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# The ‘Crookston Dollar’ and the historic muse

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*To make up for the rarity of strictly accurate annals, interest in old castles is usually sustained by the aid of traditional tales...and in the supply of such legendary ware Crookston Castle kept well to the front.*

R Renwick (1910)

England inaugurated the silver crown denomination in the reign of Edward VI with the striking ‘king on horseback’ design in 1551. Scotland followed in 1565 under Mary and Henry Darnley with a silver ryal or thirty shilling piece, bearing facing portraits (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> It was rapidly withdrawn and replaced by a design featuring the arms of Scotland on the obverse and a palm tree, tortoise and scroll on the reverse (Fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> The ryal became popularly known as the ‘Crookston dollar’ sometime in the eighteenth century, due to a presumed romantic association with Crookston Castle, near Glasgow. The term, ‘dollar’, was commonly used from the late-sixteenth century onward to describe crown-sized silver coins.

In this paper, I trace the origin and some of the ramifications of the ‘Crookston’ connection, in numismatic antiquarianism, literature, and art. I

am indebted to a nineteenth-century historian, David Semple, who documented his exhaustive researches in a monograph refuting the validity of any connection between the coin and the Crookston estates.<sup>3</sup> Some of his themes are incorporated into my paper<sup>4</sup>; moreover, as Semple’s concluding hope that “the day is now past for continuing the false name...of the coin”<sup>5</sup> has not been realised more than a century later, it is perhaps salutary to re-examine the myth.

The ryal is composed of silver with a fineness of eleven deniers and weighs one Scottish ounce (c. 30.5 g). The obverse bears the arms of Scotland crowned, between two thistles, with the legend: MARIA. & HENRIC<sup>9</sup>. DEI. GRA. R. & R. SCOTORV surrounding these central elements. The reverse bears a crowned palm tree with a tortoise climbing the trunk; across the tree is a scroll on which is displayed the motto DAT GLORIA VIRES (Glory gives strength<sup>6</sup>). The date is positioned across the lower trunk with two numerals either side. The legend: EXVRGAT. DEVS. & DISSIPENT<sup>R</sup>. INIMICI. EI<sup>9</sup> (Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered<sup>7</sup>) surrounds the central design.



Figure 1. Copper electrotype cliché of obverse of Henry and Mary portraits ryal.



Figure 2. Mary and Henry ryal (Crookston dollar).

This remained the design for three years with annual changes of dates from 1565-7. Henry's name was dropped following his death in February 1567. The majority of coins of 1567 bear the obverse legend: MARIA. DEI. GRA. SCOTORVM. REGINA.

The two-thirds and one-third ryals follow the design of the ryals in their JNAA 22, 2011 (2012)

principal features, with their weights and dimensions being in proportion. All display minor variations within each denomination (Fig. 3).

The unusual design chosen for the reverse of these coins has provided endless fascination for numismatists, and has invoked various hypotheses as to its emblematic significance.<sup>8</sup> As





Figure 3. Ryal, two-thirds and one third ryals (reverses).

these conjectures bear only indirectly on my subject, I shall not review them here except to point out that the climbing tortoise or ‘schell-padocke’ as it is designated in the ordinance, is commonly identified with Henry Darnley.

In tracing the origins and course of the appropriation of ‘Crookston’ to the coin, there is the interweaving of several threads: first, the ‘romantic’ linking of Mary to Crookston and its yew tree, secondly, the imaginative palimpsest engaged in by numismatists of effacing the palm with a yew, and finally, the immutability of the term ‘Crookston dollar’.

The association of the Mary ryal with Crookston Castle (Fig. 4) is based on the once popular presumption that the tree depicted on the reverse of the coin is a yew that grew within the castle grounds, the ancestral home of the Stewarts of Darnley. This tree caught the popular imagination through the

romantic fable that it once offered shade to Mary and Henry Darnley pursuing their courtship beneath its branches. Charles Mackie in *The Castles of Mary, Queen of Scots*, (1835) recorded: “The site of the yew tree is still pointed out...under whose ill-omened branches Mary is said to have sat with her lover, enjoying that reciprocal felicity, which was so soon to be embittered by the blackest malignity...”<sup>9</sup> Mackie went on to state the then entrenched belief that the “impress of the tree of Crookston is on the reverse of the large pieces of an ounce weight coined by Queen Mary after marriage with Henry Darnley”.<sup>10</sup>

This figment of imagination was based on a double falsehood. First, the tree depicted on the coin is a palm, and was stated as such in the ordinance of 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1565 for the striking of the ryals; secondly, there is no evidence that Mary and Henry were ever together at Crookston.

How, then, did these mythical



Figure 4. Crookston Castle viewed from the east.

associations evolve, and become enshrined in the vernacular designation of 'Crookston dollar'? A reference is to be found in *The Scottish Historical Library* by Nicolson published in 1702. Describing the coin he noted:

*A Palm-Tree crown'd...Some call the Tree on the Reverse an Yew-Tree; and report that there grew a famous one of that kind in the Park (or Garden) of the Earl of Lenox, which gave occasion to the Impress...*<sup>11</sup>

There appears to be no earlier publication attesting a connection between the yew tree and the coin, but Nicolson made it clear that a tradition had arisen prior to the eighteenth century. He is silent as by what licence the palm was transformed into a yew in the popular imagination. The myth was repeated by at least two historians during the early decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

While acknowledging the romantic associations of later generations, it is tempting to speculate that the tradition may have originated from events contemporaneous with the coinage, namely the consecutive murders of Mary's secretary David Rizzio, and subsequently, her husband, Henry Darnley. Yew trees have historically provided wood for weaponry, are of themselves poisonous, and have an ancient connection to seership as portrayed in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), Act 5, Scene 3, wherein Romeo's servant Balthasar has a vision

of death:

*As I did sleep under this yew tree here, I dreamt my master and another fought, And that my master slew him*

The first major work on the Scottish coinage, James Anderson's *Selectus Diplomatum et Numismatum Scotiae Thesaurus*, published in 1739, affirmed that the tree represented on the coin was not a yew but a palm: "in quo non taxus, sed palma".<sup>13</sup> Anderson presumably had access to the Act of the Privy Council of 1565 authorising the coinage of ryals, as this had been made freely available in an Edinburgh publication four years previously.<sup>14</sup>

I am unaware of any further reference to a relationship between the tree of Crookston and the Mary ryal until 1763, when an engraving made by Robert Paul from a sketch by Charles Cordiner and published by Foulis, included the tree in the foreground of the castle and the reverse of a Mary ryal beneath the main scene (Fig. 5). As if to make plain a link between the Crookston tree and the arboreal image on the coin, the artist placed some roots emerging from the rim of the coin!<sup>15</sup>

The following year saw the publication of *The Clyde*, a poem by John Wilson (1720-1789), containing these lines:

*By Crookston Castle waves the still green yew,*



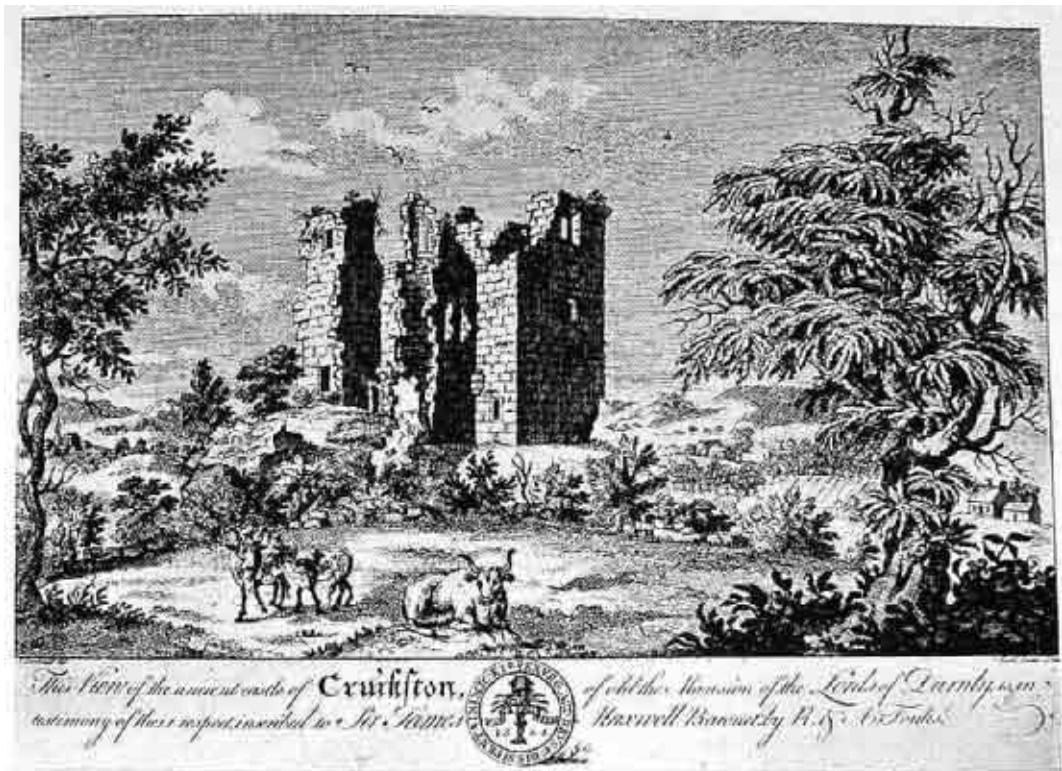


Figure 5. Castle and ryal linked in engraving of 1763. (The same perspective as in Fig. 4.)

*The first that met the royal Mary's  
view,  
When, bright in charms, the  
youthful princess led  
The graceful Darnley to her  
throne and bed:  
Embossed in silver, now its  
branches green  
Transcend the myrtle of the  
Paphian queen*

This reference to the Crookston yew being “embossed in silver”, suggests that the connection of castle and coin had by mid-eighteenth century achieved popular acceptance, or the allusion would have had little meaning for a

contemporary readership.

In 1786, Adam de Cardonnel perpetuated the myth in his *Numismata Scotiae*<sup>16</sup>, notwithstanding the assertions of Nicolson in 1702, Anderson in 1739 and Snelling<sup>17</sup> in 1774 that the tree depicted on the coin was a palm. Having quoted Anderson and the ordinance of 1565, he added the footnote:

*This was the first large silver piece that was coined in Scotland. It is observable, that this is almost the only instance of the king's name being placed posterior to that of the queen; however, to make amends as it were to the king...the famous yew tree of Cruickstone,*

*the inheritance of the family of Darnley in the parish of Paisley is made the reverse of this new coin...*<sup>18</sup>

It was not until the next century that the term ‘Crookston dollar’ appeared in print. The first reference to the term that I have been able to find is contained in a letter published in *The Times* in 1819.<sup>19</sup> The writer was at pains to point out the falsity of any romance beneath the branches of the Crookston yew, and the misappropriation of this legend to the coin:

*...the whole story of Queen Mary's connection with Cruickston-castle, and the Cruickston yew, is now known to be a mere tissue of fable. On this subject we find a double tradition extant. One part is, that in this fortalice she made her frequent abode, and that it was here, under the yew tree, she first consigned herself to the arms of Darnley; the other, that in memory of this event, she caused a coin, or medal, to be struck, the piece so much prized by antiquarians under the name of Mary's rial, or the Cruickston dollar, having for impress the said yew...in all this there is not a single word of historical truth. As for any residence at Cruickston-castle by Mary and Darnley, that was quite impossible, because... the edifice was quite uninhabitable, being little more than a mass of ruins. Nor is the story of the medal*

*better founded. That on what is called the Cruickston dollar there is a tree engraved, is very true, but then this tree is not a yew, but a palm, and the order of the Scottish Privy Council...for this particular device...is still extant...*

Under-pinning the persistent associations of castle, queen and coin was a heightening of the romantic taint in historical writing. One expression of this was the eulogistic excesses with which the Queen's physical attributes were described. “The incomparable beauty and expression of Mary's countenance,” wrote Gilbert Stuart in 1782, “the exquisite propriety of her stature, and the exact symmetry of her shapes attracted and fixed the admiration of every beholder. In her air, her walk, her gesture she mingled majesty and grace. Her eyes, which were of a dark grey, spoke the situations and sensibility of her mind; the sound of her voice was melodious and affecting; her hair which was black improved the brightness of her complexion...”<sup>20</sup>

The portrayal of both Mary, and her relationship with Darnley, reached a romantic zenith with the publication of *Lives of the Queens of Scotland* by Agnes Strickland in 1853.<sup>21</sup> She devoted the whole of the fourth volume of her eight volume work to Mary and Darnley, including a quotation from Mary's contemporary Thomas Randolph, regarding the Queen's maturity – ‘there is now so much added of perfect beauty...far excelling





Figure 6. Snuff box made from wood of Oriental Plane tree planted by Queen Mary.<sup>28</sup>

any...that ever was made since the first framing of mankind'.<sup>22</sup> Strickland concludes the volume with an appeal – “Is there the female heart that has ever felt the power of a constant and enduring love” that does not imagine Mary’s “realm would have been to her as a desert in the absence of the object of her yearning affection...?”<sup>23</sup>

The influence of Sir Walter Scott on nineteenth century Scottish culture cannot be overestimated. Both his involvement in contemporary affairs and his historical imagination as realised in the *Waverley* novels, cast a romantic glow over Scottish history. Sir Walter’s historic muse was given free rein in his novel, *The Abbot* published in 1820. Here, through the witness of Lady Fleming, he reported Mary as holding her first court at Crookston Castle after her marriage to Darnley,

and subsequently sited Mary in the grounds of the castle on her flight from Lochleven, extolling the significance of the yew tree:

*“To yonder tree,” she said, pointing to a yew-tree which grew on a small mount close to the castle; “I know it well...” And freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild step, up to the stem of the noble yew...*

*“Ay, fair and stately tree,” she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, “there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war,*

*instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee--love and lover--vows and vower--king and kingdom."*



Figure 7. *Quaich* made from wood of the Crookston Yew incorporating Mary testoon.<sup>30</sup>

A contemporary fascination for venerable trees seems to have been a popular preoccupation. A paper entitled 'Remarkable Scottish Trees' published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* in 1834<sup>24</sup>, is a synopsis of a catalogue of remarkable Scottish trees published in 1812.<sup>25</sup> Scott also had arboreal interests, manifesting in a quaint habit:

*Wherever I went, I cut a piece from a branch of a tree – these constituted what I called my log-book; and I intended to have a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut – as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood; the queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston...But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.*<sup>26</sup>

The interest in historic trees did not appear to wane<sup>27</sup>, especially trees associated with Queen Mary (Fig. 6).

Sir Walter Scott can also be credited with an early reference to the Crookston dollar. In a letter to his friend, the artist James Skene, dated 14 July 1829, referring to a plan to incorporate the coin in the fabric of a Scottish drinking cup or *quaich*, he wrote:

*MY DEAR SKENE,—I write in great haste to acknowledge your kind letter, and thank you for your*



Figure 8. Brass plaque originally in the Glasgow Botanic Gardens. © Glasgow Museums

*opinion about the coins. I think your idea of putting the Crookston dollar, if to be had, in the bottom of the large one is excellent and if Wrighton can show the reverse as well as obverse of the coin in the small cups, keeping them whiskey-tight at the same time, it will be admirable.*<sup>29</sup>

I do not know whether this plan was put into effect, but I illustrate a *quaich* made from the wood of the Crookston yew, with a testoon of Mary forming its base, and designed so that the reverse and obverse of the coin can be viewed (Fig. 7).

When the Crookston yew appeared to be entering its decline early in the nineteenth century, it was cut down, and

fragments dispersed in various relics. A cutting taken in 1789 grew for many years in the Glasgow Botanic Gardens, but this daughter tree fell victim to works attending construction of the underground railway in the 1890's. A brass plaque given in 1817 was placed at the foot of the tree, serving to augment the numismatic myth in the popular imagination. (Fig. 8) The plaque is now housed at Kelvingrove Museum.<sup>31</sup>

Nineteenth century historians and numismatists were unequivocal in ascribing the term 'Crookston dollar' to the Mary ryal.<sup>32</sup> An entry in an holograph *Inventory [sic] of the Cabinet of Coins and Medals belonging to William Mitchell Innes Esq.*, compiled in the early to mid-1800s and cataloguing





Figure 9. The ‘Yew Tree Coin’

a very large general collection, has the following entry under ‘Scottish Coins in Silver’: *Mary & Henry two thirds of Cruickston Dollar dated 1565...another of same*, indicating that the ‘Crookston’ appellation was also applied to the fractions.<sup>33</sup>

John Lindsay in his *A View of the Coinage of Scotland* (1845) perpetuated the conflicting information offered by Cardonnel in the previous century with the following footnote, having also quoted the ordinance: “These coins are commonly called Cruickstown dollars from Cruickstown Castle in Renfrewshire, the property of the

Lennox family, where was the famous Yew tree of which a representation appears on these coins”.<sup>34</sup>

James Wingate in his *Illustrations of the Coinage of Scotland* (1868) affirmed that the Mary ryals were called ‘Crookston dollars’, and even used the term to label his illustrations of the coins and their fractions.<sup>35</sup> He inferred that the name derived from the estate of Crookston having belonged to Lord Darnley, a suggestion repeated in *A Handbook to the Coinage of Scotland* by J. D. Robertson (1878). This latter author also affirmed the emblem to be “a crowned yew-tree”.<sup>36</sup>

Burns in his seminal book, *The Coinage of Scotland* (1887), with assurances derived from Semple, debunked any connection between Crookston and the Mary ryal, and affirmed the coining ordinance of December, 1565 as the arbiter of truth.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the numismatic apotheosis of the Crookston fable is displayed in a relic (Fig. 9) included amongst a small group of items known as 'The Penicuik Jewels': a ryal of 1565 mounted within a circular band so as to display the reverse side of the coin, the band inscribed:

"YEW . TREE . COIN . STRUCK  
. TO . CELEBRATE . THE .  
BETROTHAL . OF . QUEEN .  
MARY . & . DARNLEY"

This coin and the accompanying items, considered to be bequests by Queen Mary to her attendants at Fotheringay, were bought for the Scottish nation in 1923 when they were disposed of by the family of the Clerks of Penicuik. The provenance of the coin is among the least certain of the items in the group, the author of the descriptive monograph declaring "that there is no convincing reason for associating it with Queen Mary", although "it is not impossible, nor even unlikely, that the Queen had one of these coins, and she may have had it at Fotheringay".<sup>38</sup>

There is perhaps a clue to this coin's history that casts light not only on a more plausible provenance, but on past numismatic sensibilities. It is to be found in a letter from the Duke of Sutherland, dated January 11, 1846,

to the antiquary, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe:

*I suppose no genuine coins with heads of Queen Mary or of any older are to be found now at Edinburgh ? Of course not. I think of inclosing one I have of the Crookston yew-tree in glass (as I have had a gold coin of Ferdinand and Isabella, found on the N.W. coast of Sutherland), and of having it made a brooch for one's plaid. It will be as safe so, and better seen than locked up in a cabinet. If one wore velvet bonnets with a plume, as sometime was done, one would stick it there; but that would be thought excentric.*<sup>39</sup>

Sharpe was an intimate friend of the Duke and a confidant and correspondent of the Clerk family.<sup>40</sup> A gift to 'The Lady Clerk' of "some hairs which CERTAINLY were those of Prince Charles Stewart", formed part of the Penicuik Jewel acquisition. This relic is encased in a mount of very similar style to that of the coin, and inscribed in the same manner with an identical script. It thus seems that a more likely provenance for the Penicuik ryal is Sharpe's coin cabinet<sup>41</sup>, possibly in imitation of the Duke's initiative, or indeed the actual coin described in the letter.<sup>42</sup> The inscription embellishing the mount, unashamedly declares the coin to be a commemorative issue, struck to celebrate the betrothal of the Queen, yet another belief for which there is no foundation. It is perhaps the falsity

of the inscription that accounts for the disappearance of the mount, although the coin's whereabouts is certain.<sup>43</sup>

Despite debunking of the Crookston myths as realised in the idyll, the tree and the coin, the romance of a numismatic association has continued to the present day. While twentieth century cataloguers of named collections appear to have been circumspect in their use of the vernacular term<sup>44</sup>, the present century has already seen the return of the 'Crookston' descriptor in sale and standard catalogues, and on the internet.<sup>45</sup> It is true that some real or fancied association to an important historic figure assures a coin of a certain totemistic appeal, and this quality often carries a monetary premium. The denarius of Tiberius is usually offered under its vernacular title of 'Tribute penny'. A spectacular recent example is the 'Ides of March denarius' of Marcus Brutus which recently fetched over half a million dollars at auction.<sup>46</sup> But factors other than monetary gain are also important. There is an understandable reluctance to let go of a tradition that may derive its impetus from unrecognised wishes to redeem or condemn a figure as romantically tragic as that of Mary. From a less obscure perspective, there is also the sense of continuity and belonging that comes from familiarity with a term collectors and antiquarians have used over centuries – an accepted communal dilettantism.

Aspects of the Crookston myth

have become enshrined in the works of famous authors. Just as the Bible has secured the fame of the 'Tribute penny', and Shakespeare, the 'Ides of March denarius', Scottish writers other than Sir Walter Scott have played a part in ensuring an enduring Crookston mythology. John Wilson's Crookston yew 'embossed in silver' is explicit in regard to the coin, and later poets have dwelt on other aspects of the story. Robert Tannahill (1774-1810), used Crookston's bleak and wild desolation to suggest tragic romance:

*Thro Cruikston Castle's lanely wa's  
The wintry wind howls wild and dreary;*

*Tho mirk the cheerless e'enin fa's  
Yet I ha'e vowed to meet my Mary:  
Ah! Mary, tho the wind should rave  
Wi jealous spite to keep me frae thee,  
The darkest stormy night I'd brave,  
For ae sweet secret moment wi thee*

William Motherwell (1797-1835), employed the famous yew tree both as a memorial of love and a foreboding of things to come:

*...Beneath yon tree –  
Now bare and blasted – so our  
annals tell –  
The martyr Queen, ere that her  
fortunes knew  
A darker shade than cast her  
favourite yew,  
Loved Darnley passing well –*



The use of hendiadys in the phrase "bare and blasted" serves to heighten the vacillation between romance and tragedy, between transparent good and scheming evil.

It is perhaps this tension between the creative potential inherent in the beauty, power, happiness and religious faith of the young Mary and the thwarted ambitions, deprivations, tainted morality and tragic circumstances of her later years that imbue memorials of her life with talismanic powers. She epitomised to an extreme degree, the trials, ambiguities, and emotional responses that encumber all lives. Thus the sense of familiarity inherent in referring to the Mary ryal in the vernacular, reassures us that we belong at the very least to the human race, and at best to an erudite collegiate body of numismatists!

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### Notes

1. There are only two known examples of this short-lived coinage: one in the British Museum, and the other in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. The

illustration is of a copy of the British Museum specimen.

2. At this time, Scottish coins were current in England for one-sixth of their denominational value; hence thirty shillings Scots was tarified at five shillings sterling. The immediate stimulus for the minting of the Mary ryal was a dearth of silver specie. A significant differential between its intrinsic value and a higher currency value acted as a deterrent to the export of the precious metal and gave the crown a greater profit than that provided by the preceding silver coinage. The silver for the coinage was licensed to come from the melting of extant silver coins, but given the few silver coins then circulating and the considerable size of the new coinage, additional supplies of bullion may have been required.
3. Semple, D. (1876) *The Tree of Crookston: being a refutation of the fables of the courtship of Queen Marie and Lord Darnley, at Crookston Castle, under The Yew Tree; and of the Poet, Robert Burns, carving his name on The Yew Tree*. J. & J. Cook, Paisley.
4. Semple (*ibid.*) adopted a somewhat grandiose and censorious tone in much of his writing, being critical of antiquarian colleagues for their "ignorance...in calling the Mary Ryall the Crookston dollar, because, I suppose they...did not know the difference between a palm tree and a yew tree on the coins exposed in the cases in their museums" (p.50). He suggested that the 'Crookston Dollar' label may have served "to gratify the pride and vanity of some individuals connected with the Crookston estate" (p.51), and proclaimed the term 'Crookston Dollar' as an invention "unworthy of the age" (p.52).
5. *ibid.*: 52.
6. Ovid *Tristia*, 5.12.
7. *Psalms* 68, v. 1.
8. Rodgers, I. (June 1984) 'Tropical touch in medieval Scotland', *Australian Coin Review* 20/12: 45-48; Holmes, N. (January/February, 2004) 'The Coinage of Mary and Darnley', *History Scotland* 4/1: 22-25; Lord and Lady Stewartby (2007) 'Mary

- Stuart, the tortoise and the palm-tree', *The Stewarts* 22/4: 224-228; Bath, M. 'Do Tortoises Climb Trees? Emblematic Coinage of Mary Queen of Scots', paper presented at The Society for Emblem Studies Eighth International Conference, Winchester, England, 28 July-2 August 2008.
9. Mackie, C. (1835) *The Castles of Mary Queen of Scots* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Thomas Tegg and Son, London; Richard Griffin and Co., Glasgow: 123.
10. *ibid.*: 125.
11. Nicolson, W. (1702) *The Scottish Historical Library*, T. Childe, London: 323; Nicolson acknowledged his debt to Dr John Sharpe, Archbishop of York (293). Sharpe's *Observations of the Scots Money*, written in the last years of the seventeenth century but not published until 1785, had noted that the "yew-tree in the park... of the Earl of Lenox... gave occasion to the impress of the coin...". *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, No. XXXV containing Archbishop Sharpe's *Observations on the Coinage of England &c.*, J. Nichols, London, 1785: 60.
12. Crawford, G. (1710) *Genealogical History of the Royal and Illustrious Family of the Stewarts from the year 1034 to the year 1710; to which are added the Acts of Sederunt and Articles of Regulation relating to them; to which is prefixed a General Description of the Shire of Renfrew*, J. Watson, Edinburgh; and Keith, R. (1735) *The History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, T and W. Ruddiman, Edinburgh.
13. Anderson, J. (1739) *Selectus Diplomatum et Numismatum Scotiae Thesaurus*, T. and W. Ruddiman, Edinburgh: 102, footnote (f).
14. Robert Keith published the whole Act of the Privy Council of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1565, authorising the coinage of Ryals, in an Appendix to *The History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland* (see: note 12).
15. The illustration forms the *Frontispiece* in: Guy, F. (1909) *Crookston Castle*, Hugh Hopkins, Glasgow.

The inscription beneath the engraving of the castle and surrounding the coin reads "*This View of the ancient castle of Cruikfton, of old the Mansion of the Lords of Darnly, is in testimony of their respect, inscribed to Sir James Maxwell Baronet, by R G A Foulis*". ('Crookston' has been subject to a heterogeneity of spellings!)
16. Cardonnel, A. de (1786) *Numismata Scotiae*, George Nicol, Edinburgh.
17. Snelling, T. (1774) *A View of the Silver Coin and Coinage of Scotland*, Thomas Snelling, London. Snelling (p. 16) simply repeats the statements of Nicolson.
18. Cardonnel (*footnote* pp. 18-19) replicates almost word for word the observations of Robert Keith (see note 12); Semple (p. 49) points to another example of his plagiaristic propensity in comparing Cardonnel's description of the yew tree idyll with that given in Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772 published twelve years earlier.
19. *The Times*, London (7 Oct. 1819) Issue 10744: 3.
20. Stuart, G. (1782) *History of Scotland from the Establishment of the Reformation till the death of Queen Mary*, J. Murray, London, Vol. II: 386.
21. Strickland, A. (1853) *Lives of the Queens of Scotland and English Princesses*, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London: Vol. IV.
22. *ibid.*: 104.
23. *ibid.*: 384.
24. *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* (22 March 1834): 112, 58-59.
25. Walker, J. (1812) *Essays on Natural History and Rural Economy*, Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, London; and Guthrie & Anderson, Edinburgh.
26. Lockhart, J. G. (1839) *Memoirs of the life of Sir Walter Scott, bart.* Robert Cadell, Edinburgh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Vol. I: 72- 73
27. See for example: Hutchinson, R. 'Old and Remarkable Trees in Scotland.' A series of papers in *Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland* 1873-92,

- passim*.
28. The inscription inside the lid reads: "Made from an Oriental Plane, which was brought from France, by Mary Queen of Scots, and planted by her in the Garden of Holyrood house AD, 1561, Blown down 1817".
29. Skene, J. / edited by Thomson, B. (1909) *Memories of Sir Walter Scott*, John Murray, London; T. and A. Constable, Edinburgh: 160. The letter "refers to the appropriate mounting of a set of Highland quaichs, or cups, made of the wood of various remarkable trees and other relics. Sir Walter took much pleasure in displaying them on his table and in relating the merits and historical anecdotes connected with them. As he had requested me to take charge of their embellishment, I had obtained from the collections of the Antiquarian Society several very interesting and beautiful Scottish coins, duplicates of their series, which the Society very liberally presented to Sir Walter for the use intended to be made of them." : 161.
30. The inscription on the decorative silver band encircling the quaich reads: "Presented to John Black by Andrew Adie of Dominica Obit 9<sup>th</sup> November 1864. This wood is of the Crookston Yew under which Tree Queen Mary spent her happiest days and the coin is a Testoon of Queen Mary".
31. The plaque was a gift of James Spreull, City Chamberlain, whose initiative had secured the original cutting in 1789. The plaque measures 247 mm x 247 mm x 132 mm and weighs 4678 g.
32. See for example: Fraser, W. (1863) *Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok*, [Thomas Constable] Edinburgh, Vol. I: footnote p. 8 – "the coin is now generally known as the 'Crookston Dollar'".
33. The 'Inventory' [*sic*] is in the form of a leather-bound book in the author's possession. Mitchell Innes was for nineteen years, Cashier of The Royal Bank of Scotland.
34. Lindsay, J. (1845) *A View of the Coinage of Scotland*, Messrs. Bolster, Cork: 51.
35. Wingate, J. (1868) *Illustrations of the Coinage of Scotland*, Aird and Coghill, Glasgow: 98.
36. Robertson, J. D. (1878) *A Handbook to the Coinage of Scotland*, George Bell and Sons, London: 78-79.
37. Burns, E. (1887) *The Coinage of Scotland*, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, Vol. II: 339.
38. Seton, W. (1923) *The Penicuik Jewels of Mary Queen of Scots*, Philip Allan & Co., London. The illustration of the 'Yew Tree Coin' faces p. 26.
39. Allydice, A. (ed.) (1888) *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq.*, Vol. II, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London: 576. I have rendered Sharpe's abbreviations in full for clarity.
40. *ibid.*: 382.
41. Sharpe's coins and other collectables were sold at auction in June, 1851, following his death in March of that year; "his house a veritable museum". See: Manville, H. E. and Robertson, T. J. (1986) *British Numismatic Auction Catalogues 1710-1984*, A. H. Baldwin & Sons Ltd. and Spink & Son Ltd., London: 98, no. 17.
42. Sharpe had a large coin collection, and it is quite possible that he was an intermediary recipient of such a gift before bestowing it on the Clerk family. The undated note to Lady Clerk accompanying the gift of hair concludes – "I have many more relics... which I long to show you", suggests a further gift may have been in the offing! (Seton: 46-47).
43. I am indebted to the staff of the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, for their unsuccessful attempt to locate the mount. The coin is in the Museum's collection, and is illustrated in: Holmes, N. M. McQ. (2006) *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 58, Scottish Coins in the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, Part 1 1526-1603*, Oxford University Press and Spink & Son Limited: Plate 44, No. 1169.
44. The Marquess of Bute sale (Sotheby & Co., 11th June, 1951) is one exception - see lot 247.
45. See: Baldwin's Auction, No. 30, 7-8 May, 2002, lot 674. The standard catalogue, *Coins of Scotland Ireland and the Islands*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Spink, London, 2002, includes



the term in the description of the Mary ryal. Interestingly, the Seaby catalogue *Coins and Tokens of Scotland* (1972), on which the Spink publication is based, makes no mention of the term. A recent eBay offering of a Mary and Henry ryal of 1566 informed the potential purchaser that the coin is “sometimes called a Crookeston Dollar”.

46. <http://www.coinnews.net/2011/09/29/roman-ides-of-march-ancient-coin-sets-record-at-heritage-long-beach-auction/>

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