

*Maria Bogucka*

## MARY STUART IN LEGEND \*

Modern biography is increasingly more seldom satisfied with the presentation of lives of outstanding personages, but in order to fully appreciate their role it reaches out for the posthumous fortunes of its heroes. The study of legends that surround certain personalities, legends which may have little in common with their real life story and yet throughout centuries live their own lives, frequently richer than the real ones, is an exciting task. Many facts seen in this light take on new meaning; popularity and persistence of certain threads allows one to discover the secret ways in which historical consciousness is formed, which so often has a lot in common with the subconscious, and at any rate it grows out of it. On the other hand, one happens to come across the traces of manipulating the legend, creating it out of political or religious motivations, or utilizing it for the current needs of social groups or even whole nations.

One of the most famous women in history—Mary Stuart—gave birth to a legend, or more precisely speaking to two, extremely controversial legends: the white and the black one. Controversy around them goes on to this day. However, although the bibliography of works connected with the tragic fate of the

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Queen of Scots is imposing in size, nobody has taken up the full analysis of her "posthumous life" in legend.<sup>1</sup>

In order to reach the origin of her legend one must go back to Mary's early youth. Those who made the beginning of probably the richest literature ever devoted to a woman were the French poets of "la Pléiade", Pierre Ronsard and Joachim Du Bellay, who extolled in their many poems the youthful fiancée and later wife of François II. Their praises mainly centred round the bodily and spiritual beauty of the young lady, who was Scottish by birth, but whose mother and upbringing were French. In his *L'Hymne au Cardinal de Lorraine*—Mary's uncle, Ronsard wrote

... en beauté la plus belle  
Que le ciel ait fait naistre et dont les plaisans  
Meriteroyent encor'un combat de dix ans...

thus making an allusion to the beautiful Helen of Troy.

In his elegy *Au départ* the poet maintained that with the departure of Mary from France (1561) the Muses grew silent in this country.

*Comment pourroient chanter les bouches des poetes  
Quand par vostre départ les Muses sont muettes ?*

And he developed before the reader a view of the country from which beauty had disappeared.

*Comme un beau pré despouillé de ses fleurs  
Comme un tableau privé de ses couleurs  
Comme le ciel s'il perdoit ses estoiles  
La mer ses eaux, le navire ses voiles  
Un bois sa feuille, un antre son effroy  
Un grand Palais la pompe de son Roy  
Et un anneau sa perle precieuse :  
Ainsi perdit la France soucieuse  
Ses ornemens en perdant la Royauté  
Qui fut sa fleur, sa couleur, sa beauté.*

<sup>1</sup> E. Heinzl, *Lexicon. Historische Ereignisse und Personen im Kunst, Literatur und Musik*, Wien 1956, pp. 469—473 and E. Frenzel, *Motive der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart 1976 p. 500 present a very incomplete set of exclusively literary works devoted to Mary, without an analysis of their contents. They take no account of polemics and scientific works. Scanty data may be found in a book devoted to Mary's rival by J. H. Grew, *Elisabeth d'Angleterre dans la littérature Française*, Paris 1932, *passim*.

Du Bellay echoed his sophisticated flattery :

*En votre esprit le ciel s'est surmonté  
Nature et art ont en votre beauté  
Mis tout le beau dont la beauté s'assemble.\**

Not beauty however, but the vicissitudes of her complicated life, especially rich in legendo-genic threads, aroused the interest in Mary shown not only by her contemporary writers, but also those of subsequent centuries. With time a legend grew, fascinating, for full of contradictions, and changing with the passage of years. Various groups and times elicited from this life story various tones: as a result one can hardly find a more confused picture and a truth that would be more hidden from a scholar. The drama of passion that developed around this true *femme fatale*, would be enough to make not one but several rich legends. She was undoing men one by one; the procession was opened by young poet Pierre de Chastelard, followed by Mary's Italian courtier Rizzio, then by her two husbands: Henry Darnley and James Bothwell as well as by Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk, in the end by unfortunate plotters: Anthony Babington and his friends. Her drama as a person was bound up with that as a sovereign (the struggle for power between Mary and her half-brother James Murray, then between Mary and Elisabeth). Besides those two threads, Mary Stuart's legend abounds in motifs of chivalrous adventure (participation in battles, the brave escape from Lochleven). Thus among the causes of interest in Mary's history one may also mention its adventurous character. Of still greater significance was the fact that the legend referred to the religious conflicts inflaming Europe in the 16th century—and this thread was eagerly inspired by Mary herself at the end of her life. Would be Elisabeth's antagonist presented as a martyr of faith, her death became a watchword of defenders of Catholicism not only in Scotland and England, but in all countries where the Reformation threatened the old faith. There was also a possibility to use Mary's misfortunes for building a more general morality,

\* Cf. P. Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. G. Cohen, Paris 1950, vol. II, pp. 186, 291, 301; J. Du Bellay, *Oeuvres poetiques*, ed. H. Chamard, Paris 1908, vol. I, p. 120.

her example serving to show how fragile is human lot, how easily splendour and happiness may turn into suffering and humiliation. Whereas the national thread (apotheosis of independence of Scotland), as we shall see further on, was added to this legend relatively late, in fact only in the 19th century, and was never very strong.

Mary Stuart owes her drama, but also her everlasting fame, not to her beloved France, but to her native, though disliked Scotland. If the widow of François II had stayed in the homeland of her first husband, she would have been probably soon forgotten, despite the homage paid to her by courtly poets. There were always many beautiful and learned ladies on the Seine. However, soon after Mary Stuart's departure from France, dramatic and astounding news started flowing into the continent from Scotland, about unheard-of events whose heroine was a recent favourite of the Court of Valois. As early as in 1566 anonymous pamphlets in French and German, easily accessible to the reading public, started circulating in France and Germany, informing in detail and with gusto about what had just occurred in Edinburgh. They presented the killing of Rizzio and the imprisonment of the "good Queen" by rebellious subjects who wanted to exterminate Catholicism in Scotland.<sup>3</sup> The anti-Protestant edge of those publications was evident. They made not only sensational reading (a scandal at the royal court!) but also propaganda: instigating the Catholics of Europe to the struggle against Protestants, who were capable of so monstrous deeds. The next sensation was the murder of Darnley and soon the prompt wedding of Mary to Bothwell who was considered to be the murderer of the King of Scots. This was immediately used for propaganda, this time by

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<sup>3</sup> One of such brochures in German version entitled *Kurzer Auszug und schlechte erzehlung eines Landverratersstucks wider die Kunigin in Schottland von etlichen abfalligen mainaydigen und aufrurischen beschehen vermerckt auss eines hochansehlichen Herzen Schreiben trewlich verteutsch*, 1566 is preserved in Wolfenbüttel Library, call number 288. 2 Hist. (18). A Latin brochure *De polonicis, anglicis, Reginae Scotiae, Hispanicis et gallicibus rebus recens allata*, 1587 also circulated in Poland, see J. T a z b i r, *Elisabeth I in Her Contemporary Polish Opinion*, Acta Poloniae Historica vol. LXI, 1990.

the adherents of the Reformation. In October 1571 Mary's bitter enemy, her former teacher and outstanding Scottish humanist George Buchanan, published anonymously in London a pamphlet accusing Mary Stuart of hatching a plot against her husband, murdering him and entering an adulterous union with Bothwell.<sup>4</sup> In a supplement to this brochure the reader could find Mary's sonnets and private letters (distorted by incriminating additions). A Scottish edition of this work appeared in the same year.<sup>5</sup> The next years abounded in other editions and their translations into English, French and German.<sup>6</sup> They slightly differ by the selection of letters and sonnets and certain details of wording, but all contain malicious comments presenting Mary as the most degenerate wife, a second Medea, poisoner and murderess, who was duly punished for her crimes by being dethroned and imprisoned.<sup>7</sup> The energetic attempt to defend Mary Stuart made by her long-time friend, John Lesley, bishop of Ross, who argued that letters from the so-called silver casket<sup>8</sup> were forged and recalled that Bothwell's servant by the name of Paris just before his execution on the scaffold at St. Andrews bore witness to the Queen's innocence of Darnley's murder, had much weaker

<sup>4</sup> *De Maria Scotorum Regina totaque eius contra Regem conjuratione, faedo cum Bothuello adulterio, nefaria in maritum crudelitate et rabie, horrendo super et deterrimo eiusdem parricidio plena et tragica plane historia*, Londinium 1571.

<sup>5</sup> *Ane Detection of the Duinges of Maria, Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh 1571.

<sup>6</sup> In Wolfenbüttel Library call number 544.4 Hist, there is a brochure from this group, in French, entitled *Histoire de Marie Royne d'Escoce touchante la conjuration faite contre le Roy et l'adultere commis avec la Comte de Bothuel, histoire vrayment tragique, traduite de Latin en Francois à Edinbourg par Thomas Vvaltem*, 1572.

<sup>7</sup> After the introduction *Au Lecteur* the author refers to many examples of cruelty committed by wives against their husbands, however he says that Mary Stuart surpassed them: she is "*une seconde Medee*" (p. 22), poisoner and murderess. Depriving her of throne was just. At the end a documentation is enclosed: letters to Bothwell (p. 61—74) and sonnets (pp. 74—77).

<sup>8</sup> J. Anderson, *Collections Relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh 1717, vol. II, p. 83. Cf. also J. Hosack, *Mary Queen of Scots and Her Accusers*, Edinburgh 1869.

repercussions.<sup>9</sup> Maybe the enemies of the Scottish Queen carried on a more energetic propaganda, or may be the “criminal” version made more impact on the readers’ imagination? At any rate the apology seems to have been much less widely known than the lampoon. Whereas the *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* published by Buchanan in Edinburgh in 1582 authoritatively confirmed and introduced also to scholarly circulation the version of Darnley’s death which was unfavourable to Mary.<sup>10</sup>

The plot as well as the trial of Babington and his accomplices (February—September 1586) turned the eyes of the world again on the Queen of Scots for so many years held in prison by Elisabeth. This time it was the work of the Queen of England herself, at whose inspiration pamphlets in many languages (Latin, English, Italian, French, German) proliferated, published on the spur of a moment already in 1586 in various printing-houses (London, Basel) and presenting “the horrible scheming” and plots whose victim was to be the sovereign of England as a result of the intrigues of her imprisoned cousin.<sup>11</sup> This was an apology

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<sup>9</sup> I have not found any copy of this work. It is mentioned by J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, p. 33. He also mentions a brochure by a Frenchman Fr. de Belleforêt entitled *L’Innocence de la très illustre, très-chaste et debonnaire princesse Madame Marie Royne d’Escosse ou sont amplement refutées les calomnies faulces et impositions iniques, publiée par un livre secretement divulgue en France l’an 1572, touchant tant la mort du Seigneur d’Arley son epoux que d’autres crimes dont elle est faulcement accusée, 1572*. The opinions of historians on the authenticity of Bothwell’s will are divided, however there is much evidence that it is a forgery. Th. Opitz, *Maria Stuart*, Bd. II, Freiburg 1882, p. 11 says that Bothwell’s confession was discussed by two historians of the 16th century. One of them was Henry Sinclair, bishop of Ross, author of supplements to the work of Hector Boece, *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine*, published in Paris in 1526. However, as Sinclair died in 1565 he could by no means mention Bothwell’s will in his supplement. I could not find the other work mentioned by Opitz, by the Hungarian Michael Etzinger (*Mariae Stuartae Reginae Scotiae historia tragica*).

<sup>10</sup> The work reaches up to the year 1571, thus it also presents extensively the plot against Darnley and Mary’s deposition.

<sup>11</sup> In Wolfenbüttel Library there is a brochure entitled *Wahrhaftiger Bericht und grundliche Anzeig des grawsamen erschrocklichen Anschlage und der wunderbarlichen Offenbarung der letzten Conjunction und Ver-*

for keeping Mary for over a dozen years in prison as well as a preparation of the public opinion for the shock that the execution in February 1587 was bound to cause.

The decapitation of Mary Stuart had wide repercussions all over Europe. For the first time in the name of the law, as a result of a legal trial fell, the head of a born and crowned queen. The recent executions of the wives of Henry VIII did not have such a sacrilegious character : the ladies were of modest parentage and the way they came to the throne aroused many doubts, as Henry never obtained a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, whereas Mary was a born sovereign, a descendant of two famous royal houses of Stuarts and of Tudors as well as a widow of the king of France. She was not only the queen but also the *king* of Scots ; her genuine royal dignity was realized by all her contemporaries, inclusive of Elisabeth, who hesitated long and vehemently before taking the final decision. The decapitation of Mary Stuart was an ideological precedent of enormous significance to the concept of sovereignty as well as to the concept of character and scope of royal power, both concepts inherited by the Renaissance from the Middle Ages. This was a blow to the majesty of all rulers—and at the same time a blow to European Catholicism, which in the course of the 16th century suffered so great losses both in substance and prestige. No wonder then that when the news of Mary's death spread, demonstrative funeral celebrations were held in many churches i.a. Paris Notre Dame, by order of Henri III (Mary was his sister-in-law !) and in Rome at St. Peter's Cathedral by order of Pope Silvester V (with whom Mary stayed in contact and correspondence, asserting that she was a faithful daughter of the Church, suffering in a Protestant prison). However, the thrilling sermon delivered at Notre Dame by the Archbishop of Bourges, Renault de Beaulne, stressed by example of her fate mainly the instability of things of this world and wretchedness of terrestrial glory, while there

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*ratherey, welche sich im MDLXXXVI jar wider die Konigliche Majestat in Engelandt zugetragen [...] Erst newlich aus Italienischer Sprach in unser Hochdeutsch verdolmetschet... Basel 1586.*

were as yet few political and religious accents in it.<sup>12</sup> At first emotions prevailed over calculation.

After the first shock also political reactions appeared. At Saint Denis Church near Paris *les pompes funèbres à la Royale* were celebrated i.e. royal exequies due to the royalty, just as Mary asked to have it in her will.<sup>11</sup> The ceremony was attended by the old domestics and courtiers of the Queen of Scots and also by her most loyal friends and admirers. The ceremony was to testify that the scaffold did not dishonour Mary, it did not destroy her royal dignity. Lector of the French King Jacques du Perron (later Cardinal) delivered an excellent funeral oration at a special gathering of the court of Henri III.<sup>14</sup> Just as in several funeral poems he wrote for Mary, he bewailed in it "*le beau lys*" whose tragic lot could not be altered by "*la prière et les larmes*" of Henri III "*le plus grand de Rois*".<sup>15</sup> Perron at the same time attacked very sharply the Queen of England for her "inhuman relentlessness", calling her on the occasion "*ce vieux monstre concue d'inceste et adultère*". It signified unearthing the old charge of illegitimate birth which would disqualify Elisabeth as sovereign. Still in the same year 1587 as well as in the next one many ample brochures proliferated, numbering scores of pages in several languages (Latin, French, English, German), presenting a hagiographical story of the life of Mary Stuart. The story of her almost 19-year long imprisonment was especially brought into relief as well as her martyr's death for the Catholic faith ("*mors pro fide catholica constantissima*").<sup>16</sup> This literature presents Mary

<sup>12</sup> Next year it was published under the title *Oraison funebre de la très chrestienne, très illustre, très constante Marie, Royne d'Escosse*. Par R. P. Messire Renault de Baulne, Archevêque de Bourges, Paris 1588.

<sup>11</sup> Th. Opitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 418—420.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Du Perron, *L'Oraison funebre de Marie Stuart*, Paris 1587.

<sup>15</sup> *Ny du plus grand de Rois la priere et les larmes / Ny l'honneur d'avoir eu le beau lys en la main / Ne peuvent destourner ce courage inhumaine* [of Elisabeth—MB] / *Qui rit de nostre perte et se baigne de nos larmes*... Cardinal du Perron, *Les diverses oeuvres*, Paris 1622, pp. 117—118. Many other epitaphs and funeral orations composed on the occasion of Mary Stuart's death are enumerated by J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, pp. 39—42.

<sup>16</sup> In Wolfenbüttel Library call number Gr Kapsel 3(11) there is a

Stuart as innocently accused of complicity in Darnley's murder and in plots against Elisabeth, as a victim of religious persecution, a martyr who suffered for her allegiance to Catholicism. All these brochures, idealizing Mary and presenting Elisabeth as a disgusting personification of Protestantism and religious intolerance, besides prose contain also many moving poems, and are very often illustrated with etchings. It can be seen that their authors (for the most part anonymous) wanted to attract the readers' attention and win them over to the cause of Catholicism. There also appeared a distinct thread of defence of the dignity and immunity of the sovereign's person, violated by the dethronement, imprisonment and execution of Mary. Charges were aimed both against Elisabeth and against rebellious, unfaithful subjects of the Queen of Scots. A typical example of this current is a brochure by a Scottish lawyer, Adam Blackwood, sharply condemning all kinds of "rebels" who rose against their monarchs.<sup>17</sup>

A hagiographic inscription (very pathetic and with clear political accents) was placed on the tombstone that a few months after her execution, Mary Stuart's adherents put on her grave in Peterborough, as the place of secret burial ordered by Elisabeth

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brochure of that series entitled *Mariae Stuarthe Scotorum Reginae, Principis Catholicae, nuper ab Elisabetha Regina et ordinibus Angliae, post novendecim annorum captivitatem in arce Fodrinhaye [sic] interfaecte supplicium et mors pro fide catholica constantissima*, Coloniae 1587. J. H. Grew, *op cit.*, p. 43 recalls that the brochure about Mary's heroic death was published, among others by her physician D. Bourgoing, ent. *Mort de la Royne d'Escoce, Douairière de France: ou est contenu le vray Discours de la procedure des Angloys à l'Execution d'icelle, la Constante et Royale resolution de Sa Majesté defunte: ses vertueux deportemens et derniers propos, ses Funérailles et enterrement d'ou on peut cognoistre la traistre cruauté de l'Heretique Angloys a l'encontre d'une Royne souveraine, Très Chrestienne et Catholique, Innocente*, 1588.

<sup>17</sup> Adam Blackwood, *Le martyre de Marie Stuart, Royne d'Escoce, Douairière de France. Contenant le vray discours des trahisons à elle faites à la suscitation d'Elisabeth Angloise, par lequel les mensonges calomnés et faulces accusations dressées contre ceste très-vertueuse, très catholique et très illustre Princesse sont esclarcies et son innocence averée*, Anvers 1588. In two years the brochure had, as J. H. Grew says (*op. cit.*, p. 43) as many as 4 editions.

for her rival could not be concealed very long.<sup>18</sup> This text is so characteristic and important that it must be quoted here: "*Maria, Scotorum Regina, Regis Filia, Regis Gallorum vidua, Reginae Angliae agnata et heares proxima, virtutibus regis et animo regio ornata, iure regio frustra saepius implorato, barbara et tyrannica crudelitate, ornamentum nostri saeculi, et lumen vere regium, extinguitur; eodem nefario iudicio et Maria Scotorum Regina morte naturali et omnes superstites reges plebei facti, morte civili mulctantur. Novum et inauditum tumuli genus in quo cum vivis mortui induduntur; cum sacris enim divae Mariae cineribus omnium regum atque principum violatam atque prostratam maiestatem hic iacere scito; et quia tacitum regale satis superque reges sui officii monet, plura non addor, viator*".<sup>19</sup> Thus the inscription on the tomb not only extolled the splendid parentage (daughter of a king, widow of the king of France) but also personal virtues of Mary, stressing i.a. her close relationship to Elisabeth and her rights of succession to the English throne; of special importance in it is the thesis that as a result of "ignominious sentence", and "tyrannous cruelty" of her execution all the monarchs together with the convict were degraded to the rank of plebeians. Thus, in Mary's grave lies "violated and humiliated" the majesty of all rulers, who are obliged—it sounded like a threat—to defend royal rights. No wonder that Elisabeth soon ordered those words to be effaced.<sup>20</sup>

The English Queen replied to attacks of Mary's adherents with a wide propaganda campaign. The question was very serious: she had to exculpate herself at all costs in face of the public opinion at home and abroad. Already in 1587, that is barely a few months after the execution, at Elisabeth's initiative a brochure appeared in several languages (Latin, English, French, German), explaining at length the motives for her verdict on Mary Stuart: she was a political intriguer who threatened Elisabeth's life and

<sup>18</sup> Th. Opitz, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 415 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted from: *Die Geschichte von dem Leben und von der Regierung Mariae, Königin der Schotten und Wittwen von Frankreich. Aus Urkunden und glaubwürdigen Scribenten zusammengezogen und aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Johann Mattheson, Hamburg 1726, p. 324.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*

who wanted to subject whole England to the tyranny of the Pope and Jesuits.<sup>21</sup> Soon the defence was extended. In 1588 a certain Romualdus Scotus<sup>22</sup> published in the royal printing-house in London, certainly with the Queen's approval, a booklet entitled *Summarium rationum, quibus cancellarius Angliae et prolocutor Puckeringius Elisabethae Angliae Reginae persuaserunt occidendam esse serenissimam Principem Mariam Stuartam Scotiae Reginam et Jacobi sexti Scotorum Regis matrem. Una cum responsionibus Reginae Angliae sententia mortis [...] His additum est supplicium et mors Reginae Scotiae una cum succintis quibusdam animadversionibus et confutationibus eorum, quae ei obiecta sunt.*<sup>23</sup> The very title of this work suggested Elisabeth's exculpation—it was her advisers who "persuaded her" to the

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<sup>21</sup> In Wolfenbüttel Library there is copy of the German translation from the English original; the brochure is entitled: *Grundliche und Eigentlich Wahrhafft Beschreibung von der Konigin in Englandt warum sie die Konigin von Schottlandt hat enthaupten lassen, auf dem Castell genant Vodringay [sic], gelegen in der Gegend Nortamstoraier [sic!], geschehen im Jahr 1587 am 7. February. Darin alle umstand vermelt wirt, was sich darbey zugetragen, und was für Gesandten oder Herren Königliche Mayestat von Engeland dazu gebraucht, welche der gefangenen Konigin von Schottland das Urtheil ankundigten und wie sie sich dargegen gehalten hat, wie auch der Rondel oder Richtstat zugerichtet gewesen und welches Glaubens sie endlich gestorben ist, wie darnach auch der todte Körper balsamirt und in verwahrung gehalten. Sehr lieblich aber doch erbarmlich zu lesen, jedermenniglich zu einem Exempel. Auss Englischer Sprach in Teutsch vertirt oder gebracht . . .*, Cöllen 1587. The brochure brings into relief the guilt of Mary (she organized the attempt on Darnley's life, plotted against Elisabeth) and underlines that it was the English Parliament who demanded a death sentence. Next follows a detailed record of the procedure of execution, which, however, admits that she died courageously and in a Catholic way. J. H. Grew also quotes *Apologie ou defense de l'honorable sentence et très juste execution de defuncte Marie Stuard, 1588*; A brochure under the same title was circulated in France by the English government, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> Probably Scott (known also as Scot) Reginald or Reynold, English writer (1538—1599), the author of a treatise written 1588 on the subject of witches, defending old women against accusations.

<sup>23</sup> Scotus's brochure was very popular, it was translated into several languages and had many editions, i.a. in 1627 in Cologne it was published once again in Latin.

political necessity of Mary's execution. The author of the brochure made a skilful trick by placing in it certain materials of the Catholic side, well-disposed to Mary, which was to give the publication the appearance of objectivity, of an intention to show impartial truth. The brochure is opened by the text of the oration by the speaker of the House of Commons, Puckering, delivered on November 12, 1586 and containing violent accusations of Mary Stuart. The speech is divided into three parts. In the first the speaker showed how Mary threatened Elisabeth personally, namely: 1. she wanted to kill her in order to take the English crown. 2. she was so obstinate in her hostility, that there was no hope of her reform. 3. she openly admitted that she was preparing an assault on Elisabeth 4. she considered the murder of Elisabeth a just deed, since the latter was excommunicated by the Pope 5. she instigated the plotters to the murder of the Queen of England. In the second part Puckering characterized Mary as the enemy "of true religion": 1. she had been a partisan of the papists since her childhood and the only thing she had in mind was the ruin of Protestantism 2. she was linked by close collaboration to the Pope 3. she wanted to eradicate the Gospel in England, Scotland and wherever it was preached. The third part of the speech was devoted to the threat created by Mary to the state: 1. there cannot be two queens in England 2. many persons in England had been ruined as a result of her intrigues and instigations 3. she is the hope of all the "wicked" subjects of Elisabeth 4. any mercy shown to her would be a ruin to England: "who wants to save her blood brings about the doom of ours" 5. it would be an offence to all good people if such as Mary's treachery should not be avenged 6. many thousand best subjects of Elisabeth, people of all ranks organized an union in defence of the Queen; Mary's execution is the only means of taking this responsibility from their shoulders (the underlying sense—responsibility of killing her) 7. many examples from the Old Testament show that unjustified mercy arouses God's anger; the wise Solomon sentenced his natural brother to death.

The second text inserted in Scotus's brochure is Elisabeth's

reply to Puckering's speech of the same day ; in this masterpiece of understatements and hesitations the English Queen did not reveal her true designs on her imprisoned cousin, but she thanked the Parliament and her subjects for their concern, for eager care for her safety. Then follows the opinion of Parliament declared on November 24, claiming to render Mary "harm'less", a second speech by Puckering, still more vehement than the first, another evasive reply of the Queen of England (also from November 24) and finally the death sentence of December 6, 1586. After the text of these documents,<sup>24</sup> which were to prove that by consenting to Mary's execution Elisabeth surrendered to the will of Parliament and to the pressure of her subjects, there follows *Narratio supplicii et mortis Mariae Stuartae, Reginae Scotiae, dotalis Franciae*, containing her life story, exposing all her alleged offences, especially her role as the would-be instigator of Darnley's murder, caused by the sinful passion she took to Bothwell, then a relatively objective account of the trial and execution (with an emphasis that she died dauntless, steadfast to Catholicism, what as it seems aroused respect even of her enemies). Then Scotus inserts several poems, making up a hagiographic poetic description of the sufferings and death of Mary Stuart ; these are the materials mentioned in the title, produced by the beheaded Queen's adherents, who believed her a martyr of faith and a saint. The content of the poems is evident from the titles of stanzas, which are quoted here in full : *Ab Angelo evocatur ex Scotia in Angliam. Discedit ex Scotia. Ingressa Angliam ab Angelo de morte subeunda Christi nomine fit certior. In carcere sanctissimam Trinitatem laudat pro gratia martyrii sibi concessa. Christo Regi devouet se ad martyrium. Beatae Mariae Coelitum Reginae se commendat. Accepta mortis sententia S. Jacobo Apostolo, Jacobum filium commendat. Gratulatur coniugi in Scotia ab haeretici strangulato de suo martyrio. Sixto quinto Pont. Max. testatur fidem in que moritur. Jacobum filium consolatur, monetque, haereticos ne audiat. A Rege Catholico petit Catholicae fidei defensionem. Catholicos Scotiae Proceres monet, filium ut defendant. Elisabethae, Angliae Reginae ignoscit iniustam mortis*

<sup>24</sup> They are authentic.

*sententiam. Anime mortem corporis offert. Anima carnem confortat.*

As we can easily see this is a biography resembling the lives of the saints, all the more "gripping" that it is presented in a form easy to remember, of deeply moving stanzas which make up a kind of rosary. But given all its partiality, this text is not overly aggressive towards Elisabeth: it is also completely deprived of political content, of accusing the English Queen of cruelty or disqualifying her as a sovereign. Moreover—this Angel leading Mary from Scotland to England, Mary's would-be complete submission to her fate, planned by Providence to still greater glory divine—in fact means that Elisabeth should be absolved from any guilt. She was only an instrument which enabled Mary's glorious martyrdom and by pious death of her body, liberated her soul for better life.

Scotus also inserts several poems, probably circulating at that time in the circles interested in the controversy between the two queens. They are not, however, too aggressively hostile to Elisabeth. Here is a sample :

*DE ELISABETHA ANGLIAE REGINA*  
*Stuartam duro cruciatam carcere plectis*  
*Et fidei sanum vis tamen esse caput.*  
*Catholicam duro cruciatam carcere plectis*  
*Perfidie haud sanum te reor esse caput.*

At the end of the brochure we find the texts of two epitaphs devoted to the Scottish Queen. The first one, in the tone of a conventional complaint, while stressing the splendour of Mary's parentage, nevertheless exposes her offences; the tragic fate of the late Queen is to serve as a warning to the living not to commit the offences which are always duly punished :

*Stemmata Caesareo et Scotorum clara, marito*  
*Rege, ac hoc gnato qui modo sceptrum tenet.*  
*Illa ego, que sata sum regali stirpe parentum,*  
*Hoc tumulo parvo contumulata tegor.*  
*Hucque meae mentis gravae imperiosa potestas,*  
*Et mea me torsit proh temerata fides.*  
*Stemmata nil faciunt, nil prodest sanguine claro*

*Censeri, si animum devius error agit.  
 Disce sequi rectum, iustumque tenentia colla  
 Marmora, qui fato nostra resecta vides.  
 Discite mortales, quibus est mens conscia nostri  
 Consilii, in dubiis esse pericla viis.  
 Atque meo exemplo moniti desestite, nam vos  
 Certa, sed incerto tempore, poena manet  
 Bis sapit, alterius qui exemplo motus est ipso  
 Sit satis hoc nostro vos didicisse malo.*

The grandeur of the dead Queen's rank is set against the modesty of the grave where her mortal remains were buried; the deceased is tormented by pangs of conscience: "*mea me torsit proh temerata fides*". The splendour of her birth and even the most distinguished family she belonged to are of no account when her soul is consumed by the worm of guilt. The dead Queen warns the living from beyond her grave, exhorting them always to choose the path of rightness; if they swerve from it, they will be certainly punished, as is proved by her example.

The second epitaph is more favourable to Mary.

*Viator, quisquis es, hic te volt  
 Lapis consistere, cavesis pergas  
 Donec querelas hasce pellegis.  
 Maria Stuarda vita interimor occido praeter aetatem et ordinem  
 Vah, manii oppleta mortalitas  
 Vitaque fluxior aranearum operis.  
 Quid iuvat me duplici potitam sceptro, si lustrum  
 Prope quatour inter custodias, pavens intus et formidans  
 Foris, exhaeres facta vitae meae rapior ad carnificem?*

Thus the well-known motive of contrast is repeated here: her splendid birth and her double reign (the thrones of France and Scotland) as well as the quickly passing life with its network of futile problems are contrasted with the terrible fate of imprisoned Mary, trembling before the judgement which laid bare the *facta vitae* (is it a hint at the crimes committed?) and fearing the death sentence. Further on, however, stress is laid on the inhumanity of Elisabeth's behaviour, extraordinary and unusual in a woman. "*Malevolente nata genio*" the Queen of England "*pium sorbet sanguinem*". Mary's execution was ignoble and unprecedented, it occurred "*adversum Regum preces, iura, leges, bonosque*

*ritus principum*". No priest was admitted to the presence of the Queen when she was preparing for her death ("*vocato sacerdote nequicquam*"),<sup>25</sup> which did not prevent her from dying piously :

*Christum feliciter spirans  
Christo feliciter inspirante, coram populo demisi  
Regium caput in gladium.*

When Mary's mutilated body rests in earth ("*mutilum cadaver in humum vortitur*"), her soul finds salvation in heaven. The epitaph ends with consolation and warning at the same time, given by the late Queen to the Kings: Henri of France and Philip of Spain as well as to her son James :

*Ne lugete Errice, Philippeque Reges, neve tu Jacobe  
Fili, quam fatis occupor antefata, quande morte melius  
Nil accidit in malis rebus miseris.  
Neque adeo, quia sapistis, saevite vehementius  
In tenuae paucorum mensium imperium, suo  
Statim iniquitatis pondere ruiturum. Valet, abite.*

So we find here a complete acceptance of the sentence passed and an appeal to give up any revenge. This ambiguous epitaph ends the work of Scotus.

It became a basis for many recasts and other versions. A typical example of this literature is a brochure preserved in Herzog-August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel entitled *Execution oder Todt Mariae Stuart, Königinnen aus Schotlandt, gewesenener Königinnen zu Franckreich, welche 18 Februarii Anno 1587 Stilo Nuovo* [dating according to the new calendar—MB] *ins Engelandt enthauptet worden ist im Schloss Fodringham [sic!] in Northampton. Zu Magdeburgh bey Johan Francken Anno 1588.*<sup>26</sup> On the cover there is an etching, very faithfully and realistically presenting the scene of execution: Mary Stuart is kneeling blindfold on the wooden scaffold near a block; the executor raises the axe getting ready for a second blow, the first having been delivered, judging by the wound on the convict's neck. Two

<sup>25</sup> Confirmed by other sources.

<sup>26</sup> Herzog-August-Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, call number 238 Hist. (26).

women are standing close to the block (Mary's maids-of-honour, who at their insistent request were allowed to assist the execution); behind a barrier there are other persons—witnesses of the execution, as it is confirmed by many documents. The text of the brochure was composed on the basis of motifs from Scotus's work. It opens with the epitaph *Stemmata Caesareo...* which closes Scotus's exposition. Later there is a description of conspiratorial actions against Elisabeth taken up by Mary (i.e. an extensive presentation of Norfolk's "plot"), followed by the charge that she wanted to reconstitute Catholicism in England. Also the private life of the Scottish Queen is ransacked—she murdered her husband Darnley for she was smitten with vicious love for Lord Bothwell, rendering him miserable as a result—for he died in madness. An important element of the reasoning is the argument that prison in England was not hard to bear. The Queen of Scotland had here a court, her living standard was high, she was surrounded by luxury, deprived of no entertainment, she even could go hunting—and this is true, though not throughout the whole period of her imprisonment, the fact of which the brochure makes no mention. It underlines, on the other hand, Elisabeth's reluctance to pass the death sentence, and the pressure exerted by her advisers. The Queen of England would not have forced herself to make this move—the author says—unless the initiative had been taken by her secretary, Davidson, for which he was imprisoned in the Tower. Thus the author completely absolves the sovereign of England from the charge of regicide. He ends the brochure with a detailed description of the execution, introducing to his work a taste of sensation which was to attract the readers. Nevertheless the author admits that Mary died courageously, refusing to change her religion.

Thus even the publications coming from the camp hostile to Mary contributed to a certain extent to her "white" legend, presenting their heroine as the victim of a tangle of tragic circumstances, valiant and persistent in her faith. These tendencies must have grown when after Elisabeth's death (1603) the English crown was taken by Mary's son, James I. Not especially attached to his mother, brought up away from her, in his own interest, although with full respect for his great predecessor, he started to

free the memory of his mother from blame. No wonder then that he created a special supervision over the historical works written during his reign, and their authors, especially two of them : the English Protestant William Camden and the Frenchman Jacques August de Thou. In 1611, when a large part of Camden's *Annales* was ready, the author was visited by James's confident courtier, Henry Howard, who announced that the King wanted to read the manuscript. Willy-nilly, Camden submitted the part ending in 1572 ; as some scholars suppose, James censured the text personally, and then ordered to present it to Monsieur de Thou, suggesting he should take it as the basis of his description of Scottish events in the 60-ies of the 16th century. De Thou, who in 1604—1608 already published 4 volumes of his *Historiae sui temporis*, refused to make any changes, which caused a violent conflict.<sup>27</sup> Undeterred by the opposition of the Frenchman, James sent him in the following years the parts of Camden's work up to 1587, that is the year of Mary Stuart's death, at the same time endeavouring to make the French court exert a pressure on the recalcitrant historian. De Thou died in 1617 ; the executors of his will managed, though not without difficulty, to save from destruction the manuscript of his work containing the version of events suggested by Buchanan, who was ill-disposed to Mary, and they sent it to Geneva. Here, in a Protestant republic, it could be published without any concessions to the wishes of the English and French kings.

Camden, who in one of his letters to de Thou stated that "a historian's profession is dangerous"<sup>28</sup> was in a more difficult situation than his French colleague. The first part of his work was published in 1615, the whole of it only in 1625 and in Leyden. The author praises the great personality of Elisabeth, but he does not do it at the cost of her rival. He extols the piety of Mary Stuart, her wisdom and courage, her steadfastness to Catholic faith and her great beauty. Like many contemporary and later writers he is fascinated by the change in her fortunes, the metamorphosis

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Renaissance Essays*, London 1985, p. 121 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 134.

of power into "desolation and misery". He does not arbitrate whether she was guilty of Darnley's death, at any rate he does not think it important. Of primary significance to him is the fact that Mary Stuart became a victim of a tangle of circumstances and actually had not much choice. Both she and Elisabeth, as in Greek tragedy, were doomed to their fate by historical necessity.<sup>29</sup>

James saw to it that almost 20 years after her death, the body of Mary Stuart was transferred to London, to Westminster Cathedral, where it was buried in the chapel of Henry VII. From 1603 this was also a resting place of Elisabeth, so that a strange posthumous symbolic reconciliation of two rivals took place. A magnificent headstone was erected for Mary, where a Latin inscription mentions her fine ancestors, underlines her right to the English crown (by the same strengthening the rights of James) and finally her numerous virtues and assets of mind and body.<sup>30</sup> The painful problems of imprisonment and execution could not have been omitted, their formulation however was significant: "*annos plus minus viginti in custodia detenta, fortiter et strenue, sed frustra, cum malevolorum capitalium insidiis, conflictata esset, tandem, inaudito et infesto regibus exemplo, securi percutitor. Et contempto mundo, devicta morte, lassato carnifice, Christo Servatori animae salutem, Jacobo filio spem regni et posteritatis et universis caedis infaustae spectatoribus exemplum patientiae commendans, pie et intrepide cervicem regiam securi maledictae subiecit, et vitae caducae sortem cum coelestis regni perennitate commutavit*".<sup>31</sup> Thus the precedential character of Mary's trial and execution was raised again. It may seem that James apprehended the future fate of his son (and Mary's grandson), who in 1649, just as his grandmother, was sent to the block. Would Cromwell dare to commit regicide unless Mary Stuart had been executed earlier? This question must stay unanswered, although Elisabeth's decision unquestionably broke a taboo that till that time was connected with the anointed

<sup>29</sup> William Camden, *Annales rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum regnante Elisabetha*, Lugdunum Batavorum 1625. In 1635 an English translation appeared in London.

<sup>30</sup> *Exquisitissimis animi et corporis dotibus et ornamentis cumulatissima.*

<sup>31</sup> Quoted from J. Matheson, *op. cit.*, pp. 325—327.

persons ; the observers of Mary Stuart's tragedy as well as her son realized that very well.

How much James, who was by no means an affectionate son, wanted to restore the honour of his mother after her death, can be judged by his order of pulling down the castle of Fotheringhay, the scene of the bloody spectacle of execution. According to some scholars he also destroyed (or ordered to destroy) the originals of Mary's sonnets and letters.<sup>32</sup> In this way, however, he also concealed their original version from the historians, thus depriving them of the chance of pronouncing Mary completely clean of any guilt for ever.

Both sides which constructed the legend of Mary Stuart—the Catholics and Protestants—had their own reasons for being moderate in their evaluations. The Catholics were embarrassed by the obscurity of Darnley's murder and the scandalous circumstances of her marriage to the adventurer Bothwell, the Protestants by the fact that Elisabeth committed regicide in the name of the law. However, from the turn of the 16th century, Catholic publications favourable to Mary were doubtlessly in the majority. Among those who wrote about her were Italians (R. Bellarmin, J. Bosio, T. Bosio, F. A. Della Chiesa), Frenchmen (F. de Rémond, A. Duchesne, N. Caussin), as well as Flemish (A. Sanders), and English (T. Stapleton) authors—they all wrote in a more or less panegyric tone. Worthy of special attention in this current is an extensive (70 pages) brochure by an unknown author (his pseudonym Oberon of Barnstaple may indicate an Englishman?) published in Cologne in 1627, entitled *Maria Stuarta [. . .] Martir Ecclesiae Innocens a caede Darleana*,<sup>33</sup> where

<sup>32</sup> C. Bax, *The Silvercasket*, London 1946, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Maria Stuarta, Regina Scotiae, dotaria Franciae, haeres Angliae et Hyberniae, Martir Ecclesiae, Innocens a caede Darleana. Vindice Oberno Barnestapolio. Continet haec Epistola historiam pene totam vitae, qua Regina Scotiae egit misere, sed exegit gloriose rationem tituli praefert frons sequentis pagellae*, Coloniae 1627 (in Herzog-August-Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel call number 405.1 (Hist.) 2a). J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, p. 44 mentions the Latin life of Mary published immediately after her execution by Robert Turner under the pseudonym of Obert Barnestapoli, where the author admittedly frees Mary from the guilt of Darnley's murder but at the same time also absolves Elisabeth, saying that the blame for the

the heroine's life history was presented as an example of the cruel persecution of Catholics by Calvinists. The author stresses with indignation that also women and even queens become victims of this persecution. Mary Stuart, quite groundlessly accused of being an accomplice in Darnley's murder, is a martyr of faith, a saint. She would indeed be proclaimed a saint in the 17th century, unless the Church were cautious in face of constantly-raised suspicion that she murdered her husband and also because of her shameful marriage to such a dubious figure as Bothwell. Therefore many writers preferred to concentrate rather on the unquestionable fact that in her person the immunity and sacredness of royal majesty was trampled. The French lawyer Cardin le Bret in his work *De la souveraineté du Roy*<sup>34</sup> emphasized that one must in no case lift one's hand at the person of a sovereign, even if he be an enemy; the memory of Elisabeth will be defamed for ever, since she basely ordered to behead the Queen of Scotland and the French king's widow.<sup>35</sup> Le Bret is not interested in the question of Mary's guilt or innocence, for him it is not essential in her case. The first duty of the theoreticians of absolutism was to fight in defence of the threatened majesty and immunity of the throne.

The entries concerning Mary Stuart constituted a permanent item both in Protestant and Catholic 17th century biographical dictionaries. As it is impossible to mention all of them, I will discuss here four very characteristic publications of that type.

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verdict on the Queen of Scots should fall on the advisers of the English Queen. The brochure was translated in 1589 by a certain Gabriel de Guttery and with a dedication to Catherine de Medici's maid-of-honour, madame de Villeroy, it was published as *L'Histoire et vie de Marie Stuart, Royne d'Escosse, d'Oiriere de France, heritière d'Angleterre et d'Ibernye, en laquelle elle est clairement justifiée de la mort du Prince d'Arlay, son mari*, Paris 1589. The German text published in Cologne refers to this work.

<sup>34</sup> Paris 1632.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, chap. XV: "C'est un droit qui est uny à la Majeste Royale, que quand bien le Prince deviendroit ennemy de la patrie, neantmoins on ne doit jamais attenter à sa personne, non pas mesme par la voye de Justice [...]. Et tant que les siècles dureront, l'on blasmera la memoire d'Izabel Reyne d'Angleterre, d'avoir fait mourir ignominieusement Marie Royne d'Escosse et veufe d'un Roy de France".

There is the anonymous one (the author signs himself ID), published many times (in 1605 the fourth edition!), very popular *Dutch Speculum tragicum regum, principum et magnatum superioris saeculi celebriorum ruinam exitusque calamitosos breviter complectens . . . Auctore I. D., Lugdunum Batavorum 1605*, which contains i.a. three life sketches: of Henry Darnley<sup>36</sup> (he was murdered as a result of a plot organized by Mary Stuart, who grew bored of him, and moreover she fell in love with Bothwell), of Bothwell<sup>37</sup> (with special focus on his death in madness) and lastly of Mary herself<sup>38</sup> (deposed and imprisoned by rebels in Lochleven, later for 18 [sic!] years held in prison in England, condemned and executed because of constant machinations against Elisabeth). Thus it is a version unfavourable to the Queen of Scots, plainly based on Buchanan's work. In the same time published was a comprehensive (almost 80 life sketches) German biographical dictionary *Der Teutschen Recreation oder Lusthaus darin das Leben der allerfürnembsten und denckwürdingsten Mans- und Weibspersonen . . . begriffen by Ae. Albertinus*,<sup>39</sup> containing over a dozen pages long life story of Mary Stuart,<sup>40</sup> which clearly takes the side of the Queen of Scots; she was unjustly accused of Darnley's murder and conspiracy against Elisabeth. A detailed description of the execution serves to underline the courage and nobility of the convict and the epigram placed at the end of her biography condemns the tyranny of the English Queen, who as a woman should have been moved by the lot of her rival:

*Foemina foeminae debebat sorte moveri  
Sexus et in sexum mitior esse suum.*<sup>41</sup>

As many as 17 pages were devoted to Mary by Rev. Hilarion de Coste in his collection of biographies of famous ladies and

<sup>36</sup> *De Henrico Stuardo, Scotiae Rege*, pp. 93—96.

<sup>37</sup> *De Jacobo Hebburno, Comite Bothuello*, pp. 96—97.

<sup>38</sup> *De Scotiae Regina Maria*, pp. 97—98.

<sup>39</sup> *Der Teutschen Recreation—oder Lusthauss darin das Leben der allerfürnembsten und denckwürdigsten Manns- und Weibspersonen [...] begriffen [...] Durch Aegidium Albertinum colligirt und zusammengetragen Part I—III München 1612, P. IV, München 1613.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, Part IV, pp. 342—353.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 353.

gentlemen published in Paris in 1625, entitled *Histoire catholique ou sont descrites les vies, faicts et actions heroique et signalées des Hommes et Dames illustres*—a collection republished in 1647<sup>42</sup> under a slightly altered title. “*Si quelque Dame et Princesse doit trouver place dans ces éloges c’est sans doute cette sainte Princesse et glorieuse Martyre de Jesus Christ*”—so Reverend de Coste begins his hagiographic presentation of the life of the Scottish Queen.<sup>43</sup> He compares her fate to that of the ancient Queen of Palmyra—Zenobia: equally beautiful, learned, virtuous and valiant, she was also taken captive (by caesar Aurelianus), she also suffered innocently as victim of a tragedy. Among the ladies from times closer to the author, Mary Stuart was a pearl of incomparable beauty. She was the most beautiful, noble, the most learned, the most generous (*genereuse*) and persistent (*constante*) princess of the Renaissance world. The writer reminds us how she enchanted the court of Henri II with her accomplishments, how she was extolled by French poets, among others by Ronsard. Although many slander her, she was not guilty of the attempt on Darnley’s life. Her marriage to Bothwell was enforced on her by her rebellious subjects. Innocently imprisoned by Elisabeth, she never conspired against the English Queen. The crystal character of Mary is contrasted with her rival, her evil-spirited half-brother Murray, who was “*un de plus mechans hommes du monde*”.<sup>44</sup> Mary died for the Catholic Church and her faith. Here follows an extensive description of her execution intermingled with fragments of poetic works,<sup>45</sup> anagrams,<sup>46</sup> and closed by a review of favourable opinions on Mary Stuart expressed by historians and writers of the turn of the 16th century, representing the Catholic point of view, or by moderate Protestants (Camden). She was like a stone—Rev. de Coste concludes—if the waves beat

<sup>42</sup> *Les éloges et les vies de Reynes, des princesses et des dames illustres en piète, en courage et en Doctrinae, qui ont fleury de nostre temps et du temps de nos pères [...]. Par F. Hilarion de Coste, Religieux de l’Ordre des Minimes de Saint Francois de Paule, Paris 1647, vol. I—II.*

<sup>43</sup> *Histoire Catholique*, p. 541.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 549.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Les éloges*, vol. II, p. 504 ff.

<sup>46</sup> E.g. the anagram: *Maria Stuart—Tu as martire*, p. 510.

at her it was only to polish her and not to injure her stately constancy.

Pierre Le Moyne in his biographical dictionary of great women published in the middle of the 17th century, on over a dozen pages portrays with true emotion the martyrdom of Mary Stuart, saying i.a. that the hair of this beautiful and virtuous lady became white as a result of the torment inflicted on her by Elisabeth and complaining that all the virtues and graces were "violated" in her person in a way unseen in antiquity and impossible to imagine by posterity: "*ce que la plus barbare Antiquité n'a peut-estre jamais veu, ce que la plus credule Posterité ne croire peut-estre jamais, toutes les vertues et toutes les Graces sont violée en sa Personne*".<sup>47</sup>

Le Moyne doubtlessly made use of the panegyric entitled *Le combat de toutes les passions représenté au vif en l'histoire de l'incomparable Reyne Marie Stuart* by the Jesuit N. Caussin. This booklet published in 1646 or 1647 exerted a great influence on the writers preoccupied with the fate of Mary Stuart, lending glamour to her "white" legend. Caussin adorned his heroine with all possible virtues and assets, while attributing to her rival—Elisabeth—the most criminal features and bloodthirsty instincts.

The execution of Mary's grandson, Charles I in 1649, started a new wave of interest in the history of the Stuart family, and especially of its most famous female representative, who like Charles went to the block. Still in the same year 1649 a brochure was issued in Dordrecht by a Dutchman James van Oorts, entitled *Ongeluckige Heerschappye ofte kort verhael van alle d'ongelucken en rampsaligheden het Doorluchtig Huys van Stuart overkomen, sints Robert, d'eerste uyt Schotse Heerschappye is opgedragen, tot de doot van Karel d'eerste, Koningh van Engelandt, Schodlandt en Yerlandt*. Richly illustrated with copperplates, presenting images of the Stuarts, and also scenes of Mary's and Charles's executions, the brochure underlines the tragic fate of many members of this magnificent—but according to the author—ill-fated family. In his presentation of Mary's history there are

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<sup>47</sup> P. Le Moyne, *Gallerie des femmes fortes*, Paris 1665, vol. II, pp. 181—193, quotation from p. 181.

distinct traces of Camden's approach: as in Greek tragedy she cannot avoid the fatal coincidence, while the problem of her guilt or innocence recedes into the background.

An important role in the formation of 17th century legend of Mary Stuart was played by various writings of people who knew her personally, which then appeared in print. In 1621 in Paris there appeared *Memoires* of a 16th century French diplomat, envoy at the English and Scottish courts, Michel Castelnau, in which he devoted much space to the conflict of Mary Stuart with her half-brother and Elisabeth, and later to her marriage with Darnley. Castelnau, an experienced politician, although he pays a tribute to Mary's charm and beauty, cannot help admiring the dexterity and talents of Elisabeth as a sovereign, and places in his *Memoires* a real panegyric in her honour.<sup>48</sup> In comparison to the Queen of England Mary appears as a person incapable of playing the diplomatic game to her advantage. At the beginning, to be sure, she had all the trumps in her hand; Castelnau says that on coming to Scotland at the beginning of her rule "*ie trouvoy cette Princesse [that is Mary Stuart—MB] en la fleur de son age, estimée et adorée de ses suiects et recherchée de tous ses voisins; en sorte qu'il n'y avoit grande fortune et alliance qu'elle ne peut esperer; tant pour estre parente et heritière de la Royne d'Angleterre, que pour estre douée d'autres graces, et plus grandes perfections de beauté, que Princesses de son temps...*"<sup>49</sup> All this was irretrievably lost—Castelnau does not say it expressly but it results from his exposition—as Mary did not know how to avail herself of her chances, she was a passive instrument in the hands of politicians who were more astute than herself: Elisabeth, who suggested to her Darnley for a husband and the cunning Scotsmen "*le Comte de Murray, frère bastard de ladicté Royne [that is Mary—MB] qui manioit toutes les affaires de ce Royne avec le sieur de Ledinton [Maitland of Lethington—MB] Secretaire d'Estat*".<sup>50</sup> Castelnau's general opinion

<sup>48</sup> *Memoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissiere [...] Ambassadeur pour Sa Majesté en Angleterre*, Paris 1621, esp. pp. 118—119.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 324.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 327.

of Scots is disapproving; he qualifies Rizzio's murder as follows: "spectacle estrange et asse souvent pratiqué par les Ecossois, quand ils se mettent quelque chose de sinistre en l'esprit".<sup>51</sup> In such surroundings, and without the ability to politicize, Mary was bound to suffer a defeat: "ceste ieune Princesse [that is Mary—MB] qui avoit un esprit grand et inquieté, comme celuy du feu Cardinal de Lorraine son oncle <sup>52</sup> (ausquels ont succédé la plupart des choses contraires a leurs deliberations) ne pouvait s'accomoder avec la Roynne d'Angleterre qui estoit plus puissante q'elle".<sup>53</sup> This is actually the first assessment of Mary as a politician, very critical despite the sympathy that she doubtlessly aroused in the author of *Memoires*.

In 1665 the first edition of P. Brantôme's work was issued, who in the gallery of famous ladies did not fail to mention the former favourite of the French court.<sup>54</sup> It introduced new buoyancy and piquancy to the recollections about Mary. On the other hand, *Memoirs* published in 1683 by Sir James Melville, Mary's courtier and servant, who was faithful to her for many years, by returning to the hagiographic track, provided many arguments both to her admirers and the writers ill-disposed to Elisabeth.<sup>55</sup> The presentation of the conflict of the two queens—one sincere, impulsive, naive, the other cool, astute, relentlessly realising her aims, must have directed the sympathy of the reader rather towards the former, although it was the latter who had all assets as a sovereign. Nevertheless here also the objectively interpreted testimony of a politician who took part in the events, discloses Mary's inaptness as a sovereign; she was only able to die as a queen, but did not know how to live as one on the throne.

It is not by accident that so turbulent a biography early provided inspiration for *belles-lettres* and drama. Already in 1593 a Flemish writer Adrien de Rouler published (in Latin) a dramatic picture of Mary's life, entitled *Stuarta Tragoedia*, underlining her

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 335.

<sup>52</sup> Guise Charles de, 1524—1574, Cardinal of Lorraine.

<sup>53</sup> *Memoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau*, p. 334.

<sup>54</sup> P. Brantôme, *Viès des dames gallantes*, Paris 1665.

<sup>55</sup> Sir James Melville, *Memoirs of His Own Life*, Edinburgh 1683.

constancy in Catholic faith.<sup>51</sup> Dramatic vicissitudes of Mary's life inspired even William Shakespeare. Students of English literature discover numerous "Stuart" threads in his works, especially in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Mary as a martyr became the heroine of the drama by a Dutch Catholic poet Joost van Vondel, written in the middle of the 17th century. His play entitled *Maria Stuart of gemartelde Majesteit*<sup>57</sup> in five acts in Dutch presents the last hours of Mary, once innocently accused of complicity in the plot against Darnley, and now equally unjustly suspected of plotting with Babington against Elisabeth. Mary energetically rejects any attempts at converting her to Protestantism :

*Ick leefde Katholijck, en ben getroost te sterven  
In't Katholijck geloof; zoo wert ick opgevoet;  
Zoo offre ick't Roomsche altaer mijn kroonen en  
mijn bloet*<sup>18</sup>

The play ends with *Triomf van Maria Stuart* where she declares :

*Ick roemde op geen doorluchte troonen,  
Noch grijzen stam, noch schoone Jeught,  
Maer stelde mijn gewijde kroonen  
Uit liefde tot de hooghste Deught...  
Wie zich getroost voor Godt te sterven  
Zal't ewigh Rijck en leven erven.*

To end up the text of the play there is an excerpt from Camden with his favourable opinion of Mary, copies of both tombstone inscriptions (from Peterborough and Westminster) and lastly a Latin epitaph, praising her ancestry, virtues and martyrdom; executed by Elisabeth

*...Nunc morte triumphat  
Fructibus ut sua spes pullulet inde novis!  
Vita nequit vinci, nec carcere clausula teneri,  
Nec occisa mori, sed neque capta capi.*

<sup>51</sup> Cf. E. Frenzel, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>57</sup> Joost van Vondel, *Maria Stuart of gemartelde Majesteit, te Keulen, in doude Druckerye 1646*. The author dedicated his play to Duke of Bavaria, related to the Scottish Queen.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*. In this book pages are not numbered.

*Sanguine sancivit foedus cum plebe Jehova.  
Sanguine placabant numina sancta patres.  
Sanguine conspersi quos praeterit ira penates.  
Sanguine signata est que modo cedit humus...  
Sit Reges mactare nefas, ut sanguine post hac  
Purpureo nunquam terra Britanna fluat...  
Magna viro, major natu, sed maxima partu  
Conditur hic Regum filia, sponsor, parens.*

Despite all the hagiographic bias of the author who reduces the problem of Mary Stuart exclusively to that of faithfulness to Catholicism and sees her as a holy martyr, there are also gleamings of his realisation that her greatness lies mainly in the manner of her death (“*maxima partu*”). Following that line he also compares her to a ripe ear of corn.<sup>59</sup> It was however, impossible to exclude politics completely from this strange biography, even if transformed by the poet into a drama. Thus in his *Supplement to the Portrait of Mary Stuart (Byschrift op d’afbeeldinge van Koningin Maria Stuart)* Vondel says:

*Twee punten hebben haer de bijl door’t vleesch gedreven  
Haer erfrecht tot de Kron, en haer Katholisch leven.*

The brochure ends with a poem of lament over the most noble island (“*edelste Eiland*”) which though its name is derived from that of angels (“*der Englen naem*”) nevertheless sheds the blood of its kings.<sup>60</sup>

The dramas written in the Netherlands both by de Rouler and van Vondel were not the only plays about Mary Stuart. Beginning with the end of the 16th century, many dramatized stories about the Queen of Scots were staged in the Jesuit schools of Germany.<sup>61</sup> In 1672 a translation of van Vondel’s play appeared, made by Chr. Kormart and soon after (1683) an original drama by A. von Haugwitz entitled *Schuldige Unschuld oder Maria Stuarda*, also

<sup>59</sup> “*Incomparabilis Heroinae Anagramma: Maria Stuarta erat Matura Arista*”. *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> *Klaghte over de Weerspannelingen in Groot Britanje aen de zelve. Ibidem*.

<sup>61</sup> E. Frenzel, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

centred round the motif of martyrdom of faith.<sup>62</sup> In Spain Mary Stuart's Catholicism was elated by F. Lope de Vega (the poem *Corona tragica*, 1627) and a little later by J. B. Diamante. Many dramas devoted to Mary Stuart were written in Italy (C. Ruggieri, *La Reina di Scotia*, 1604, F. Della Valle, *Maria Stuarda*, 1628, G. Fr. Savaro di Mileto, *La Maria Stuarda*, 1663, H. Celli, *La Maria Stuarda*, 1665, A. Samsone di Mazzare, *La Maria Stuarda*, 1672). In France the first drama on the subject appeared soon after 1600 (A. de Montchrestien, *La reine d'Escosse*),<sup>63</sup> another in 1639 (A. Regnault, *Marie Stuart, Reyne d'Escosse*).<sup>64</sup> Mary's adherents were soon to see in France the first comprehensive, several hundred pages long novel devoted to her, of the *vie romancée* type, that was to proliferate in the following centuries. In 1675 in Paris there appeared a work by P. G. Le—Pesant—de—Bois entitled *Marie Stuart, Reyne d'Escosse*. The author assures the reader in his preface that this is not a romance but true history (“*Ce n'est point icy un Roman, c'est une Histoire très veritable*”),<sup>65</sup> and then says that he does not agree either with the hitherto picture of Mary Stuart—a martyr (as she was portrayed by the Jesuit N. Caussin) or Mary Stuart—a courtesan (as she was presented by Buchanan's calumnies). In order to establish “the objective picture” the author, as he

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>63</sup> The first edition appeared in 1601 in Rouen, the second in 1604, completely refurbished. The play represents the last days of life of the “sweat” Mary, however Elisabeth is also presented with some liking. The Queen of England commits the crime of sentencing Mary out of her sense of duty towards the state, in order to save own life as a sovereign who is indispensable to her subjects, cf. J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, pp. 60—61.

<sup>64</sup> A drama based on the apparent rivalry of Mary Stuart and Elisabeth of England for the favours of Duke of Norfolk. It idealizes the former and presents a dark picture of the latter, although it brings out the long hesitation of Elisabeth before sentencing Mary, *ibidem*, p. 70—71. In the 80-ies of the 17th century Edme Boursault wrote another drama on Mary Stuart, based in a large measure on the older play by Regnault. Boursault's drama gained considerable popularity and was staged many times at the Paris Comedie Française, *ibidem*, p. 91.

<sup>65</sup> Pierre Le-Pesant-de Bois-Guillibert, *Marie Stuart, Reyne d'Escosse*, Paris 1675, pp. 1—4. E. Heinzl (op. cit., p. 471) probably quoting after somebody else, mistakenly defines this work as published anonymously.

assures us, had scanned several works, wherein that by the especially credible Camden (as Protestant and Englishman) and will provide in his book a true portrait of Mary. In fact the book is an example of sugary panegyric literature (with many errors, beginning with the information that she was born in Edinburgh);<sup>66</sup> to make the book more popular, the biography was given the form of a romance. Actually it must have enjoyed considerable interest, since in the next century it became the basis for a German plagiarism.<sup>67</sup>

In the 18th century the interest in the person of Mary did not subside, although the number of propaganda brochures was smaller. But there appeared at least two attempts—a German and an English one—at a more critical treatment of her life history: *De vita et rebus gestis Mariae Scotorum Reginae*<sup>68</sup> by Samuel Jebb, and *Die Geschichte von dem Leben und von der Regierung Mariae, Koniginn der Schotten und Wittwen von Frankreich. Aus Urkunden und glaubwürdigen Scribenten zusammengezogen und aus dem Englischen ubersetzt von Johann Mattheson*.<sup>69</sup> The author of the latter book, not only a writer but also a productive composer, probably grew interested in the figure of Mary in 1706, during his stay in England. Struck by the diametrically different views on this personality held by the older historians (Buchanan, Camden), he was also aware of the dependence of the development of Mary's legend on religious polemics between Protestants and Catholics. His book numbering almost 400 pages constitutes a full compendium of the then knowledge about the fate of the Scottish Queen. The author makes use of documents which were favourable to Mary as well as of those hostile to her and tries, by analysing the course of events, to form his own view. While avoiding excessive praises he nevertheless

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> F. S. Mursinna, *Leben der unglucklichen Mariae Stuart*, 1791, quoted from E. Heinzel, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

<sup>68</sup> London 1725. The author set together in his work various opinions and testimonies, i.a. by Buchanan, Leslay, Turner, Blackwood, Belleforêt, extracts from memoirs by Michel de Castelnau, fragments of the text by N. Caussin. Cf. J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, pp. 98—99.

<sup>69</sup> Hamburg 1726.

absolves Mary from the charge of accomplicity in Darnley's murder; according to the author the plot was prepared by Bothwell and other Scottish lairds (among others Mary's half-brother James Murray and James Douglas earl of Morton). The father of French Enlightenment, Voltaire, viewed the Queen of Scots with a more critical eye. Namely, perhaps in order to stress his disapproval of the Catholic hagiography, he maintained that Mary was beyond any doubt an adulteress and murderess, though sentencing her to death by Elisabeth was a "tyrannous act".<sup>70</sup>

Of greater significance than the new interpretations of Mary Stuart's biography and the controversy about the extent of her guilt was the publication in the 18th century of collections of sources concerning her person and activity.<sup>71</sup> These years also saw the first attempt at a critical assessment of the validity of her letters to Bothwell, made by the Scottish historian Walter Godall.<sup>72</sup> This problem will be discussed very intensely in the next century.

Quite naturally alongside the scholarly critical current there also developed a tendency to treat the whole story as a subject for sensation and vulgarization. The French Revolution and especially the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette aroused afresh the interest in the person of their royal predecessor at the block. In 1793 in Paris a new life of Mary appeared,

<sup>70</sup> Voltaire, *Oeuvres completes*, Paris 1880, vol. XII, p. 498.

<sup>71</sup> Mention is due here above all to the four-volume edition by J. Anderson, *Collections Relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh 1717—1788, containing documents hitherto unknown even to scholars, and also the edition of letters of a dangerous adversary of Mary, William Cecil (Samuel Haynes, *A Collection of State Papers [...] from 1542 to 1570 from Original Letters Left by William Cecil Lord Burghleigh*, London 1740). Also Buchanan's *History* was republished (in *Opera omnia*, ed. T. Ruddiman, Edinburgh 1715, repr. Leiden 1725), as well as Sir James Melville's *Memoirs* in a French version (Edinburgh 1745) and *Memoirs* of Michel Castelnau (Paris 1788). New editions were also made, especially in France and Germany, of translations of letters and sonnets of Mary, drawn from the first (corrupt) edition of Buchanan. In 1765 Meusnier de Querlon published a poem, allegedly of Mary's authorship ent. *Adieu plaisant pays de France*; this pastiche was disclosed only in the 20th century. Cf. J. H. Grew, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> W. Godall, *Examination of the Letters Said to Have Been Written by Mary Queen of Scots to James Earl of Bothwell*, Edinburgh 1764.

entitled : *La vie, les amours, le proces et la mort de Marie Stuart* by Claude Mercier. It constituted a symbiosis of panegyric raptures in the style of N. Caussin and drastic sensational details of the private life and the last moments of the Queen of Scots. In order to enhance the "authenticity" of his exposition the author maintained that his story was a recapitulation of some very rare and valuable life of Mary, allegedly produced in 1597. There also appeared publications connected directly with the execution. In the same 1793 at Brunswick an anonymous brochure was published (by Hermann Dietrich Bräss) entitled *Die Hinrichtungen Carls I Königs von England und der Maria, Königinn von Schottland für Leser welche die Hinrichtung Ludwigs XVI. damit vergleichen wollen, nebst Abbildung der Koepf-Machine Guillotine*. Thus the author was clearly aware of the links between both those monarchical executions across the ages, but he viewed them merely on the surface-sensational plane. His brochure was meant for the mass reader and adorned with trivial anecdotes, suiting the taste of his time. Among them, an especially lengthy one concerned the would-be fate of the executioner who beheaded Charles I and living until the age of 125 [sic !] was to spend the end of his life in tears and contrition, concealing his infamous identity from the world. Only on his deathbed did he summon to his house in London suburbs his grandson—a lord, who of course had no idea of his parentage ; the grandfather then confessed to his descendant the secret of his disgraceful lineage. An illustration presenting in meticulous detail the mechanism of the guillotine was to add to the attraction of this publication. The brochure devoted a lot of space to the misfortunes of the Stuarts and especially to the most tragic among them—Mary Stuart. The author quite realistically assessed the political reasons of the conflict between Mary and Elisabeth. The English Queen was not only envious of her cousin's beauty, but also saw her as a rival using the title and coat-of-arms of the English sovereign and aiming to seize the English throne. Mary aroused resentment of her subjects by accomplicity in the murder of her second husband, Henry Darnley. Deposed, she fled to England ; Elisabeth did not take the opportunity of being magnanimous, but acted as the prudence of a stateswoman dictated to her : after 19 years of

imprisonment she sentenced her adversary to death, thus ensuring her own safety. Most of the factual data and especially the description of Mary's last moments were drawn from Mattheson's work.

The picturesque motive of Mary Stuart's misfortunes appears here and there also in 18th century *belles-lettres*. In Scotland a special poem was devoted to her by Robert Burns.<sup>71</sup> She was the heroine of dramas written in France,<sup>74</sup> Germany,<sup>75</sup> Italy,<sup>76</sup> Portugal.<sup>77</sup>

Thus the crop of the first 200 years of the development of Mary Stuart's legend is imposing; it includes dozens of works of various calibre and character, published in several languages and in many countries of Europe—from Spain and Portugal up to Germany and the Netherlands, to say nothing of England and Scotland. We shall discuss Poland separately in another place. The friction of the two legends: the black and the white one, took place mainly in the second half of the 16th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries the white legend clearly gets the upper hand; even in Protestant publications the vision prevails of a beautiful and unhappy victim of circumstances, a woman who was dauntless and great in face of death. The reason is clear—when Elisabeth died (1603) nobody was any more anxious to slander Mary, and many people had good reason to want to exculpate her memory. We have already mentioned the energetic steps taken by James Stuart in this direction. The reign of Stuarts in England was bound to entail Mary's rehabilitation and support the growth of the white legend. The Stuarts were related to various rulers reigning in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries (among others some German princes), and the latter also endeavoured to cultivate

<sup>71</sup> *Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots*, 1786.

<sup>74</sup> Fr. Trondin, *Marie Stuart*, 1734.

<sup>75</sup> J. Riemer, *Vom Staatseifer, das ist Maria Stuart*, 1712, with a clear moral tendency and Chr. H. Spiess, *Maria Stuart*, 1793, doubtlessly under the influence of the decapitation of Louis XVI.

<sup>71</sup> V. Alfieri, *Maria Stuarda*, 1788/89; a drama centred round the murder of Darnley shows a sweet, affected figure of the main heroine.

<sup>77</sup> F. de Sousa da Silva Alcofarado Rebello, *Vida e Morte tragica de Marie Stuart*, 1737.

a good memory of Mary and to stifle the scandal around her person. This was also connected with a wider problem—that of defence of the royal majesty and the immunity of the monarch who could not be judged by any tribunal, except for the tribunal of God. This problem interested all the absolute rulers and lawyers at their service. So that in the situation when the main enemy of Mary—Elisabeth—was in her grave, the ranks of defenders of the Scottish Queen started growing and the vision of a charming and noble martyr ousted the unsympathetic shadow of the courtesan and murderer. This was a true, posthumous triumph of Elisabeth's long-time prisoner—a triumph presaged by Mary and heroically prepared by her at the end of her life.<sup>78</sup>

The 19th century brought a new wave of interest in Mary Stuart. This was caused, on the one hand, by the perfected methods of research used in historiography, on the other by the atmosphere of the era—the Romanticism which was fascinated by the nebulous, adventurous past of independent Scotland and the secrets of her beautiful Queen's tragedy. An important part was played here by the development of the national and historical consciousness of Scots, the fact that they started looking back to the era which marked a break-through in political, religious and social relations in their country. All those problems were focussed in the person of Mary Stuart, as if in one lens: she stood at the cross-roads of the Scottish Reformation and the last attempts at defending Scottish independence against England; her life and death were involved in the most vital problems of 16th century Scotland. No wonder then that in the 19th century, the time of an universal struggle for independence in many countries, she grew to become a symbol of the independence and the heroic past of Scotland.

Of great significance, of course, was the fact that in the 19th century a number of fundamental sources' editions appeared, which brought a multitude of data concerning the reign and later

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<sup>78</sup> Authentic records show how carefully Mary directed her last moments. On one of many embroideries she made in prison, she was said to place the motto: *En ma fin mon commencement*.

fortunes of Mary Stuart.<sup>79</sup> The *Memoirs* by Sir James Melville and Michel de Castelnau were republished<sup>80</sup> and the first publication was made of important contemporary chronicles of events in 16th century Scotland.<sup>81</sup> Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*<sup>82</sup> was translated into English and published again, by the same reaching a wider circle of readers. An important document of the last years of Mary's life—letters of her last guard, Sir Amyas Paulet<sup>81</sup> was introduced into scholarly circulation. A great event for the Queen's admirers was the publication of a collection of Mary's Latin compositions and stylistic exercises from her school days.<sup>84</sup> Duke Alexander Labanoff, a great bibliophile and searcher, published various letters and writings of Mary's authorship in a multi-volume, though insufficiently critical edition.<sup>85</sup> It was complemented by the French historian Al. Teulet with materials found in Spanish archives of Simancas.<sup>86</sup> Teulet also published a set of documents and records

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<sup>79</sup> These are i.a. 21 volumes of *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign Series. Elisabeth*, ed. J. T. Stevenson and J. Cresby, London 1863—1931; 20 volumes of *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary Queen of Scots*, ed. J. Bain, Edinburgh 1898—1916; 4 volumes of *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Preserved in the Archives of Simancas*, London 1892—1899; 9 volumes of *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, London 1894; *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson and C. Innes, Edinburgh 1814—1875; *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. J. H. Burton et al., Edinburgh 1877—1914; *State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler*, ed. A. Clifford, Edinburgh 1809.

<sup>80</sup> Edinburgh 1829 (Bannatyne Club) and Paris 1838 (collection Michaut et Poujoulat).

<sup>81</sup> *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents in Scotland* anonymously edited Edinburgh 1833 and the work by John Lesley, bishop of Ross, history of Scotland 1436—1561 in Latin (1830) and in an English translation (1890—95).

<sup>82</sup> Ed. J. Aikman, Glasgow 1827—29.

<sup>81</sup> *Letterbook of Sir Amyas Paulet*, ed. J. Morris, London 1874.

<sup>84</sup> *Latin Themes of Mary Queen of Scots*, London 1855.

<sup>85</sup> *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Marie Stuart, reine d'Ecosse*, vol. I—VII, London 1852.

<sup>86</sup> *Lettres de Marie Stuart. Supplement au Recueil du Prince Labanoff*, Paris 1859.

concerning the history of Scotland in the 16th century<sup>87</sup> as well as a volume containing materials dealing especially with the political relations of France and Spain with Scotland in the 16th century.<sup>88</sup> In all, this was an enormous editorial crop, and yet we mention here only the most important items.

At the same time the old controversy about the guilt or innocence of Mary Stuart was revived; this time the answer was sought on the basis of exhaustive archival quests and critical analyses of documents. In the years 1863—70 in London 12 volumes appeared of the fundamental *History of England* by J. A. Froude.<sup>89</sup> The volumes III—XII of this work constitute a veritable lampoon against Mary Stuart. She was also critically assessed by the French historian F. A. Miguet<sup>90</sup> (although he maintained that the notorious letters of Mary were in a large measure falsified) and by the German scholar A. Gaedeke.<sup>91</sup> The latter developed at length the thesis of the corruption of Mary's character already in her early youth, as a result of her stay at the French court. Here her over-sensuality developed, her inclination to easy love-affairs, her superficiality as well as inability to resist a passion. On the other hand Gaedeke extols Mary's bitter enemy—Murray.

There were, of course, also Mary's defenders. Her silhouette was sketched with clear sympathy by J. Gauthier<sup>92</sup> and J. Hosack;<sup>93</sup> Al. Patrick put forward the thesis that Bothwell exculpated Mary from suspicions of murder in his will.<sup>94</sup> Her figure is similarly characterized by E. Bekker in his work devoted

<sup>87</sup> *Papiers d'Etat, pièces et documents inédits ou peu connus, relatifs à l'histoire de l'Ecosse au XVI<sup>e</sup> s.*, 3 vols, Edinburgh 1852—59.

<sup>88</sup> *Relations politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Ecosse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1862.

<sup>89</sup> J. A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*.

<sup>90</sup> *Histoire de Marie Stuart*, I ed., Paris 1851.

<sup>91</sup> *Maria Stuart*, Heidelberg 1879.

<sup>92</sup> *Histoire de Marie Stuart*, vol. I—II, I ed. Paris 1869. The book received an award of French Academy.

<sup>93</sup> *Mary Queen of Scots and Her Accusers*, vol. I—II, I ed. Edinburgh 1869, II ed. Edinburgh and London 1870, III ed. Edinburgh 1874.

<sup>94</sup> *Zur Geschichte des Grafen Bothwell*, St. Petersburg 1874.

to the unfortunate eternal triangle.<sup>95</sup> A German Catholic historian B. Sepp,<sup>96</sup> the critical editor of her letters and sonnets, came out in passionate defence of Mary, and provided his book with a significant motto: *Sieg der Wahrheit*. Fighting like a knight errant for the honour of his heroine, Sepp argued that her so-called letters are a forgery, as incriminating insertions were introduced into the notes she made in her diary during her stay in Glasgow in January 1567. No such thesis is put forward by H. Breslau,<sup>97</sup> although he is also of the opinion that the most compromising so-called "long letter from Glasgow" is to a large extent the work of a forger. It may be added that both Labanoff and Hosack also doubted the full authenticity of Mary's letters. The meticulous analyses by Breslau and Sepp prove how hard it is—with the originals missing—to establish a true version of letters as well as their character and consequently to state the extent of Mary Stuart's involvement in the plot against Darnley.

At the end of the 19th century the Scottish Queen was presented with clear sympathy by Th. Opitz, even though he was a Protestant who with German *Grundlichkeit* wrote an extensive, well-documented biography of the Queen (though not devoid of some minor errors and slips).<sup>98</sup> He supports many theses of the Catholic Sepp. Opitz's biography unquestionably surpasses the work by a French historian Robert Chantelauze, published a few years earlier, even though the latter made use of certain documents earlier unknown, i.a. the diary of the physician of the Queen of Scots. In his apologetic tendency, however, Chantelauze doubtlessly forfeited the objectivity of his general assessment.<sup>99</sup>

The items discussed above do not exhaust all the historical

<sup>95</sup> *Maria Stuart, Darnley, Bothwell*, Giessen 1881.

<sup>96</sup> *Die Kassettenbriefe. Tagebuch der unglücklichen Schottenkönigin Maria Stuart, während ihres Aufenthaltes zu Glasgow 23—27 Januar 1567*, München 1882.

<sup>97</sup> *Die Kassettenbriefe der Königin Maria Stuart. Eine historisch-diplomatische Untersuchung*, in: *Fr. Raumer's historisches Taschenbuch*, ed. W. Mauerenbrecher, VI Folge, I Jg., Leipzig 1882.

<sup>98</sup> *Maria Stuart*, Bd. I, Freiburg 1879, Bd. II, Freiburg 1882.

<sup>99</sup> *Marie Stuart, son procès et son exécution d'après le journal inédit de Bourgoing, son medecin, la correspondance d'Amyas Paulet, son geôlier et autres documents nouveaux*, Paris 1876.

works devoted to Mary in the 19th century as they were much greater in number,<sup>100</sup> and were of unequal level and worth; the subject of discussion was mainly the authenticity of Mary's letters to Bothwell—i.e. the problem of the degree of her accomplicity in the murder of Darnley as well as the analysis of Mary's relationships with various personages who played an important role in her life (the Guises, Catherine de Medici, Elisabeth Queen of England, Bothwell, Buchanan, Knox etc.). In factual respect these numerous works seldom added something new to the cyclopedic biography by Opitz; above all they bore the trace of the Protestant—Catholic controversy, thus being not devoid of partiality.

While historians worked through the piles of records and documents, and shedding light on the shady side of Mary's fortunes argued about the extent of her guilt, the Queen of Scots made her triumphal entry into the romantic *belles-lettres*. For the writers of this era, so fond of mystery and tragedy, the misfortunes of love adventures and the horror of death—she was the ideal heroine. No wonder then that the great romantic poet—Friederich Schiller set his pen to the job. Before starting it the poet had studied all available documents and literature. He began writing his drama in June 1799 and finished it on June 9, 1800. Five days later, on June 14, the première took place on the Weimar stage; the play was received enthusiastically and acclaimed one of the best dramas of Schiller. The text was published in

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<sup>100</sup> Among those who wrote about her in the same century were also: G. Chalmers, *The Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. I—II, London 1818; A. Cheruel, *Maria Stuart et Catherine Medici*, Paris 1858; H. Forneron, *Les ducs de Guise et leur époque*, vol. I—II, Paris 1877; H. Forst, *Über Buchanans Darstellung der Geschichte der Maria Stuart*, Bonn 1882; T. Henderson, *The Caskett Letters and Mary Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh 1889; Kerwyn de Lettenhove, *Marie Stuart*, vol. I—II, Paris 1889; A. M'Neel Caird, *Mary Stuart, Her Guilt or Innocence. An Inquiry into the Secret History of Her Times*, Edinburgh 1866; F. Raumer, *Elisabeth und Maria*, Leipzig 1836; A. de Ruble, *La première jeunesse de Marie Stuart*, Paris 1891; A. Strickland, *Letters of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. I—II, London 1842; eadem, *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh 1864; L. Wiesener, *Marie Stuart et le comte de Bothwell*, Paris 1863.

1801 and soon translated into many foreign languages. According to the Romantic fashion Schiller idealized his heroine. His Mary is a personification of sweetness, a victim of unfortunate passion for Bothwell, however not absolved from corresponsibility for Darnley's murder (by whose ghost she is haunted). The drama takes place at the castle of Fotheringhay, already after the trial, in the days when Mary awaited her sentence. To dramatize this uneventful period, Schiller departed considerably from historic facts (i.a. by creating the fictitious figure of Mortimer, a nephew of the guard Paulet, who conspires in order to free Mary and murder Elisabeth). He also introduced the scene of the meeting between the two queens (in fact it never took place), necessary for showing the contrast between the two characters: spontaneous, light-minded but proud Mary faces the cold, cunning and double-dealing Elisabeth. Apart from the play by Schiller, the 19th century saw many other dramas based on the motifs of Mary Stuart's life.<sup>101</sup> Mary also scored successes in romantic poetry of higher and lower order.<sup>102</sup> The motifs connected with Mary Stuart, especially the extremely stagey murder of Rizzio—were used particularly often by the 19th century opera librettists.<sup>103</sup> She was also the heroine of symphonic compositions.<sup>104</sup> The excellent Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott introduced Mary into

<sup>101</sup> In Scotland and England (J. Grahame, W. H. Murray, M. Russel Mitford, J. Haynes, V. Fane, M. Quinn, M. Field, R. Blake, M. Deverell), in France (P. and A. Lebrun, A. Dubout, M. Rougemont, G. de Pixérécourt, F. de Villeneuve, J. D. Gimet de Joulan, Th. Anne, J. A. Guyet, A. Poujol, Ch. Rey, M. Soullier, F. Dizac, A. Joubert) in Italy (A. di Brenna, P. Giacometti), in Germany (E. Raupach, H. A. Müller, H. Koester, N. Reh-binder, M. von Ebner-Eschenbach, J. Bamme, A. Ruge, L. Schneegans, O. Ludwig, W. von Warteneegg, F. Danneman).

<sup>101</sup> In Scottish poetry J. Hogg, *The Queen's Wake*, 1813; H. G. Bell, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, 1889; in English poetry W. Wordsworth, *Lament on Mary, Queen of Scots Captivity*, 1850, Al. Ch. Swinburne, *Adieux à Marie Stuart*, 1899; She was remembered by German poets (i.a. F. Dahn, *Maria Stuart und Sir Gordon*, in: *Gedichte*, 1898) as well as the Swiss (C. F. Meyer, *Die verstimmte Laute*, 1880, who referred to the rarely raised motive of Chastelard's death.)

<sup>101</sup> P. Casella, R. Hamilton, S. Mercadante, C. Coccia, G. Donizetti, F. Geyer, L. Niedermayer, L. Canepa, E. Sarria.

<sup>104</sup> I.a. J. L. Nicodé, A. Sandberger.

the orbit of 19th century prose. In his novel *The Abbot*, published in 1820, the main plot describes the history of several fictitious characters (a page of mysterious descent, no less mysterious abbot and an old woman, half-saint, half a witch). In the background, however, there are also historic figures: Scottish lairds Ruthven, Melville, Lindsay as well as Mary herself, a beautiful, attractive, unhappy *femme fatale*. Scott did not take sides in the matter of Mary's guilt or innocence of Darnley's murder, but he underlined that she was hated by Protestants as a representative of a diametrically opposed posture in life, as a symbol of cheerfulness, of *joie de vivre*. The book won considerable popularity, was translated into many languages and appeared in several editions.

The attractiveness of motives connected with Mary's life was also appreciated by other authors. In the 19th century scores of novels were based on her life as well as many publications of the *vie romancée* type, on the borderline of popular biography and *belles-lettres*.<sup>105</sup> Thus the 19th century saw an extremely exuberant flowering of Mary Stuart's legend. Even those authors who under the influence of Protestant tradition took the side of Elisabeth in the controversy of the two queens, yielded to the charm of the beautiful Scotswoman; while Catholic and Scottish writers openly idealized her—some because she resisted the temptation of conversion and clung constantly to Catholicism, others because she was a symbol of the independent Scottish past.

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<sup>105</sup> The Scottish writer C. J. Whyte-Melville devoted a rather sugary book to the moving childhood and later mature friendship of "Four Maries"—friends of the Queen (*The Queen's Maries. A Romance of Holy-wood*, 1862). In Scotland novelized biographies were written by M. M. Scott (1862) and Flora Mac Alpin (1882). Fr. Mathew chose as the subject of his novel Mary's moral triumph (*One Queen Triumphant*, 1899). Several novels based on Mary's history also appeared in Germany (A. E. Brachvogel, 1879; L. Lang, 1865). In France Jean-Armand Lacoste (called Saint-Amand) devoted to her a lot of space in his story about women at the court of the last Valoises (*Les femmes de la Cour des derniers Valois*, 1885). The book enjoyed great popularity. There were also several anonymous tales, more or less fantastic. The lot of Mary attracted also Al. Dumas (father) who in his book entitled *Marie Stuart* (1856) maintained that even a slight physical flaw could have saved her life—since Elisabeth was simply envious of her rival's beauty!

The 20th century seems merely to copy the stereotypes that arose earlier, although the discussion goes on over the extent to which the papers from the silver-casket were forged, and over the innocence or guilt of Mary in Darnley's murder (there is general agreement as to her conspiracy against Elisabeth). Among major works one should mention a study on the content of the silver-casket by the English researcher C. Bax,<sup>106</sup> who is inclined to accept the authenticity of letters and sonnets. Various aspects of Mary's biography became again a subject of discussion by many Scottish and English historians,<sup>107</sup> however these newer publications not always signify a real progress with regard to Opitz's work. Against this background a two-volume, insightful biography by Antonia Fraser,<sup>108</sup> favourably assessing the heroine, seems the most convincing. In Scotland however it met no acclaim; Jenny Wormald, a well-known Scottish researcher into the 16th century, while speaking of the way Scotland and especially Scottish gentlemen were presented in Fraser's book, characterized it briefly as a treatise on a very nice queen in an unpleasant country.<sup>109</sup>

Of course biographies of the *vie romancée* type continue to outnumber others.<sup>110</sup> In majority of cases they are of a hagiographic-sensational, superficial type and use faded stereotypes. Worthy of attention against this background is the book by the

<sup>106</sup> *The Silvercasket*, London 1946.

<sup>107</sup> I. a. A. Arbuthnot, *Queen Mary Book*, London 1907; R. Mahon, *The Tragedy of Kirk of Field*, Cambridge 1930; F. Grant, *Mary of Scotland, 1561—1568*, London 1930; J. Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, Edinburgh 1922; J. Stoddard, *The Girlhood of Mary Queen of Scots*, London 1906; C. Turner, *Forgotten Forgeries*, London 1933.

<sup>108</sup> *Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. I—II, I ed. London 1969.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. J. Wormald, *Scotland 1470—1625*, London 1981.

<sup>110</sup> Let us mention among the most famous: P. H. Berdeau, *Marie Stuart*, Paris 1947; R. Chauviré, *Le secret de Marie Stuart*, Paris 1947; A. Dakers, *The Tragic Queen*, Edinburgh 1931; G. Doublier, *Marie Stuart*, Graz—Köln 1959; H. Gorman, *The Scottish Queen*, New York 1932; M. Hume, *The Love Affairs of Mary Queen of Scots*, London 1903; M. Humbert-Zeller, *Marie Stuart*, Paris 1948; A. Lang, *The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, London 1901.

Austrian biographer Stefan Zweig<sup>111</sup>—although maintained in the same genre but fascinatingly written and translated into many languages and many times republished. What interests Zweig is not the political history or the conflict of two sovereigns, but a history of a woman and her passion, hence he concentrates on two years from Mary's life (her marriage with Darnley and her love for Bothwell), all the rest being a prelude ("French" times) or existence without meaning (imprisonment). Zweig has no doubts about Mary's guilt, he does not try to idealize her: she was a murderess, she lied and cheated in politics. Such character, thus burdened with sins, better suits his conception of Mary's fortunes, stylized after the Greek tragedy, than if she were a colourless innocent. Zweig's extremely suggestive book affected not only the popular image of Mary but also influenced researchers (e.g. some traces of fascination with Zweig can be found in Fraser's study). Although far from a picture of an innocent victim, Zweig's vision cannot be ranked in the "black" legend: the passion guiding the Queen of Scots, pushing her to crime and to risking the throne was so strong and so bound up with the wonderful bloom of her life as a woman, that according to Zweig it justifies the deeds committed by Mary.

The biographers of Elisabeth I of necessity devote a lot of space to Mary. Of interest here, on account of its considerable objectivity, is J. E. Neale's book<sup>112</sup> as well as the work by M. Waldmans.<sup>113</sup> In Poland a biography of Elisabeth was published by St. Grzybowski<sup>114</sup> in the series of the Ossolineum Publishing House. A lot of new light on the reign of Mary Stuart was shed by new studies, based on extensive archival quests: French about her trial<sup>115</sup> and English about the contest between two sovereigns.<sup>116</sup>

Neither does Mary disappear from 20th century *belles-lettres*.

<sup>111</sup> *Maria Stuart*, I ed. 1935.

<sup>112</sup> *Queen Elisabeth*, I ed. London 1934, many reeditions and translations.

<sup>113</sup> *Elisabeth and Leicester*, London 1946.

<sup>114</sup> *Elżbieta Wielka [Elisabeth the Great]*, Wrocław 1984.

<sup>115</sup> M. Thomas, *Le procès de Marie Stuart. Documents originaux*, Paris 1956.

<sup>116</sup> A. Plo w d e n, *Two Queens in one Isle*, London 1983.

She continues to be an inspiration to poets<sup>117</sup> and playwrights as well as novelists.<sup>118</sup> But this type of literature gradually seems to flag and lose breath. One might think that Zweig's book satisfied the needs of the readers so well that it became an unsurpassable rival for *belles-lettres*.

A special place is due to the repercussions of Mary Stuart's legend in Poland. Skarga was the first Polish author who presented in his *Zywoty świętych* [*Lives of the Saints*] an extensive description of the trial and execution of the Scottish Queen, which created of her a martyr of faith.<sup>119</sup> For almost 200 years Skarga was also the main source of knowledge about Mary in Poland.<sup>120</sup> Later came the drama by Schiller; it was staged right after 1800, before the text was translated into Polish, in French version. None other but Kazimierz Brodziński soon translated whole fragments

<sup>117</sup> A. Niegel, *Gedichte*, 1901; H. Schubert, *Die Verlorene*, 1955; a French drama by G. Marfond, *Marie Stuart et Elisabeth*, (1929) is an attempt at a modern presentation of the full history of Mary, however, his rendering is rather primitive and lacking a good knowledge of the era.

<sup>118</sup> In England and Scotland (M. Hewlett, *The Queen's Quair*, 1904; R. H. Benson, *The Queen's Tragedy*, 1906; C. Oman, *The Royal Road*, 1924; M. Baring, *My End is My Beginning*, 1931; E. Linklater, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 1932), in the United States (H. S. Gorman, *Scottish Queen*, 1932), in Germany (O. Elster, *Im Kampf um Schottlands Krone*, 1912; M. Kurlbaum-Siebert, *Kampf und Liebe der jungen Maria Stuart*, 1922; W. Heichen, *Maria Stuart*, 1927; G. Lentz, *Maria Stuart*, 1938; H. Reisiger, *Ein Kind befreit die Konigin*, 1947), in France (J. Petithuguenin, 1930). The Petithuguenin's novel deserves special attention as it is destroying the scheme that clears the heroine from blame. The author shows Mary Stuart as a hypocrite, adulteress and accomplice in crime, which enhances the dramatic quality of the story and places the novel in the "psychologizing-Freudian" current.

<sup>119</sup> In the 6th edition of his *Zywoty Świętych* [*Lives of the Saints*], which appeared a year after Elisabeth's death (1603); was this a mere coincidence? Cited from J. Tazbir, *Piotr Skarga*, Warszawa 1978, p. 233.

<sup>120</sup> Only in Calvinistic circles there were repeated opinions unfavourable for Mary; Krzysztof Kraiński in his *Postil* (1611) wrote that the mother of the King of England [James—MB] was by the English Parliament "sent to the block for important and just reasons and without the Queen's of England [Elisabeth—MB] knowledge", cited from J. Tazbir, *Elżbieta I Tudor w opinii staropolskiej*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce", vol. XXXIV, 1989, p. 64.

of Schiller's work into Polish, later Józef Korzeniowski tried to do it in blank verse. The first full translation was made by Michał Budzyński.<sup>121</sup> From then on Schiller's Mary Stuart became part and parcel of the permanent repertoire of the Polish stage, played even by small provincial troupes.<sup>122</sup> It was, however, outdistanced soon by the native play—written in 1830 by Juliusz Słowacki.<sup>123</sup> Schiller based his play on the drama of two rival rulers, Słowacki on the drama of a woman, concentrating on the murder of Rizzio and later the assassination of Darnley. His Mary is even more idealized than Schiller's heroine ("Oh, Queen, you have the face and heart of an Angel" says Rizzio in the first scene). But it is she, obsessed by her love for Bothwell and seized by contempt for the treacherous weakling—Darnley—who suggests to her lover to kill the King, it is she who hands in the cup with poison (to be drunk, though, by the King's fool, Nick). Słowacki also departs considerably from facts, and besides, like Schiller, clearly charges Mary with the guilt of killing her husband. In great Romantic drama crime committed out of love and a criminal tormented by pangs of conscience were too attractive for the poet, to be given up on account of historians' scruples.

Those two romantic dramas have finally shaped in the 19th and 20th centuries the picture of Mary Stuart as a passionate mistress and great murderess, repenting too late for her deed. This vision ousted the earlier version of Skarga—of an innocent martyr of faith. The theatrical legend was backed up by Walter Scott, translated into Polish by F. S. Dmochowski.<sup>124</sup> Various 19th century Polish periodicals also carried some articles devoted to the Queen of Scots. Thus e.g. in 1838 *Przyjaciel Ludu* [*Friend of the People*] published at Leszno, in its No. 29 inserted a popular study on Mary Stuart (with an illustration), emphasizing the perversity of Elisabeth and Mary's constancy in Catholicism, thus being rather in the vein of Skarga than Słowacki. Already after Poland regain-

<sup>121</sup> Printed : Leipzig 1844.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. in 1857 it was staged at Żytomierz, cf. J. Komorowski, *Polskie życie teatralne na Podolu i Wołyniu do 1863 r.* [*Polish Theatre Life in Podole and Wołyń up to 1863*], Wrocław 1985, p. 101.

<sup>123</sup> Printed : Kraków 1910.

<sup>124</sup> Published under the title *Opat*, Warszawa 1832.

ed its independence, in 1920, Karol Chłędowski in his book about de Valoises<sup>125</sup> devoted a lot of space to Mary's youth. However, only the Polish translation of Zweig's excellent biography positively enhanced Mary's popularity in Poland.<sup>126</sup> Zweig's romantic vision of the Queen of Scots, at the same time idealized and burdened—for greater dramatic effect—with unquestionable guilt of murder, although she paid for it with repentance, thus became naturalized in the wide Polish historical awareness.

To sum up one has to agree that Mary Stuart's legend created and perpetuated three ways of viewing the Queen of Scots: 1. "Protestant"—as a courtesan, murderer and political intriguer 2. "Catholic"—as an innocent victim of circumstances and a saint-martyr of faith 3. a symbiosis of these two approaches was created in the 19th and 20th centuries in the Romantic—Zweigian image according to which Mary is on the one hand, a victim of a great passion, prompting her to crime—and on the other, a symbol of the independent past of Scotland.

*(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)*

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<sup>125</sup> *Ostatni Walezjusze* [*The Last of the Valoises*], chapt. ent. "Siostrzenica Guise'ów" [*The Niece of the Guises*]. The book was republished after the war (Warszawa 1958).

<sup>126</sup> First edition in 1936, second in 1938, after the war a number of editions (1959, 1961, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1974).