

Abelard's roles within the letters, citing, for example, Claire Nouvet's "The 'Discourse of the Whore,'" (*Modern Language Notes* 1990) and Heloise's wonderful example that "the master is master only to the extent that the 'whore,' through self-humiliation, recognizes him as such" (163). Chance begins with a reminder that Heloise herself provides a "mutual identity crisis" by deconstructing Abelard's identity, referring to both of them in multiple roles (master, husband, brother/handmaid, wife, sister), which leads to a lack of identity and reciprocal lack of manhood in Abelard. Chance then explores Heloise's uses of classical figures such as Mars, Venus, and Minerva to expose Abelard's self-deceit regarding his relationship with Heloise. Chance writes: "The truth, the more profound truth about himself – his pride and lechery – emerges although he apparently refers only to the fact of their sexual union, the literal coupling and the scholastic truth about the Mars, Venus, and Vulcan allegory" (171). Following this analysis Chance moves on to address Heloise as Dame Philosophy to Abelard's Boethius, an exchange which educates Abelard and provides a means for him to understand himself, Heloise, and her sisters more fully and to properly interpret and contextualize for them all both scripture and patristic scholarship.

Heloise remains a difficult figure to know, in spite of all the scholarship that has recently emerged, such as this collection, which has sought to bring her into focus. This collection does provide scholars with the means to regard Heloise again, to listen to what she now has to tell us through recent approaches to her as a woman, a theologian, and a representation of medieval life and culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Several contributors to this collection argue admirably that the Heloise we know and perceive as a "real woman" may be as much a fictional construct as Chaucer's Criseyde or Spenser's Una, although a new perspective on this debate, argued by Jane Chance, is that this constructed "Heloise" may well be one constructed by the historical woman Heloise, and thus, although she may still be a fiction, she is at least a female-authored construction, and as such bears closer scrutiny and attention, particularly by feminist critics and scholars.

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**Wormald, Jenny. *Mary, Queen of Scots: Politics, Passion and a Kingdom Lost*. London: George Philip, 1988; rpt. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001. Pp. 208.**

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The first edition of Jenny Wormald's study of Mary, Queen of Scots (London 1988) was hailed as a groundbreaking study of the Scottish queen and as a valuable addition to British historical studies. This revised edition is equally welcome to the field: it is a masterful study of Mary's reign, grounded within the complexities of sixteenth-century Scottish and European politics. In this book, unlike in previous studies of the Queen, Mary is presented as a political figure, "the arguments about her shifted from the bedroom at Holyrood and Dunbar to the world of sixteenth-century politics, which is where she belongs" (8). With this revised focus, Wormald looks beyond the sensational final years of Mary's reign and considers the entirety of her rule, evaluating and discussing the queen as a mid-sixteenth century monarch. Wormald

works from a perspective similar to Gordon Donaldson's in *All the Queen's Men: Power and Politics in Mary Stewart's Scotland* (London 1983), attacking the legend of Mary and treating the Queen as a queen, rather than as the participant in a murderous romance or bedroom drama.

Mary's personal rule lasted for only six of her forty-four years, but in order to comprehend that period, its context must be established, and Wormald does so with remarkable skill. She positions Mary within a discussion of Scottish monarchy; Scottish attitudes towards, and expectations of, monarchy; and the dynamics of subject-ruler relationships within Scotland. Chapter Two clearly elucidates the intricate nexus of Scottish attitudes and power relations, creating a vantage point from which the distinct periods of Mary's reign can be surveyed, analyzed, and interpreted. Beginning in Chapter Two, and continuing throughout the book, Wormald cogently presents the complex patterns of shifting loyalties within the Scottish nobility and council and uses this information to shed light on Mary's failed monarchy. Wormald's extensive knowledge of the subject enables such clarity, especially the research done for her earlier book on religious and political bonds, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent 1442-1603* (Edinburgh, 1985).

Wormald is far from unique in viewing Mary as an unsuccessful monarch, but her explanations as to why Mary failed are original and persuasive. She explains that Mary's problems cannot be ascribed to her sex, youth, religion, or French upbringing, but rather to her personal attitudes towards Scotland and its governance as well as to her inability to understand her subjects, their self-perception, and their conception of monarchy. For Mary's subjects and for past monarchs, Scotland was a valuable participant in European culture and politics, but for Mary it was an inferior country to be sacrificed to and for either England or France. Furthermore, she failed to understand the unique relationship between the Scottish nobility and monarchy. Where she saw an unwelcome lack of bureaucracy and a decentralized, splintered seat of governance, there was in reality a strong, patriotic, and loyal nobility, with a high degree of respect for the institution of monarchy and for individual monarchs, who were ready to obey her commands. Unfortunately Mary failed to recognize this and she even failed to command. As Wormald demonstrates, Mary was a ruler only in name: she was "a queen regnant reluctant to rule" (107). The Scottish nobility "were prepared to welcome the heir of the Stuart kings back to Scotland and make the best of a bad job—if only she would turn up and do the job" (108). However, she stayed in France after Francis II died and even after Mary of Guise's death, thus leaving Scotland without a regent for over a year. Following her return to Scotland she had little input in government, and any policy she devised was with an eye to ultimately inheriting the English crown. This ambition also explains the bizarre religious situation during her rule: despite her Catholicism, Scotland was a Protestant country. She subordinated her own religion to secular concerns, namely her desire to raise English Protestant sympathy in order to appear a good choice for the English throne. As such, Wormald demonstrates that praise for Mary's religious tolerance has been misguided. She was not tolerant; she was unresponsive to the religious and political needs of her subjects. Wormald ably shows that none

of Mary's policy was sensible on diplomatic, political, religious, personal, or national grounds. "Mary as ruler achieved nothing" (192).

There are few differences between this volume and the earlier version of the book. The subtitle has been changed from *A Study in Failure to Politics, Passion and a Kingdom Lost*, which stresses the interrelation of politics and passion in Mary's career—as outlined by Wormald—and which led to the loss of her kingdom. There are several new explanatory and expository paragraphs added to the book on pages 44, 75, 103-4, 127, 130-1, and a final paragraph updating the bibliography on 197. A much-appreciated change would have been the addition of footnotes, enabling readers to follow Wormald's trail through the impressive amount of sources consulted, the lack of which is the book's only serious flaw.

This is a fresh and insightful look at one of the most-written about historical figures of all times. Wormald's book is of special interest to feminist scholarship as it analyzes Mary as a political, public figure, rather than, as in previous studies, simply discussing Mary in the context of her personal and romantic relationships. This is not a definitive study of Mary: as Wormald herself indicates, much work remains to be done. Yet, while written over fifteen years ago, this book has not yet been superseded: in the intervening years no full-length study of Mary as a monarch has been produced. In *Mary Stewart: Queen in Three Kingdoms* (ed. Michael Lynch, Oxford, 1988), each contribution aims to understand Mary as an historical figure, following in the footsteps of Wormald and Donaldson. In *Mary Queen of Scots: Romance and Nation* (London and New York, 1998), Jayne Elizabeth Lewis also seeks to expose the mythical side of Marian scholarship, but she does so through an historiographical study of the genesis and propagation of the myths within British culture. Wormald's book has the expressed aim of opening the debate on Mary as a political figure, and she succeeds admirably in establishing the groundwork for such an exchange. I hope that the Tauris edition will inspire a new generation of scholars to engage in the much-needed additional research to enable a full debate to take place. Wormald's book is an original, remarkable, well-written and lucid account of Mary's rule, as well as a reminder of the work that remains to be done on this Scottish Queen if we are to understand her historically, rather than only as a figure of myth or imagination.

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