As a widowed, Catholic, deposed queen of Scotland living during the 1500s, Mary Stuart became living confirmation of all the popular reasons why women lacked the right to rule. The marital and political scandals surrounding Mary increased her danger to her cousin Elizabeth I of England and earned her a place of infamy among modern historians and general audiences alike. Elizabeth I’s counselors professed Mary as the greatest living threat to Elizabeth's monarchy, subsequently manipulating the realm’s legal system to justify the execution of a foreign monarch despite the lack of precedence. While edited excerpts of the surviving early modern English sources concerning Mary’s infamous treason trial exist, this project draws instead on a personal exploration of trial documents in their original manuscript forms, housed in the State Papers collection, a repository of documents created by the English secretariat. I conducted this primary source study following training in paleography where I learned to read early modern English handwriting. Studying documents in their original format allowed me to avoid the restrictions secondhand accounts contain—like incomplete transcriptions and biased interpretations—and personally evaluate the English responses to Mary’s attempt at presenting herself as a Catholic martyr and victim of English corruption. Using the English records, I argue that the Scottish queen’s attempt to take hold of her reputation and shape it into one of her own making failed because the reputation earned from her earlier political and sexual escapades proved too established for a moment of self-stylized martyrdom to overcome.