

The Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots

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Room 1

Exhibition introduction (with large portrait)

The Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots

Heroine or whore, martyr or heretic, victim or villain – Scotland’s most controversial monarch has been endlessly reimagined over the centuries since her execution.

The Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots is inspired by this enduring interest in the life and death of the Scottish queen and brings to the forefront some of the questions around authenticity and truth that were, and still are, at the heart of the debate around her character.

Drawing on the vast array of objects related to Mary Queen of Scots in the University of Glasgow’s collections, the exhibition starts with objects dating from her own time, that bring us as close as we could ever be to the ‘real Mary’. It then turns to the countless conflicting, emotionally charged and sometimes enigmatic depictions of Mary over the centuries, before considering what she means to us today.

Room 1 introduction (grey)

Princess, Queen and Captive

Mary Stuart was the daughter of James V of Scotland and his second wife, Mary of Guise. Her mother was a powerful French noblewoman whose family's social status was second only to that of the royal family in France.

As a Scottish monarch with strong claims to the English throne, Mary's status was attractive to both the French and English crowns. Henry VIII's attempt to abduct the five-year-old queen and marry her to his son, the future Edward VI, led to her departure for France, where she was betrothed to the French crown prince, the Dauphin Francis.

Mary's eventful life can be likened to a three-act play, where she is in turn a French princess, a Scottish queen and a captive.

Theme introduction (cream)

Act One: The French Princess (1548–61)

Mary is raised in France as a devout Catholic princess at the court of King Henri II alongside her future husband, Francis. She briefly rules with him as queen consort. However, Francis dies six months after their coronation and in 1561, aged 18, Mary returns to Scotland.

Coin labels

Top

Mary Queen of Scots Testoon

1553

Silver

Scotland

GLAHM:38996

Coinage was crucial in spreading messages of legitimacy and an important symbol of royal authority. Mary was depicted on pennies in the earliest years of her reign, but these were small coins with an indistinct, stylised portrait. The issue of this testoon, in 1553, finally introduced a recognisable image of Scotland's child queen, here aged 11.

Bottom left

Mary and Francis Testoon
(obverse)
1558
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:14622

Mary and Francis Testoon
(reverse)
1558
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:39003

During her regency, between 1554 and 1559, Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, ensured that when new coinage was struck, her family symbols appeared in the design. On this testoon, issued the year Francis and Mary were married, crosses of Lorraine flank the 'FM' monogram on one side, while the cross potent – with crossbars at the four ends – associated with the House of Lorraine is shown side by side with the royal arms on the other.

Bottom right

Mary and Francis Testoon
(obverse)
1560
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:39578

Mary and Francis Testoon
(reverse)
1560
Silver
Scotland
S/2958
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

This coin dates from the one year when Mary and Francis were monarchs of both Scotland and France. Gone are

symbols associated with Mary of Guise – who died the year before – or Francis’s status as a dauphin. Instead the reverse shows a crowned fleur-de-lys and thistle in honour of the royal couple. On the obverse three prominent fleur-de-lys sit opposite the lion rampant to celebrate their joint kingship of not just one, but two countries.

Book labels (cream, left to right)

Letter of immunity... granted by Queen Mary and her mother, Queen Mary of Lorraine, in favour of the University from the taxation granted by the clergy of Scotland to the crown

1556

GLA ASC GUA BL 486

Signed and sealed by the young queen’s mother on her behalf, this is one of three letters within the University collections issued during Mary’s time in France. Mary of Guise often used gifts such as clerical tax exemption to secure loyalty to Mary, who was now living permanently abroad (or so they thought). As the Protestant Reformation took hold in Scotland, the protection of Mary’s inheritance through such gifts would become increasingly difficult for the regent.

Los doze libros de le Eneida de Vergillio (The *Twelve Books of the Aeneid* by Virgil)

Antwerp: Jean Bellère, 1557

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Bb.4.16

The signature in this Spanish translation of Virgil has been attributed to a young Mary, but is open to debate. Hinting at the revival of interest in classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome across 16th century Europe, it matches what we know of Mary's library. Its previous owners include our founder, Dr William Hunter. Among the many 18th century personalities fascinated by the true nature of the Scottish queen, Hunter had a section dedicated to her in his library.

Theme introduction (grey)

Act Two: The Queen of Scots (1561–67)

In Mary's absence, Scotland outlaws the Catholic faith and adopts a hard-line Protestant church at the 'Reformation Parliament' of August 1560. As a Catholic queen in a Protestant country Mary initially faces difficulty, but quickly enacts a temporary settlement with the church. Her main political aims are to find a husband, produce an heir and have her claim to the English throne recognised.

She marries her second cousin Henry Stuart (whom she makes Lord Darnley), partly because his claim to the English throne is as strong as hers. They quickly produce a child, James, who would become James VI of Scotland and I of England, but Darnley proves himself unfit to rule. His murder two years into their marriage, and Mary's subsequent wedding a few months later to James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, triggers a short war against her, fuelled by accusations of murder and adultery.

Coin labels

Top

Mary Queen of Scots
Testoon (obverse)
1561
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:39589

Reverse
Mary Queen of Scots
Testoon (reverse)
1561
Silver
Scotland
S/2986
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

Regarded as the finest portrait of Mary on a coin, the first widowhood testoon portrays her as Queen of Scots and Queen Dowager of France. Mary reportedly had a personal interest in this particular coin, as it was based on a drawing taken from life presenting her as a fashionable Renaissance monarch. It suggests that she understood the importance of using coinage to promote her image upon her return to Scotland.

Bottom left

Mary Queen of Scots and Henry Lord Darnley Medal
1565
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:37190

Two almost identical medals were struck to celebrate the marriage of Mary and Henry, one depicting them uncrowned, as here, and another crowned. Heavy and valuable, they were intended as gifts and are among the few images of Mary that were made during her years in Scotland. Both refer to Darnley as King of Scots ('Rex Scotorum'), a title which Mary had bestowed on him, without the sanction of Parliament, on the eve of their wedding. Today, they are extremely rare.

Bottom right

Mary and Henry Ryal
(obverse)
1566
Silver
Scotland
S/5282
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

Mary and Henry Ryal
(reverse)
1566
Silver
Scotland
S/3007
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

With their unusual reverse design of a tortoise climbing a palm tree, ryals are perhaps the most iconic of coins associated with Mary. They were issued when Mary and Henry were Queen and King of Scots. The latest research suggests that the imagery was chosen as a personal message from Mary about the survival of the Stuart dynasty. Palms were associated with royal marriages and victory, tortoises with wisdom and determination. Both were symbols of fertility.

Book labels (grey, left to right)

The Actis and Constitiounis of the Realme of Scotland... and
in Tyme of Marie now Quene of Scottis Edinburgh: Robert
Lekpreuik, 1566

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Q.3.19

Monarchs had to make laws and manage justice: in her personal reign Mary held one substantial parliament (in 1563) and went on several 'progresses' or tours to dispense justice. This collection of Scotland's parliamentary laws was also produced in her personal reign. One of the first acts of propaganda by her son's party following her abdication was to release a similar volume of laws, with James' name on the frontispiece instead.

Blackhouse Charter: Queen Mary's Foundation of Bursaries
for Five Poor Children

GLA ASC GUA BL 394

1563

When Mary visited the University in the early 1560s (then on Glasgow's High Street), she was appalled by its neglected state, due to the Protestant Reformation and the flight of most of the Catholic staff. This charter records her grant of former monastic lands in the city to provide bursaries for five poor students. As a Renaissance queen, Mary had a strong interest in education, and acted as a patron to the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen and to the Scots College in France.

Theme introduction (red)

Act Three: The Captive (1567–87)

Mary is forced to abdicate and is held at Lochleven Castle for just under a year. She escapes, loses a crucial battle at Langside near Glasgow, and flees over the border to England, where she is placed under house arrest. She remains there for 19 years and is eventually executed for treason against Elizabeth I after a failed plot to seize the crown for herself.

Coin labels

Top

James VI Ryal (obverse)
1567
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:39010

James VI Ryal (reverse)
1570
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:14657

James VI's ryals are provocatively different to those from his mother's reign. First minted a month after her deposition by the 'king's party', this ryal was known as a 'sword dollar' due to the large sword pictured piercing Scotland's imperial crown. The coin's blunt symbolism was clearly an attack on Mary, with the reverse inscription embodying George Buchanan's idea that tyrannous monarchs can be justifiably removed: *'For me; against me if I deserve it.'*

Bottom left

James VI Ducat (obverse)
1580
Gold
Scotland
GLAHM:39014

James VI Ducat (reverse)
1580
Gold
Scotland
S/4827
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

This coin, issued 13 years after Mary's abdication, shows James at a comparable age to that of his mother in the 1553 testoon. Both denominations depict child monarchs dressed in the trappings of royalty, and share the biblical inscription also adopted by earlier Stuart monarchs: *'Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered.'*

Bottom right

Mary Queen of Scots Testoon
1553
Silver
Scotland
GLAHM:39528

Coinage has been appropriated not only for propaganda purposes but also to express dissent. Here, someone has deliberately defaced Mary's portrait, scarring the metal with deep gouges. We can only speculate as to when and why this occurred. Perhaps the damage was inflicted at the

time of issue, with the perpetrator wanting to leave a visceral mark of opposition to Mary's rule.

Book labels (red, left to right)

Richard Verstegan (c.1550–1640)

Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis (The Spectacle of the cruelties of the heretics of our time)

Antwerp, 1587

GLA ASC Sp Coll BC32-f.27

Mary's execution triggered an outpouring of Catholic outrage and grief across Europe. In France her death made for excellent propaganda for the Catholic League fighting against the Protestants. The Catholic campaigner Richard Verstegan (or Rowlands) produced many books about the suffering of English Catholics in the 1580s. Immediately after Mary's death he incorporated her story and a striking image of her execution, which was copied many times, into his collected 'Exhibition of Cruelties' against Catholic martyrs in England.

John Leslie (1527–96)

De origine, moribus, et rebus gestis Scotorum, libri decem... (Concerning the origin, behaviour, and deeds of the Scots, in ten books)

Rome: Populi Romani, 1578

GLA ASC Sp Coll Bi3-h.2

Besides tracts defending Mary, Leslie wrote this history of Scotland, which he published in exile in Rome. It includes an engraving depicting Mary and her son, which to this day is

considered likely to be based on a truthful likeness of Mary in later life. The text banners and symbolism all assert Mary's authority as the true reigning queen and advise her son James (made here to look much younger than his actual 12 years in 1578) to submit to his mother's rule.

George Buchanan (1506–82)

Ane detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes

London: John Day, 1571

GLA ASC Sp Coll Euing BD1-k.4

George Buchanan was a renowned European intellectual and writer, who returned to Scotland from Europe in Mary's entourage as her tutor. However, his family were also clients of the Lennoxes, and Buchanan turned spectacularly on Mary following the murder of Darnley. He was the mastermind behind the 'evil legend' that portrayed Mary as having an affair with Bothwell and arranging Darnley's murder, first disseminated in print through this short pamphlet in both English and Latin versions.

John Leslie (1527–96)

A Defence of the Honour of... Princesse Marie

Rheims: J Foigny, 1569

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Cn.3.37

Rushing to Mary's defence after her abdication was John Leslie, whom Mary had made Bishop of Ross in 1565. Leslie was one of Mary's key advisers during the York-Westminster trial of 1568, where she was first officially accused of adultery and involvement in Darnley's murder. Most

importantly, Leslie wrote a series of works defending Mary's reputation and her rights to the English throne, including this small tract, which directly challenged the damaging view of her set out by Buchanan.

Painting label (red)

Amias Cawood

Head of Mary Queen of Scots after Decollation

Signed and dated 9 February 1587

Oil on canvas

The Faculty of Advocates Abbotsford Collection Trust

This painting, of which two other versions are known today, was once in the collection of one of Mary's greatest admirers, Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). The famous Scottish author, who gave the painting pride of place in his dining room, discussed it in a letter quoted nearby. Summarising what Scott knew of the painting, it provides a unique insight into the interest Mary and her death held for him, and still generates to this day.

Extract from a letter from Sir Walter Scott dated 16th September 1822 to Robert Pitcairn

"I could have wished you had seen a painting in my possession, supposed to be original, of Queen Mary's head after decollation... The painting is well executed and resembles the head on the testoon much more than the common prints and pictures... If this painting was really executed the day after the murder, it is a first-rate curiosity."

Audio information (red)

The last letter of Mary Queen of Scots

Written on 8 February 1587

National Library of Scotland, Adv.MS.54.1.1

Audio recorded by the University of Glasgow

Timeline (cream)

1542

Born at Linlithgow Palace, Scotland; Mary's father James V dies a week later

1543

Crowned Queen of Scots

1543-7

Henry VIII tries to seize Mary as a bride for his son, the future Edward VI

The French Princess

1548

Sent to France as the future bride to the crown prince of France, Francis

1559

Mary and Francis become Queen Consort and King of France

Scottish Reformation Rebellion begins

1560

Reformation Parliament outlaws Catholicism in Scotland

Francis II dies, still in his teens

The Queen of Scots

1561

Returns to Scotland aged 18 to exercise direct rule as Queen of Scots

1565

Marries her cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley

1566

Gives birth to Prince James, the future James VI and I

1567

Lord Darnley is murdered at Kirk O'Field on 10 February

Mary is abducted by James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell, on 24 April

Mary and Lord Bothwell marry on 15 May

The Captive

1567

Imprisoned at Lochleven Castle on 17 June

Abdicates in favour of her one-year-old son James VI on 24 July

1568

Escapes from Lochleven Castle

Defeated at Langside, outside Glasgow

Flees to England seeking the support of her cousin Elizabeth I

1568–87

Held in captivity in various English castles

1586

Tried for treason against Elizabeth I and found guilty

1587

Executed at Fotheringhay Castle, aged 44

Room 2

Room 2 introduction (cream)

From Power to Romance

From the moment Mary is forced to abdicate, rival accounts of her life and character emerge and play an important role within intertwined contemporary debates around politics, religion and gender prerogatives.

Over the centuries she has been portrayed in countless different ways to support many different causes and perspectives. From Mary the innocent to Mary the murderess; Mary the mother of the nation to Mary the tyrant adulteress; Mary the Catholic martyr to Mary the heretic; Mary the ideal woman to Mary the wicked seeker of earthly pleasures.

Many of these depictions quickly left 'reality' behind to become imagined versions of the Scottish queen. Together, they conjure up a rich and ultimately confusing range of myths mixed with facts around Mary: one for every cause or view.

Theme introduction (grey and cream)

Power Games and Politics

The shift from reality to myths mixed with facts in both written and visual depictions of Mary starts during her lifetime. Rival accounts of her life and character are spread to either justify or condemn her removal from power, imprisonment and death.

Mary herself tries to seize control of her image at the time of her execution by portraying herself as a Catholic martyr: holding her rosary and wearing a scarlet red bodice (the colour of martyrdom) beneath her black gown, she announces on the scaffold that she dies for the Catholic faith and forgives her executioners. After her death, the Catholic printing presses in mainland Europe, particularly France, produce reams of texts and images to commemorate the queen, cementing the view of her as a victim and martyr.

Meanwhile, Mary features in histories of England and Scotland and in pamphlets during the British Civil Wars and Jacobite uprisings as both an example of an unlawfully deposed monarch and an evil tyrant. In each case, parallels are most frequently drawn with her grandson, Charles I, who a little over six decades after her death was also charged with high treason and executed.

Decoding Images of Mary

Born and based in Glasgow, the graphic artist Frank Quitely has earned a worldwide following for his unique and striking style, which has featured in best-selling titles including *X-Men*, *Flex Mentallo* and *Batman*.

In 2019 he responded to the Mary Queen of Scots research project by imagining what a character sheet (used by comic artists as a point of reference) for Mary would look like. The resulting drawing provides a helpful summary of symbols that, over time, have become an integral part of generic depictions of Mary.

Cap: Widowhood

Ruff: 16th century fashion

Cross: Martyrdom

Rosary: Catholicism

Crown: Royal status

Casket letters: Accomplice/lover of Bothwell

Axe: Execution

Sceptre: Royal authority/Abdication (when broken)

Scarlet red bodice: Martyrdom

Wall label (cream)

Rachel Maclean (British: b.1987)

The Queen

Archival digital print

2013

GLAHA:58197

Maclean is a Glasgow based video artist and printmaker. *The Queen* is part of a series of works commissioned and published by Edinburgh Printmakers in the lead-up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. The artist stressed then how she drew “...on the historical mythologies of Scotland rather than the actual history” and how “So much of what we identify with in terms of historical events...somehow get reinterpreted into contemporary politics or identity.”

Coin labels

James VI Twenty Pound
Piece (obverse)
1575
Gold
Scotland
GLAHM:39012

James VI Twenty Pound
Piece (reverse)
1575
Gold
Scotland
S/4826
The Lord Stewartby
Collection

Showing James aged nine, dressed in armour, this rare, large and heavy coin is made of gold. Like other images of James that appeared on customs and government seals during his minority, it aimed to impress, to make a powerful statement about the young king’s authority, and to reinforce the fact that he – not his mother – was the monarch. Only 193 twenty-pound pieces were struck by the Edinburgh Mint, suggesting that they were created as high-status or royal gifts.

Book labels (red section, left to right)

Adam Blackwood (1539–1613)

Martyre de la Royne d'Escosse... (Martyrdom of the Queen of Scotland)

Paris: Jean Nafeild, 1587

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Cn.3.39

This book, published within months of Mary's death, marks the beginning of a huge outpouring of devotional material lamenting her execution and portraying her as a martyr, encouraged by the Catholic League. Scottish-born magistrate Adam Blackwood had studied in France under the direct patronage of Mary and condemned Buchanan's ideas that a monarch could be deposed or killed by the people.

George Conn (d.1640)

Vita Mariae Stuartae Scotiae Reginae (The Life of Mary Stuart Queen of Scots)

Rome: 1624

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Cn.3.34

The engraving chosen to illustrate this text shows Mary with four crowns, representing the thrones of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, which George Conn believed were Mary's rightful property. An ardent Scottish Catholic activist, Conn was educated in Europe. His *Life of Mary*, written when in Rome, condemned Buchanan's negative narrative and gave a detailed and moving account of her execution.

William Udall (1595–1636)

The Historie of the Life and Death of Mary Stuart, Queene of Scotland

London: 1636

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hunterian Cn.3.36

The engraving complementing William Udall's title page is among the very few that make Mary look remarkably like Elizabeth I. His account of the Scottish queen – the first to be written in English – was drawn from the first Latin biography of Elizabeth I by William Camden (1551–1623). Both texts were sympathetic towards Mary. They also supported her son's politics, aimed at shifting perceptions of his mother away from an enemy and traitor to England, towards a founder of the Stuart dynasty.

Grey section

George Buchanan (1506–82)

An Appendix to the History of Scotland

London: Samuel Palmer, 1721

GLA ASC Sp Coll Bo5-d.16

Besides his pamphlets attacking Mary's character, Buchanan wrote a treatise on the law of kingship which was first published in 1578. It argued that the Scots had always elected – and thus could remove – their monarch. His *History of Scotland* (1582), full of stories of good kings being rewarded and bad kings being removed or killed, defended these claims. Buchanan's works were republished for

centuries after his death. In this later edition, he is depicted writing his works under angelic protection with the explosion that killed Darnley in the background.

Wall labels (red section, left to right)

Unknown Artist

Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots

c.1600

Engraving

GLAHA:59043

The execution of Mary was immediately followed by a brisk trade in the reproduction and circulation of engraved portraits commemorating her death such as this one. Its source – one of very few likenesses of Mary in her later years still considered potentially truthful – is a portrait print by French engraver Thomas de Leu (1560–1612). Found in numerous 17th century publications, this portrait type was at times made to express ideas around her political, religious or dynastic role through the addition of text and/or other images.

The Wierix Brothers (Flemish: active c.1570–1620)

Mary Queen of Scots

1587–90

Engraving

GLAHA:58198

By adding scenes of Mary's execution, angels holding laurel crowns of martyrdom, allegorical figures of Faith and Hope

and text referring to Mary being '*slain by the foul command of the virgin queen of England*', this print transforms a commemorative portrait into a powerful propaganda image. Its authors were the Wierix brothers, who were behind the first engraving depicting Mary's execution, published around the same time in Verstegan's account of Catholic Martyrs.

Wall labels (grey section, left to right)

Jean Couvay (French: c.1605–63)

Mary Stuart, A Seated Portrait of the Queen

1620

Engraving

GLAHA:58206

Here Mary is wearing ermine-lined robes of state with embroidered fleur-de-lys while the crown on the table next to her is helpfully labelled 'Scottish crown'. The engraving belongs to a particular type of portrait print of Mary developed in France during the 17th century. Its aim was to stress her dynastic significance through her connections to the French and Scottish thrones, and to celebrate her status as a Catholic heroine with an image of her execution in the background.

Richard Gaywood (English: 1650–1711)

Mary Stuart Queen of Scotland

1655

Etching

GLAHA:1065

Another celebration of Mary as martyr for her faith, this portrait is based on a posthumous drawing by the celebrated French Court painter and printmaker Claude Vignon (1593–1670). This version made for the British market was used as a frontispiece in several publications throughout the 17th century. The first was William Sanderson's 1656 *Compleat History* of Mary and her son, the most systematic Royalist response to the republican histories criticising the Stuart dynasty in the years following the execution of Charles I.

Grey section, group of three

Top left

George Vertue (English: 1684–1756)

Maria Scotorum Regina et Franciae Dotaria (Mary Queen of Scots and Dowager of France)

1735

Engraving

GLAHA:25597

The source for this print is a portrait of Mary presumably painted for her grandson, Charles I. Unlikely to be a faithful likeness, it nonetheless includes accessories traditionally associated with the queen, and inspired numerous printed versions. Vertue alone engraved five different variants within fifteen years. This version, embellished with symbols – a crown, Death peering from beneath drapery, and in the foreground a broken sceptre and an axe – was commissioned to illustrate an 18th century *History of England*.

Bottom left

John Simon (French: c.1675–1751)

Maria Stuart, DG Scotiæ & Franciæ Regina (Mary Stuart, By the Grace of God Queen of Scots and France)

c.1715-20

Mezzotint

GLAHA:1066

This bust-length portrait is one of many fictitious portraits presented as authentic likenesses that were churned out throughout the late 17th and 18th centuries. Although the only hint of the sitter's potential identity and royal status is in the print's ornate oval frame with fleur-de-lys, thistles and palm fronds, such images were often published by more than one printmaker to fill a seemingly unquenchable interest in Mary.

Right

Francesco Bartolozzi (Italian: 1725–1815) after Federico Zuccaro (Italian: c.1542–1609)

Mary Queen of Scots with James I and VI

1779

Engraving

GLAHA:8958

By the 18th century the identity of the sitters in this portrait was already being questioned. This did not stop Bartolozzi, a renowned printmaker, from considering Zuccaro's painting a worthy, and no doubt lucrative, subject for reproduction.

When the print arrived in Glasgow as part of William Hunter's bequest in 1808, it was displayed in the staircase of the original museum. Today, the attribution to Zuccaro is contested, as is the identity of the sitters.

Theme introduction (cream)

Power Games and Gender

Mary was a queen ruling in a highly patriarchal society, where debates fuelled by religion and politics around the right of women to rule were raging. This made it difficult for her to govern in her own lifetime. Preachers like John Knox sought to condemn her morally for enjoying courtly entertainment such as dancing, while intellectuals like George Buchanan argued Mary was not fit to rule because she had unnatural feminine lust.

These debates have carried on well beyond her time. From her lifetime onwards, writers for and against Mary have used gender as a way of defining her character, with interpretations ranging from an 'unfeminine' adulteress and murderer of her husband, to a devoted wife to Darnley and a chaste and innocent woman brought down by wicked men.

As centuries have gone by the 'real' Mary has ceased to exist, and stereotypical depictions of the Scottish queen have started to reflect evolving views on the nature of women. Her apparently ever-changing attributes have been used to define models of 'ideal' and 'wicked' womanhood.

Echoes of these presentations can be found in images and writings about her down to the present day.

Coin labels

Left

Mary Queen of Scots Ryal

1567

Silver

Scotland

GLAHM:39009

Issued after the murder of Darnley during her second widowhood, Mary's name appears alone on her final ryals. These coins were only minted for a few months in 1567 before Mary's enforced abdication and the crowning of her infant son James as King of Scots. Nevertheless, the queen's name on her coins remained an important symbol of royal authority, legitimacy and power.

Right

Henry and Mary Ryal

1566

Silver

Scotland

S/5010

The Lord Stewartby Collection

Only a handful of these curious ryals exist with Henry's name before Mary's. They are genuine coins made from altered original dies, but exactly why they were produced remains a mystery. A similar official issue featuring facing portraits of

Mary and Henry was also struck, but swiftly withdrawn after an outcry over the inscription giving Henry precedence over the Queen of Scots.

Wall label (cream)

Giles Rousselet (1610–86) and Abraham Bosse (1602–76)
after Claude Vignon (1593–1670)

Mary, Queen of Scots

1647

Engraving, 1647

GLAHA:58205

Among the key representations of Mary in the 17th century, this print was originally conceived as an illustration to Pierre Le Lemoyne's *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes (The Gallery of Strong Women)*. Mary was one of twenty women chosen to exemplify leadership qualities of both body and mind.

Dedicated to Anne of Austria, when she was regent of France, it contributed significantly to the debate that began in the Renaissance and concerned the role and capability of women.

Case labels (cream)

John Johnston (c.1565–1611)

Inscriptiones Historicae Regum Scotorum (Historical
Addresses to the Kings of Scotland)

Amsterdam: Cornelis Claeszoon & Andro Hart, 1602

GLA ASC Sp Coll Mu49-a.21

Inscriptiones consists of a series of Latin verse sketches celebrating the rulers of Scotland, stretching back to the mythical Fergus I in 330BC. All had Latin mottos celebrating their skill and virtues, while Mary's states: "*I soon became the tearful laughing-stock of the mistress [Elizabeth] whom I once seemed to stand greater than in the empire of fortune*".

Scholar and poet John Johnston belonged to a faction of protestant Presbyterians who welcomed the accession of Mary's son James to the English throne, uniting the island under one godly king.

Willoughby Bertie, Earl of Abingdon (1740–99)

A Representation of the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots in
Seven Views

London: T Monzani, 1790

GLA ASC Sp Coll Euing T.x.62

The late 18th century saw a renewal of interest in Mary among music writers, including the creation of iconic operas such as Friedrich Schiller's *Maria Stuarta* (premiered in 1800). This publication consists of scores for music by the Earl of Abingdon, an influential figure in the London musical scene of the time, illustrated by seven engravings. It is

dedicated “*to those female Philosophers, members of the blue stocking Club*”, the first female-led group to champion the careers of women before feminism gained momentum at the turn of the 20th century, in the hope that it “*may prove No uninstrutive Lesson to the Sex*”.

Matilda Betham (1776–1852)

A Bibliographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country

London: B Crosby and Co et al, 1804

GLA ASC Sp Coll 2640

The 18th century saw the publication of several dictionaries celebrating women’s achievements to assert mental equality between the sexes. In her account of Mary, Matilda Betham stresses how ‘... *all agree, that she was most cruelly and unjustly treated*’. Together with the inclusion of Mary’s portrait in the frontispiece, right next to that of Joan of Arc – a teenage girl who helped lead a French army to victory yet was burnt for witchcraft and dressing like a man – it encapsulates contemporary fascination with female rebel-heroes driven by love, and injustice.

Programme for Liz Lochhead’s *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*

1994

GLA ASC STA TP 55/7a

Scottish poet and playwright Liz Lochhead once commented how “*The Catholic Mary is certainly a martyr and almost a saint*” while the Protestant version of Mary “*veers between*

limp victim and politically inept nymphomaniac devil-woman who almost scuppered Our Glorious Reformation". In her celebrated play, Lochhead rejects one-dimensional portraits of Mary and presents her as a woman first and foremost.

Programme for Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*

1987

GLA ASC STA Fe 1/22

Writing in the context of the failed Scottish devolution referendum in 1979 and the re-election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1987, Lochhead revisits 16th century power struggles to reflect on contemporary issues of nationhood, sectarianism and limitations on female autonomy. In Lochhead's play, the story centres around the tension between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth as queens and women, who have in common their battle to maintain power in a patriarchal society.

Programme for Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*

1987

GLA ASC STA Fj 934

Reflecting retrospectively about the play, Lochhead stated: *"When I look at it now it is clearly fundamentally about Mary and Elizabeth, the passion of these women to have sex and love and marriage – or not – for can they, without losing power? How do you have a full life as a woman and your full independence? All these things women are still struggling*

with.” Since Lochhead’s play, other Scottish women writers have used Mary to approach contemporary feminist issues.

Theme introduction (red)

‘The hapless heroine of a tragic drama’

After the final defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden in 1746, the major conflicts created by the deposition of the Stuart dynasty were starting to ease. This marks the beginning of a new era in the afterlife of Mary. As her importance for political and religious debates diminishes, histories of England and Scotland re-interpret her story according to the sensibilities of their age. Their focus shifts onto Mary as a person rather than as a figurehead for political causes. This shift rekindled debates around her true nature in the British press.

The first historical painting depicting an episode of Mary’s life is *The Abdication of Mary Queen of Scots* by Gavin Hamilton, dated 1765-75. Rather than being commissioned as a true likeness of Mary, it was intended as a piece of storytelling, based on romantic ideals. It also opened the floodgate for a new wave of depictions of Mary across visual, literary, and performing arts.

Painting label (red)

Gavin Hamilton (Scottish: 1723–98)
The Abdication of Mary Queen of Scots
1765–75
Oil on canvas
GLAHA:43874

Presenting Mary as a classical heroine, this pioneering painting was intended to influence the debate around her true nature. Its starting point was an emotional description of Mary's abdication in *The History of Scotland ...* (1759) by William Robertson. The book was an instantly popular hit and moved James Boswell, a 25-year-old lawyer, writer and ardent admirer of Mary to tears. Keen to transfer the description on canvas, Boswell turned to Hamilton, a rising star on the European art scene. Their decision to make her an object of compassion and not to let her features interfere with the overall effect fast-tracked her final transition from a historical figure to a fictional character and a much-loved theme in the arts.

"... Mary, when she subscribed these deeds, was bathed in tears; and while she gave away, as it were with her own hands, the sceptre which she had swayed for so long, she felt a pang of grief and indignation, one of the severest perhaps which can touch the human heart."

William Robertson, *History of Scotland*, 1759

Letter excerpt (red)

Letter from Gavin Hamilton to James Boswell, 5 August 1768, Rome

"My painting days pass like a dream and though I sleep with Homer under my head yet I don't forget my country, my queen and my friend. Mary often passes before me in the pleasing vision and Boswell is never forgot. The favourite picture is now on the easel and the beautiful Queen becomes

more and more an object of ~~distress~~ compassion. Beauty in distress is what I mean to represent and Mary's features I hope will not interfere with the representation."

Wall labels (red)

To the left of the painting, with TV screen

Left

William Nelson Gardiner (Irish: 1766–1814) after Jean
François Rigaud (French: 1742–1810)
The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots
1790
Stipple engraving
GLAHA:58199

Just like Hamilton, Rigaud emphasises anguish and loss, with no attempt at any accurate representation of the 'real' Mary. The drawings were commissioned by Earl of Abingdon to illustrate the publication of his musical homage to Mary, displayed nearby. Abingdon was in Rome with Boswell in 1765 when the latter commissioned Hamilton to paint the queen.

Top right

Valentine Green (English: 1739–1813) after Johann Gerhard Huck (German: 1759–1811)

The Death of Mary Queen of Scots, AD 1587 from *Acta Historica Reginarum Angliae* (Historical Acts of the Queens of England), Plate IX

1790

Mezzotint

GLAHA:58201

This print is yet another example of the flurry of late 18th century works in all media romanticising the most dramatic moments of Mary's life. Following in Hamilton's footsteps, they aim for '*a spectacle of beauty and nobility in suffering*'. The mezzotint belongs to an ambitious set of plates that illustrate events in the history of the Queens of England, published under the patronage of Queen Charlotte and other European queens.

Bottom right

Francis Legat (Scottish: 1760–1817) after Gavin Hamilton (Scottish: 1723–98)

Abdication of Mary, Queen of Scots

1786

Engraving

GLAHA:25491

This engraving reproduces Hamilton's original painting. Commissioned by the artist and his patron, it was meant to

be accompanied by a quote written by contemporary literary celebrity, Dr Samuel Johnson, that reads “*Mary, Queen of Scots, harassed, terrified and overpowered by the insults, menaces and clamours of her rebellious subjects, sets her hands with tears and confusion, to a resignation of the Kingdom*”.

Wall labels (red)

To the right of the painting

Left

James Stewart (Scottish: 1791–1863) after William Allan
(Scottish: 1782–1850)

Mary Queen of Scots Compelled to Sign her Abdication in the
Castle of Lochleven

1827

Engraving

GLAHA:58200

By the time prominent history painter William Allan executed the painting reproduced in this engraving, Mary’s life was a fashionable subject across Europe. The scene closely follows Sir Walter Scott’s imaginary depiction of Lord Lindsay “*snatching hold of the Queen’s arm with his own gauntleted hand*” in *The Abbot*. While Hamilton’s pioneering version was received with mixed success when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1775, Allan’s painting secured him an election as an associate of the Royal Academy in 1825.

Top right

John Burnet (Scottish: 1784–1868) after William Allan
(Scottish: 1782–1850)

Sir Walter Scott in his Study at Abbotsford
1836

Engraving

GLAHA:58202

Besides drawing on his friend Sir Walter Scott's novels for inspiration, Allan painted several portraits of the famous author. Many use props to highlight aspects of his character – in this instance, their shared fascination with Mary. Here Scott is shown reading *The Proclamation of Mary, Queen of Scots Before her Marriage to Lord Darnley*. The writer's interest in the queen was such that he integrated her death mask within the ceiling decoration of his library at his home in Abbotsford.

Bottom right

Thomas Hodgetts (English: active 1801–1840) after Farino
Mary Queen of Scots, dedicated to Sir Walter Scott

1828

Mezzotint

GLAHA:58203

In the 1820s, Scott was driven to lament “*there are no absolutely undoubted originals of*” Mary, only “*innumerable copies*” which leaves her “*as unfortunate in this as in other particulars of her life*”.

This portrait is no different: it has more in common with contemporary criteria for feminine beauty than with any potential likeness. Its accompanying verses, however, embody how, in Scott's own words, "*[Mary lived] a life that men have construed, and will construe, more according to their own feelings and passions, than with the calm sentiments of impartial judges*".

Book label (wall case)

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)

The Abbot

London: Adam & Charles Black, 1891

GLA ASC Sp Coll Z6-e.41

The Abbot, Scott's celebrated novel (first published in 1820) marks the moment when Mary firmly becomes a romantic figure and a part of the national narrative. It takes the reader through the imprisonment of Mary at Lochleven, her enforced abdication, her escape from the Castle, defeat at Langside and flight to England. In his introduction, the author emphasises Mary's wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and "*the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history*".

Book labels (red)

Walter Goodall (d.1766)

An Examination of the Letters, Said to be Written by Mary Queen of Scots, To James Earl of Bothwell

Edinburgh, 1754

GLA ASC Sp Coll BI1-k.1

The revival of interest in the letters in 18th century Europe reflects the extent to which Mary had become an intriguing mystery rather than a political threat. Their endless analysis was mostly aimed at determining whether she had written them. The illustration is known as the 'Carleton' type, after a portrait that also provided the inspiration for the prized miniature of Mary, once in the collection of Charles Stuart. It was partially used by Hamilton. Regarded then as among the most important portraits of the queen, it is no longer considered authentic.

Thomas Birch (1705–66)

The Heads of Illustrious Persons of Great Britain, engraved by Mr Houbraken and Mr Vertue...

London: 1813

GLA ASC Sp Coll RX 85

This image of Mary is based on a miniature by Isaac Oliver (c.1565–1617) which at the time of its production belonged to Dr Richard Mead (1673–1754). A philanthropist, insatiable collector and leading physician, Mead held weekly gatherings at his home where he welcomed scholars and artists. Despite doubts even then as to its authenticity, the miniature's accessibility to artists encouraged its frequent use as a reference for images of the queen in contemporary publications such as this one. It was among the likenesses discussed by Hamilton and Bothwell.

George Buchanan (1506–82)
History of Scotland
London: J Bettenham, 1733
GLA ASC Sp Coll 1660

Portraits of Mary included in the many republications of Buchanan's *History of Scotland* across the centuries provide clues as to how her likenesses evolved to fit changing aesthetic standards. For this 1733 edition, the publisher chose a well-known portrait with a royal provenance adapted by George Vertue, a British antiquarian and engraver with a taste for history.

Samuel Croxall (c.1690–1752)
A Select Collection of Novels and Histories
London: 1729
GLA ASC Sp Coll Bo2-k.24

Samuel Croxall published the sensational *Memoirs of Mary's death and imprisonment* within a selection of works by famous writers. Its anonymous author's expectation that his readers would "*have a Tear to shed for this disastrous Princess*" suggests the rising relevance of her tragic story in a society where sentimental feelings were becoming fashionable.

Case labels (red)

John Skelton (1831–97)
Mary Stuart
London: Goupil, 1898

GLA ASC Sp Coll Hepburn q50

This late 19th century publication belongs to a period marked by yet more raging debates around the true personality of Mary, which led a contemporary to comment that “*The Mariolatry of the present day...[is] becoming exasperating...*”. Skelton was a Scottish lawyer and author with a sustained and earnest interest in the Scottish queen. His sympathetic account of Mary, with numerous high-quality reproductions of portraits and facsimile documents illustrating her life, is among the most visually striking.

Electrotype

19th century

England

S/5011

The Lord Stewartby Collection

This electrotype of a Mary and Henry marriage medal mirrors the original issue. However, here the couple wear prominent crowns, amplifying the pomp and celebration. Electrotypes (high-quality copies of coins or medals) were particularly popular in the Victorian era. Even museums produced electrotypes of numismatic items from their cabinets for collectors and wider public consumption.

Snuff box

1887

Silver

England

Barnett Henry Joseph & Company

GLAHM:C.1935.5

The design of this snuff box is inspired by Marian ryals. It was made in the tercentenary of Mary's execution. Like the electrotype, it illustrates the rising popularity of Marian mementoes, also apparent in the 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition: 28 reputed 16th century portraits of Mary were included together with objects associated with her, and waitresses in the nearby Castle tearooms were dressed in Marian costumes.

Room 3

Room introduction (grey)

Iconic Mary

Mass media – via film, TV, the internet and social media – has dramatically reshaped Mary as a 21st-century cultural icon. Mary's image is widely found in reproductions featuring her stylised image and familiar attributes: cap, ruff, cross and/or rosary and black dress.

Prints played an important role in spreading a stripped-down version of this image of Mary to a broader international public over the centuries, because they were cheap to produce. The icon rapidly became more important than the likeness of Mary herself.

Tourism and heritage have also significantly added to the retelling of Mary's story – from Scottish tourist trails to castle brochures or popular history texts. The draw of the Scottish queen on our imagination has become such that her image and story have also been repackaged in children's books and toys, popular merchandise and even rubber ducks.

Today, Mary's iconic status and star quality mean that besides being a commercial commodity, she is also a cultural reference point that continues to inspire the arts. Most recently, her image has been used to comment on a variety of issues at the heart of contemporary society and culture,

from sectarianism to nationalism, race, gender and queer identity.

Wall labels (grey, left to right)

John Bellany (1942–2013)

Mary Stuart (Mary, Queen of Scots)

c. 1990

Oil on canvas

The Paton Bellany Collection

John Bellany is among Scotland's most celebrated artists of recent times. His evocative depiction of Mary, one of four, belongs to a group of portraits of iconic characters across the ages, from Sir Walter Scott to Billy Connolly and Sir Sean Connery. Instantly familiar, it demonstrates how Mary's stripped-down image lends itself well to powerful re-interpretation in today's Scotland.

Group of three

Top left

Henry Osborne Mavor (1888–1951)

John Knox Introducing Horatio Bottomley to Mary Queen of Scots

1917

Watercolour

GLAHA:43137

In this caricature, successful playwright and draughtsman Henry Osborne Mavor (also known as James Bridie) pokes

fun at Horatio Bottomley (1860–1933). A controversial figure in early 20th century British politics, Bottomley was involved in numerous debates around sinful and inappropriate behaviour that troubled wartime Britain. Mary embodies women, simultaneously identified as being innocent angels and sexually wanton *femmes fatales*, while John Knox stands for the Protestant clergy and its attack on soldiers' morals.

Bottom left

Alexandra Princess of Wales as Mary, Queen of Scots

1871

Photograph

Loan, private collection

The popularity of Mary as an inspiration for fancy dress costumes in the 18th century was such that a contemporary felt compelled to remark how masquerade balls were overrun with “*dozens of ugly Mary Queen of Scots*”. Here Princess Alexandra of Wales (1844-1925) is dressed up as the character of Mary from Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Abbot* (first published in 1820).

Right

Unknown Artist

Mary Queen of Scots

c.1830

Album sheet with collaged prints, fabric, beadwork and hand inscription

GLAHA:58204

This bust of Mary dressed in a gown of three coloured fabrics and intricate beadwork is embellished with 19th century lithographs of butterflies and plants, and a scene from a generation earlier. Lovingly put together, and complemented by a hand written inscription celebrating her talents and misfortunes, it evocatively hints at the iconic status Mary was reaching as another queen, Victoria, was about to take the throne.

Case labels (blue, left to right)

James Tassie (1735–99)
Mary Queen of Scots Medal
(obverse)
1791–99
Bronze
England
GLAHM:40383

James Tassie (1735–99)
Mary Queen of Scots Medal
(reverse)
1791–99
Bronze
England
GLAHM:40417

The late 18th century marked the beginning of a craze for mementoes associated with Mary. Medals such as these were among the first to respond to this increasing demand. Based on Mary's tomb in Westminster Abbey, the queen's likeness is complemented on the reverse with a summary of her life in abbreviated Latin. It was part of an unfinished series of Scottish monarchs by Glasgow-born James Tassie, who gained a reputation throughout Europe for his popular ranges of engraved gems and portrait medallions.

Mary Queen of Scots Medal
19th century
Silver
GLAHM:40380

An impressive medal from the Victorian age, this collectors' item is a hybrid of inspirations. The obverse is after an early, extremely rare cast medal of Mary by Jacopo Primavera (died c.1600), who also produced a medal of Elizabeth I. Often copied from the 18th century onwards, Primavera's is the only known medal of Mary made during her lifetime. The reverse is a copy of the Tassie medal's summary of her life.

Francis and Mary Medal
(obverse)
19th century
Silver
France
GLAHM:40381

Francis and Mary Medal
(obverse)
19th century
Bronze
France
GLAHM:40382

Inspired by a 1558 cast medal by Guillaume Martin (c.1520–90) celebrating the marriage of Francis and Mary, these high-quality 19th century French imitations offer a fineness of detail and finish that only contemporary machine production could deliver. Like James Tassie a few decades earlier, European medallists exploited opportunities to capitalise on Mary's image, especially for export to an enthusiastic British market.

Mary Queen of Scots Medal
19th century
Possibly Russia
GLAHM:40309

Less refined than other medals showing Mary, this item may have been produced by Count Potocki, a sculptor and medallist possibly active in Russia in the 19th century. It might also be a fake. Complete with a loop, it could be worn as a pendant, and is a good example of the more affordable type of mementoes that could double up as jewellery manufactured from the 19th century onwards.

Theme introduction (grey)

Mary on Stage and Screen

Modern portrayals of Mary in the performing arts still resonate with earlier depictions of her in literature and art. She usually appears proud, slightly tragic and defiant, as a woman controlled by men and as a Catholic martyr. Films and television series have also become contributors to Mary's story, from the first ever film produced that portrayed her execution – it was also the first ever depiction of Scottish history on screen – to the 2018 *Mary Queen of Scots* Hollywood blockbuster.

Films label (blue)

Mary as a Cinema Celebrity

The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots

1895

National Library of Scotland

Warning: this clip contains a depiction of an execution.

The first ever film to feature Scottish history on film was a short 18-second portrayal of Mary's execution produced by the Edison company in New York in 1895. It is the first to feature a 'jump cut' special effect, where the film is paused so that the actor playing Mary (who is male) can be moved and replaced with a headless mannequin.

There is no sound with this film.

Extract from *The Loves of Mary Queen of Scots*

1923

Celluloid Tapestry and Archive Film Agency

Mary was the focus of this 1923 British silent film, featuring Fay Compton in the leading role. The film was believed lost until a single copy was rescued and cleaned by film historian Tony Fletcher and film restorer Bob Geoghegan. It was shown again for the first time in almost a century, opening the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival, Bo'ness in 2022 with a Film Explainer performance by Scottish storyteller Andy Cannon and live music.

There is no sound with this film.

Extract from *Das Herz der Koenigin*

1940

Archive.org

Mary's story became part of Nazi propaganda in 1940, when she was portrayed by Zarah Leander in *Das Herz der Königin*, a film produced by the Berlin film company UFA. Mary is relentlessly plotted against to her death by Elizabeth (played by Maria Koppenhöfer), who symbolises British imperial aggression against Europe. It also has a very unusual subplot, suggesting that the earl of Bothwell's first wife, Jean Gordon, conspired with Bothwell to destroy Mary.

Case labels (blue, left to right)

Playbill for Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland or The Castle of Lochleven

Theatre Royal, Edinburgh

Edinburgh, 1827

GLA ASC STA 2/56

Programme for Mary Stuart

Glasgow University Arts Theatre Group

1966

GLA ASC STA Bk Box 4/1

Programme for Mary Stuart

Assembly Hall, Edinburgh

Edinburgh, 1987

GLA ASC STA FM 12/9b

Postcards for Mary Stuart
Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow
Glasgow, 1985
GLA ASC STA Ea Box 6/38b

Book of Performance Photographs for Mary Stuart
Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow
Glasgow, 1985
GLA ASC STA Ee 4

Programme and Flier for Mary, Queen of Scots
King's Theatre, Edinburgh
Edinburgh, 1976
GLA ASC STA SB Box 11/10 a-b and Box 11/11 a-b

Programme for Mary, Queen of Scots
The Scottish Ballet
Aberdeen, 1976
GLA ASC STA SB Box 1/75-79

Theme introduction (blue)

Mary Queen of Strips

From the moment educational comics or illustrated books for children come into being in the early 20th century, Mary is presented as one of history's most important characters. The short film nearby discusses why Mary has become such a suitable character for comics. It also follows Frank Quitely as he creates his 'own' Mary and reflects on what she means to him. The ways in which Mary has been reimagined range

from the educational – as in Philip Ardagh’s *Fast and Funny Guide* – to an art form in itself – as in Nicolas Juncker’s ambitious tale of two rival Queens.

Case labels (blue)

Philip Ardagh

Shortcuts, A Fast and Funny Guide to Mary Queen of Scots
2013

Private collection

Philip Ardagh’s *Fast and Funny* guide is typical of the many educational comics and books focusing on Mary from the 20th century onwards. It is part of a set of ten short and funny biographies of some of the Western world's most famous historical figures, including William the Conqueror, Henry VIII and Florence Nightingale.

Nicolas Juncker

La Vierge et la Putain (The Virgin and the Whore)
Glenat, 2015

This provocatively titled work in two volumes - each a mirror of the other - revolves around “Elizabeth the frigid, the eternal virgin, illegitimate daughter” and “Marie Stuart the sublime, the sparkling”. According to its publisher, it “tells the extraordinary story of these *two women of power through the eyes of men who rubbed shoulders with them... to highlight how, in the Middle Ages, two women had most men of their time at their feet.*” An ambitious, striking work,

it sums up the enduring fascination these two strong characters still hold to this day.

Theme introduction (blue)

Commercial Mary

Visit a museum or historic attraction in the UK and you will probably find specially designed merchandise for sale. Heritage sites relating to Mary take full advantage of their connections to her. Designed to be affordable these objects appeal to a wide audience, from those actively wanting a souvenir of their visit to others lured in by the temptation of an impulse purchase. And just like the objects that inspired them, one of the functions of Marian merchandise is to promote the memory and afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots.

Object labels (blue)

Reproduction Testoon

c. 2001

Alloy

England

GLAHM:40398

Mary Queen of Scots Medal

1987

Bronze

England

GLAHM:40384

Reproduction three-pound piece

c. 2001

Base metal

England

GLAHM:40385

Bust of Mary Queen of Scots

19th century

Fired clay

GLAHA:59113

Inspired by the marble effigy on Mary's tomb in Westminster Abbey, this bust was produced by one of Glasgow's most successful pottery manufactures of the Victorian age. It was probably intended to be used as a garden ornament.

Theme introduction (blue)

Virtual Mary

Websites, Instagram and You Tube are just some of the virtual platforms offering access to countless images and stories relating to Mary. The examples selected here capture aspects of her important and enduring presence in contemporary collective memory and popular culture.

TV screen

Mary's Face

Engraved images and posthumous portraits of Mary have all varied wildly over the centuries and the presentation of Mary's face online in the digital era is no different. Here we have three renderings of Mary's face – one using a digital reconstruction of her skull, and two using digital illustration to enhance a copy of her supposed death mask and portrait – which all look very different to one another.

Mary and Queer Identity

Mary's story has always served as a reflection of who we are as a society and commemorations of Mary in the 21st century continue to do so. The 2018 film *Mary Queen of Scots* was pioneering for its use of colourblind casting and its portrayal of Darnley as bisexual and David Rizzio as his lover. Queer, gender-fluid and drag culture have all embraced Mary as source of inspiration.

Acknowledgments (blue)

The Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots originated in 'In My End is my Beginning': *The Memorialisation and Cultural Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots*, a research project led by The Hunterian and the University of Glasgow. Initially funded by a small grant from the Centre for Scottish and Celtic Studies, it also received a Royal Society of Edinburgh research network grant between 2019 and 2021.

We are grateful to all the academics, curators, librarians, archivists and students who participated in discussions of Mary and her cultural life.

Like all exhibitions, *The Afterlife of Mary Queen of Scots* is the product of teamwork: The Hunterian wishes to thank all staff and University colleagues involved and to highlight the significant contribution made by colleagues in the University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections.

The Hunterian gratefully acknowledges loans from the Paton Collection, the Abbotsford Trust and private collectors who wish to remain anonymous.

Conservation of *The Abdication of Mary Queen of Scots* by Gavin Hamilton was made possible by a grant from the Art Fund and the Alexander and Margaret Johnstone Fund.

The Mary Stuart Society generously contributed to costs associated with interpretation material.

Credit for the photography of works from the University of Glasgow Collections goes to the University of Glasgow's Photographic Unit. The short films realised within the context of the Royal Society of Edinburgh research network grant were made by film maker Marissa Keating.

Heartfelt thanks are owed to Vincent Deighan, also known as Frank Quitely, for his involvement in the project.

Work placement students, interns and postgraduate students have participated in various ways: thank you all. David Maclean's contribution to numismatic labels and Nia Clarke's involvement with texts around Liz Lochhead's play are gratefully acknowledged.