



Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe

Stuart Carroll

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The House of Guise was one of the greatest princely families of the sixteenth century, or indeed of any age. Today they are best remembered through the tragic life of one family member, Mary Queen of Scots. But the story of her Guise uncles, aunts and cousins is if anything more gripping - and certainly of greater significance in the history of Europe.

The Guise family rose to prominence as the greatest enemy of the House of Habsburg and had dreams of a great dynastic empire that included the British Isles and southern Italy. They were among the staunchest opponents of the Reformation, played a major role in re-fashioning Catholicism at the Council of Trent before plunging France into a bloody civil war that culminated in the infamous St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. They protected English Catholic refugees, plotted to invade England and overthrow Elizabeth I, and ended the century by unleashing Europe's first religious revolution, before succumbing in a counter-revolution that made them martyrs for the Catholic cause.

Martyrs and Murderers is the first comprehensive modern biography of the Guise family in any language. In it Stuart Carroll unravels the legends which cast them either as heroes or as villains of the Reformation, weaving a remarkable story that challenges traditional assumptions about one of Europe's most turbulent and formative eras.

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