on the Isles. The Scots, however, still nurtured the idea of being independent from English rule, and Mary as their monarch embodied such an ideology. Her far-reaching influence beyond the Scottish kingdom, as Walton states, was the aspect that brought her immense potential in shaping political loyalty on a continental level,[62] but it was also the factor that triggered the ambitious nobility both Scottish and English to limit her authority and eventually cause her downfall.

Mary's religion at this moment in Scotland was perhaps the strongest factor that enhanced the development of Scottish sense of belonging. Walton states that before Mary's reign Scottish unity mainly meant being distinguished from the English,[63] as amongst the many foreign invaders who desired to conquer Scotland, they considered England their main and oldest enemy. However, this uniformity changed with the Reformation,[64] which caused a different type of alliance amongst the Scots other than being non-English. The new faith became integrated into Scottish oneness.

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[60] Kristen Post Walton, "Mary's return," in *Catholic Queen, Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion*, ed. by Kristen Walton Post (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 14.
[61] Walton, "Introduction," 4.
[62] Ibid., 2.
[63] Walton, "Scottish Nationalism," 118.
[64] Although its root lies with the Earl of Arran, regent of Scotland after Mary's ascendence, who turned the government pro-English), see *ibid*.

Protestantism as a Scottish sense of belonging posed a challenging environment for the Catholic Mary, but it was perhaps more significant for the Protestant Scots who began to wonder if their views could align with the queen's conservative beliefs.

<u>Confessional difference</u>

Only a year prior, the Scots succeeded in weakening French and Catholic control over Scotland, thus the return of the likewise Catholic Mary, despite the joy of the remaining Catholics on the Isles, raised doubts as Mary was potentially viewed as the revival of Catholicism and French tyranny. Once again, we may refer to Roger Mason's statement regarding the importance of the Reformation for it redefined Scottish belonging, as they were trying to create a stronger bond within their community by not only believing in their monarch but in God, which would make them distinguished from other communities. Scottish nobles made Protestantism the official religion in 1560 and embraced the preaching of John Knox who returned from his Genevan exile heavily influenced by Calvinism. This created an environment where Mary was the only one person who was allowed to listen to Catholic mass,[65] while her Scottish subjects followed the new faith by law made by the nobility.

Although much more characteristic of Mary to embrace Catholic symbols especially during her English captivity while she still attempted to express herself as the true Catholic monarch, and upon her execution when she emerged as a Catholic martyr (subtopic of Chapter 3); her faith was documented through her early depictions at French court. An eminent example of showcasing her religious beliefs in her girlhood are the various seals and signet rings that were likely struck with the silver medal, attributed to Guillaume Martin, commemorating Mary and the dauphin's marriage in 1558 (Figure 1). Christ on the cross occupies the central topic on every insignia

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[65] Walton, "Introduction," 12.

emphasizing Catholic elements as Mary was a devoted believer, which she projected of herself through ordinary items. These seals, however, shown on John West's engraving, are more than simple items. Valentin Groebner notes that although an obvious function of seals would be to secure letters and protect their content, their prior purpose was to make their owner most noticeable.[66] Therefore, these objects not only reflect Mary's faith but convey a political message of Catholicism, as it was important to position her as a Catholic monarch for future endeavors when practicing her triple sovereignty.

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[66] Valentin Groebner, "Letters and their bearers" in *Who are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*, translated by Mark Kyburz and John Peck (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 157.
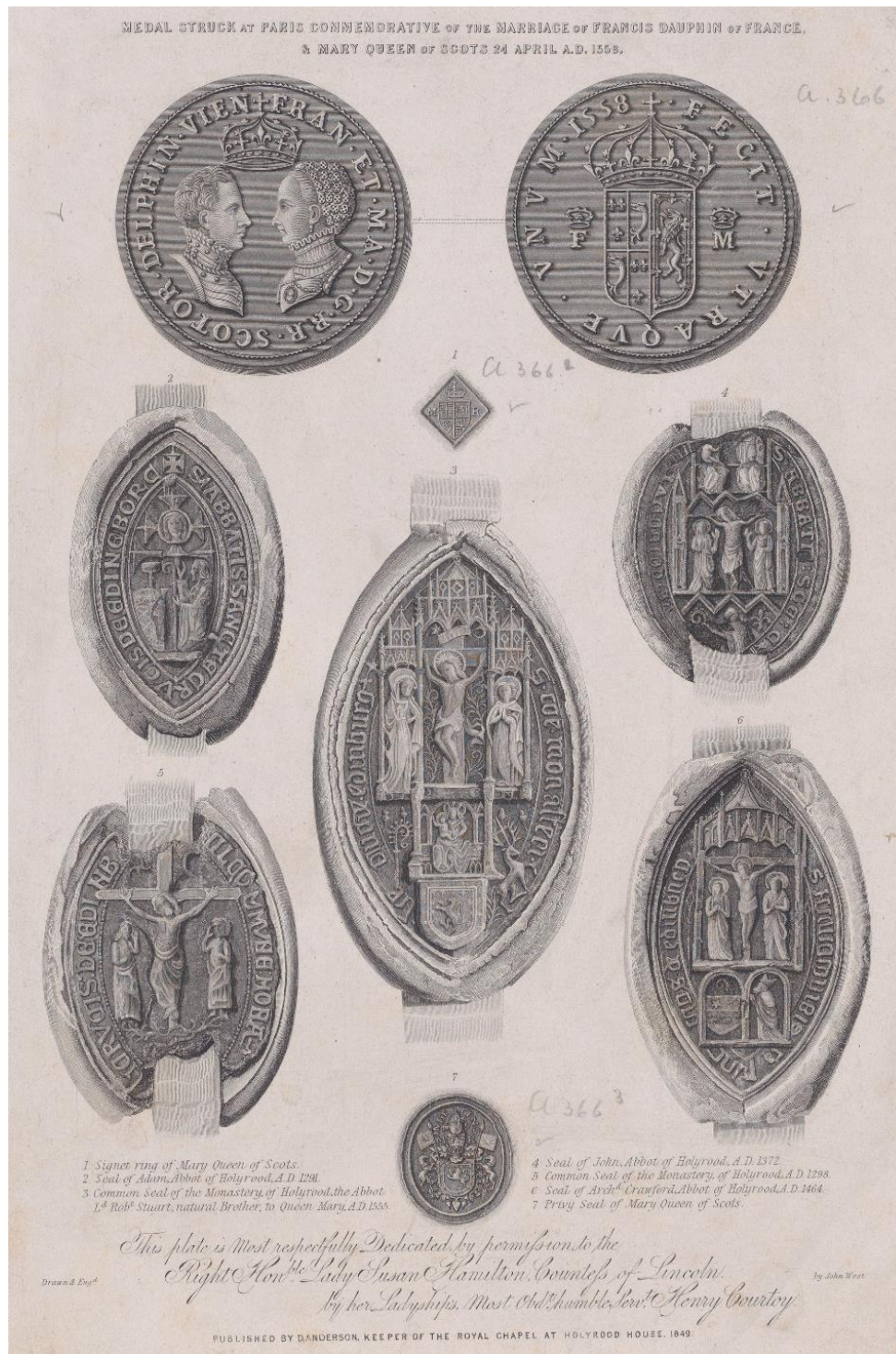
Figure 1 John West, Bridal medal, seals and signet rings relating to Queen Mary, 1558, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<u>Personal otherness</u>

Assuming that a kingdom's leader reflects the kingdom's people would be certainly false in the case of the Scots and Mary. As was demonstrated a religious difference was apparent between the Catholic queen and the Protestant Scots, but there was a further gap. The Scots developed a determination, passion in patriarchism from their extensive history in resisting to succumb themselves and their kingdom to foreign forces. They exemplified masculine traits, perceived as robust and unpolished, where Mary with her refinement and exceptional beauty caused the development of an ambivalent relationship between Mary and her subjects, who vacillated between her acceptance as Scottish queen and an unsuitable monarch.

Andrew Lang, an expert in the authentic portraits of Mary explains that her beauty was well-discussed and praised throughout Europe, as much as even her rivals, like John Knox and her cousin Elizabeth I recognized it.[67] This feature radiates from the early crayon sketches made by French court painter, Francois Clouet. Although they are somewhat less discussed, Lang states that these early sketches are the most authentic portraits of Mary since the facial characteristics – the

Figure 3 Francois Clouet, *Mary, Queen of Scotland*, 1552, Musee Conde, Chantilly.

Figure 2 Francois Clouet, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, 1558-9, National Portrait Gallery, London.

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[67] Andrew Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels of Mary Stuart." *The Scottish Historical Review* 3, no. 10 (1906): 113.

long and narrow eyes and especially the low and straight nose – appear in every authentic portrait of Mary in her later life.[68] The earliest existing sketch of Mary is the red and black chalk piece, titled *Mary, Queen of Scotland, at the age of nine years and six months, in the month of July 1552* (Figure 2), commissioned by her future mother-in-law Catherine de' Medici. The colored crayon drawing *Mary, Queen of Scots* (Figure 3) created six years later confirms the same characteristics. Such portraits acted as "identifying" factors themselves in early modern Europe, but Mary's depiction in an elegant dress and jewels are also important distinctive factors following the example of the above-mentioned seals. According to Groebner, materiality was an indispensable part of creating one's "identity." Clothes for instance were significant in serving an official description of a person.[69] Jewels too, played an important role in identifying Mary's persona, most visible in Lang's monograph,[70] in which he approached the identification of Mary's authentic images by comparing the jewels sketched or painted in detail with the jewels in her inventory. For the young queen' s overall reflection of refinement, beauty and Catholic faith, material aid was well-used and a key component evident through her early depictions.

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[68] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 138.
[69] Valentin Groebner, "Preface," in *Who are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe,* translated by Mark Kyburz and John Peck (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 11.
[70] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 129- 156.

Figure 4 Francois Clouet, *Uffizii miniature*, c. 1558, Uffizii Galley, Florence.

The ambivalent relationship between Mary and the Scots started when Mary was sent to France. Separated from her kingdom, Walton reveals that at Henry II's court, Mary was educated to be a French princess and future Queen of France rather than the Queen of Scots.[71] Meanwhile her mother, Marie de Guise, confident in Mary's marriage to Francis, worsened the situation in Scotland by turning against Protestants, hence the kingdom by Mary's return was hostile to the French.[72] Mary's return was, therefore feared to revive French influence.

Although it is important noting that Mary's royal portrayals were generally titled as "Queen of Scotland" perhaps to indicate her sovereignty of her own right, Mary's character as a French princess and her integration into the Valois family is fully detectable through visual depictions. A superb example is the *Uffizii miniature* (Figure 4) painted by Clouet, representing Henry II of

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[71] Walton, "Mary's return," 27-28.
[72] Ibid., 20.

Valois and Catherine de' Medici's family. Mary is shown next to Francis as Dauphine of France (upper left corner).[73]

Mary's French marriage, like her Catholic faith is a recurring topic in her visual portrayal as it was a significant moment for Catholic Europe. Another miniature from the same period titled *Mary, Queen of Scots* (Figure 5), also known as the Melville portrait likewise by the hand of Clouet, is eminent in symbolizing Mary's engagement to Francis and its political significance. According to Lang the miniature might have had an additional purpose and was send to Queen Elizabeth to reduce her jealousy for the attractiveness of her cousin, thus allegedly Mary was depicted more as a diplomat rather than her usual portrayal as a beautiful young queen.[74] As Mary's

Figure 5 Francois Clouet, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, c.1558,
Royal Collection Trust, London.

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[73] Andrew Lang, "Portraits of Mary Stuart." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 10, no. 45 (1906): 184.
[74] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 138-139.

French marriage was in the same year as Elizabeth's ascendance to the English throne in 1558, it also might be the case that, next to the threat Mary posed in the English Succession Crisis, her marriage and potential heirs were a further threat to Elizabeth who has not secured Tudor succession yet. Regardless of the miniature's function, the celebratory nature of Mary's integration to the French royal family and her engagement to Francis along with her foreign upbringing, perhaps explain Mary being viewed more French than Scottish.[75]

To Mary's femininity and her being viewed as a Frenchified Catholic joined her personality. Unlike her sister queen, Elizabeth, Mary somewhat perhaps failed in immediately asserting herself to the ruling position. This came as an opportunity for the power-hungry nobility, who were not only used to having authority in governmental affairs but were eager to keep their posts. While Mary was the acknowledged monarch of Scotland, the nobility by mid-century acquired an extensive level of power and authority, which made the queen the governing monarch only symbolically. Walton states that several generations of minor heirs starting in the fifteenth century enhanced the freedom, ambition and power of Scottish lords who established a governmental structure, which enabled successful operations without the monarch's intervention and even presence. The medieval structure was preserved which as demonstrated in the first part was based on personal contacts between people and monarch. Such a constitutionalist attitude of the lords was strengthened by their belief that by Marie de Guise, regent of Scotland's death they were to take government into their hands as it was customary.[76] When Mary returned to rule in her own name, the nobles became concerned for their positions. According to Walton, the question at

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[75] Walton, "Mary's return," 24.
[76] Ibid., 16-17.

that moment was how will they keep their positions, authority and religion with the presence of the queen. Resulting from this, Mary's reign and religion was closely controlled.[77]

According to Walton, Mary failed in asserting herself at the beginning of her reign in Scotland, which resulted in a polity that was not much different from the government before her or during her minority.[78] Mary's desire to acquire the English crown was perhaps the reason for her disinterest, Walton points out, this is reflected in the first years of her reign in Scotland as she occupied herself with obtaining her place in England.[79] The further fact that she did not question the Reformation Parliament and its decision without her ratification even strengthened the nobility's authority compared to hers.[80] Mary's interest in other matters, therefore simplified the Scottish lords' case as they deliberately limited her authority building on her foreignness, lack of ambition, perhaps her young age and lack of experience as an independent ruler. Their success can be found in Mary's inability to create her own voice and assertion within the new environment of Scottish constitutionalist government.

This chapter illustrated that the Scots developed a shared bond of political loyalty sourcing in antiquity to which in the sixteenth century an alliance by religion has joined. This resulted in a political, cultural and confessional environment in which their own queen failed to fit in. When at last, Mary returned to begin her individual reign, it coincided with the spread of Protestantism and hostility towards France which was incredibly inconvenient for the Catholic and mainly French Mary, whose lack of knowledge about her kingdom and its customs along with her lack of ambition opposed to the nobles left her little chance for success. Walton claimed that for Mary faced such overwhelming barriers, to which her sex was added as further strike against her, she became part

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[77] Walton, "Mary's return," 15.
[78] Ibid., 47.
[79] Ibid., 47-48.
[80] Ibid., 47.

of a debate[81] - although not always directly – present since a century but reached its peak during

Mary's time as the number of ruling female monarchs was also blooming.

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[81] Walton, "intro," 4.

Chapter 2: Polemical Representation of Sixteenth-Century Queenship

The previous chapter demonstrated Mary's struggle to fit into the harsh and to her odd cultural environment of Scotland. As Protestantism increasingly carved itself deeper into the core of the kingdom, Mary's confessional otherness was obvious, triggering a patriotic enthusiasm towards a governmental polity, which Mary's overall persona could not complement. As women's capabilities were simultaneously debated throughout the sixteenth century, her sex intersected with the confessional and cultural strikes against her. This chapter aims to provide an analysis based on a close reading of two polemical texts examining arguments against female authority from different perspectives both religious and secular. Such a close reading of the tracts reflects contemporary ideological conditions, according to which women were incapable for government both by natural and divine law. Written approximately a decade apart, both John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* and George Buchanan's *De Maria Scotorum regina* represent a high mark within anti-female publications. The timing of Knox and Buchanan's publications along with their personal and political motivations played an essential role in their significance – the *Blast* by being the climax of the anti-Marian polemics and the *Detection* by its absolute influence on Mary Stuart's defamation. While the two tracts have not been explicitly analyzed together and did not receive universal agreement of their theses, both amplified Protestant and patriotic purposes, essentially indicating the presupposed ill nature of women, upon which their exclusion from both the political and public scene was based.

Early models of femininity

The unusually high number of female monarchs exercising power in various parts of sixteenth-century Europe[82] contributed to the formulation of a humanist debate on sexual equality,

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[82] For instance: Catherine de' Medici, Mary Tudor, Marie de Guise, Elizabeth Tudor, Christina of Denmark, Margaret of Austria, Anne of Bohemia and Hungary to mention a few.

and on the capabilities, nature, role and place of women in society.[83] This debate was not an entirely new phenomenon, as already in Aristotelian times women's capabilities were the subject of discussions. The sixteenth-century debates, American historian Joan Kelly claims, were the continuation of the late medieval dispute of women, first discussed in the 1400s as a reaction to the emergence of the secular state and its consequences to the status of women.[84] Feeling repressed, women, most significantly the Italian poet, Christine de Pisan (1364-c.1430) asserted her voice on this issue, which triggered the 400-year-old debate known as the *Querelle des Femmes*. Kelly also states that it would be incorrect to assume the absence of female contribution in the Renaissance due to the absence of women's movement. Although proto-feminist works written by women existed, they rarely appeared in contemporary literature, thus pro-female message was forced to be transmitted through men at the time, particularly in England and France.[85]

Sixteenth-century contributions on the physical and mental capabilities of women included many aspects, namely the nature of education women might receive, their roles within the household and society but most prominent to our purpose are the discussions on women's suitability as heads of government, which was a specifically blooming topic amongst English humanists. Most humanist treatises aim to prove women's ability to embody the four cardinal virtues, notes literary scholar Constance Jordan, with an egalitarian perspective of the two sexes that is rather attentive to the secular prospect of women's daily lives.[86] Such tracts are usually visible in three categories: defense of the female sex, roles in marriage, and the nature of education. A key, yet atypical – since it discusses all three categories – contribution on women's suitability

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[83] Patricia-Ann Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe: Aylmer, Knox and the Debate on Queenship." *The Historian* 52, no. 2 (1990): 242.
[84] Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the 'Querelle Des Femmes', 1400-1789," *Signs* 8, no. 1 (1982): 5.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Constance Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists: The Case of Sir Thomas Elyot's Defence of Good Women." *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1983): 181-182.

for rulership was written by Henry Tudor's courtier, Sir Thomas Elyot (c.1496-1546) in 1540, titled the *Defence of Good Women*. Written in a dialogue with an apologetic purpose, the treatise was dedicated to Anne of Cleves, fourth wife of Henry VIII. Elyot's anti-Aristotelian *Defence* argued against female inferiority based on historical experience which used Zenobia, Queen of Syria's character to demonstrate a woman who, was at once a successful queen, wife and an intellectual.[87]

Elyot's *Defence* was partly an answer to his fellow humanist scholar, the Spanish Juan Luis Vives's (1493-1540) tract, *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* written in 1523 and translated to English in 1540. Dedicated to Catherine of Aragon, it offered an education model for her daughter, Mary Tudor. At the first sight, notes Gloria Kaufman, Vives's work might seem pro-female which claimed that all women deserve education.[88] A closer examination of the entire content, however, reveals that it better illustrated the appropriate attitudes of a Christian woman rather than the type of education women should receive. While Vives emphasized the importance of education he did not address the capabilities of women. Therefore, Vives is a middle-ground humanist who, while expressing sympathy towards the female sex, also set boundaries. Unbale to escape Aristotelian anti-female thinking, he concluded that women should not teach or have authority over men, an argument rooted in the original sin and its consequences assigned by God.[89] Though without such a dichotomy, much resemblance to this will be discovered in John Knox's treatise.

A clear definition of pro-female theories was not an easy task in the sixteenth century. Kaufman claims that the detected ambiguity in Vives's *Instruction* was not unusual in the period.[90]

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[87] Jorda, "Feminism and the Humanists," 181-185.
[88] Gloria Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women," *Signs*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Summer, 1978): 893.
[89] Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives," 893-896.
[90] Ibid., 896.

In this sense, as Jordan states, Elyot's *Defence* was unique, since one of his characters (Caninius) was inspired by Aristotle whose views were challenged and renounced in the dialogue, which demonstrated Elyot's motivation to confront the philosopher on women's capabilities.[91] But as literary scholar Zsolt Almási pointed out, as much as Elyot positioned the dialog to be pro-female, in it, discourses on women were done by men without women's presence, and Zenobia only joined the conversation when allowed and for as long as it was permitted to her by Elyot himself.[92] Elyot and Vives's publications though ambivalent, they represent the logic and reflection on women on the dawn of the century, which certainly prepared the intellectual ground for John Knox and George Buchanan's treatises written some decades later.[93]

Knox and Buchanan on female authority

Let us now turn to the two key figures, Knox and Buchanan's general perspectives on the female sex and their argumentation on women's suitability for rulership. Although the Scottish preacher, John Knox was exiled from his homeland during the regency of Marie de Guise, he settled in England where his Protestant views fit and were embraced by its society. Not expecting the reinstatement of the Catholic regime, Knox fled to the continent in 1554. His eventual relocation to Geneva, according to Robert M. Healey, where he spent about a year with a group of Marian exiles created the circumstances where Knox started exploring the question of female

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[91] Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists," 188.

[92] Zsolt Almási, "Az irodalom határvidékein. Bölcsészeti próza," In *Az Angol Irodalom Története* ed. Bényei Tamás and Kállay Géza (Budapest: Kijárat Kiadó, 2020), 233.

[93] Vives and Elyot were not the only early humanist contributors. See further, for instance: Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *De nobilitate et praecellentia sexus foeminei* (1529); Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528). Thomas More's name should be mentioned, whose work highly influenced pro-female notions by mid-sixteenth century. For an in-depth analysis of fifteenth and sixteenth-century humanist debate on the *querelle des femmes* see Gisela Bock, *Women in European History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Paula Louise Scalingi, "The Scepter or the Distaff: the Question of Female Sovereignty, 1516-1607," *The Historian* 41 (November 1978): 59-75.

rulership, which eventually resulted in composing *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* specifically targeting Catholic rulers.[94]

While Knox's tract was not directed at Mary Stuart specifically, the Scottish humanist George Buchanan's *De Maria Scotorum regina*[95] was published with a pro-English purpose to defame the Scottish queen's reputation on the continental level and to justify her deposition. Interestingly, like Knox's *Blast*, Buchanan's *Detection* was written in Latin already in 1568 as an assembly of evidence against Mary but was only published in 1571. According to Trica A. McElroy, a committee held a hearing at Westminster already in 1568, where Mary's fate was discussed, and based on the evidence provided by the Scottish lords Buchanan's *Detection* was born.[96] After the hearing, the tract, however, remained with William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief advisor until the Ridolfi plot in 1571, which was allegedly an attempt to replace Elizabeth with Mary. While Elizabeth was generally against the publication of defamatory materials against her cousin, Mary, this plot forced her to act otherwise, thus the *Detection* this time appeared in print.[97]

Although both authors essentially argue for women's unsuitability for government, Buchanan and Knox's narratives relied on different strategies. According to Kristen Walton, the debate on female government evolved around two distinct categories, concerning natural and divine law.[98] Those who based their theories on the law of nature argued that women's incapability

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[94] John Knox and Robert M. Healey, "Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer, 1994): 372.
Knox identified himself with prophets and found that his duty was to spread the word of God, hence the trumpet. The "monstruous regiment of women" here means, the unnatural rule of women. Further in the essay the title will be used in its condensed version: *First Blast*.
[95] English title: "*A detection of the actions of Mary Queen of Scots concerning the murther of her husband, and her conspiracy, adultery, and pretended marriage with the Earl Bothwell and a defence of the true Lords, maintainers of the King's Majesties action and authority.*" The treatise will be referred to as *Detection* from this point on.
[96] Tricia A. McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics in George Buchanan's Ane Detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes." In *George Buchanan. Political Thought in Early Modern Britain and Europe* ed. Caroline Erskine and Roger A. Mason (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 51-52.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Walton, "Mary's return," 26.

to govern lies in their inability to do so, where those who relied on divine law stated that female authority is forbidden by the laws of God.[99] While a mixture of both categories is present in Buchanan's *Detection* and Knox's *Blast*, they likewise put more emphasis on one perspective over the other. By juxtaposing the two, it is clear that Knox's main issue with queenship is rooted at God's will and the natural order of things, where women were subordinated to men in addition to the allegedly sinful nature of the female sex. Buchanan, on the other hand, specifically disapproved of Mary's reign, chiefly on moral grounds due to her inappropriate decision-making and assumption of unlimited power, occasionally supplemented with the negative association of her sex.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Reformation brought great changes to Scotland, most importantly religion became integrated into Scottish unity. Protestant rationale therefore influenced the views of female authority especially on the Isles. Thus, Walton points out that the trumpeters' arguments were constructed from a combination of religious and secular aspects of patriotism.[100] While both Knox and Buchanan's perspectives were naturally anti-female, their opinions were equally shaped by a mixture of contemporary strict Protestant ethics, Calvinist dogma, and strong dedication for a political ideal that emphasized civic virtue, where a clear cut between being a Catholic and being a woman cannot be made. Having such a vision implied a body politic where Mary and her fellow sixteenth-century female monarchs in general did not fit. To argue against them, rhetoric was an obvious tool not only to influence the reader's personal beliefs but to trigger a direct effect on the formation of governmental policies.

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[99] Walton, "Mary's return," 26.
[100] Ibid., 25-26.

Knox against female rulership

"[…] she may never rule nor bear empire above man."[101] Such an opinion was not uncommon amongst men in the sixteenth century. While many agreed that women's government is unnatural, most of the society also accepted the legitimacy of female monarchs if both traditional state custom and the public approved their reigns – but not John Knox. His infamous treatise, the *First Blast* centers on such a discourse. Fueled by anger towards the Catholic rulers who forced him to exile intended not only to write one but three blasts.[102] In the first, he claimed that rule by women is unnatural based on divine ordinance. A postscript from 1558 indicated Knox's intentions for the *Second Blast*. Dedicated to his opposers, he planned to argue against tyrannous rulers regardless of sex, stating that birthright is not sufficient enough, God's law on order has to be detected in the ruler.[103] This *Second* and the unknown agenda of the *Third Blast*, however, was never written.

After formulating his treatise for four years, Knox finally – although anonymously – published the *Blast* in 1558. Although it addressed women's abilities in general, it targeted three contemporary female monarchs whose Catholic regime Knox wished to overthrow. To Marie de Guise the queen regent of Scotland since 1554, who ruled Knox's homeland in the name of her infant daughter and later queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart. Knox also dedicated his prophetic trumpet to the infamous Queen Mother of France, Catherine de' Medici, although he omitted analyzing her persona in detail. The most direct target, however, is Mary Tudor. The *Blast* was heavily imbued with the religious aspect of Knox's argument. In it, he identified three reasons

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[101] John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558), 16. Direct quotations will appear in modernized spelling throughout the essay.
[102] Ibid., 8.
[103] Edward Arber, *John Knox: The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women, 1558*. (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895), 55-56.

based on which female rulership should not be permitted. First off, he argued that government by women or a woman is "repugnant" (disgusting) to nature, supplementing this argument with multiple examples of failed female authority. Secondly his argument goes back to the original sin and Eve, it is that female rulership is the opposite of God's will, because God punished women and subordinated them to men. Finally, the last reason was female authority being the opposite of good order, good equality, and good justice. From this point Knox extracted the conclusion that God not only created an order in nature, but he created one in the politic and the civil body of the commonwealth, where again men enjoyed dominion.[104] His conclusion is rather ambitious by using a biblical metaphor, which also qualified as an indirect suggestion to the English nobility to remove Mary Tudor, violently if needed.[105]

His perspective on women and female rulership, were not new to sixteenth-century society. According to Kelly, what is visible in Knox's polemic is a subordination and domestic nature of women which emerged with the formation of the modern state determining the practicality of women's day-to-day lives and lack of activity outside the household.[106] Such a change in state system particularly affected aristocratic women who previously had at least some power and political influence. Additionally, the formation of the patriarchal household starting in the fifteenth century, and the introduction of the head of the household, who were always men undermined female authority and placed women under patriarchal power both in their private and public lives.[107] According to such generally accepted male superiority, Lee states that men had the right

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[104] Knox, *The Fist Blast*, 9-39. Knox states that his interest is not to gather evidence to prove the three reasons. Instead, he will write down his thoughts plainly on God's order of nature stated by him and ancient writers (see p.9).
[105] Ibid., 53.
[106] Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory," 23.
[107] Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory," 23.

to rule not only over estates but in marriage and within their households.[108] This automatically assumed female subordination, which deprived women from practicing authority within society.[109]

Jordan emphasizes that the notion of the inferiority of women, in fact, has a much longer foundation, which again can be traced back to Aristotle, who for instance in *The Generation of Animals* stated that women were the results of nature's occasional malfunctioning, as a female child was a deformed "deviation" from the original male human norm.[110] From such a perspective, further conclusions can be drawn on how women were viewed in terms of their virtue or the absence of it, which made their roles within or outside society another popular topic in the debate. While such ideologies were maintained, the sixteenth century simultaneously produced several female monarchs exercising power in various parts of Europe.[111] for Knox, seeing women who did not mean to have any direct authority (according to him) were now heads of government ruling over men might have indicated as if the world has turned upside-down. Knox potentially saw this converse phenomenon as if the world were overwhelmed with sin and felt it his duty to preach against it. His timing was inconvenient however, as his publication coincided with the succession of the Protestant Elizabeth, which undermined his initial strategy of targeting Catholic regimes.

Contemporary reactions to the *First Blast*

The Protestant exiles in Geneva were not particularly enthusiastic about Knox's publication due to their (partial) disagreements of the *Blast*'s content and its unfortunate timing. In 1559, Elizabeth Tudor, the Protestant queen succeeded the English throne, who according to Lee, was offended by Knox's verbal attack against female monarchs.[112] With the regime change, a group of

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[108] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 242-243.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists," 186.
[111] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 243.
[112] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 258.

Marian exiles wished to reconcile with the new queen and to gain permission to return to the Isles. This plan, however, was jeopardized with Knox's publication, thus contemporary opinions on the *First Blast* seemed to be based on and shaped by personal tactics and positioning and less on its content. Exiles who yearned for their return to England naturally disapproved of Knox's views to position themselves favorably in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth.[113] But others disapproved the *Blast* claiming counter-examples of successful and rightful authority of women.

Despite of its controversial content or precisely because of it, the *First Blast* was widely read amongst (but not only) Protestants. Although his publication on ordinance and female authority was not the first nor the only one in the period, Lee notes, that perhaps the English clergymen and likewise Marian exile, Christopher Goodman was the only one in Geneva who fully agreed with Knox's ideas.[114] Goodman himself wrote a similar treatise shortly prior to the *Blast* called *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyd*, in which although he did not address female rulership directly, he encouraged Mary Tudor's removal based on her actions rather than her lacking the right to rule.[115] Another English Protestant churchman, John Ponet during his exile published on this topic already in Strasbourg in 1556. The *First Blast*'s resemblance with Ponet's *Short Treatise of Political Power* tackled the God-created natural order and women's obedience, which too naturally disapproved the Marian government. Such polemics published immediately prior the appearance of the *First Blast* certainly influenced its reception.[116] The ongoing provocation of the Marian government overly escalated and likely reached its zenith with the

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[113] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 246.
[114] Ibid., 250.
[115] Ibid., 249-250. Goodman too, considered female rulers to be monsters in nature.
[116] Ibid.

publication of the extremely vocal *Blast*. Its significance is precisely it being the climax of anti-female polemics.

There was a certain group amongst the exiles who partially agreed with Knox. During Knox's exile in Geneva in 1554, Lee states that he asked the Swiss Heinrich Bullinger and the French John Calvin, two key figures of the Protestant Reformation for their thoughts on queenship.[117] Both shared Knox's views that according to God's order, women cannot rule but they arrived at different conclusions. Bullinger and Calvin both argued that if the law permits and accepts women for government and their inheritance to rule in a given kingdom, then it is not a rebellion against God. While both disapproved of Mary Tudor's reign they claimed that it was not reason enough for rebellion. Calvin emphasized two biblical figures Deborah and Huldah, who were successful leaders to further oppose Knox's perspective. Bullinger also elaborated that if the queen was truly tyrannous, then God would terminate her reign in his own time with his appointed representatives, following the example of the biblical character of Athaliah, who was deposed and murdered.[118] In addition to Calvin and Bullinger, the English historian, John Foxe after reading a copy of *The First Blast*, likewise acknowledged God's natural order but disagreed with Knox's conclusion and disapproved Knox's rhetoric and style of presentation in the polemic.[119]

Publications like those of Knox, Goodman and Ponet worried the group who wanted to avoid angering the new queen, Elizabeth.[120] Amongst these was the French reformer, Theodore Beza, who argued that the group suffered and had been prevented to achieve reconciliation with Elizabeth because of such publications.[121] The English exile and later bishop of London, John

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[117] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 244
[118] Ibid.; Healey, "Waiting for Deborah," 372-373.
[119] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 245.
[120] Ibid., 249-50.
[121] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 259.

Aylmer, is an important figure, given that Aylmer was the first and only one amongst Knox's contemporaries who responded to the *First Blast* in writing.[122] His response was published a year later, in 1559 in London titled *An harborovve for faithfull and trevve subiectes*.[123] In order to defend the rule of Elizabeth and female monarchs in general, Aylmer formulated his argument around three points: the succession expresses God's will; according to English legal and traditional framework under which Elizabeth gained her queenship and continues her authority is permitted; Elizabeth has special qualities to hold her position as a monarch. Like Knox, Aylmer disliked the reign of Mary Tudor, but he challenged Knox on his conclusion, according to which, based on one case, all female monarchs must be condemned. While Knox positioned the Bible as having absolute superiority, Aylmer argued that state law and customs are equally important when considering female monarchs' legitimacy. Because inheritance is linked to such laws, Elizabeth was a legitimate ruler. Aylmer further stated that if women lack skills to perform successful government, it is because of the gaps in their education rather than due to their nature, as Knox argued.[124] While Knox viewed female authority as the opposite of natural order, Aylmer saw it as acceptable and approved by God,[125] his response remained the main answer to the *Blast* as it remained the main apologetic tract towards the legitimacy of female government immediate to Knox's attack.

According to the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC) its printers, Antoine Rebul and Pierre Jackques Poullain printed thirteen copies of the *First Blast*.[126] Around its publication, the same press printed discussions of idolatry and the Christian faith, the French version of the Bible,

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[122] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 245.
[123] Ibid., 245-246.
[124] Ibid., 250.
[125] Ibid., 254.
[126] See the USTC entry on https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/450272

psalms especially popular were David's, the New Testament, and the French translation of Martin

Luther's *Traite tres excellent de la liberite christienne*. Other publications in Geneva between 1557

and 1559 include texts on prophets mainly by Heinrich Bullinger, John Calvin, and Martin Luther,

as well as texts on the purgatory, antichrist, apocalypse, and Saint Paul. Knox in the *Blast*

referenced most of these topics especially, David and Saint Paul's teachings, as well as idolatry

and the antichrist (as according to Mason, Knox was certain that the biblical Revelation was

close)[127] were a frequent touchpoint for the Scottish theologian. The fact that Knox identified

himself with prophets further illustrates his polemic's fit within the range of subjects not only

Rebul and Poullain but Geneva in general was publishing at the time.[128]

Buchanan's defamatory propaganda

The *Detection* was published in London circa 1571, approximately thirteen years after

Knox's polemic, and like the *Blast* it represented the most prominent voice amongst contemporary

anti-female publications. While the *Blast* was a general attack against female monarchs based on

the example of Mary Tudor's reign, Buchanan's *Detection* was specifically directed at Mary

Stuart. According to Cathy Shrank, it can be characterized as the pillar of the anti-Marian literature,

which became the primary source of molding the picture of Mary as a conspiring, immoral,

tyrannous criminal, who even ridiculed Scottish law.[129] The polemic was a direct response to the

so-called Ridolfi plot taking place earlier in the year, attempting the assassination of Elizabeth I

and the marriage of the already-captive Mary and the Duke of Norfolk taking the English throne.

Thus, the *Detection* was born with an explicit political agenda already in 1568, which was kept

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[127] Mason, "Usable past," 60.
[128] See further on Genevan publications around this period Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, and Alexander Wilkinson, *Books Published in the French Language before 1601* (Brill, 2007).
[129] Cathy Shrank, "This fatall Medea," "this Clytemnestra": Reading and the Detection of Mary Queen of Scots," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (September 2010): 526.

until this provocative moment and was published with the purpose of altogether ruining Mary's reputation. Through the publication of Buchanan's polemic English authorities, namely William Cecil Elizabeth I's chief advisor aimed to eradicate the continuous threat Mary's sole existence and claim to the English throne posed to Protestant politics and to Elizabeth herself.[130]

The treatise aimed to explore Mary's alienation from her husband and the core of the hatred she nurtured for Darnley to show the extreme immorality of the newly arrived queen. To achieve this purpose, the treatise was strategically divided into two parts. In the first Buchanan described in microscopic detail the background of Mary's hostility to Darnley and carefully traced the queen's earliest negative attributes until her conspiracy with James Hepburn, Fourth Earl of Bothwell with whom she allegedly master-minded and executed the regicide. Buchanan set up a chronological order of events from Mary's adulterous relationship with Bothwell, through the multiple plots against Darnley's life and Bothwell's investigation and acquittal of the said murder, until his flight to Denmark and Mary's forced abdication and English captivity. This was followed by a second part, where Buchanan attached several letters – some versions of the infamous Casket Letters[131]– which he showcased as proof of evidence for all actions he previously accused Mary of. Structuring his argument in such a manner was by no means accidental. Buchanan deliberately painted a foul picture of Mary's persona as a guilty, foolish, irrational woman, who is incapable of self-control, by which he intended to convince the reader that such a loose-living woman is not able to govern. Such a standpoint is in dialogue with Knox's beliefs discussed previously. Its structure likewise implied a previously employed strategy. The early introduction of positive and

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[130] Shrank, "This fatall Medea," 526-527.
[131] The Casket Letters were eight letters and a number of sonnets discovered in Holyrood in 1567, allegedly written by Mary to Bothwell. Found in a silver casket, they were used by the Scottish lords as evidence against Mary's conspiracy in her husband's murder. The letters' authenticity remains subject to debate.

negative characters, like in Elyot's *Defence* Buchanan, too limited the horizon of interpretations,[132] depicting Mary as the absolute antagonist.

Buchanan observes that Mary's irrational actions started with non-violent wrongdoings, in the form of subtle negligence evident in depriving the king of most of his servants, funds, goods, and proper household. This was followed by planting the seed of hatred between Darnley and the Scottish nobility, in hoping to initiate conflict between the two, without fearing the well-being of her half-brothers.[133] Her "unappeasable hatred"[134] escalated to such an extent that Mary attempted to poison her husband while he was lodged in a distant, inappropriate, and half-ruined house, which in itself as per Buchanan, was an insult. Darnley's miraculous recovery, however, required more direct action.[135] This plot, although following the example of the previously ineffective attempts, regardless of its initial failure was the ultimate one. Buchanan argues that Bothwell was accountable for preparing the perfect circumstances to execute the plot. By being the master-mind behind it, Buchanan intentionally illustrated the allegedly hidden yet true personality of Mary.[136] When the already half-ruined house blew up, it was found that Darnley unexpectedly was able to escape in haste, since his half-naked body was found unharmed by the explosion but nevertheless lifeless.[137] The murder of the king is a turning point in Mary's reputation, since her involvement due greatly to the publication of the *Detection* was assumed and consequently both the nobility and the Scottish people lost respect towards their monarch.

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[132] Almási, "Az irodalom határvidékein," 232.
[133] George Buchanan, *A detection of the actions of Mary Queen of Scots concerning the murther of her husband, and her conspiracy, adultery, and pretended marriage with the Earl Bothwell and a defence of the true Lords, maintainers of the King's Majesties action and authority* (London: Richard Janeway, 1689), 9.
[134] Ibid., 19.
[135] Ibid., 8-9.
[136] Ibid., 9-10, 35.
[137] Ibid., 10-11.

Throughout the *Detection*, Buchanan attempted to discover the reason behind Mary's decision-making, which reflected one of the principal themes amongst contemporary theorists – the overall understanding of women's behavioral tendencies. His portrayal of Mary's character as emotion-driven, ultimately led to his conclusion according to which, "women […] have vehement Affections both ways; they love with excess, and hate without measure; and to what side soever they bend, they are not governed by advised Reason, but carried by violent Motion."[138] Mary's overall lack of self-control,[139] therefore, is the source of her irrational actions resulting in likewise irrational ends, being unchaste and conspiring, but such immoral behavior is likewise the trigger of her decision-making as a ruling monarch upon which Buchanan determined her reign tyrannous.

The presence of Protestant rhetoric, like in the *First Blast*, is obvious. As was previously made evident, Mary attempted to assert herself to the English succession, which to Protestant circles meant the potential reinstation of the Catholic regime on the Isles in case she succeeded. Defaming the Queen of Scots, Shrank notes, was thus thought to be the solution for preventing such an outcome.[140] She states that William Cecil's involvement in the birth of the *Detection* is assumed.[141] The original Latin version was published by John Day in London, and as per the USTC forty-one copies were printed, which made it the highest number of printed copies from all Buchanan's publications up until 1571.[142] Its immediate translation from Latin to English, notes McElroy, enabled its rapid spread through not only the Isles but the continent and aimed to strengthen its defamatory and call-to-action thesis.[143] There are thirty-three copies printed in

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[138] Buchanan, *Detection*, 19.
[139] Stated by Mary herself in one of her letters written to Bothwell: "I knew not how to govern my self." See *ibid*., 71.
[140] Shrank, "This fatall Medea," 526-528.
[141] Ibid.
[142] See USTC entry at: https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/507253. His *Rerum Scoticarum historia* later in 1582 was printed in 72 copies.
[143] McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics," 49-53.

English by the same printer in the same year, with the translation of Thomas Wilson. Five copies of a second edition in Scots by the same translator was printed a year later by Rober Lekpreuik at St Andrews as it was important that Scottish printers publish the *Detection* to illustrate that Mary's own subjects turned against her and support her deposition.[144] The translator had his own function in discrediting Mary's personality. Wilson according to Shrank, included an oration that foreshadowed Mary's own words, resulting in a situation where Mary defamed herself.[145] Such a high number of both Latin and English translations indicates an already existing readership whose demand for the polemic was previously fabricated, as well as the printing press's role as a catalyst for spreading malignant propaganda of Mary.

William Cecil was managing the *Detection*'s translations from the original Latin to English, Scots, French and German,[146] along with their circulations amongst the politically most influential. Cecil cleverly passed French translations to the leader of the Huguenots, who already blamed the Guises for their losses in the St. Bartholomew massacre, now saw an opportunity for revenge through Mary who through her mother was a Guise.[147] Thus, a pawn and victim of politics, Mary needed to be removed before she could pursue any politically major decisions. To ensure such, Buchanan in the *Detection* did not omit referencing the slightest suspicious aspect of Mary, where similarly, he continuously reassured the reader of Darnley's humbleness and innocence. Darnley is portrayed as neglected, Bothwell as the one who destroyed the royal marriage, and Mary the emotion-driven antagonist, adulterer, and murderer.[148] Thus, Buchanan created a text

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[144] See USTC entry at: https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/507254 and https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/507428
[145] Shrank, "This fatall Medea," 527.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid., 526-528.
[148] See for example Buchanan, *Detection*, 4-8.

with a power of mass-manipulation and direct influence on governmental policy by depicting Mary as an immoral woman whose removal was necessary.

<u>Responding to the *Detection*</u>

Just as Knox's polemic was not the first hostile text to the Marian government, Buchanan's tract was part of the pro-English propaganda against Mary Stuart. After Mary's forced abdication from the Scottish throne and exile to England, discourses on her persona already began in 1568. Although many agreed with Buchanan who played a leading role in defaming Mary and labeling her as a moral and political tyrant, there existed a few who defended her in writing. John Leslie, Catholic bishop of Ross, English ambassador and one of Mary's most trusted advisors upon her return is one eminent example.[149]

Leslie contributed to the debate by writing the *A defence of the honor of the right, high, mighty and noble princess Mary queen of Scotland* published in London in 1569. A pro-female tract written around Buchanan's, according to Walton is a three-volume tract, mainly defending Mary's persona and claiming her right to the English throne.[150] In the first book, Leslie attempts to clear Mary's name and deny her involvement in the regicide. The longest amongst the three is the second book dedicated to justifying Mary's inclusion in the English Succession and her right to the English throne. The third book was a response to Knox's *Blast* in which he employed similar arguments as John Aylmer in his response to Knox. By bringing biblical arguments that female government is comfortable with the natural order of things, Leslie at once aimed to prove female

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[149] McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics," 24; Andrew Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan." In *George Buchanan. Political Thought in Early Modern Britain and Europe* ed. Caroline Erskine and Roger A. Mason (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 73.

[150] Kristen Post Walton, "The English Succession Crisis and Debates about Mary Stewart: Law, National Identity, Citizenship and the Queen's Two Bodies." In *Catholic Queen Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion* ed. by Kristen Walton Post (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 66.

monarchs' legitimacy and Mary's own.[151] Leslie's response to Knox's earlier polemic suggests that the *First Blast*, more than a decade after its appearance was still read, influential and moreover it served as a touchpoint for later publications within the debate.

Like Aylmer's response to Knox was published anonymously, so was Leslie's *Defence* written under the alias 'Morgan Phillippes.'[152] As a Catholic and Scotsman, Walton states that Leslie was concerned to publish under his own name for it might have been perceived otherwise. Thus, his arguments appear to the reader as if they were written by an Englishman attempting to appeal to the English audience for which his Catholic faith was also hidden throughout the polemic. Publishing under an Englishman's pseudonym, therefore, served a propagandistic purpose.[153] Leslie's apologetic *Defence* of Mary opposed to the hostile picture painted of her by Buchanan, was not successful in counterbalancing the already defamed image of Mary. As Walton notes, Lesile omitted exploring the legal aspects of Mary's imprisonment, instead he argued for her innocence in Darnley's murder claiming that the evidence against her was on the basis of hearsay about her personality that she was capable of committing the crime.[154] While Knox's *Blast* was well-debated, Buchanan's *Detection* received less controversy. This was perhaps as Hadfield states, due to Buchanan's success and influence amongst the Protestant English writers, who found Buchana's writings appealing.[155]

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[151] Walton, "The English Succession," 74.
[152] Ibid., 66.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Walton, "A Queen Undone: Justifications of Deposition, Resistance and Imprisonment." In In *Catholic Queen Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion* ed. by Kristen Walton Post (Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 169.
[155] Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan," 74-75. Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), one of the most celebrated English poets, for instance was interested in the affairs involving Mary and her downfall, who later when he wrote his most famous poem *The Faerie Queene* praising Elizabeth I, gained inspiration from Buchanan's works.

Thematic analysis of the politics of anti-female narratives in Knox and Buchanan

While Knox's articulation of his judgments on women and female monarchs in the *First Blast* might be harsher than Buchanan's, his anti-female position is clearly communicated in the *Detection* too. It is equally clear that in Knox's eyes the Bible enjoyed absolute authority even in civil government, Buchanan was more concentrated on intrinsic values. Although the *First Blast*'s main focus was to encourage the nobility to overthrow female authority, namely the Catholic regime maintained in England and Scotland, he did not hesitate to gather all plausible reasons for the queens' disposal. The same in-depth analysis and opportunistic behavior is noticeable in Buchanan's argumentation about Mary's wrongdoings in the *Detection*. In the following section, I will explore the grounds for Knox and Buchanan's views on women's capability for rulership, which might also mirror the collective fear of the unfamiliar, for it both Mary Tudor and Mary Stuart were the first female monarchs of their kingdoms, which generally were both strongly patriarchal.

Challenging female authority through the classics

Classical teachings are one of Knox's main foundations for showcasing the malfunctioning nature of female authority, where Buchanan though put less emphasis on the realm of the classics, he found arguments against female government in Greek mythology. Through the revival of the classics, they aim to show that already in Greco-Roman times women failed in ruling positions. Classicism also serves as a judicial foundation for women's unsuitability for rulership, as regulations were already then set to prevent further inadequacies in governmental affairs women allegedly caused.

Calpurnia's case is the earliest classical revival of malfunctioning female authority in the *Blast*. The third or fourth wife of Julius Caesar, Calpurnia, although tried to prevent the attempt

on Caesar's life, which she allegedly foreseen in her dream,[156] Knox was able to use her as a negative example of women's unfitness to participate in governmental affairs. Knox eagerly recited the event when Calpurnia was given eligibility to speak in front of the Senate, but when she did so, she was apparently only babbling. Having failed in such a minor task, for Knox, this case sufficiently demonstrated that handling governmental affairs is "unnatural" for women who cannot be expected to rule over men and state. To support this, Knox referenced Aristotle's argumentation on female authority in his *Politics*, in which Aristotle wrote that women are the sources of all trouble, and he highlighted the philosopher's conclusion that when women are in a powerful position, the nation finds itself in disorder, which directly leads to its downfall.[157] Referencing Aristotle is unsurprising, as Jordan notes, the philosopher's thoughts were the most obvious sources for anti-female literature in the Renaissance.[158]

The same notion of women being incapable for government appears in early Roman law, likewise, discovered by Knox and referenced to prove that women should not be permitted nor are they fit to perform matters of the state. While there is limited information of Knox's education, Graham Duncan states that it is almost certain that he attended either the University of St Andrews or the Glasgow University both employing a medieval structure of education system.[159] It is known, however, that after his return to Scotland in 1560, Knox submitted a proposal for the structure of the reformed Church of Scotland, *The First Book of Discipline*, which included a model for education influenced by Calvin's *Ecclesiastical Ordinances.* This new educational system constructed by Knox included the reading of Roman laws,[160] from which he perhaps gained

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[156] For more on Calpurnia see for instance Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Plutarch's *The Life of Caesar.*
[157] Knox, *The First Blast*, 11-12.
[158] Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists," 185.
[159] Graham A. Duncan, "John Knox and education," in HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies 73(3), (2017): 2.
[160] Ibid., 3-4.

evidence when writing the *Blast*. The *Rules of the Law* (*Regulae iuris*), the group of legal maxims in Roman law first established in the third century, declares that "Women are removed from all civil and public office, so that they neither may be judges, neither may they occupy the place of the magistrate, neither yet may they be speakers for others."[161] The third and the sixteenth book of the *Digests* (*Digestorium*) – a collection of fifty books on juristic writings on Roman law assembled by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I between 530-533 – in addition to the previous regulations prohibit women from interfering in situations of others.[162]

To prove that female authority is capable of producing unnatural order, unnatural equality and unnatural justice in everyday life, Knox cites the theologian and philosopher from the Western Roman Empire, Augustine de Hippo's dialogue-based teaching, called *On Order* (*De Ordine*) whose definition for good order is the way God created it. It is indicated that Augustine omitted instruction for society when God's guidance on natural order might be missing, Knox, however did not find this a problem because he saw clarity in the way God stated his will, thus he argued that everything against it was a sin. Rule by women, as per Knox, therefore, is subversive to the will of God, who denied women authority, subjected them to men by the creation (Eve comes after and from Adam) and by his curse upon women. Such order, according to Knox is transmissible to civil life and politics, where again men enjoy dominion.[163]

Knox further referenced a group of prominent ancient writers and their works to support his point on the ill nature of women. One of these is the early Christian theologian and church father, Tertullian's *Women's Apparel*, in which the author sees women as "port and gate of the

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[161] Knox, *The First Blast*, 11-12.
[162] Ibid., 11, 12.
[163] Ibid., 26-27.

devil."[164] What Tertullian refers to and the point Knox shares with him is that all women are Eve(s), the first ones who disobeyed God's will,[165] which for Knox proves that women condemned humanity while they were in God's favor in the Garden of Eden, therefore in every woman lurks the same urge to sin. But can this alleged urge to sin be based on her sex? Indeed, Knox applied a long-standing, yet very much blooming simple dualistic perspective between right and wrong, where the negative trait always belonged to women for they by nature were thought to be more open to temptation compared to men.[166] Research conducted by Frankforter on Knox's personal relationship with women, however, suggests that Knox, in fact, held women in high esteem and even preferred women's company and friendship over men, admitting that from his conversations with women, he received spiritual consolation.[167] While Knox painted an extremely negative picture about the nature of women in the *First Blast*, his private relationship with the female sex did not seem to interfere with the ideology of women expressed in the *Blast*.

Besides classical literature, Greek mythology is recalled both by Knox and Buchanan to further support the malfunction of female authority. Knox notes, the myth of the female-only society of the Amazons, who supposedly by murdering their husbands demonstrated their displeasure with male domination.[168] For women to possess such a high position is considered to

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[164] Knox, *The First Blast*, 18.

[165] Ibid. For more examples of works written by ancient authors on forbidding women's superiority see p. 19. Tertullian: *de Viginibus Velandis*, *Against Marcion*; Origen and diverse others; Augustine (how can women be the image of God, only when compared to other creatures but not men): *Against Faustus* p.19. St Jerome's *Hexaemeron* (Adam was deceived by Eve and not the other way around, thus women receive and acknowledge him for their governor. Man is the author or beginner of women) p.20-22. Ambrose: "it is plain, that all woman is commanded to serve, to be in humility and subjection, women are commanded to be in silence." p.21-22. Chrysostom encourages men who were inferior to women to realize this unnatural thing, men are head women are foot, foot cannot govern head p. 22-23. *Womankind*: woman shall have nothing to do in judgment, in common affairs, or in the regiment of the commonwealth p.25. Basilius Magnus: *Aliquot Scripturae Locos*: on vices of women p.25.

[166] László Kontler, "Beauty or beast, or monstrous regiments? Robertson and Burke on women and the public scene." *Modern Intellectual History*, 1, 3 (2004): 311.

[167] Daniel A. Frankforter, "Correspondence with Women: The Case of John Knox." *Quidditas* 6, 12 (1985): 160-161.

[168] Knox, *The First Blast*, 11.

be "a corrupted fountain"[169] by Knox who concluded that when women occupy ruling position it was to "pollute […] the royal seat."[170] It is important to note, that Knox objects to any women who practices government, not only Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise. Though his verbal attack is heavily directed to Mary Tudor, Knox uses mythology to demonstrate Marie de Guise's persona. Comparing her to Circe, an enchantress who through her knowledge of potions was famous for her ability to transform her enemies into animals is perhaps the most provocative account the queen regent of Scotland received from Knox. By such a comparison, Knox aimed to indicate the condemnation of Scottish lords, who "has drunken also the enchantment and venom [of Circe]."[171]

Mythological references, however, are more characteristic to Buchanan's *Detection*. Mary, though unintentionally, complemented her negative portrayal by referring to herself as the sorceresses Medea in one of her letters written to Bothwell.[172] Medea is compared to Mary on the basis that both share great power, Medea's lies in her ability to perform magic and Mary's in her status as a ruling monarch. The dichotomy of male and female characteristics is equally present in both women. Medea and Mary exemplify masculine traits of intelligence and skillfulness, while they are both associated with negative traits associated with women by being unable to control their emotions, making them, as was argued before, irrational decision makers. As Medea turned to poison to avenge her husband's abandonment, so did Mary allegedly poison Darnley, which their feminine traits triggered them to commit. Their masculine trait of intelligence, which was supposed to be a positive aspect of their persona, Mary and Medea used it for wicked purposes – to manipulate men (Medea king Jason and Mary her husband). Mary's comparison to Medea is more interesting when returning to Knox's reference to Circe, since Medea was Circe's blood

[169] Knox, *The First Blast*, 51.
[170] Ibid., 47.
[171] Ibid., 29. See more on Circe in Homer's *Odyssey*.
[172] Buchanan, *Detection*, 32.

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relative, the very mythical female figure whom Knox compared her mother with.[173] Next to female mythological figures in the *Detection*, Buchanan compares Darnley's suffering to Prometheus's to shed light to Mary's cruelty towards him.[174] Just like Prometheus's liver was growing daily to feed the eagle, as did Mary feed her husband's hope by false promises and kindness, only to agonize him even more.[175]

Bible as the divine case law

The Bible is the most significant reference point for Knox in proving female subordination and therefore their lack of right to authority. But the Scriptures also serve as a theoretical playground through which Knox sought to formulate his political agenda of removing female monarchs. While Buchanan omitted directly drawing onto religious perspectives, it would be wrong to assume that his opinion of the female sex in the *Detection* was not influenced by contemporary religious aspects. Hadfield points out, that Buchanan emphasized the limited power of the monarchs and the people's right and ability to limit this power and if necessary to overthrow the monarch given that it was in line with God's will.[176] Hence, Buchanan's overall thinking fits into the frame of Protestant ethics, which generally influenced opinions of women at the time.

In order to understand Knox's ideology of female subordination emerging from biblical teachings and its absolute authority for the preacher, it is necessary to draw onto the austerity of Protestant ethics, from which Knox's position evolved. Roger Mason points out that the Old Testament received particular attention amongst the reformed, not only as an inspirational doctrine but as a divine manual laying down the laws according to which sixteenth-century Scottish and

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[173] For more on the depictions and characteristics of Medea see for example: Euripides's *Medea*, and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria; Heroides;* and *Metamorphoses*.
[174] Buchanan, *Detection*, 34.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan," 73.

English society was supposed to function following the biblical example of Israel and Judah.[177] Thus, Knox's principal argument against female authority lies at God's will described in the Genesis. When Eve rebelled against God, argues Knox, humanity became cursed, thus God, too cursed women by making women subject to men.[178] Thus, for Knox, the Bible not only declared the true natural order of things but the hierarchy between man and woman.

Just like he applied classical lessons of the faulty nature of female government, Knox also applied the Scriptures to demonstrate the same. The essential point Knox wants to communicate through the Bible, particularly through the Old Testament besides their subordination, is that female authority if for whatever reason present has the potential to weaken and destroy kingdoms.[179] The teachings of David, referenced by many reformers, were a central figure for Knox. By including David's words declaring that "[…] they [women] have eyes, but they see not, mouth, but they speak not, nose, but they smell not, hands and feet, but they neither touch nor have power to go," Knox implies that despite women's physical appearance resembles the features a powerful ruler might have, women lack virtue and strength, therefore the same is lacking in the kingdoms they reign.[180] The issues concerning women's virtues were already mentioned as the base of their immorality and lack of reason – crucial abilities needed in governmental affairs. The absence of strength is an additional feature to the combination of aspects declaring their unsuitability for rulership. Women being morally weaker than men Jordan claims, occasionally correlated with them being also physically weaker.[181] Aristotle particularly referred to women's

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[177] Mason, "Usable Past," 58.
[178] Knox, *The First Blast*, 13-14. "[…] thy free will has brought thy self and mankind in to the bondage of Satan, I therefore will bring the in bondage to man. For where before, thy obedience should have been voluntary, no we it shall be by constraint and by necessity…" (p.14). See further St Paul's argumentation on this subject: women are subjects because this is the law rather than their lack of knowledge (p.15-16).
[179] Ibid., 27.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists," 187-188.

smaller size, softer flesh, and needing longer sleep compared to men next to the psychological weaknesses resulted in women's likewise subordinate status in politics. Jordan further notes that by recognizing the same weaknesses in biblical teachings, such as the mentioned Genesis and apostolic teachings made such an ideology within the (Protestant) community challenging to renounce.[182] It is likewise reflected in Knox's words in the *Blast* stating that "for they [women] ought to be constant, stable, prudent, and doing everything with discretion and reason, which virtues women cannot have in equality with men."[183]

Knox states that female government is "abominable, odious, and detestable […] usurped authority."[184] Knox who declared that "he [God] made my tongue a trumpet"[185] found his vocation to be a prophet. As his warning of the two Maries to convert to Protestantism failed and resulted in exile, he referred to the two queens as the biblical figure Jezebel who became to be known as an archetype of wicked women, and who like Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise defied prophets.[186] Amongst the many, one specific biblical event, however, bears more significance. Athalia's story serves as a biblical allegory, resembling similar situations between Athalia, Queen of Judah and Mary Tudor, Queen of England's situation. Maintaining a tyrannical reign, Athalia was removed and executed, thus Knox taking the Old Testament as legal precedence, suggests that the same should be done in England, since Mary Tudor's reign is like Athalia's – unjust.[187]

At this point it is important to mention that, as Knox's fellow reformer, John Calvin pointed out, there are two prominent female leaders present in the Bible whom God has appointed.[188]

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[182] Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists," 187-188.
[183] Knox, *The First Blast*, 24.
[184] Ibid., 6.
[185] Roger A. Mason, "Knox, Resistance, and the Moral Imperative," *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Autumn 1980): 412.
[186] Knox, *The First Blast* 2, 41.
[187] Ibid., 52-53.
[188] Ibid., 39-40.

Deborah who ruled Israel and Huldah who taught prophecy in Judah are both examples for successful female government. Knox's response to Calvin's argument despite this was that Deborah and Huldah's case does not establish common law, since God is the only one who knows the reason of the two women's superiority over men. In addition, while their reigns were said to be just, Knox claimed that Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise's could not be further from demonstrating the same, since God did not appoint them for queenship, they usurped it.[189] Knox, therefore, used the Bible as one of the most powerful tools to communicate against female rulership. By recalling the teachings about biblical female rulers who demonstrated unjust government, Knox aims to prove that women by the will of God and through the original sin are subordinated to men, therefore authority in civic or governmental affairs is "unnatural."

Nature of women

As it was mentioned, debates on women's capabilities were generally divided between two categories; whether they are capable for government by natural law representing the secular perspective and if they possess the right to rule by divine ordinance. In Knox and Buchanan's polemics a mixture of both categories is detected. While both illustrate the allegedly ill nature of women, Knox's emphasis on the divine ordinance overshadows secular aspects, yet does not exclude the latter, where in Buchanan's the opposite can be noticed relying on moral grounds before religious.

Knox, although mainly founded his argument against female authority in God's will and its subsequent meaning for the status of women, he did not oversee their physical and mental capabilities while articulating his perceptions of women. Throughout the *First Blast*, he emphasizes the following features which he thought every woman regardless of social status

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[189] Knox, *The First Blast*, 39-40.

demonstrated by nature: being metaphorically blind, weak, sick, impotent, foolish, mad, frenetic, frail, impatient, feeble, inconstant, variable, cruel, and lacking skills for government.[190] Essentially, through these adjectives Knox indicates that women have many imperfections, which lead them to have excessive appetite for wrongdoing.[191] However, Knox states that women are perfect for the purpose to serve and follow the commands of men, rather than to themselves practice authority and rule over men.[192] Based on these gathered traits women allegedly possess, Knox constructed a harsh picture of Mary Tudor, the direct target of the *First Blast*, thus her persona received the most attention. Perhaps Knox's harshest statement about her is calling her "cruel monster Mary (unworthy, by reason of her bloody tyranny, of the name of a woman)[…]."[193] Her name is also associated with "brute beast,"[194] and "wicked woman, […] a traitress and bastard."[195]

Buchanan shares most of these features of women in the *Detection*, though communicated through Mary Stuart's persona. This comes to light in Buchanan's minute analysis and documentation of the slightest suspicious acts of Mary but Darnley's unpredictability, for which he was known for,[196] is neglected. Hadfield further states that no positive opinions of Darnley were made by historians, thus, Buchanan employs yet another strategic tool to condemn Mary as opposed to her innocent husband.[197] Darnley is constantly praised, where Mary from the beginning is the antagonist, who by committing two major offences, being unfaithful to her husband and her

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[190] Knox, *The First Blast*, 9, 10. I note these pages, but such characteristics appear later in the text as well.
[191] Ibid., 12. Knox gives examples of women who betrayed their husbands, countries, and cities and/or killed their own descendants – the stories of Romilda, Queen Jane, and Athaliah.
[192] Ibid., 13. Reference to St. Paul: "Man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. And man was not created for the cause of the woman, but the woman for the cause of man […]."
[193] Ibid., 48.
[194] Ibid., 30.
[195] Ibid., 2.
[196] Walton, "Introduction," 12.
[197] Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan," 73.

involvement in the murder of Darnley,[198] indicates the immoral behavior of the queen. Like Knox, Buchanan referred to the inconsistency and unpredictability of women, which is very well-articulated in the *Detection*, as well as the main reasons against Mary's unsuitable for government. He refers to Mary's rapid change in behavior towards Darnley, and her emotions towards Bothwell who was not only loved but "outrageously and intemperately loved"[199] by the queen, as an indicator of her uncontrollable and unpredictable nature.[200]

Mischief and creativity seemed to be ingredients of female government for both Knox and Buchanan. Knox particularly referred to Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise as the "mischievous Marys"[201] suggesting the monarchs' involvement in persecuting or slaughtering Christians. Where Buchanan exemplifies Mary Stuart's mischief in her layered conspiracies against her subjects, husband, and nobility. As Knox addressed Marie de Guise the "crafty dame,"[202] Buchanan's argumentation on Mary's constant plotting and the inventive nature of it implied the same craftiness in Mary like this trait was inherited. Paired with frenetic cruelty, such craftiness is a noticeable phenomenon not only pre- but postmortem of her husband. Her pretended sorrow at the site of Darnley's dead body, her disrespectful mourning and secret funeral, along with confiscation of Darnley's belongings, and engaging with cheerful company during the traditional mourning period were seen by Buchanan as wholly inappropriate, disrespectful towards the deceased king, and cruel in their nature.[203]

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[198] Buchanan, *Detection,* 41-43.
[199] Ibid., 27.
[200] Ibid., 20, 27.
[201] Knox, *The First Blast*, 41.
[202] Ibid., 48.
[203] Buchanan, *Detection*, 9-14, 17, 20.

Knox's judgment of Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise are based on their status as female monarchs with the agenda to prove that their reigns are unnatural, and their statuses are usurped since God did not grant it. What is unique about Buchanan and differs from Knox's perspective, is that he not only investigated Mary Stuart's persona as a queen, but as a wife and woman as well, where Knox heavily argued for the ill nature of women and did not engage in exploring morality or personal traits of the queens. On the other hand, Buchanan investigated Mary's actions from which he drew his conclusion. The fact that Mary was a female monarch is not explicitly the issue, but her sex is part of the combination of reasons to remove her. The core of the issue for Buchanan is that Mary was as per him, usurping her power, she was an adulteress, plotted her husband's murder and that she married the murderer. Mary's attitude as a wife towards Darnley is especially analyzed by Buchanan as the previous section illustrated. As much as Buchanan was explicit in articulating Darnley's pureness and innocent character, as did he emphasized Mary's allegedly unjust hatred towards her husband. To demonstrate such disrespect towards her partner in holy matrimony, a woman who had no emotional connection towards her husband was not only cruel but made Mary according to Buchanan a "brute creature."[204]

Mary's analysis as a ruling monarch does not receive less attention. It starts with Buchanan's claim that most of the issues are grounded in her late acquaintance with real hands-on governmental experience.[205] Due to this, according to Buchanan, Mary found herself having the degree of regnant authority of her own, which she had not experienced prior. Buchanan adds that the existing experience she brought herself from France, however, was corruption and tyranny according to which governmental affairs were dealt with in France, hence the notion of government

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[204] Buchanan, *Detection*, 43.
[205] Ibid., 28.

by law in Mary's reign was lacking. This was made visible by Mary's abuse of longstanding Scottish laws and costumes according to her best interests. The corrupted investigation of her husband's murder, most of all, where her lover was the judge, investigator and murderer were the essential indicators of Mary's tyranny as she "[…] endeavoured to draw Right, Equity, Laws, and Customs of Ancestors to her only beck and pleasure."[206] She is depicted as the monarch who if could not achieve her wishes by conversation, she was motivated to accomplish them by force. This is particularly evident besides the murder of her husband in her intentions to marry Bothwell, which when disapproved of by the nobility, Mary turned to violent tools.[207] Assuming the unlimited power of a regnant, Mary thought herself to be untouchable regardless of the nature of her actions, was a principal factor for Buchanan to show her political tyranny.[208]

"her, [Mary] who a Sister, hath butcherly slaughtered her Brother, a Wife her Husband, a Queen her King? May we commit our safety to her, whom never shame restrained from unchastity, woman-kind from cruelty, nor religion from impiety? Shall we bear with her age, sex and unadvisedness, that without all just causes of hatred, despised all these things in her Kinsman, her King, her Husband?" [209]

This particular declaration besides the arguments for Mary's political tyranny, sheds light to Buchanan's underlying argument about Mary's sex, as an uncontrollable, raging, emotion-driven woman, which is a contributing factor for her unsuitability to rule.

Upon such a close reading of Buchanan and Knox's polemics, a biblical and classical paradigm is noticeable based on which their ideal type of government was formed. Reciting ancient scholars was important first to demonstrate that already in classical times, prominent scholars declared women as both morally and physically weaker than men, from which their inferiority stems. This was complemented by the long-standing proof of regulations against female

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[206] Buchanan, *Detection*, 28.
[207] Ibid., 27-28.
[208] Ibid., 42.
[209] Ibid., 43

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government as it was demonstrated already in the classical antiquity, women were not capable for the political scene. When the strict ethics of Protestantism joined the Aristotelian anti-female ideology in the sixteenth century, the Bible functioned as a model based on whose teachings the Protestant community was expected to order their lives accordingly. As Mason states, early Protestant thinking evolved around a simple duality between right and wrong, scriptural and unscriptural, godly and ungodly.[210] With the Reformation, religion intersected with the debates on women's mental and physical capabilities and influenced both Knox and Buchanan's perspectives. Their attitudes on the nature of women naturally grew out of both classical proof and the Bible's absolute authority, which painted a picture of female rulership that was inappropriate both by divine and natural law. This resulted in although two different narrative strategies, both Knox and Buchanan's are political in their agenda and initiate a rebellion against female government.

Female monarchs reacting anti-female polemics

Responses by female monarchs to the *Blast* and the *Detection* are much richer in Knox's case. Knox with his prophetic trumpet initially aimed to overthrow Catholic regimes, however, it did not reach its direct targets. Marie de Guise and Mary Tudor never saw its content since both queen's death took place within a couple of months after the publication. Thus, the judgement of its thesis was left to an unexpected audience on the British Isles. Elizabeth I's ascendance to the English throne could have reversed the situation of the exiled reformers, but Knox's publication instead complicated the matter. Lee notes that Elizabeth took offence in Knox's words,[211] and Healey further states that she in fact, deeply resented the *Blast*.[212] She ordered punishment for everyone who was thought to share and support such a doctrine.[213] Since the *First Blast* was

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[210] Mason, "Usable Past," 58.
[211] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 257-258.
[212] Knox and Healey, "Waiting on Deborah," 379.
[213] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 257-258.

published anonymously, however, it was unsure who to punish. Given Calvins position amongst the Protestant exiles, Elizabeth accused Calvin of collaboration in co-authoring the *First Blast* along with his permission for its publication in Geneva. When Calvin tried to defend himself unsuccessfully, Knox came forward and declared his authorship.[214]

Elizabeth likely understood Knox's words as encouragement for rebellion amongst her subjects, if not a possible murderous attempt on her life. [215] In addition, for Knox in the *First Blast* repeatedly called Mary Tudor, her half-sister and likewise female monarch a Jezebel probably worsened his case. Elizabeth's anger was obvious towards Knox as when he attempted to return to Scotland in 1559, she repeatedly denied him passage through England. His *Blast* was also banned along with Knox's many attempts towards the queen to explain his arguments.[216] Maintaining the thought that his thesis expressed in the tract was accurate, Knox did not renounce it, yet he was still surprised by Elizabeth's offence and behavior towards him.[217] He claimed in a letter directly addressing the queen, stating that the *Blast* was not directed towards her, by stating,

"[…] therefore to ground the justice of your authority not upon that law which from year to year does change, but upon the eternal providence of Him who contrary to nature, and without your deserving has thus exalted your head. If thus in God's presence you humill (humble) yourself, as in my heart I glorify God for that rest granted to His afflicted flock within England under you a weak instrument, so will I with tongue and pen justify your authority and regiment as the Holy Ghost has justified the same in Deborah […]"[218]

The essence of Knox's statement, according to Lee, was that he wished from Elizabeth to not only accept God's words but to accept them as was interpreted by Knox, which could not be further from Elizabeth's standpoint.[219]

[214] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 258.
[215] Ibid., 248.
[216] Ibid., 258-259.
[217] Ibid., 259.
[218] Knox's *Declaration* to Queen Elizabeth, 20 July 1559, in Edward Arber, *John Knox: The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895), 60.
[219] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 259.

The second clear target of the *First Blast*, Marie de Guise's interactions with Knox at the beginning of her regency showed tolerance towards the preacher in order to maintain the favor of the Scottish nobility, which she needed before her daughter, Mary Stuart secured her marriage with the dauphin.[220] But when Knox returned to Scotland in 1555 and achieved unexpected success in influencing the local Protestants to refuse the mass, frightened Marie, who therefore charged Knox with heresy. While Marie de Guise intervened shortly before his trial and granted Knox a pardon, his further religious movements angered her and resulted in his conviction and exile.[221] Although she died some months after Mary Tudor, Knox's *Blast* did not reach her. Instead, Knox's experiences with Mary, Queen of Scots proved to be similarly unpleasant, whose Catholic faith within the Protestant community reminded Knox of his previous experiences with Mary Tudor.[222] Like her mother, Mary at the beginning of her reign tolerated Knox but after he criticized her religion and mass-attendance, Mary accused Knox of four charges: encouraging rebellion against Marie de Guise and her; demonstrating disloyalty to her mother and her by writing and publishing the *First Blast* in which he attacked women in general; causing disorder in England; and practicing necromancy. Knox's counter-argument was that the *Blast* while was indeed written by him, its thesis was valid but had no importance within the relationship between Mary and him as queen and subject. Knox states,

"If the realm finds no inconvenience from the regiment of a woman, that which they approve shall I not further disallow than within my own breast, but shall be as well content to live under your Grace as Paul was to live under Nero; and my hope is, that as long as that ye defile not your hands with the blood of the saints of God, that neither I nor that book shall either hurt you or your authority […]"[223]

While Elizabeth, according to Lee, never showed doubt of her legitimacy as a female monarch, claiming it by both blood and being God's appointee, her success was perhaps founded

[220] Knox and Healey, "Waiting for Deborah," 374.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., 382.
[223] Ibid., 382-383.

in immediately asserting herself for the position.[224] As Chapter 1 showed, this was not the case with Mary Stuart, whose ambition in this matter was apparently far weaker than her cousin's, who as Andrew Hatfield notes, through stressing her masculine traits (while Mary could not escape her femininity resulting in irrationality) became an exception amongst her sex.[225] Lee states, that perhaps due to this and learning from Knox's mistake, the trumpeters' voice declined for a while but as Mary Stuart attempted to insert herself into the English succession certain aspects of the debate reappeared.[226] The most prominent of these polemics, as mentioned before, was Buchanan's *Detection*.

From the birth of the *Detection* at Westminster in 1568, it was already evident that Mary's opinion about the gathered evidence against her was insignificant, her persona was clearly fabricated through Buchanan's hand to appeal for its audience, who was not Mary but both the elite and common people. The reason it received little controversy was likely Buchanan's status as one of the most recognized amongst contemporary scholars. McElroy notes that two of his contemporary infamous publications contributed to justifying the *Detection*'s thesis, that is Mary's deposition.[227] If collectively read, the *De Iure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus* (1579) illustrates Buchanan's position on an ideal limited monarchy, after which the *Detection* explicitly illustrates why that is necessary demonstrated by Mary's personal tyranny, and finally the *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582) places Mary's situation within Scottish history.[228] Thus, electing Buchanan for authorship for the defamatory polemic of Mary was a strategic choice by the English, which was not only based on Buchanan's intellectual status but his Scottish origins. McElroy further explains

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[224] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 261.
[225] Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan," 73.
[226] Lee, "A Bodye Politique to Governe," 260.
[227] McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics," 49-50.
[228] Ibid.

that English authorities deliberately wanted to show that Mary's actions and guiltiness are told from a Scottish perspective, based on Scottish material, assembled by Mary's Scottish nobles to indicate that her own subjects turned against her and at once to shift the attention from the involvement of the English authorities.[229]

Although, McElroy notes, that Buchanan's involvement after the original Latin text was written seems to be nonexistent, the English government made use of his style and structure, which was of a theatrical nature as it was a record of Mary's trial showcasing evidence against her and condemning her as a criminal and tyrant.[230] While the content is not entirely accurate, manipulative, and deliberately constructed to convince the public of Mary's guiltiness through a fictional trial, its conclusion is valid in Mary being already captive, for which the *Detection*'s own validity needs no further justification nor debate.[231] While I did not discover any documentation whether Mary herself read the *Detection* or responded to it, unlike it was the case with Knox's *Blast*, it does not seem that the public showed interest in knowing Mary's response nor was it important, since as McElroy states, Buchanan actively involved his readers in Mary's imaginary trial.[232] Such an involvement of the common people in having the ability to observe the queen's tyranny and to overthrow such reign goes back to Scottish "constitutionalist" history, on which Buchanan based his political thought is evident through the *Detection*.

In this chapter, I approached two infamous anti-female polemics, Knox's *First Blast* and Buchanan's *Detection* to discover the specific features of women that make their rule "unnatural" as per the contemporary ideology. While Buchanan and Knox's polemics shed light to arguments

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[229] McElroy, "Performance, Print and Politics," 53.
[230] Ibid., 69.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid., 50.

against female government on the basis of natural law and divine ordinance, each tract emphasizes more on one of these aspects – Knox's on divine law stating that women are subordinate to men by the will of God, thus cannot assume authority, and Buchanan's on natural law demonstrating that women for being immoral and emotion-driven leaves them with the absence of virtue without which government is unimaginable. Their model for government emerged on the basis of contemporary austere Protestant ethics which met the example by history illustrating the malfunctioning nature of female government already detectable in classical antiquity. This powerful combination projected an image of women nature that was uncapable for leadership, thus their exclusion from it was seen not only appropriate but necessary, which is well-reflected in the *Blast* and the *Detection*.

My choice of the two polemics was based on both representing the most prominent voice amongst contemporary anti-female literature as their publications caused immense consequences partly based on their timing and partly on their content, but the agency of the authors themselves are not to be underestimated either. My interpretation and comparison of Knox and Buchanan's polemics, however, are by no means exhaustive, since I heavily focused on the specific features of women, they mention that makes their rule "unnatural" intrinsically, historically, and on the basis of the Bible. I attempted to discover shared aspects between Knox and Buchanan, but certainly these sources offer further potential for comparative analysis. Yet, they represent a powerful combination if read together, which was quite possible as Knox's *First Blast* was revisited when Buchanan's *Detection* was published. The two tracts enhance one another's thesis on women's unsuitability for government as the divine and natural law joins and together create a powerful case against women.

Knox and Buchanan's works likely represent the beginning of the war of the pamphlet's that eagerly discussed women both apologetic and anti-female in nature, which at once enabled the widening of the print culture. According to Anikó Oroszlán, when Elizabeth Tudor ascended the English throne, such pamphlets entered a new stage and earlier polemics reappeared debating the rightful rule of women.[233] By the succession of James I, anti-female pamphlets increased with the most popular topic being the marriage and how wives were capable embittering their husband's lives. Such polemics aimed to caution men to marry carefully.[234] Despite the reappearance of anti-female pamphlets, Hadfield notes, James advised his son to oppress texts written by Knox and Buchanan, suggesting his dislike towards governmental ideals the two nurtured.[235] By 1640 however, anti-female pamphlets declined due to the increasing number of female writers who gained acknowledgement in their own rights.[236] Pamphlets, however, were not the only forms present in the debate of women. Mary Stuart, specifically next to literary was defamed through visual propaganda as well.

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[233] Anikó Oroszlán, "Női szerzők, szerzőnők és női irodalom a kora újkorban." In *Az Angol Irodalom Történelme*, ed. Bényei Tamás and Kállay Géza (Budapest: Kiájart Kiadó, 2020,) 77.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Hadfield, "Spenser and Buchanan," 72.
[236] Oroszlán, "Női szerzők," 79.

Chapter 3: Visual Propaganda of Mary as wanton-woman and "innocent Susan"

The previous chapter demonstrated how rhetoric was used as a strategic tool to preach against female rulership. The two eminent examples, Knox and Buchanan's polemics drew on both natural and divine law along with contemporary Protestant attitudes to justify their arguments against women and their inaptness for rulership. Defamation, however, did not only happen through word but in Mary Stuart's case, through visual representation. The appearance of satirical placards advertising Mary's perceived wantonness and involvement in the regicide, received as much attention as the defamatory tract about her written a year later by Buchanan. This chapter looks at one specific placard, which became known as the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard, and a later counter-example, the *Sheffield portrait* made during Mary's English captivity. I argue that both of these portrayals are propagandistic images, which served specific purposes in specific times. But they were also part of the set of different types of sources that fabricated Mary's image either to defame her and support her deposition, or the opposite, to clear her name and reinstate her authority. Both visual portrayals are rich in symbolism, thus unveiling their iconography sheds light to both their ultimate meaning and political function at the specific eras when they were made. Like the anti-female and apologetic tracts were tailored to specific audiences, so were the two depictions, whose reception dictated their effectiveness.

Mary, the crowned mermaid

On March 7, 1567, a satirical placard was anonymously posted on the church door of Edinburgh. While several others circulated on the streets after Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley's murder a month previously, the placard posted on the door of St Giles Church was rather appalling as it depicted the Queen of Scotland as a half-naked mermaid-like creature, a contemporary symbol

for wantonness, prostitution, and pride. Sketched with ink on paper, originally probably colored,

disgraces Mary. The several fold-marks visible through the placard suggests that it was passed

around before it reached its final destination. The placard's defamatory nature, however, did not

stand out from the many visual materials portraying the Earl of Bothwell as the committer of the

regicide[237] as was visible from Buchanan's *Detection*. Bothwell's presence did not escape the

content of this placard either, and as it is apparent, in fact, Mary's presence was the recent addition.

Below Mary, shown as the crowned mermaid, the earl appears as a hare encircled with seventeen

swords, hence it became known as the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard (Figure 5).

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[237] Debra Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary, Queen of Scots: Icons of Wantonness and Pride," in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 72. Placards were posted on the Tolbooth with a list of names potentially involved in Darnley's murder, from which Bothwell's name stood out as Bothwell was the one with who Mary allegedly committed adultery. Bothwell was accused of the murder but Mary declared him innocent and married him, the suspected murderer, thus Mary was condemned with Bothwell.
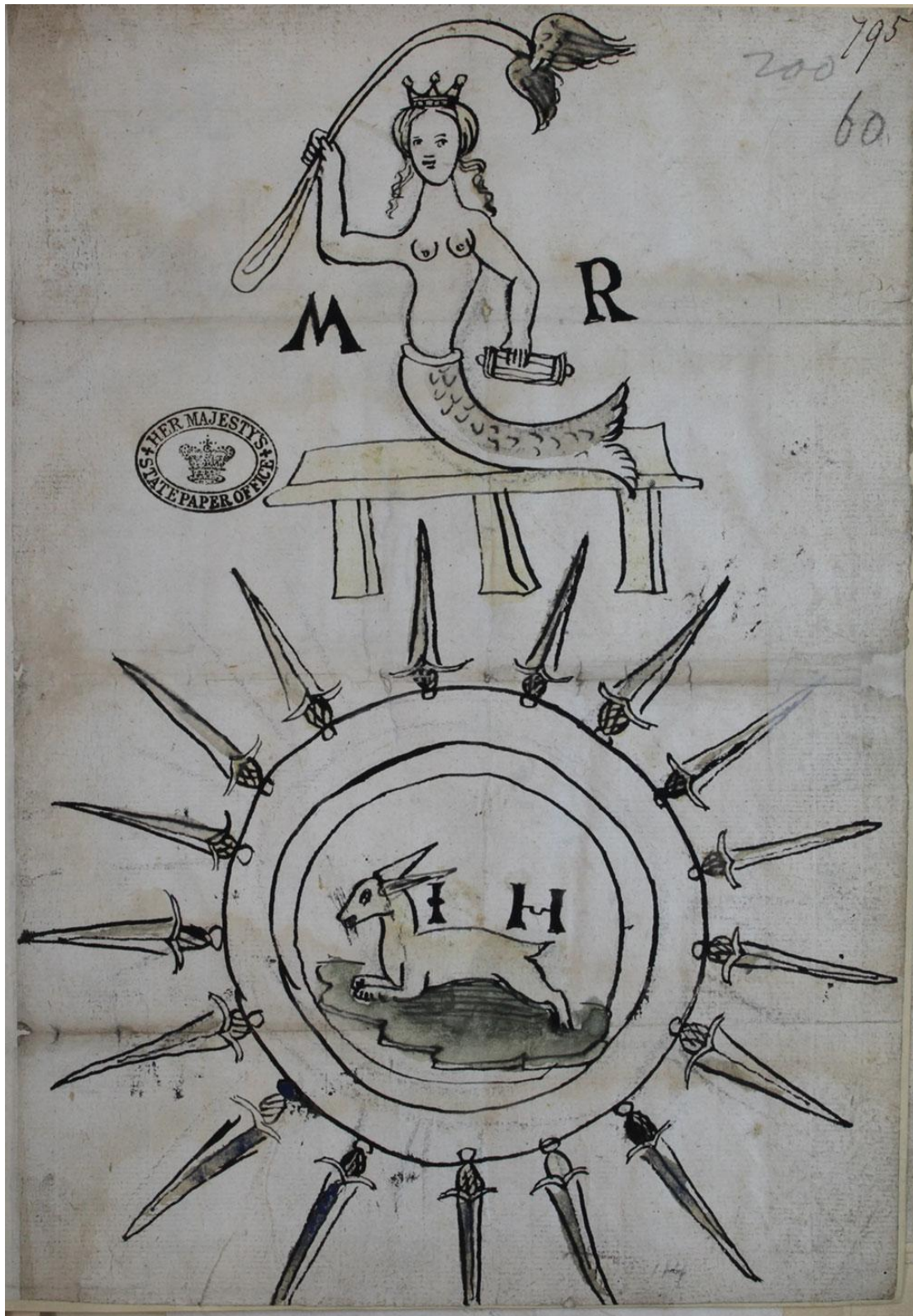
Figure 6 Unknown artist, Placard of Mary Queen of Scots and James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, as mermaid and hare (27 x 20cm). National archives (UK), SP 52/13 no. 60.

The placard's history along with its maker and process of creation is filled with mystery. There are more unanswered questions than known facts about its iconography, symbolical meaning, and function, which the anonymity of the placard's maker further complicates. Based on the political affairs contemporary to the placard's appearance, two possible layers of purpose might be detected. First, its symbolism charged with sexual elements, the mermaid representing wantonness and the hare lust, is perhaps a reference to Mary and Bothwell's adulterous affair while both married. On a second level, a deeper meaning might be detected, if we level with the artist, we might realize the placard's message as a more political one suggesting Mary's unsuitability for government as her harlot-like nature suggests through the first level of sexual interpretation embodying her persona through a mermaid allegory.

The placard's physical characteristics further enhance its peculiarity. A fairly small size of paper on which the sketch appears was folded three times on its horizontal side and once through the vertical. When folded its dimensions were about five-centimeter times thirteen-centimeter, which means that it would be easily portable in pockets or in any small sack-like objects or even envelopes. According to accounts the general consensus is that this placard – or a version of it – was nailed or posted to the church door.[238] There is no nail mark or whatsoever detectable on this particular placard, and close observation indicates that the overall placard, the ink and the paper itself is in a well-preserved condition. This is even more strange when weather conditions in Edinburgh are considered. A plausible explanation for the placard's extremely good condition would be that this was not the placard posted on the door of St Giles in the March of 1567, rather a copy or perhaps the original sketch. In case the contrary is true, and this placard is the one that

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[238] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 69; Michael Bath and Malcom Jones, "'Placardes and Billis and Ticquettis of Defamatioun': Queen Mary, The Mermaid and The Hare," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 78, (2015), 223.

was hanging in Edinburgh then it is likely that it was shortly taken off and kept safely for unknown, but surely important reasons, perhaps to preserve it for future copying purposes.

The iconography of this placard has been examined by historians and visual studies scholars. Several attempts have been made to interpret both the iconography and iconological meaning of the placard. The objects visible in the mermaid's hands as well as the ones around the hare are subject to speculations. In the following section, I will survey two recent attempts to analyze the meaning of the image. Literary scholar Debra Barrett-Graves has suggested that the placard is a parody of Mary's official royal portraits, making a reference to her foreignness, religious beliefs, and immoral behavior through the placard's symbolism. Michael Bath and Malcolm Jones' study, on the other hand, investigates the symbolism of the placard, emphasizing the importance of the Renaissance emblem transmitting a political and moral message. While both studies approached the iconography of the placard from different perspectives, both ultimately arrived at the conclusion that the anonymous maker aimed to illustrate Mary as an adulteress, immoral woman who is unsuitable for rulership. Building on their work, I argue that while the iconography of the placard is highly complex, general associations of the visuals' symbolism was sufficient for communicating the suggested political agendas.

<u>The placard's iconography</u>

It might be obvious that the placard's central figures are Mary and Bothwell on the basis of the embedded initials – 'MR' for *Maria Regina* placed around the mermaid, and 'JH' around the hare is a reference to James Hepburn, Fourth Earl of Bothwell. The artist's choice of allegory for Mary as a mermaid and Bothwell a hare, suggests both a contemplated strategy and reference to contemporary affairs, but not at all a haphazardly made decision.

The mermaid-siren figure, as Barrett-Graves sates was most frequently associated as the symbol for prostitution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[239] Odysseus' encounter with sirens on his way back from the Trojan War was probably a familiar anecdote for the early modern culture, thus the association of the mermaid with lustful behavior as a *femme fatale* stems from Homer's epic poem.[240] As wantonness was the chief association of mermaid symbol at the time, it is not wholly surprising then, when a placard appeared with a defamatory agenda depicted Mary as a siren-like figure. Visible from Buchanan's *Detection*, Mary was allegedly conducting an extra-marital relationship with Bothwell while the earl was likewise married. However, it was not solely Mary's alleged adulterous affair, which labeled her as a mermaid.

In Chapter 1 multiple paragraphs were dedicated to elaborate on Mary's beauty and its wide recognition. The placard's maker seemed to utilize such personal characteristics by turning them to negative associations. Andrew Lang in his monograph states that, "one thing is historically certain: Mary was either beautiful, or she bewitched people into thinking her beautiful […] There is some enchantment by which men are bewitched [by Mary.][241] Her beauty is a further possible connection between Mary and the mermaid-siren figure, whose beauty enchanted and bewitched men, much like sirens. To such observations joins Knox's judgment of Mary, declaring that Mary overly occupied herself with endless entertainment, which she as per Knox, learned from the French, instead of dealing with more important matters.[242] Mary's preference of dances and banquets instead of governmental affairs is perhaps an additional reference to sirens' lustful and

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[239] Barret-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 73, 75.
[240] Ibid., 81. Sirens were also thought to be pride creatures, for they according to contemporary mythographers, like the Italian Natale Conti (1520-1582), sirens challenged the muses into a singing contest, in which the latter triumphed and the sirens were punished for their pride in assuming a victorious outcome against the muses, see p 82. Barrett-Graves speculates on if Mary's pride in desiring the English throne could potentially be a further connection between Mary and siren figure, see p. 87.
[241] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 133.
[242] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 82.

even musical nature. Barret-Graves speculates on another plausible connection, by mentioning the mermaid sculpture in Linlithgow Palace, Mary's birthplace.[243] A mythical origin of mermaids reveals an association between the mermaid and elite women, whose advanced educational background poses the threat to subvert the natural order of things and harmony.[244] This resembles some of the arguments Juan Luis Vives states in *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* (English translation in 1540) on certain genres and authors women should avoid reading because they would steer women's thinking in a negative direction.[245] But such a concept on subverting the order of things heavily resonates in Knox's *First Blast* (1558) as was made evident in Chapter 2. Thus, dressing Mary into a mermaid-allegory might be a reference to her sex as a danger to the kingdom as well as an agent of defamation. If all these connections are not convincing, the crown the mermaid wears would be the ultimate indicator for the queen.

The same is true for Bothwell, his initials are not the only indicators for his identity. As his family crest was a hare, and the symbol for lust and cowardice noted by most interpretations and generally acknowledged amongst Mary's biographers.[246] The swords around him, might be a reference to Bothwell's martial qualities, but perhaps sexual symbolism for male genitalia.[247] Sexual symbolism is also tailored to the fish-tailed object in the mermaid's right hand as well, which was most often assumed to be a whip, tail of a dolphin or a sea anemone, a symbol for female genitalia.[248] Thus, on the surface, the placard communicates the unchaste behavior of both Mary and Bothwell, whose identities are (almost) explicitly stated through its iconography. However, its meaning was more than sexual symbolism, as suggested by both of the most recent

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[243] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 80.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives," 894.
[246] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 223; Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 70.
[247] Ibid.; Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 73
[248] Ibid.

accounts. It is more likely that the 'Mermaid and Hare' placard was a catalyst for promoting and even shaping opinions of Mary in the social, religious, and political arena.[249]

Starting with the first attempt, Barrett-Graves's interpretation suggests that the swords' have a deeper meaning than solely a reference to Bothwell's military triumphs or phallic symbols.[250] She argues that a closer look at the swords' grips reveals the repetition of certain patterns, from which the most common is a 'round-shaped cluster,' which might be the floral motif the Hepburns' employed on their armors. The literary scholar claims, that this was a strategic move of the Protestant lords who deliberately named Bothwell as the murderer of Darnley by including not only his personal crest but a heraldic symbol belonging to his family to further ensure the recognition of his identity.[251]

As for the whip-like object in the mermaid's right hand, Barrett-Graves argues that it could be perhaps seen as a dolphin's fin and at once a word-game for 'dauphine,' thus a reference to Mary's former title as Queen of France, through her marriage to the dauphine, Francis II.[252] Simultaneously, the French connection indicates her otherness amongst the Scots both confessional and cultural. Barrett-Graves states that the artist was using Mary's foreign overall otherness, mainly her French connections, to trigger the fear of the potential reinstatement of both French dominion and the 'old' Catholic faith – a motivation strong enough to depose Mary and control the young heir, James VI.[253] Following the logic of such an approach to the placard's iconography the audience might conclude that it shows Mary, the Frenchwoman whose agenda

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[249] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 71.
[250] Ibid., 73.
[251] Ibid., 74. The other symbols on the grips of the swords are references of the other clan members whose involvement in the regicide was assumed.
[252] Ibid. In heraldry, a dolphin is a significant figure, who occupies the highest position amongst sea animals, a reference of the dauphine's status.
[253] Ibid., 74-75.

was different from the Scottish nobility's posed a major immediate threat and must be overthrown,[254] given that the audience dug deeper than the first layer of the sexual symbolism.

The item in the mermaid's left hand, Barrett-Graves states, is often interpreted as a net, associated with sirens which helped them in luring in their victims.[255] However, she suggests that it is a scroll that was rolled up upon a successful negotiation, a bond that was signed between Bothwell and some of the nobility granting him permission to marry the queen. Barrett-Graves argues that by placing the scroll in Mary's hand means that she knew of Bothwell's involvement in her husband's murder or even that she herself was involved.[256]

Barrett-Graves ultimately makes the connection with a so-called Forman Roll[257] (Figure 6) as the basis for the placard's iconography and symbolism.[258] She states that it is likely that the placard was made to parody Mary's status as a sovereign, through the symbolism of the two objects the mermaid holds in her hands. When compared to the Forman Roll, what we see on the placard is the replacement of the royal insignia – the orb and the scepter – with the whip ending with the dolphin's fin and the signed bond. The roll originally celebrates the alliance between Mary and Francis, as well as a reference to her dynastic status communicated through armorial heraldry, which the placard parodies likewise through symbolism.[259] It also undermines not only Mary's royal status but her official portraiture, ultimately resulting again in Mary's absolute character defamation.[260]

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[254] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 74-75.
[255] Ibid., 73.
[256] Ibid., 75.
[257] Roll of the arms of 267 knights and Scottish gentlemen, see in *ibid.*, 79.
[258] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 79.
[259] Ibid., 78.
[260] Ibid., 79.

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The symbolic nature of the placard, however, is not wholly surprising. Sixteenth-century European society demonstrated an enthusiasm towards emblems, which quickly spread into the British Isles as well. [261] Whatever forces drove such an attraction towards symbolic imagery was detected within British society too. The emblem's general function was to reveal certain hidden meanings, moral lessons, or the ultimate truth often communicated through mythological symbols.[262] As the emblem is a synthesis of multiple symbols, according to the eminent scholar in emblem studies, Daniel S. Russell, each of these 'actions' might translate into multiple meanings, however, there is one correct meaning for every symbol, when each symbol is correctly read then and only then will the genuine meaning of the scene be revealed.[263] Thus, returning to Barrett-Graves' interpretation, when the symbols are read collectively, the placard's message might be a concern for Mary's French relations and Catholic faith, along with her unsuitability for government due to her mermaid-like behavior not only in terms of committing adultery but destroying all men who stumble upon her.[264] Fearing foreign dominion was most frequently a blooming topic in contemporary polemics (normally through a female sovereign who exposed her kingdom to possible overlordship by marrying a foreign prince). Mary's French origins, thus were strategic decisions made effectively by the placard's maker.

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[261] György Endre Szőnyi, "Kép és szó, szó és hang, zene és líra." In *Az Angol Irodalom Történelme*, ed. Bényei Tamás and Kállay Géza (Budapest: Kiájart Kiadó, 2020), 93.

[262] Ibid., 95.

[263] Daniel S. Russell, "Perceiving, Seeing and Meaning: Emblems and Some approaches to Reading Early Modern Culture." In *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory, 1500-1700*, ed. P. Daily and J. Manning (New York: AMS Press, 1999), 79.

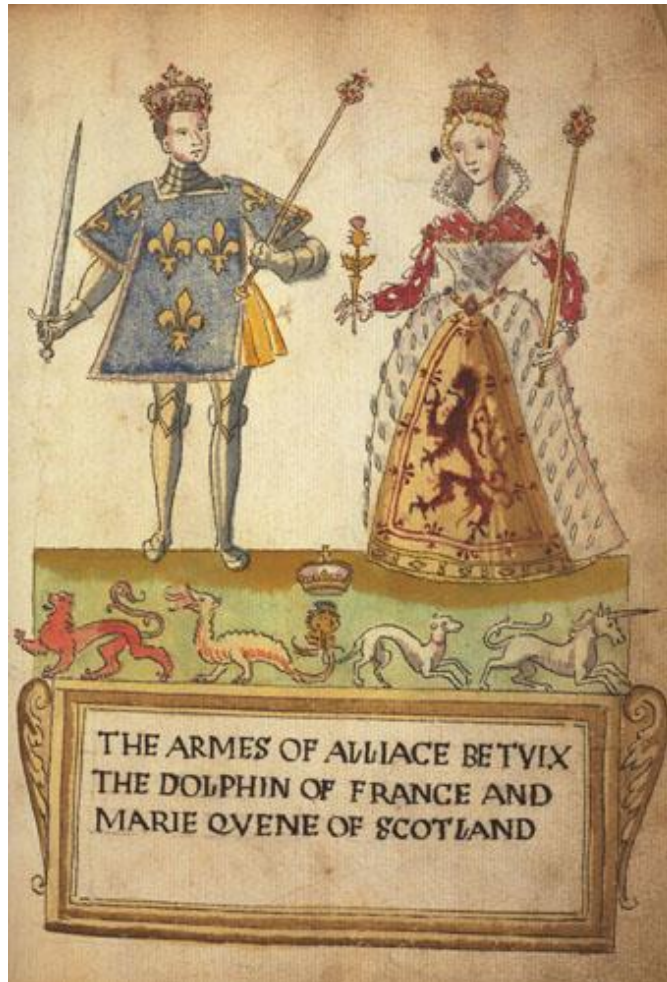[264] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 79.

Figure 7 "The Armes of Alliance betvix the Dolphin of France and Marie Qvene of Scotland," Forman Armorial, c. 1558, National Library of Scotland, Adv.MS.31.4.2.,f.19r.

The Renaissance emblem is even more significant as well as the essence of the iconographical analysis conducted by art historians, Michael Bath and Malcolm Jones. They argue that the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard is based on two separate emblems adopted from the French writer, historian, and emblem collector, Claude Paradin's (c.1510-c.1573) *Devises heroiques* (*The Heroicall Devises*) published in 1557.[265] The placard's meaning and message can only be understood, Bath and Jones claim, once knowledge is acquired about the original forms and meanings of the two shown emblems – the mermaid and the hare below her. In Paradin's

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[265] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 226. The first edition was already published in 1551.

emblem book, there is an illustration of a hare encircled by swords, titled *Malo undique clades* ('For the wicked man destruction on all sides') (Figure 7) which is without any doubt the closest in resemblance to the placard's lower emblem. The Paradinian emblem is accompanied by a verse, which references the biblical story (Deuteronomy 32.25), according to which God converses with Moses and states that all will be contemned who fails recognizing Moses as God of Israel, for which God declares that 'The sword shall destroy them and from without, and terror within.'[266] Thus, according to Bath and Jones' interpretation, the swords are not heroic or sexual symbols, instead they refer to Bothwell's already-tangible punishment and destruction for his guilt in the regicide and adultery as per the contemporary political affairs suggested.

The placard's upper emblem depicting Mary as a mermaid is likewise connected to Paradin's work.[267] It is important to note, that this second and most recent interpretation does not analyze the plausible meanings of the mermaid-figure but the whip-like object in her right hand. The authors argue that it is a falconry lure taken from Paradin's *Spe illectat inani* ('It allures with vain hope') (Figure 8), rather than a dolphin's fin referencing Mary's former-alliance with the dauphin. According to the emblem's verse, the lure symbolizes how earthly things play with human morals, like the lure with its pretty feathers does with the falcon only to catch it.[268] Thus, a moral lesson comes to the surface once again, referring to Mary's beauty and enchanting nature, which attacks men only to distract them. The authors argue, that it is only now that the original message of the placard might be discovered, that is Mary by waiving the lure in front of Bothwell, she attempts to attract him, which was successful as they allegedly committed adultery, but for Bothwell the punishment is already lined up for he was the one accused of committing the

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[266] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Bills," 227.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.

regicide.[269] Following the Paradinian emblem's function, the placard aimed to show two sides of Mary, on the one as a beautiful woman, on the other like the sirens were enchanting creatures are dangerous beasts as well, who lure unwary victims into their ends, like Mary did.
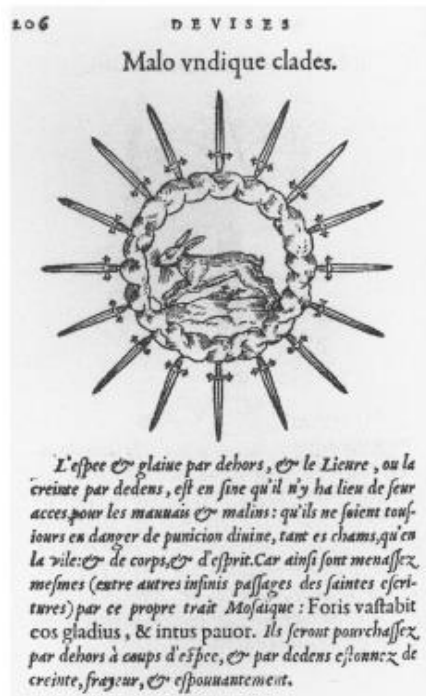

Figure 9 *Malo undique clades*, from Claude Paradin's *Devises heroïques*, 1557.

Figure 8 *Spe illectat inani*, from Claude Paradin's *Devises heroïques*, 1557.

    While Barrett-Graves did not speculate on who the maker of the placard was, Bath and Jones assembled a theory. They argue that due to the complexity of the placard's iconography, the creator was likely a well-educated individual, familiar with both the Scripture and Paradin's work.[270] Therefore, they suggested David Ferguson, the minister of Dunfermlie and defender of John Knox, as well as the first known collector of Scottish proverbs as the creator, for Ferguson had the necessary background knowledge to produce such propaganda.[271]

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[269] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 228.
[270] Ibid., 230.
[271] Ibid., 238-239.

While Bath and Jones in their iconographical analysis stated that the creator of the placard was likely an amateur who did not receive proper training appropriate for early modern artists,[272] such a suggestion is somewhat unconvincing. Indeed, the sketch does not resemble the composition and technique typical for Renaissance painting, however, there are several details on the sketch indicating otherwise. The most obvious is the presence of perspective, particularly on the table or bench the mermaid is placed on, and the land or island the hare is standing on. The alternation of light and shadow most visible on the blades of the swords and on the mermaid's fin, is likewise a technique that absolute amateurs might not apply.

The mermaid's facial expressions are another telling sign of its detailed complexity, but they are simultaneously identifying features of Mary. As Andrew Lang, expert in Marian portraiture, pointed out that Mary's infamous facial characteristics are recognizable on the mermaid's face.[273] The thin eyebrows, long nose, oval face, small mouth, and sidelong glance were equally noticeable on the early crayon sketches made by Francois Clouet at the French court. Furthermore, if a closer observation is conducted about the position of the mermaid's hands and the hare's legs, it is strange to realize that they approximately are anatomically correct. The placard, thus showcases an interesting juxtaposition between a resemblance of a childish cartoon-like sketch and a demonstration of a skilled hand. While if the Paradinian emblems were adopted for the placard's purpose, it might be that artist traced the two emblems, yet the complexity of the subject matter, along with the invested time for anatomically correct details, shading, and coloring implies an at least not-entirely-amateur artist.[274]

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[272] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 230.
[273] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels of Mary Stuart," 152.
[274] It is not entirely unlikely that there was more than one individual working on the content and composition of the 'Mermaid and hare' placard, where one person was the creator of the symbolism and another the artist.

<u>The placard's reception</u>

While Barrett-Graves does not elaborate much on the audience of the placard rather puts more emphasis on the artist's intentions and the plausible message it aimed to communicate, Bath and Jones speculate on whether Scottish people understood the complicated iconography, and the Paradinian and biblical references at all the placard showcased. They ultimately concluded that it is highly likely that the majority of the Scots misunderstood the deep political meaning of the placard due to lack of proper biblical and iconographical knowledge.[275] Without the knowledge of the biblical story and Paradin's book, it is impossible to arrive at the placard's meaning as per Bath and Jones. According to Barrett-Graves, without the familiarity of the Forman Roll, discovering the true dishonor of Mary's status is likewise unlikely.

But was it necessary to understand all emblematic and biblical references for the early modern viewer to grasp the defamatory and political agenda of the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard? Or was it sufficient for the audience to recognize Mary's character as a mermaid, based on its culturally embedded[276] association with seduction and prostitution to acknowledge the defamatory nature of the placard? The immediate association of the mermaid with wantonness and its connection with the rumors surrounding Mary and Bothwell, next to their inscribed initials, the artist perhaps already achieved its aim to slander Mary's image in the eyes of the public. Thus, further symbolic references to Paradin, the Bible, and the armorial roll was not an absolute necessity.

Whichever interpretation we might settle with, the maker was evidently an educated individual, who was either familiar with Paradin's emblematic works and scriptural teachings, or

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[275] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 230.
[276] See more on this topic in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973).

with royal armorial rolls and Mary's official royal portraits painted in France. If the placard aimed to target the most educated within the community, intellectual audiences, however, might have recognized such references through emblematic and scriptural knowledge, which if they did, such a rich iconology only enhanced the political, religious, and moral meanings of the placard. While the placard's iconography is highly complex, it is almost certain that simply the subject matter and minimal iconographical analysis – as much as connecting the mermaid with lustful behavior – already reached the viewer, who if was not able to solve all symbolic meanings, certainly recognized the sexual ties between Mary and Bothwell. Thus, their adultery and rumors about Bothwell's involvement in the murder automatically became clear. If a pragmatic approach is applied, placing Mary's persona in the allegory of a *femme fatale*, and Bothwell within the swords, through symbolism the placard's didactic function is evident.

Unfortunately for Mary, her association with the mermaid figure from this point on remained with her. Both accounts, Barrett-Graves and Bath and Jones mention the later Shakespearean reference, that might be connected to the placard. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600), Shakespeare writes about a mermaid, which was seen on a dolphin's, which is frequently dedicated to Mary and her French relations.[277] An earlier account by Edmund Spencer in his most famous *The Faerie Queene*, Mary appears as Acrasia who is often referred to as "wanton-lady," "seductress," "enchantress," and "witch," which according to Barrett-Graves was not far from the Protestant nobility's opinion of Mary.[278] Surely, Protestant lords deliberately painted a dishonorable picture of Mary, as fearing many political decisions she would make based on her

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[277] Bath and Jones, "'Placardes and Billis," 226. Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 69.
[278] Barrett-Graves, "Mermaids, Sirens, and Mary," 82-84.

Catholic and French background. However, much like the anti-female polemics were answered with apologetic defenses, so was Mary's image subject to defense propaganda.

Mary as the biblical heroine Susanna

Biblical Susanna is a Babylonian young wife, who was disturbed by two elders from her community while bathing. When the elders failed to lure her into sexual relationship, in fear, they accused Susanna of adultery, for which she was found guilty and sentenced to death. Susanna was, however, saved by Daniel who upon showcasing evidence against the elders, quickly subverted the scene and it was now the elders who awaited their ends.[279] When on the *Sheffield portrait* (Figure 9) depicting Mary in her tenth year of English captivity, Susanna's story was enclosed in a cross-shaped ornament attached to a rosary hanging from Mary's waist, it was for the purpose to deliver a specific Catholic-fueled message at a specific period in Mary's political career. While Mary's situation did not entirely align with Susanna's, the biblical heroine was not a haphazard choice, since through her story Mary aimed to promote both her innocence and the approaching justice as well as punishment for those who wrongly accused her.

Mary as Susanna in polemics

It was perhaps precisely due to one eminent example of apologetic polemics, that Mary's life was compared to the Babylonian Susanna's, which according to Renaissance scholar Jeremy L. Smith, resonated so strongly that by the time of Mary's execution in 1587 in Fotheringhay Castle, Susanna was considered as Mary's alter ego.[280] Mentions of Mary as Susanna was first made by John Leslie, her most loyal defender and advocate on the 1568 trial in London, where

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[279] Book of Daniel, Chapter 13, 'Susanna and the Elders.'
[280] Jeremy L. Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna in Catholic Propaganda," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 73 (2010), 220.

Mary's fate after her forced abdication, exile to England, and alleged involvement in the regicide was decided. A year after the trial, Leslie composed the arguments into his tract, *A Defence of the Honour of the Right Highe, Mightye and Noble Princess Marie Quene of Scotlande*, published in 1569[281] (parallel with Buchanan's defamatory *Detection*,) in which Leslie declared that "this good lady is unjustly accused, and wrongfully oppressed, as good Susanna was."[282]

Perhaps the Susanna parallel seemed necessary as by the time Mary arrived to England to seek her cousin, Elizabeth I's help her name was associated with adultery and murder. Mary herself, according to Smith, felt the need for clearing her name from such incriminations, stating that her accusers were the "inventors and doers of the said crime that would imput to us."[283] This resonates in Leslie's *Defence*, as Mary, like the innocent victim Susanna, bears the punishment of her accusers. In the polemic, he resembled the biblical scenario, where Mary was Susanna, the Earls of Morton and Murray the accusing elders, Leslie was Daniel who advocated for the innocent victim, the Elizabethan committee as the judges, and Elizabeth herself was assigned the role of God. The tract was written to Elizabeth, quite strategically in trying to influence her decision about Mary, thus cleverly no mentions were made of Mary's Catholic faith or claim to the English throne.[284] In the end of the re-created trial scene, Leslie attempted to pro-figure the outcome of Mary's trial suggesting the same subverted faith as Susanna's implying the accusers' (Murray and Morton's) punishment by stating,

"We can tell you, that you altogether resemble the two old wicked governors that wrongfully accused her, as an adulteress being the adulterers them selves, and brought her into danger of present death by their false testimony (as you have done with your well intending Queen) for that she would not consent and yield to the olde lusty lecherous Rebelles. We can tell you, that if you do not the sooner repeat, you see by example of them, What your reward shall

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[281] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 217.
[282] John Leslie, *A defence of the honour of the right highe, mightye and noble Princesse Marie Quene of Scotlande and dowager of France with a declaration aswell of her right, title & intereste to the succession of the crowne of Englande, as that the regimente of women ys conformable to the lawe of God and nature* (Eusebius Dicæophile: London, 1969), 45.
[283] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 212.
[284] Ibid., 213.

be, And that in the mean while God has as wonderfully delivered out of your hands this our innocent Susanna, as ever he did the other from them."[285]

While Mary's faith failed to align with Susanna's, ultimately the parallel between her and the biblical heroine remained with Mary even after her execution. Smith claims that Mary's image as Susanna, and the connection between the two women's unjust suffering was a favored rhetorical tool amongst Mary's defenders. Besides Leslie's *Defence* there were another two tracts which presented the Susanna parallel with Mary. The anonymously written *L'innocence de Marie Royne d'Ecosse* (*The Innocence of Mary Queen of Scots*) appeared in 1572, representing the second stage of the Susanna symbol.[286] Consequent to the trial declaring Mary guilty, the Susanna parallel was used in sorrow to show the injustice of Mary's enemies. According to Smith, *L'Innocence* was tailored to the French audience where a marginal note indicated that Susanna's story is accurate for the Queen of Scots'.[287] Another of this tract's significance is that it claims that Mary's unjust incarceration was a result of political agendas from the French side, as France omitted intervening in her case in order to stay in harmony with England and avoid disturbing their alliance with them forged against Spain.[288] Finally, the third stage is represented by Adam Blackwood, Mary's eminent apologist's tract called, *Le Martyre de la Royne d'Escossee* (The Martyrdom of the Queen of Scots) published in 1587. It was one of the most prominent accounts of Mary's execution based on her French ladies' eyewitness reports. In such tracts, Susanna appears as a political tool for enhancing the innocence of Mary, who was wrongfully punished, to show rage and fury of her supporters as well as the unlimited wickedness of her opponents most significantly her accusers.[289]

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[285] Leslie, *Defence*, 45.
[286] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 215.
[287] Ibid., 216. "histoire de Susanne bien accomode a la royne d'Ecosse"
[288] Ibid., 216-217.
[289] Ibid., 218, 220.

Mary's resonance with Susanna, however, was not only visible through the polemics but visual portrayal as well, for which the former perhaps provided the motivation. Assuming Mary's lack of agency in positioning herself as Susanna to transmit a certain message, however, would be wrong as the biblical story served as strong Catholic propaganda in a pivotal time during Mary's captivity. The next section looks at the *Sheffield portrait*, imbued with Catholic symbolism, which represented a key part of Mary's propaganda efforts.

Catholic propaganda on the *Sheffield portrait*

One of the most widely discussed portraits of Mary claimed by Andrew Lang, expert in the Queen of Scots' authentic portraits, the *Sheffield portrait* (see Figure 9) belongs to the so-called Sheffield series, dated 1578, and signed by an artist calling themselves "P. Oudry."[290] This portrait shows Mary in her tenth year of English captivity when thirty-six-years old. The title stems from the name of the castle where Mary was held for a year in the company of a Protestant noble English woman, Elizabeth 'Bess' Hardwick. The life-size portrait is well-debated in regards to the identity of the artist, its chronological authenticity, and its iconographical purpose. While British art historian and once-director of the National Portrait Gallery, Sir Lionel Cust, who cataloged the authentic images of Mary,[291] argues that the portrait was made for Bess of Hardwick, Andrew Lang claims that it could only be made for a Catholic sympathizer given the heavy emphasis on Catholic symbolism, such as the Latin inscription and the rosary and crucifix Mary wears.[292]

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[290] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 212.

[291] Lionel Cust, *Notes on the Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots: Based on the Researches of the Late Sir George Scharf, Rewritten in the Light of New Information* (London & Edinburgh: Ballantyne Press, 1903).

[292] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 212-215. Four of the portraits from the Sheffield series illustrate Mary with the Susanna ornament: Hatfield, Cobham and National Portrait Gallery, and the Hardwick. I used the Hardwick version for the purposes of this chapter.

The Susanna and the Elders story was placed in the cross-shaped ornament's center, attached to a rosary hanging from Mary's waist. Around the centerpiece, a Latin inscription is visible stating 'angustiae undique' ('beset on all sides') along with a capital 'S' letter on each arm of the cross. [293] Following the stages of political uses of the Susanna motive, the *Sheffield portrait* belongs to the second stage, depicting Mary as the biblical Susanna to showcase sorrow for the unjust incarceration of an innocent victim. Mary's agency comes to light in Smith's study, as the scholar traced her letters written contemporary to the inscribed date on the portrait, from which one of them reveals the queen's request for the ornament. In her letter to James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, her ambassador in Paris Mary wrote,

> "Obtain for me, I pray you, a fine gold mirror, to hang from the waist, with a chain to hang it to; and let there be upon the mirror a cipher of the Queen and mine and some appropriate motto which the Cardinal, my uncle will suggest."[294]

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[293] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 209.
[294] Ibid., 216. Mary's letter to the archbishop is dated as January 9, 1575, now in Edinburgh, Scottish Catholic archives.

Figure 10 Dedicated to "P. Oudry," *Mary, Queen of Scots*, from the Sheffield series, 1578, National Trust, Hardwick Hall.

Text and image, like in the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard, meet on the *Sheffield portrait* as well, which is a reference to the emblematic way of seeing favored by sixteenth-century Europe. The Renaissance emblem was an essential tool of message transmission, as Smith claims when the Latin inscription along with the other Catholic symbols are read together, Mary's political arsenal can be realized.[295]

The Latin text in the upper right-corner praises Mary for her dynastic status as Queen of Scotland and Dowager Queen of France.[296] The rosary and the cross are obvious symbols for Mary's devotion to the Catholic faith, which paired with the biblical Susanna's presence imply a powerful political agenda. Susanna, the symbol of innocence, aims to trigger the viewer's sympathy towards the captive Mary, who already endured ten years for uncommitted crimes, which were forced upon her by her opponents, as the motto 'beset on all sides' suggests.[297]

The year of 1578, shown in the painting, was a crucial year in Mary's captive life. According to Smith, this year was when her faith had the most potential to complement Susanna's.[298] This was due to her son, James VI's year of maturity and beginning of personal rule, in which Mary hoped to join him as co-regnant. Hence the capital 'S' letters in the arms of the cross are for 'Stuart,' an association of Mary with James.[299] Thus, conceivably, Mary herself fabricated the *Sheffield portrait*'s iconography and shaped its message, therefore her agency in this portrait seems tangible compared to the placard in whose making she clearly had no impact. While Mary through Susanna likely aimed to present herself as an innocent victim, as Smith claims, the

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[295] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 216.
[296] Jeremy L. Smith, "Revisiting the origins of the Sheffield series of portraits of Mary Queen of Scots," *The Burlington Magazine* 152, no. 1285 (2010), 212. Latin inscription: 'MARIA D. G. SCOTIAE PIISIMA REGINA. FRANCIAE DOWERIA, ANNO AETATIS REGNI, 36, ANGLICAE CAPTIVAE, 10, S.H. 1578.' (Mary by the grace of God most pious queen of Scotland. dowager of France. In the year of her age and reign, 36, of her English captivity 10. In the year of salvation of men, 1578).
[297] Ibid., 216-217.
[298] Ibid., 218.
[299] Ibid., 217.

portrait is also "an ingenious message of political self-assertion,"[300] indicating hope for Mary's supporters by projecting her as the true Catholic queen of Scotland without implying any sign for the quite opposite faith she was destined for.[301]

A mysterious audience

Mentions of the several mysterious circumstances that surrounded the 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard were already made. Such unsolved aspects were not less present around the making and purpose of the *Sheffield portrait*. Uncertainty about the identity of the artist was already stated, as well as the debates on whether it was a Jacobean portrait or one made contemporary to Mary's English captivity. Even less is known about the consumers and recipient of the portrait. While the *Sheffield portrait* seemed to be a significant tool for Mary's propaganda purposes, this specific version was found in the Hardwick Hall, possibly left behind when Mary was moved from the Sheffield Castle.[302] Thus, if the portrait served such an important political purpose, the question might be raised about its negligence upon the move. A plausible answer is that, indeed, this portrait was a copy of one of the originals from the Sheffield series as experts have been speculated in the past.[303]

The portrait's plausible recipient is even more puzzling. Several audiences might have been subject to Mary's political purposes in 1578. It is not entirely unlikely that the *Sheffield portrait* was made for James as a reminder of his unjustly captive Stuart mother upon his maturity, and as motivation to intervene in her imprisonment. On the other hand, the portrait could have been dedicated to Mary's opponents and accusers, with a didactic function indicating a warning of her

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[300] Smith, "Mary Queen of Scots as Susanna," 218.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 146.
[303] Ibid., 145-152.

approaching vindication and her detractors' punishment. Certainly, the portrait essentially aimed to reach the most politically influential and powerful circles, who Mary believed were able to directly help her and her cause or indirectly through convincing her son, James to do the same. James' most immediate circle, therefore, is a possible audience, since according to Smith, the same year as the portrait was made, in 1578, it was most likely that Mary would join James on the Scottish throne.[304] It was during this period, that the Pope, who advocated for Mary's reinstatement sent John Leslie, one of Mary's most faithful supporters, to be James' chief advisor. Although, as Smith points out, Leslie never reached Scotland, significant efforts were made to manipulate James to Mary's favor.[305] James, however, was surrounded by Protestant lords, who opposed the reinstatement of the Catholic Mary, not to mention James himself was a Protestant too. Thus, a joint-reign with the deeply Catholic Mary would pose many difficulties.

Andrew Lang, perhaps correctly assumed that the portrait's heavy Catholic iconography required a likewise Catholic audience.[306] Thus, Mary's most loyal Catholic supporters would be the most obvious and most receptive audiences. Potentially, Mary was inspired by Leslie's *Defence* in which he compared her to the biblical Susanna. As Mary was a devoted Catholic, she favored the parallel and found many similarities between her and Susanna's story. As Susanna relied on prayer, as did perhaps Mary believed in divine aid that would turn her faith following the example of Susanna. Thus, Mary, still herself nurturing hope, fabricated an image of herself that projected not only her innocence, piety, and entitlements but the same hope for his followers, thus keeping her 'legend' alive.

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[304] Smith, "Revisiting the origins," 218.
[305] Ibid., 217.
[306] Lang, "The Portraits and Jewels," 146.

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This chapter surveyed two different propagandistic visual portrayals of Mary, Queen of Scots, which both appeared at pivotal times to enhance and ultimately achieve a certain political agenda. The defamatory 'Mermaid and the Hare' placard followed the rumors about Mary and Bothwell's unchaste affair and the regicide, where the *Sheffield portrait*, assumably made a decade later, projected the queen in a highly Catholic setting, as a comparison between her and the biblical Susanna. Both associations, the mermaid and Susanna, sustained after Mary's execution just as they lingered around her in her lifetime. This illustrates a strange dichotomy between wantonness and divinity within Mary's persona. The popular use of the Renaissance emblem is present on both visuals' iconography, suggesting the possibility of multiple interpretations, yet the understanding of complicated symbolic references was perhaps not always necessary for the reception of its ultimate message. When read collectively with contemporary political circumstances, the placard as well as the *Sheffield portrait* becomes part of the available sources promoting either Mary's abdication or defending her name, royal status, and piety.

Conclusion

As Mary Stuart was one of the most controversial figures of sixteenth-century Europe, it is hardly surprising that her persona was mythologized. Literature on her tragic life, brief personal rule, and path to her downfall is extensive. The most often evoked element to explain Mary's undoing, was her Catholic faith, for which she was prepared to spend her blood, as Mary herself declared moments before her execution.[307] This project departed from the secondary literature which attempted to analyze the different factors that played a part in the Queen of Scots' change in public perception, unfavored reign, and forced abdication in 1568.

Taking into consideration the religious struggle the Reformation brought to the British Isles, the appearance of contemporary anti-female pamphlets heavily imbued with Protestant rationale and rhetoric, along with the continuing dispute of women and their suitability for rulership, it became evident that Mary's ill-fate stemmed from a combination of different factors. To her confessional otherness as a devoted Catholic amongst the Protestant Scots, Mary's aesthetic features and femininity joined, which can be equally grasped on her contemporary visual depictions as well. Thus, in this study I aimed to bring together the literary and visual worlds, to discover correlation between the two. I have attempted to show that the change in Mary's public perception both in word and image, is achieved through various tools emerging or reappearing due to contemporary cultural, political, and confessional circumstances. It became apparent that both the pamphlets and visual material served propagandistic purposes, which when taken together transmit a strong political message. Furthermore, the findings suggest an unfortunate timing for Mary's personal rule in Scotland, which awaited her with a Protestant, patriarchal environment along with the power-hungry nobility and subjects who had a right to intervene in governmental

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[307] See Sir Robert Wingfield, *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*, ed. Andrew McLean (Isle of Bute: Mount Stuart, 2007).

affairs. This suggests an environment where Mary had limited room to establish her independent authority.

This study made an attempt to investigate Mary's persona and political career from a different angle. By simultaneously observing Mary's polemical presence and visual depictions approximately from the same time period, showcases a rarely used approach when conducting research on her. Correlation between word and image, however, illustrates how early modern culture absorbed and treated certain situations. At the same time, it also shows how the written word accompanied by visual material is able to strengthen one another, while each having propagandistic power of their own. While this study attempted to show the conditions of early modern queenship from Mary's case, as well as sixteenth-century gender roles, it is based on a certain set of sources both literary and visual. It should be taken as a foundation for further research between word and image. Analysis on further polemics both anti-female and apologetic as well as the analysis of visual materials of different mediums shall provide a more crystallized perspective on the correlation between the two disciplines.

While Mary was defamed through literature and art, deposed from the Scottish throne, and executed for treason, her political career survived long after her death. In the introduction, I quoted James V's words prophesizing on the end of the Stuart dynasty upon the news of the newborn Mary's sex. This could not be further from how future events unfolded. Through Mary, the Stuart dynasty lived on to see the union of the Scottish and English crowns in 1603, and a century later the union of the two kingdoms. Thus, an investigation of Mary in a broader scope provides fertile ground for further research not only within the fields of gender, politics and religion but international relations as well.

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