



## History MA Thesis Defence

**Student:** Elizabeth Heaton

**Date:** April 23, 2026

**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Place:** Virtual (email [histacademic@uoguelph.ca](mailto:histacademic@uoguelph.ca) for link)

### “The Shaping of a Young Queen: The Youth of Mary, Queen of Scots in the French Court”

#### Abstract

This thesis studies how Mary, Queen of Scots was shaped politically, religiously, culturally, and emotionally during her time in the Valois court. Mary was raised as the betrothed of the French Dauphin in the lavish Renaissance court of Henri II of France from the age of five until she left to return to Scotland at eighteen. The youth of Mary was formed by a few main influential figures consistent in her youth, the Valois court, the circumstances of her ‘childhood,’ and the tragic last few years of her time in France. The influential figures from her youth that are studied are: the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine; Catherine de Medici; Diane de Poitiers; Henri II; the Dauphin, François; and Elisabeth de Valois. This thesis uses court culture, childhood studies, and the history of emotions to change the current historiographical narrative and show that during her youth in the French court Mary was shaped to be Mary, Queen of France.

**Advisor:**

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