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Review of Pamela E. Ritchie, *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548-1560: A Political Career*

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Pamela E. Ritchie. *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548–1560: A Political Career.* East Linton: Tuckwell Press Ltd., 2002. Pbk. xiii + 306 pp. index. append. map. gloss. bibl. £20. ISBN: 1-86232-184-1.

Mary of Guise, widow of James V of Scotland, is a fascinating woman, though one with a very different life than was portrayed in the 1998 film, *Elizabeth.* There are only two earlier studies of Mary of Guise, those by Rosalind Marshall (1977) and Marianne McKerlie (1931). For those who wish to know more about this important political player, Ritchie's book is a welcome addition. As she points out, Mary of Guise is usually discussed only in connection with her daughter Mary Stewart, her French family, or the Reformation Rebellion of 1559–60. Ritchie provides a far more complete view of her political career in Scotland from 1548 to 1560, and by using a much wider range of sources than has been usually tapped, demonstrates that the most significant issue during Guise's political career was not Catholicism but the dynastic interests of herself and daughter both in relation to France and to Mary Stewart's eventual claim to the English throne. Ritchie attempts to demonstrate that Mary of Guise was a shrewd, and effective ruler, and she places Guise and Scotland in the period from 1548–60 within the broader realm of European politics. Ritchie's book tells us not only about the religious and political conflicts in Scotland but how they connected particularly with England and France, and Henri II of France's hope that the marriage of Mary's daughter and his son might lead to a Franco-British empire.

The Treaty of Haddington, signed in 1548, not only arranged the marriage of Mary Stewart and the dauphin but also made Scotland a "protectorate" of France. No one assumed the year of the treaty that Mary of Guise would make her political stamp in Scotland; indeed most believed that Guise would accompany her young daughter to France. But Guise was determined to see the conclusion of the Anglo-Scottish conflict and did not travel back to France until peace had been formally

agreed to with the treaty of Boulogne. When Guise visited France 1550–51, many thought she would stay with her daughter and her relatives in her native land. But with Mary Stewart being raised in France, Scotland needed a regent and the Scots were unhappy with a Frenchman ruling. They preferred Guise, who, while French, had lived much of her life in Scotland, and Henri wanted some stability in Scotland. By 1554 she was the official Queen Regent there. Though the sixteenth century is certainly a century of queens, given Guise's gender and nationality, this is still a remarkable achievement.

The sixteenth century was also one of divisive religious conflict, but Ritchie argues that religion was not Guise's predominant concern; what mattered more were securing her daughter's marriage and Scotland's defense and national security. Ritchie characterizes Guise as a woman who was neither a Catholic zealot nor a believer in religious persecution. Her position of accommodation and tolerance assured her Protestant subjects that they would not be excluded or marginalized. This position could be changed, however, for political not spiritual reasons, and this was to lead to the unfortunate end of her regency, a regency dictated by the international situation. After the death of Mary I, Guise issued a religious proclamation ordering all Scots to return to the ancient faith; she hoped this would increase her daughter Mary's opportunity to be recognized as the legitimate queen of England. This led to Reformation Rebellion, which Guise always claimed was a rebellion against established authority, not a revolt of conscience. Ritchie argues that not only England's formal intervention but more importantly France's failure to respond to this intervention with military reinforcements irrevocably weakened Mary of Guise's regency. When Guise died in June 1560 the administration's collapse was complete. But Ritchie strongly encourages her readers not to see Mary of Guise, whom she characterizes as a "pragmatic politique," as a failure, arguing that it was the French policy that led to the collapse. Ritchie also emphasizes that much of the negative attitudes toward Guise and her regime come from the propaganda of her Protestant enemies. Though at times overly repetitious, Ritchie makes a solid case and her book is well worth reading, providing scholars with valuable information and insight into a important and enigmatic woman of the sixteenth century.

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