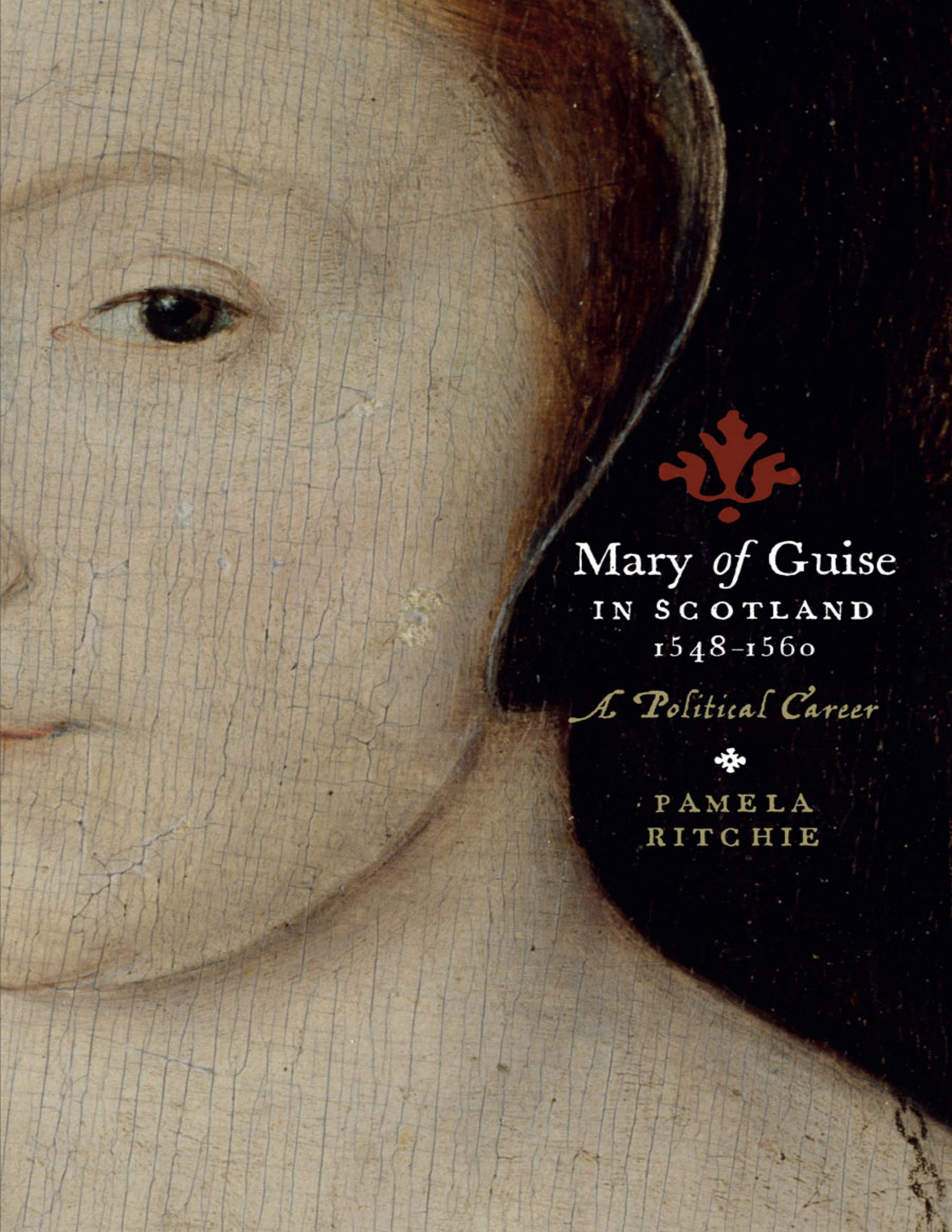

Mary *of* Guise

IN SCOTLAND 1548–1560

A Political Career

PAMELA RITCHIE

Mary of Guise in Scotland

To my parents and sisters

Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548–1560

A Political Career

Pamela E. Ritchie

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List of Abbreviations

All dates are in New Style and, apart from those listed below, all abbreviations and contractions in the text have been taken from 'List of Abbreviated Titles of the Printed Sources of Scottish History to 1560', *Scottish Historical Review,* supplement (October 1963), pp.vi–xxix.

Adv.MSS	Advocates' Manuscripts
AÉ	Archives de Ministère des Affairs Étrangères, Paris
APC	*Acts of the Privy Council of England,* ed. J.R. Dasent *et al,* New Series, 46 vols. (London, 1890–1964)
BL	British Library, London.
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Ch.	Charter
Cor. Pol.	*Correspondence Politique*
CSP Foreign	*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series,* eds. W.B. Turnball and J. Stevenson *et al* (London, 1861–1950)
CSP Ireland	*Calendar of State Papers relating to Ireland of the reigns of Henry III, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, 1509–1573,* ed. H.C. Hamilton (London, 1860)
CSP Rome	*Calendar of State Papers, relating to English Affairs preserved principally at Rome in the Vatican Archives and Library,* ed. J.M. Rigg (London, 1916)
CSP Spain	*Calendar of Letters, Despatches and*

	State Papers, relating to the negotiations between England and Spain, ed. J.M. Thomson *et al* (London, 1862–1954)
CSP Venice	*Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, relating to English affairs, existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice,* ed. R. Brown *et al* (London, 1867–97)
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography,* ed. L. Stephen *et al* (London, 1885–1903)
E	Exchequer
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Fo(s)	folio(s)
GD	Gift and Deposit
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
L & P of Henry VIII	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII,* ed. J.S. Brewer *et al* (London, 1862–1932)
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NAS	National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
Papal Negotiations	*Papal Negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots during her reign in Scotland, 1561–1567,* ed. J.H. Pollen (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1901)
PRO	Public Record Office, London
SP	State Papers
Statutes of the Realm	*The Statutes of the Realm,* ed. A. Luders *et al* (London, 1810–28)

Glossary

Assythment: compensation for loss or injury by payment; reparation, indemnification.

Barratry: the purchase or sale of an ecclesiastical preferment; the crime by an ecclesiastic of the corrupt purchase of benefices.

Bonds (or Bands) of Manrent and Maintenance: contracts promising loyalty, support, protection and service for life or in perpetuity.

Casualty: an incidental item of income or revenue, for example that due from a tenant or vassal in certain contingencies.

Entry: the establishment of an heir as a new vassal with his superior, thereby making his ownership effective.

Escheat: property, possessions or goods taken by foreiture or confiscation – especially falling to the crown; the forteiture of a person's property.

Horn: to outlaw. Literally, the wind instrument used to proclaim one an outlaw. When the king's messenger gave three blasts of the horn, one was officially put to the horn or declared an outlaw.

In Commendam: a benefice given in charge to a cleric or layman to hold until a proper incumbent was provided for it, or bestowed upon a layman or secular ecclesiastic with enjoyment of revenues for life – especially used of a benefice which a bishop or other digniatry was permitted to hold along with his own preferment.

Infeftment: the action or fact of investing with heritable property – the evidence for which is contained in an instrument of sasine.

Justice Ayre: a circuit court held by itinerant judges or officers.

Non-entry: the failure of the heir of a decceased vassal to renew investiture and the feudal casualty due to the immediate superior upon such failure.

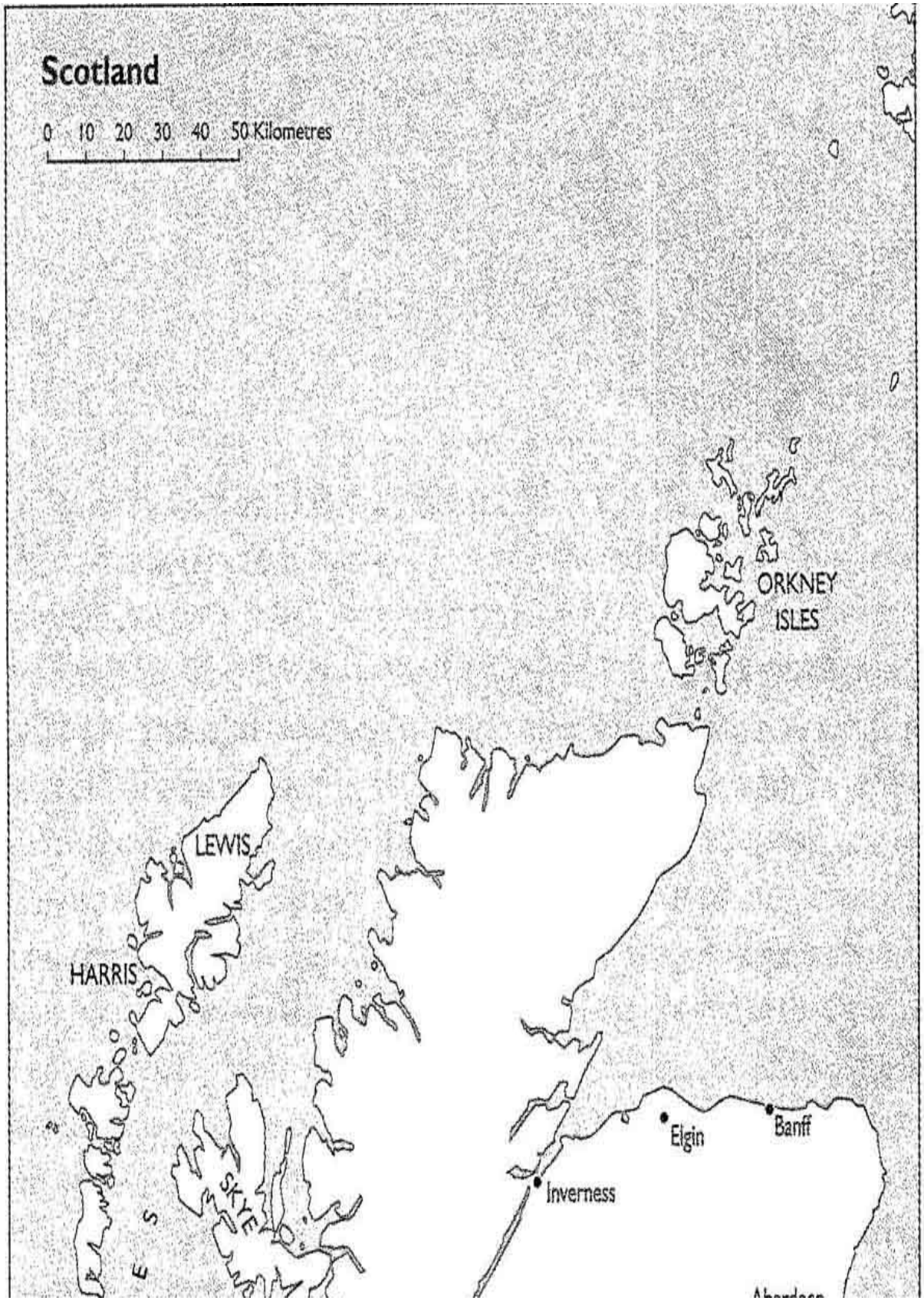
Percept: an instrument granting possession of something or conferring a privilege.

Precept of Sasine: an instrument by which the legal ownership of land is transferred.

Propine: gift, tribute.

Sasine: the act of giving possession of feudal property; an instrument proving possession of feudal property.

Stent: an (annual) assessment of the value of property (especially land) for taxation purposes; the amount so fixed paid in tax.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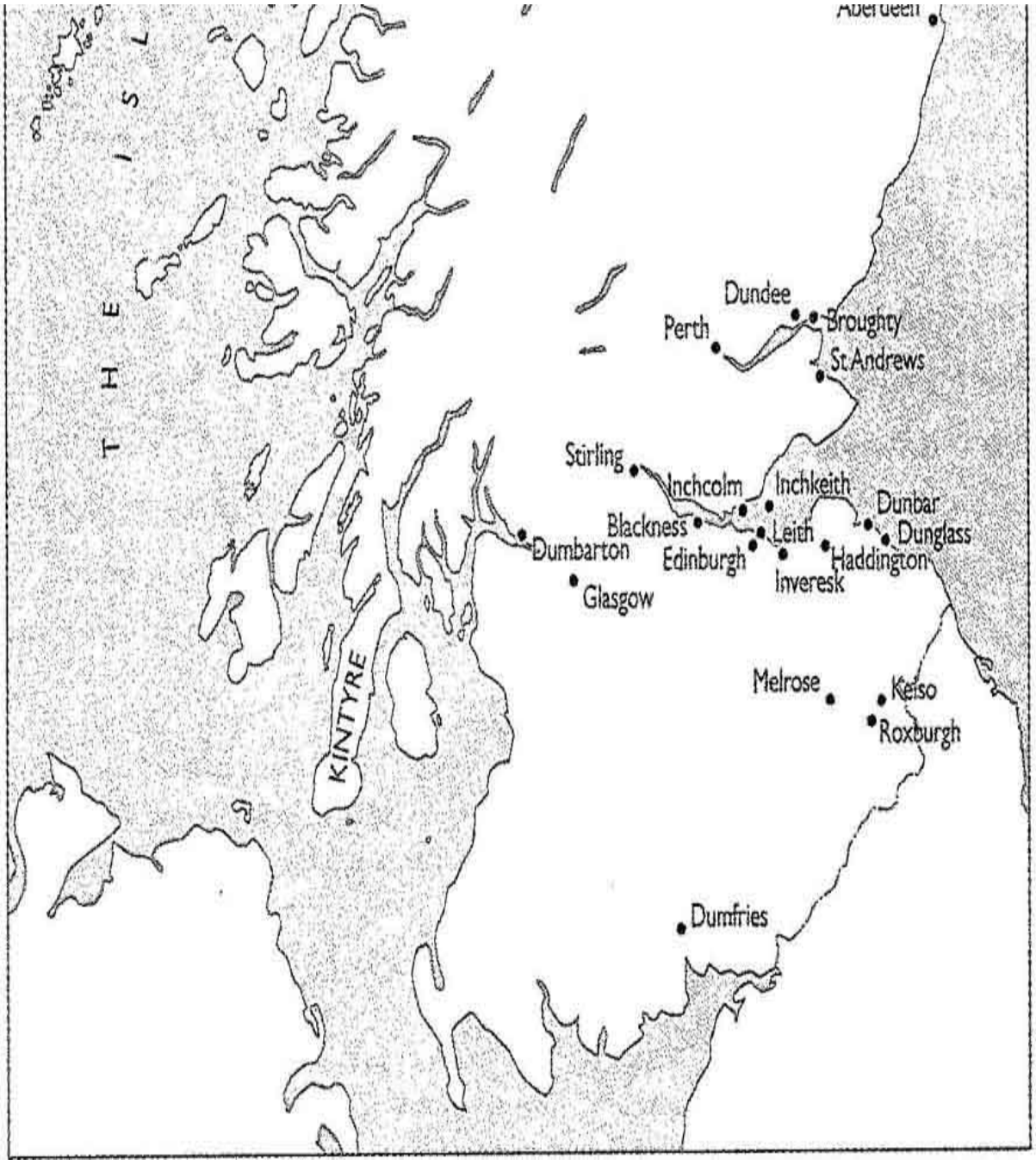
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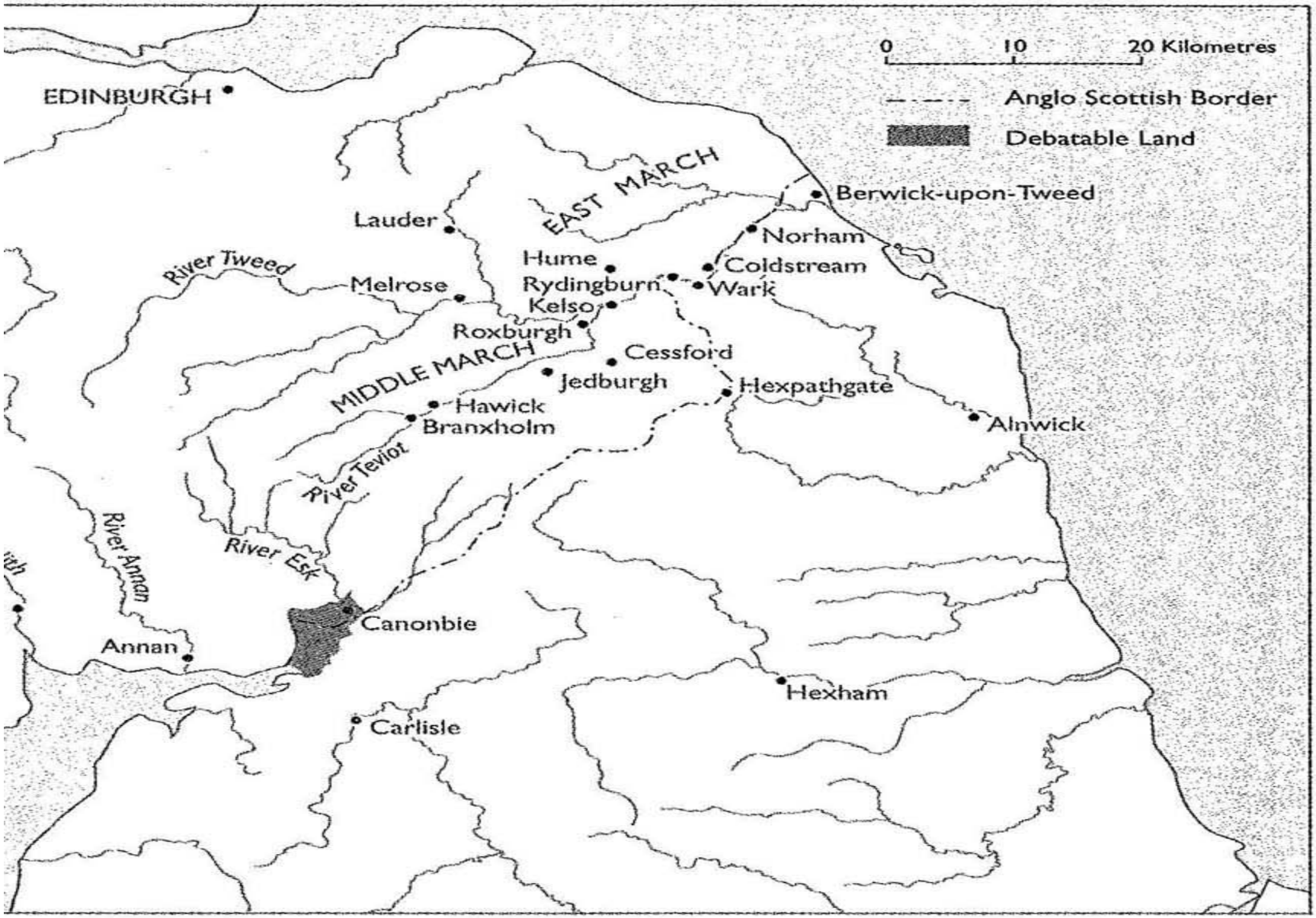
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Debatable Land
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Lauder
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Rydingburn
Wark
Kelso
Roxburgh
MIDDLE MARCH
Cessford
Jedburgh
Hexpathgate
Hawick
Alnwick
Branxholm
River Teviot
River Annan
River Esk
Canonbie
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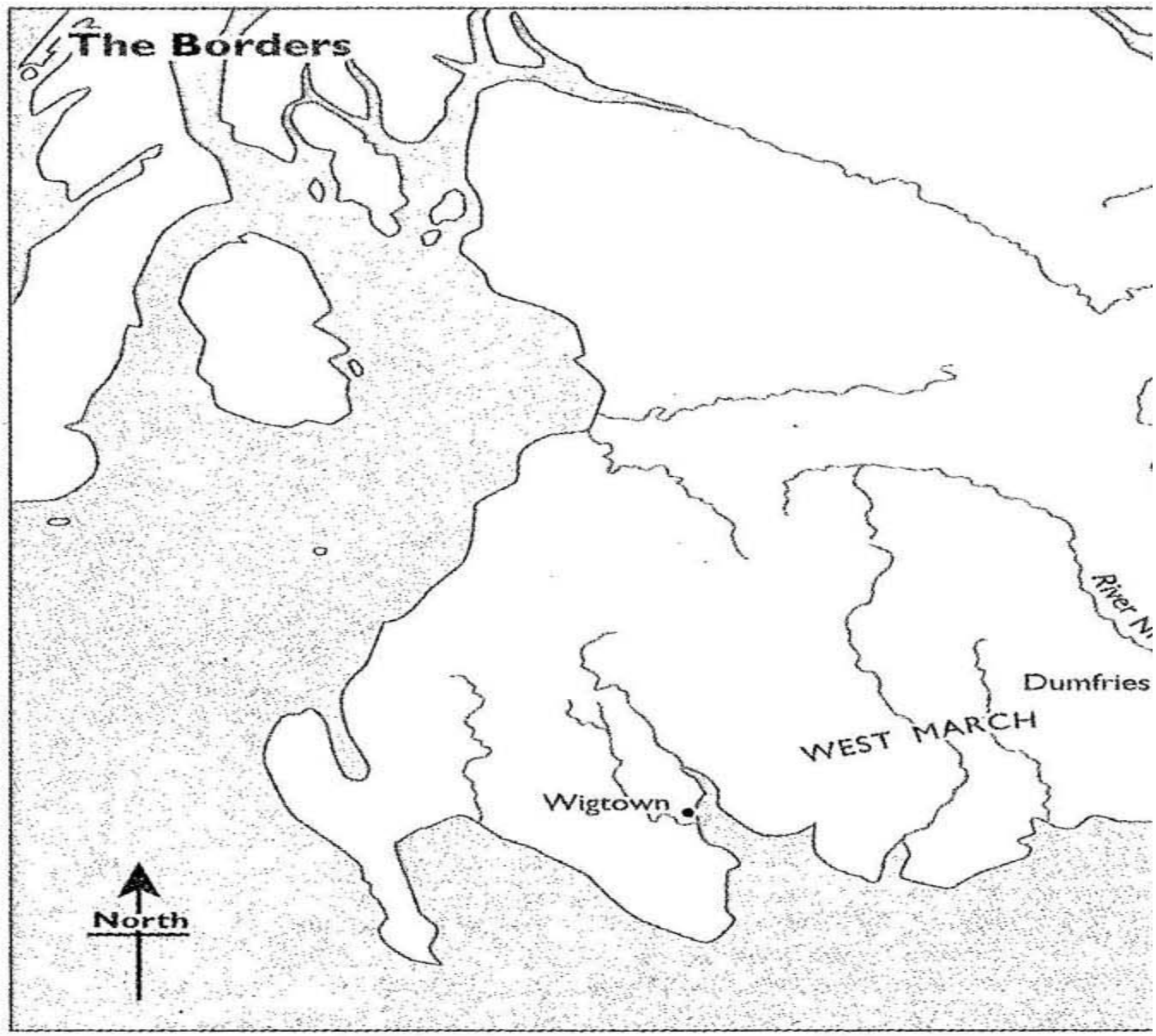
Carlisle


The Borders
Dumfries
WEST MARCH
Wigtown
North

Introduction

On 21 October 1559 the Reformation Rebellion ceased to be a Protestant revolt against Catholicism that was exclusively concerned, at least publicly, with the establishment of the reformed kirk in Scotland. The Lords of the Congregation's 'Act of Suspension' added a nationalist dimension to their rebellion that was now directed specifically against the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, and the establishment of French power in Scotland.[1] In their act attempting to depose Mary of Guise from the regency, the Lords of the Congregation charged the Queen Regent with the 'interprysed destructioun of thair said commoun-weall, and overthrow of the libertie of thair native cuntree'.[2] She had revealed her true intentions by such acts as building and fortifying strongholds, appointing Frenchmen to key offices of state and, most obviously, by bringing in French troops in August and September 1559. The fact that these troops had arrived in Scotland with their wives and children so soon after Mary, Queen of Scots' husband, François, had succeeded Henri II to become the King of France, was used by the Congregation to infer that Scotland's future as an independent kingdom would be short-lived in the union of the French and Scottish crowns. Such 'enormities' clearly showed that Mary of Guise's true political objective was the 'manifest conqueast of our native rowmes and countree to suppress the commoun-weall, and libertie of our native countree, [and] to mak us and our posteritie slaves to strangearis for ever'.[3]

Rhetoric such as this typified the propaganda disseminated by the Lords of the Congregation during the Reformation Rebellion.[4] Its emphasis on conquest and French domination was designed to play on the xenophobia of the Scots and establish the Congregation as a party of patriots, being the 'borne Counsallouris' of the realm and the 'sworne protectouris and defendaris' of the commonweal.[5] By identifying themselves with freedom, liberty and patriotism, the Congregation not only hoped to secure widespread political support for their 'religious' rebellion, but also, and more importantly, the public and military support of Elizabeth I.

Although it is widely recognised by historians that the Lords of the Congregation engaged in a war of words against Mary of Guise, very little has been done to explore the extent to which their propaganda bore any relation to the facts. The reason for this is symptomatic of a larger problem – neither Mary of Guise nor her political career in Scotland has been the subject of in-depth study or historical analysis. Only two works have been completely devoted to Mary of Guise. Rosalind Marshall's biography[6] is a readable but overly romanticised literary work, while Marianne McKerlie's[7] study is not only dated but devoid of any sophisticated analysis. Any attention Mary of Guise does receive in modern scholarship tends to be in relation to her family in France, Les Guise,[8] her daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots[9] or the Scottish Reformation,[10] and is conventionally used to establish the context of, and pretext for, the Reformation Rebellion of 1559–60. As a result, her political career in Scotland from 1548 to 1560 has been the victim of selective examination and gross misunderstanding.

The tendency of historians, such as Gordon Donaldson, to read history backwards and examine Mary of Guise's régime within a religious framework has been a convenient

way to justify the Lords of the Congregation's rebellion and to account for their ostensible victory. This is largely because modern scholarship is still heavily reliant on partisan sources such as the English State Papers and, in particular, John Knox's version of events contained within his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*. Consequently, the negative imagery surrounding Mary of Guise and her regency has, on the whole, been reinforced and perpetuated over time. While Jenny Wormald and Michael Lynch have gone some way to free Guise of her historiographical stereotype as the defender of Catholicism whose political career climaxed with the Reformation Rebellion,[11] Donaldson's assessment still remains largely unchallenged.[12]

By reading history forwards from the perspective of Mary of Guise herself, however, an entirely new picture develops. A reassessment of the sources traditionally used for this period of Scottish history clearly shows that her political career in Scotland after 1548 must be examined within the wider context of European dynastic politics and, specifically, within the context of the Franco-Scottish alliance of 1548–60. This book, therefore, has expanded the source base to include French and English archival material, largely in the form of diplomatic and state papers held in the French Archives de Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, the English Public Record Office and various manuscript collections in the British library.[13] These sources reveal that the conventional religious interpretation of Mary of Guise's régime is largely overblown. Dynasticism, not Catholicism, was the overriding characteristic of her political career in Scotland. Mary of Guise emerges as an extremely shrewd and effective politique whose own dynastic interests and those of her daughter took precedence over her personal and religious convictions. It also becomes clear that, contrary to

the assertions of the Lords of the Congregation, Mary of Guise was not solely responsible for the establishment of French power in Scotland. Rather, this process began in 1548 with the signing of the treaty of Haddington and came as a direct result of Henri II's protectorate of Scotland. More importantly, it was a process that was sanctioned and endorsed by the Scottish political élite itself.

This book, therefore, is the first full-scale study of Mary of Guise's political career in Scotland from 1548 to 1560. As such, it is not simply a book about Scotland and its politics during the 1550s, but one that takes an innovative look at the exceedingly important role Scotland played in European politics. While this study does not claim to be definitive or exhaustive, it does examine some fundamental points that modern scholarship has failed to consider. First and foremost is the nature of the Franco-Scottish alliance during the minority of Mary, Queen of Scots. The treaty of Haddington provided for the dynastic union of the French and Scottish crowns with the betrothal of Mary Stewart and François Valois and, more importantly, laid the foundations for a Franco-British empire. Mary Stewart's Catholic claim to the English throne, strengthened by Henry VIII's break with Rome and the repeated failure of Tudor monarchs to secure the line of succession by producing heirs to the throne, made it a very real possibility that she alone could unite the crowns of Scotland, England and Ireland under one Catholic crown. Marriage to the Scottish Queen, therefore, came with the prospect of controlling the entire British Isles and it was this imperial opportunity, which Mary Stewart's dynastic position provided Henri II through marriage to his son, that was the prime motivating factor behind his Scottish policy as a whole.

The possible realisation of Valois notions of a Franco-British empire was not the only advantage the treaty of Haddington afforded Henri. On a more immediate and

practical level, it created a protectoral relationship between the ‘auld allies’. Henri became the ‘Protector’ of Scotland, and Scotland a ‘protectorate’ of France, and it was this relationship that justified and facilitated the establishment of French power in Scotland prior to the union of the crowns in 1558. Specifically, Henri’s protection of Scotland and its queen enabled him to maintain a permanent military foothold in a kingdom that served as the backdoor to England, assume control over Scottish diplomacy and direct its foreign policy. But it was his control of the Scottish government through his appointment of Mary of Guise to the regency that was the final and, arguably, most important part of the process establishing French power in Scotland.

Mary of Guise’s ascent to power was in no way certain after Mary Stewart left Scotland to become an absentee monarch in 1548. Indeed, it was commonly presumed that Guise would accompany her daughter to France now that the young Queen of Scots’ future seemed so secure. Guise, though, was committed to seeing the Anglo-Scottish conflict brought to an end, and only when peace had been formally contracted in the treaty of Boulogne in 1550 did she feel the time was right to return to her native France for good.

Mary of Guise’s celebrated trip to France in 1550–1 is one of the most misunderstood periods of her political career. Questions surrounding the *real* reason why she went to France and, more importantly, the reason why she returned to Scotland in 1551 have never been fully or adequately explored. The answers to these questions are found in the future government of Scotland. In 1548, and in return for a French pension, the Duchy of Châtelherault and a host of other financial inducements, the Earl of Arran agreed to resign as regent at the end of Mary, Queen of Scots’ minority. But because Mary was an absentee monarch living in France, a regent was still required in

Scotland during her majority. The big question was who? It should not be automatically presumed that Mary of Guise wanted the job or was even at the top of the list to succeed Arran as regent. Everyone expected Mary of Guise to stay in France. Why would she even want to return to Scotland when her children, her family and a life of luxury were all waiting for her at home? The main reason why Mary of Guise returned to Scotland was because the Scots wanted her to. Those who had travelled with her to celebrate Henri's triumphant entry into Rouen were adamantly opposed to the idea of a French gentleman acting as a viceroy and they wanted Mary of Guise to return for the 'executioun of justice and [the] ordouring of the cuntre'.[14] Yet, while the Scots may have had a say in who they wanted to govern during Mary, Queen of Scots' minority, the decision ultimately lay with Henri as the 'Protector' of Scotland. As soon as Mary entered into her twelfth year in December 1553, Henri informed Arran (now the Due de Châtelherault) that his tenure as regent was over and that his successor would be the Queen Dowager.[15] The establishment of French power was completed on 12 April 1554 when Mary of Guise officially became the Queen Regent of Scotland.

Mary of Guise's regency was dominated by international considerations and this book is the first study to place her régime within the wider context of Euro-British dynastic politics. The Anglo-Imperial dynastic alliance that was forged with Mary Tudor's marriage to Philip of Spain brought the Habsburg-Valois conflict to the Anglo-Scottish Border and Guise's administration was, consequently, overwhelmingly concerned with matters of defence and national security. The Tudor-Habsburg threat also highlighted the need for domestic stability and, in particular, law and order. While this was particularly true of the Borders and Highlands, the general aims of Guise's

policy were to effect a strong, yet personal monarchy throughout all of Scotland. To do this, Guise implemented traditional Stewart policies dating back to 1424 that aimed to reassert royal power and advance the interests of the crown at the expense of local jurisdictions. In attacking the vested regional interests of the nobility and local magnates, these policies were very ambitious and extremely difficult to enforce – even for a Stewart king. But this task was even harder for Mary of Guise. Not only did she run the risk of criticism simply on the grounds of her gender and nationality, but also because she was a regent with extraordinary vice-regal powers whose term of office was for an unlimited period of time. What was acceptable for a sovereign was less acceptable for a regent – especially for one who was trying to act like an adult Stewart monarch. A few feathers were bound to be ruffled amongst the ruling élite. Their activities had gone virtually unchecked by central government since the death of James V in 1542 and Mary of Guise did meet with some opposition. Parliament rejected her tax reassessment scheme in 1556, which would have provided emergency funds for her defensive policies, and throughout much of 1557 Mary of Guise was consciously estranged from her subjects. But given the number of criticisms that could have been levied against her, the opposition she did encounter was surprisingly muted and was motivated by noble self-interest rather than as an attempt to prevent the ‘conquest’ of Scotland by France.

For many members of the Scottish political community, though, the international situation ultimately highlighted the need for Mary, Queen of Scots’ marriage. The Scots were increasingly reluctant to finance the Queen Regent’s defensive policies simply on account of Henri’s foreign policy or, for that matter, on the strength of a protectoral alliance. England’s declaration of war against France and entry into the Habsburg-Valois conflict in June 1557 was

the catalyst that resulted in the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots to the Dauphin of France in April 1558. The Franco-Scottish dynastic alliance marked the fulfilment of Mary of Guise's dynastic policies, while the Three Estates' consent to grant the crown matrimonial to the Dauphin brought Henri one step closer to realising his imperial ambitions. The death of Mary Tudor in November 1558 and the dubious legality of the accession of her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth, saw the launch of a vigorous campaign on the part of the French King to advance the Catholic claim of Mary Stewart to the English throne, which by virtue of the crown matrimonial was also that of her husband, François.

Finally, this book reassesses Mary of Guise's religious policy and refines the traditional view that Guise needed to conciliate her Protestant subjects in order to achieve her dynastic objectives.[16] This interpretation, while not entirely inaccurate, is nevertheless limited in scope and, therefore, misleading. It implies, erroneously, that all Protestants were diametrically opposed to the Valois-Stewart marriage and fails to take into consideration the other political, social and economic factors that determined attitudes to the Franco-Scottish dynastic alliance. Mary of Guise's policy of conciliation was not aimed exclusively at those with reforming sympathies, but at the Scottish political élite as a whole. During the period 1548–51, for example, French patronage was distributed by Guise to Scots of all religious and political persuasions, and during her regency Protestants enjoyed key offices of state alongside their Catholic peers.

Examining Mary of Guise's political career within a religious framework also places undue emphasis on the importance of the reform movement in shaping Guise's policies. Religion was not a predominant concern for Mary of Guise and it took a back seat to the more pressing

concerns of securing her daughter's marriage to the Dauphin, defence and national security. This is not to say, however, that she was oblivious to the fact that the Church was in need of internal reform or that the reform movement had amongst its ranks some very powerful and influential members of the nobility.[17] She was a shrewd politician who knew that the alienation of certain sectors of the political community would lead to unnecessary disaffection and dissension. By nature, she was also neither a Catholic zealot nor an advocate of religious persecution, and so it was very much in keeping with her character to assume a tolerant position towards the reform movement and its adherents. This inclusive and accommodating position assured her Protestant subjects that they would not be excluded or marginalised on account of their faith and that the reform movement was not necessarily incompatible with her dynastic policies. Because of this, leading Protestants like the Earl of Argyll, Lord James Stewart and John, Erskine of Dun, were extensively involved in every aspect of Mary, Queen of Scots' marriage to the Dauphin and the union of the French and Scottish Catholic crowns.

But Mary of Guise was also a pragmatic politique who was not above altering her religious policy if international considerations made such a change necessary for the protection and/or advancement of her dynastic interests. This was certainly the case in 1558–9, when the dubious legality of Elizabeth Tudor's accession forced Guise to issue a religious proclamation ordering the return of all Scots to the ancient faith in order to increase Mary Stewart's chances of being recognised as the true and legitimate Queen of England. The fact that this alteration of policy came just months after the Three Estates had ratified Mary, Queen of Scots' marriage contract and granted the crown matrimonial to the Dauphin has reinforced the view that Mary of Guise's policy of religious toleration was always