

MARY STUART AS A BIBLIOPHILE

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FEW rulers of sixteenth century Europe are better known or more discussed than Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. Highly praised by some writers for her charm and talents, she has also been sharply denounced by others for the general ineptness of her reign and the political problems she failed to solve. 'The daughter of debate, that eke doth discord raise,' was the apt characterization that Queen Elizabeth I made of her arch rival, and time has not essentially changed the validity of this judgment. Although the complexities of sixteenth century politics in which Mary Stuart became deeply involved have been carefully studied by historians, very little attention has been given to the Scottish Queen as a book collector. The purpose of this short paper is to suggest that she might well be considered as one of the noted bibliophiles of Western Europe in the turbulent period of the Reformation.

During her early childhood Mary Stuart lived amidst cultivated and refined surroundings. At the age of five she left her native Scotland to live in France at the luxurious court of the Valois monarch Henry II and his Italian born wife, the famous Catherine de' Medici. Both the King and the Queen of France were book collectors, many of their literary treasures eventually becoming part of the holdings of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. Diane de Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois, the proud beauty who became the King's mistress, was also a lover of richly ornamented books and fine bindings. Her library was housed in the sumptuous château of Anet, situated in northern France between the rivers Eure and Vègre. Some of the volumes in her collection were magnificently bound and embellished with a closely interlaced monogram "H.D." Diane befriended Mary in her early years in France and may well have influenced her literary tastes. Because of the influence of the Court the acquisition of libraries became a fashionable aspect of social life among the aristocracy in sixteenth century France.

James V, King of Scotland, and Mary Stuart's father, likewise collected books, but his library was destroyed in 1543 by English invaders, and no catalogue thereof seems to have survived. It is not known how many books Mary Stuart may have left behind her in France when she returned to Scotland in August, 1561, at the age of nineteen. That her literary possessions in Scotland were fairly extensive is proved by the existence of two separ-

ate inventories, one dated in 1569 and the other in 1578. Unfortunately both inventories are incomplete, making it difficult to identify clearly some of the books which are enumerated, to say nothing of particular editions to which they belong. The Queen's books at the royal palace of Holyrood were kept in a room carpeted with green cloth and catalogued under three major divisions – Greek, Latin, and modern languages.

Among the Greek books Homer, Herodotus, Sophocles, Euripedes, Isocrates, two copies of Lucian, Athenaeus, all of Plato, Ptolemy's *Geography*, and Demosthenes' *Orations* are included. Further items in the Greek collection were St. John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Epistles of St. Paul*, a volume of commentaries on St. Paul, the dictionary of Hesychius of Alexandria, and the *Progymnasmata* (i.e. preliminary exercises) of Aphthonius. The last named work was commonly used as a text for rhetoric in Mary Stuart's day and was designed to introduce pupils to the art of speaking.

Latin and French translations from the Greek language constituted part of Mary Stuart's library. There are Latin translations of the historian Diodorus Siculus of *Agyrium* and of Diogenes Laertius, author of a preserved compendium of ancient philosophy. A Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geography* beautifully illuminated for a member of the great Florentine family of the Frescobaldi and magnificently bound for Mary Stuart was one of the treasures of her collection. The device in the center of this binding was composed of the Greek letters Mu and Phi, for Mary and her first husband Francis. The letters were interlaced so as to read equally well upside down, and the French crown surmounts the whole affair. Characteristic of that age was the use of an anagram surrounding the device, namely, 'Sa vertu matire'. French translations of Herodotus, the *Cyropaedia* of Xenophon, Aristotle's *Ethics*, the *Timaeus* and the *Symposium* of Plato, Hippocrates, the *Olynthiacs* of Demosthenes, Herodian, and the history of Ethiopia by Heliiodorus, bishop of Tricca, were also included in the Queen's library.

The field of Latin literature is less extensively represented. There are several volumes of Cicero, including three volumes printed on vellum, two copies of Vergil, and a volume of commentaries on his *Georgics*. Cornelius Nepos, Horace, Lucius Columella, St. Augustine, two works of Boethius, and the military compilation of Flavius Vegetius are also mentioned among the varied holdings. Livy is represented together with a copy of the annotations of the Swiss scholar Henricus Loritus. There are two French and Latin dictionaries and the *Cornucopia sive Linguae Latinae Commentarii* of Nicholas Rerotti, bishop of Siponto.

Medieval and Renaissance Latin prose is represented among other items by the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony, Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gods*, and the *Roma Instaurata* of Flavio

Biondo. Four volumes of Latin poetry are listed, namely, the *Carmina* of the Italian Petrus Bargaesus, Louis Leroy's elegy on Henry II of Valois, Buchanan's translation of the Psalms, and the Epithalamium on the Queen's marriage with Lord Darnley by Thomas Craig of Riccarton.

One may note further the Italian versions of Sallust and of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and French versions of Sallust, Ovid's *Epistles*, Valerius Maximus, Lucan, Suetonius, and some of the historian Orosius. There is a French translation of the great collection of saints' lives (the *Golden Legend*) by Jacobus de Voragine; Platina's *Lives of the Popes*, Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, and the *Cosmography* of Petrus Apianus also appear in French translation.

Italian books include Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto, the *Triumphs* of Petrarch, the *Asolani* of Cardinal Bembo, and an Italian version of the *Marcus Aurelius* of Antonio de Guevara, bishop of Cadiz. Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* was represented in a French translation. Two Spanish books are listed – a volume of chronicles and an edition of the *Cancionero de Romances*. There are French translations of the romance of *Palmarin* and of the still more popular romance of *Amadis de Gaul*.

French books are more extensively represented than those in any other language. History books abound. One may note especially the chronicles of Froissart and of Monstrelet, the work of Jean Lemaire of Belges, and an account of the first crusade by Philip Aubert of Massoigne. There are also Jean Bouchet's genealogy of the kings of France printed at Paris in 1537, Charles Estienne's account of the history of Lorraine and Flanders, the *Chronicle of Scotland* by Denis Sauvage, historiographer of King Henry II, Guillaume Paradin's *Chronicle of Savoy* and the history of his own time. Charles du Moulin's work on the progress of the realm of France, printed at Paris in 1561, and Guillaume de la Perrière's book on politics are also included. Prose fiction is represented by the romances of Jason, Lancelot du Lac, Gyron the Courteous, Gadifer, and Perceforest. Poetry is not lacking either from the French collection. Alain Chartier, Clement Marot, Joachim du Bellay, Mare Claude du Buttet, and Pierre de Ronsard were all included in Mary's Stuart's library, for she was much interested in this art. Indeed, Pierre de Ronsard taught verse writing himself to the Queen of Scots.

English books are few in the Scottish Queen's collection. This is not surprising since it is only after her departure from Scotland forever that she devoted some serious time to the study of that language. The *Acts of the Parliament of Queen Mary Tudor*, the *Acts of the Parliament of James V of Scotland*, and a catechism seem to be the chief works in English in Mary Stuart's library.

The religious controversy of the sixteenth century is reflected also in the royal collections. Writings of Martin Luther, the elder Osiander, Peter Martyr, and of René Benoist, the erudite doctor of the Sorbonne who accompanied the Queen of Scots from France, are all included. Calvin's Institutes is represented in a French version.

Only a few manuscripts are mentioned. One was a copy of her speech written in Latin in defence of learned women which at the age of thirteen she delivered in the great hall of the Louvre before Henry II and the assembled French court. Another was a finely written folio dealing with the household expences of the Regent Arran in 1546 and which is preserved among the public records of Scotland.

The catalogue which enumerates these literary treasures ends with a note of six Mass books burned by the Regent Murray, the Queen's illegitimate half-brother. In fact, not many of the Queen's books seem to have survived. The dispersed and destruction of books at the time of the Scottish Reformation has been alleged by the historian John Spottiswoode, and he is confirmed by a witness of 1562 who bewails the 'insane fury' which not only casts down images but also burns the writings of the Church Fathers. Nonetheless, Mary Stuart's library assuredly was one of the most notable collections of books assembled north of the Tweed in the sixteenth century and is one of the interesting reflections of the cultural interests of princes in that turbulent age.

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