



Lambeth Palace Library
Research Guide

Mary Queen of Scots





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Mary, Queen of Scots

1	Introduction	1
2	Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers.....	1
3	Other Manuscript Sources at Lambeth.....	3
4	Miscellanea	4
5	Printed Sources At Lambeth	5
	Mary's marriage	5
	Protestant literature against Mary as Queen [Small sample selection].....	5
	Protestant literature in support of her execution [Small sample selection].....	5
	Defences of Mary's reign	6
	Other works.....	6

1 Introduction

Whilst the main manuscript resources concerning Mary Stuart are held in other repositories such as the National Archives and the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library does hold some collections of relevance and several items of special interest.

2 Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers

The Library holds the papers of the earls of Shrewsbury from the 15th century to the death of Gilbert Talbot, 7th earl, in 1616. The earls were influential figures, both locally and nationally, as lord lieutenants and privy councillors.

Most importantly, George, the 6th earl, was for many years custodian of Mary Queen of Scots during her captivity in England. The collection contains hundreds of letters relating to her enforced residence, including details of her household, the costs of maintenance (frequently in arrears), the danger of her escape, plans for surveillance, and relations with Elizabeth. A sample selection of references is given below (in date order):

Queen Elizabeth to the earl of Huntingdon, 22 September 1569, ordering him, because of the earl of Shrewsbury's illness, to keep guard over Mary, Queen of Scots. Shrewsbury is of the opinion that Mary should not be moved, for fear of attempts at rescue. When the time seems meet, Mary will be moved to Huntingdon's residence. She is not to have any visitors or to send any letters without Elizabeth's knowledge. (MS 3196, f.229)

Lord Burghley to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 5 September 1571. The Queen of Scots is to be informed that her practices with the Duke of Norfolk and others in connection with the Ridolfi Plot against Elizabeth are now fully known, and she is to be provoked



Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

to answer. The Queen is anxious that Mary be straitly kept. Endorsed with the word 'haste' and in the Earl's own hand 'The Quene's ... Letter ... for the Redusenge of the Scots Quene's nombre to xvj parsons of all sortes'. (MS 3197, f.33).

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley, 2 August 1572, describing the visit of the French Ambassador's secretary to Mary. She has sent letters to the Ambassador and to the Queen. She would like an interview with Elizabeth. (MS 697, f.90)

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley, 24 September 1572, with a reassurance that the Queen of Scots is in safe keeping. He will not allow her out of Sheffield Castle for all her anger, and has added 30 soldiers to the guard. (MS 3197, f.39)

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley, 21 February 1573, concerning his discussions with the Queen of Scots about her financial affairs. He suspects her of wanting to use these arrangements as cover to obtain intelligence and further her plotting. (MS 3197, f.57)

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley, 13 June 1574, complaining bitterly about the cost of acting as custodian to the Queen of Scots 'whyche I wysch with all my hart I hadde never delt withall'. He is obliged to spend £300 a year more on wages and also to keep soldiers to guard her. (MS 3206, f.703)

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir Francis Walsingham, 27 and 31 August 1574. He has tried with little success to discover the contents of the last letters from France received by Mary (MS 3206, f.713) and has searched the closet of her secretary who has just died, but found only a few old letters and 280 French crowns which he had given to Mary to dispose of. (MS 3206, f.711)

Lord Burghley to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 7 September 1577. There has been great alarm at court at the rumour of Mary's escape and the Queen urges extra vigilance. Chatsworth is a good place to keep the Queen of Scots because of its distance from any town. (MS 3206, f.845)

The Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir Francis Walsingham, 5 August 1582. He has passed on the contents of Walsingham's letters to the Queen of Scots, who, finding that Elizabeth objected to her writing to the Privy Council, asked to deal directly with the Queen. She protests that she has done everything possible to bring about an agreement between her son [James VI of Scotland] and the Queen. (MS 3198, f.173x)

Thomas Styngar [Stringer] to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 15 November 1584. Sir Francis Walsingham has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Walter Mildmay, temporary custodian of Mary, Queen of Scots while Shrewsbury was at court, to know how many attendants the Queen of Scots has and details of her diet. Mildmay has replied that she has 16 dishes at the first and second courses; the Master of the Household, her chief officers and their servants, 10; her gentlewomen, 8; the rest of the women, 5. There were not under 100 gentlemen, yeomen and officers to guard her, besides 50 soldiers. (MS.3198, f.263) As well as more important matters there



Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

are details of daily life: the purchase of wax lights, torches and table linen (MS 3198, f.92), a detailed inventory of household goods (MS 3198, ff.150-9), the commissioning of two satin night-caps (MS 3198, f.179) and several references to trips to Buxton spa.

A full listing of these collections can be consulted in the following published catalogues:-

A calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot papers in Lambeth Palace Library and the College of Arms. Volume I. Shrewsbury MSS in Lambeth Palace Library [MSS 694-710], by Catherine Jamison, revised and indexed by E.G.W. Bill. (Historical Manuscripts Commission. Joint Publication, 6. 1966)

A calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot papers in Lambeth Palace Library and the College of Arms. Volume II. Talbot papers in the College of Arms, by G.R. Batho. (Historical Manuscripts Commission. Joint Publication, 7. 1971. [The College of Arms collection is now held by Lambeth Palace Library as MSS 3192-3206]

3 Other Manuscript Sources at Lambeth

The Library has some important items relating to Mary's execution:-





Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

Above right: Copy of the execution warrant, dated 1 February 1587, with annotations by Robert Beale, clerk of the Privy Council. This copy was conveyed by Beale to Henry Grey, 6th Earl of Kent, one of the principal Commissioners for the Queen's trial and execution (MS 4769)

Above left: Letter from the Privy Council to Henry Grey, Earl of Kent, ordering the execution to be carried out, dated 3 February 1587. Signed by William Cecil (Lord Burghley), Robert Dudley (Earl of Leicester), Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Christopher Hatton and other members of the Council. (MS 4267, ff.19-20).

The text of the sermon intended for preaching at the execution by Richard Fletcher, dean of Peterborough, which Mary refused to hear (MS 2827, ff.15-16).

An account (MS 4267, ff.21-32) of the trial and execution of Mary from the papers of Henry Grey, Earl of Kent.

'... then laye shee downe verye quietlye stretchinge out her bodye, & layinge her necke over the blocke, cryed, In manus tuas domine, &c. One of the executioners held downe her hande[s], the other did w[i]th 2 strokes of an axe cut of her head, w[hi]che (falling of her attire) appeared verye graye & near powled [bald] ... the blooddye cloathes, the blocke, & what soever els bluddye was burned, in the chimneye fyer ...' (MS 4267, f.28v)

The Earl of Kent's retained copy of his letter in February 1587 to Queen Elizabeth following his censure for the execution. He protests that the Commissioners for the execution did 'nothing but according to your Majesties Commission'. (MS 4267, ff.33-34)

Copy of a speech made in the Star Chamber on 28 May 1587 attacking William Davison, Elizabeth I's Secretary, for revealing Mary's death warrant to the Council 'of his owne head without the privyete or consente of her majesty and contrarye to her commandment ...' (MS 250, f.169) Davison was imprisoned in the Tower by Elizabeth on this account, but later released unharmed.

There is a published catalogue for these papers:- Index to the papers of Anthony Bacon (1558-1601) in Lambeth Palace Library (MSS 647-662), by E.G.W. Bill (London, 1974).

4 Miscellanea

Lambeth holds a series of watercolour illustrations of Scottish Kings and Queens finishing with the figures of Mary with her first husband the Dauphin (MS 316, f.17), and by herself (MS 316, f.18). The representations are roughly contemporary but probably imaginary.

MS 566 entitled 'Piæ afflicti animi Meditationes, divinæque Remedia' (Pious meditations of an afflicted soul and their divine remedy) is dedicated to Mary by John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, and stamped with her crowned initials. It is almost certainly



Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

Mary's own dedication copy. There are other contemporary works by Leslie in the printed books sequence.

MS 655 includes a lament for Mary by Robert Southwell, an English Jesuit, in several verses based on her own last words as reported by her servants (MS 655, f.112)

'Rewe not my death, reioyce att my repose;
It was noe death to me butt to my woe.
The budd was opened to lett out the rose,
The chaines unloosed to lett the captive goe!'

5 Printed Sources At Lambeth

A small sample selection is listed below, arranged in date order within sections:-

Mary's marriage

[A description of Mary's wedding to the Dauphin] (Edinburgh, 1558) STC 17566.5

Protestant literature against Mary as Queen [Small sample selection]

John Knox, *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women*. (Geneva, 1558). STC 15070. Written primarily against Mary's mother, Mary de Guise and Mary Tudor, this tract also succeeded in annoying Knox's key Protestant ally, Elizabeth, and had clear implications for Knox's future attitude towards Mary.

A discourse touching the pretended match betwene the Duke of Norfolk and the Queene of Scottes. (1569/70?). STC 13869. Anonymous work attributed to Thomas Sampson, Thomas Norton or Sir Francis Walsingham. Norfolk's intrigues finally resulted in his execution.

George Buchanan, *De Maria Scotorum regina ... historia*. (London, 1571) STC 3978. Buchanan was tutor first to Mary and then to her son King James VI, but here accuses Mary of the murder of Lord Darnley, her husband and father of her son.

The copie of a letter written by one in London ... concernyng the ... detection of the doynge of the Ladie Marie of Scotland. (London, 1572). STC 17565. Anonymous work attributed to George Buchanan or William Cecil.

Protestant literature in support of her execution [Small sample selection]

Robert Cecil, *The copie of a letter to the right honourable the Earle of Leycester ...* (London, 1586). STC 6052. Collection of Parliamentary petitions to Elizabeth I to execute Mary, published by the Queen's Printer. This work also contains Elizabeth's prevaricating replies.

Richard Crompton, *A short declaration of the ende of traytors*. (London, 1587). STC 6055. Dedicated to Archbishop Whitgift, this tract justifies Mary's execution as a traitor against Elizabeth.



Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

Defences of Mary's reign

John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, *Treatise concerning the defence of the honour of the right high mightie ... Princesse Marie, queene of Scotlande and Dowager of France, with a declaration as well of her right, title and intereste to the succession and crowne of Englande ...* (Liège, 1571). STC 15506. Suggests that Mary was being persecuted solely for religious reasons. Leslie was imprisoned in the Tower for his part in the Ridolphi conspiracy of 1571 and for this work.

A treatise of treasons against Q. Elizabeth and the Croune of England. (Louvain, 1572). STC 7601. Anonymous work, possibly by John Leslie, Bishop of Ross. Refutation of English attacks on Mary, identifying William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, as traitors, plotting to overthrow both Elizabeth I and Mary. This work was banned, and Elizabeth ordered all copies to be burned.

John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, *De titulo et jure serenissimae principis Mariae Scotorum reginae, quo regni Angliae successionem sibi juste vindicat, libellus ...* (Rheims, 1580). On Mary's right of succession to the throne of England and a general defence of the right of women to rule.

William Allen, Cardinal, *A true sincere and modest defence of English catholiques that suffer for their faith, both at home and abroad ...* (Rouen, 1584). STC 373. Polemic in support of Mary and the Catholic cause in England emphasising her sufferings for her faith.

Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis*. (Antwerp, 1587). Illustrated martyrology including an account of Mary's sufferings and an engraving of her execution.

Adam Blackwood, *Martyre de la reyne d'Ecosse, douariere de France*. (Anvers, 1588). Blackwood also wrote against Buchanan.

Robert Turner, *Maria Stuarta, regina Scotiae, dotaria Franciae, haeres Angliae, martyr ecclesiae innocens a caede Darleana, vindice Oberto Barnestapolio ...* (Ingolstadt, 1588). Sion College Library copy. Vindication of Mary as a martyr for her faith. The folding plate frontispiece depicts the martyred queen with her heavenly crown and a row of four earthly crowns.

William Udall, *The historie of the life and death of Mary Stuart, queene of Scotland ...* (London, 1624). STC 24509a. Sympathetic account based on selected translations from Camden's *Annales*.

Other works

The Library has a number of works on Mary from a slightly later period as well as reprints, including a complete series of *English Recusant Literature 1558-1640*. Substantial collections of manuscripts and printed material relating to the general history of the period can also be found in the Library.