

## Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots

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### Summary:

The British Library is planning a major exhibition about Queen Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots: two powerful women whose rivalry not only dominated English and Scottish politics for thirty years but also reflected the much broader story of national religious struggle and England's turbulent relationship with Scotland and Europe.

The CDP will create the opportunity for a student to bring an additional element of new research on a relevant subject to the exhibition and to make an original contribution to knowledge and scholarly debate within the field of Elizabethan studies more generally. In addition to working on their research project, the student will be able to make a valuable contribution to the Library's cultural and public engagement programmes through writing exhibition labels and catalogue entries, blog posts and online articles for the exhibition web space. The CDP will also coincide with the Library's Heritage Made Digital project to digitise a substantial number of sixteenth-century manuscripts, creating the potential for the student to enhance manuscript catalogue records that relate to their own research.

The CDP student will benefit from the expertise of the exhibition curatorial team, with whom they will have regular opportunities to study and discuss manuscripts. Moreover, their close involvement in the exhibition planning and exposure to large numbers of manuscripts will help to develop a context for their own research project.

### Areas of Study:

The British Library holds one of the most important collections of Tudor manuscripts, which along with The National Archive's collection of State Papers forms the backbone of scholarly research on Tudor England and provides extraordinary insight into the revolutionary political, religious and social changes of the period. In particular, the Library's Cotton, Harley, Lansdowne and Yelverton collections contain vast numbers of Tudor State Papers. The breadth and range of the Library's Tudor collections combined with the very basic nineteenth-century cataloguing of the Harley collection and the Cotton State Papers means that there is great potential for making new research discoveries and to enhance existing catalogue records where relevant. The manuscript material is complemented by the world's largest collection of printed material of the period.

The richness of the British Library's collections opens up many potential areas of PhD research. It will appeal to students with a research interest in the history of monarchy, government and politics, diplomacy and religion in the Elizabethan era, but also to those who wish to pursue interdisciplinary research.

To complement the Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots exhibition, PhD proposals will be welcomed on any of (but not limited to) the broad themes outlined below:

- Court politics and diplomacy in the reign of Elizabeth I
- Anglo-Scottish relations in the Elizabethan period
- International relations between England and continental Europe in the reign of Elizabeth I
- The Elizabethan Reformation, including the royal supremacy and the establishment and maintenance of a state church, recusancy and religious persecution, sermons, public preaching and religious debate

- Mary, Queen of Scots and especially her period of English captivity
- The relationship of Elizabeth I and James VI
- Espionage and the development of the intelligence network in the reign of Elizabeth I
- Elizabethan mapping
- Elizabethan letter writing and correspondence
- Propaganda, pamphlets and satire (in both manuscript and print forms)

We would like the HEI partner to work with us to develop the research theme, enabling the project to benefit from their research expertise, historiographical knowledge and academic networks. Possible research subjects include:

- the political and diplomatic career of Sir Ralph Sadler
- the influence of William Cecil's mid-Tudor political career on the shaping of Elizabethan England
- Sir Francis Walsingham and the development of the intelligence network
- William Cecil and his use of mapping as a tool of government
- a study of sermons in manuscript to understand the post-Reformation reshaping of belief, salvation and polity within the British Isles
- Elizabeth I's correspondence with James VI and the effectiveness of her role as his mentor in the years before her death.

#### **Benefits and training opportunities for the student:**

As the subject of the PhD will overlap with the Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots exhibition, the student will be able to make a direct contribution to the Library's cultural programme. They will also have the opportunity to work closely with subject specialists within the Ancient, Medieval & Early Modern Manuscripts, Modern Archives & Manuscripts and Printed Heritage Collections sections and to gain insight into the workings of a special collections library and major cultural institution.

The student will contribute new and innovative research on a subject relevant to the exhibition and will help to disseminate it to a broad range of audiences by contributing to interpretative text for the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue as well as writing articles on their research topic for the exhibition web space. The student will also contribute regular blog posts for the [Medieval Manuscripts blog](#) about their research. This will help the student to have a public impact and to develop different research and writing skills from those used in their PhD thesis.

The student will benefit from a wide range of additional resources and learning opportunities, not least that of being able to contribute to a major exhibition and gain insight into the development process from start to end. Staff-level access to the collections will enable the student to survey them in much more depth than would be possible from the Manuscripts and Rare Books Reading Rooms, providing them with the opportunity to discover additional new research material.

The British Library will provide specialist training in palaeography and codicology. The HEI partner will provide the student with a support network and training in historiography and research methods as well as academic supervision and guidance on the organisation and structuring of the thesis.