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Society of Antiquaries
of **Scotland**

National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street, Edinburgh

www.socantscot.org
Charity No SC 010440

4. THE QUEEN MARY CAMEO JEWEL PURCHASED FOR THE MUSEUM

A HEART-SHAPED locket bearing a cameo portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, has been bought for the Museum with the help of a generous donation from the National Art Collections Fund and a special Treasury grant as well as the contribution from the Museum's Annual Grant (p. 257).

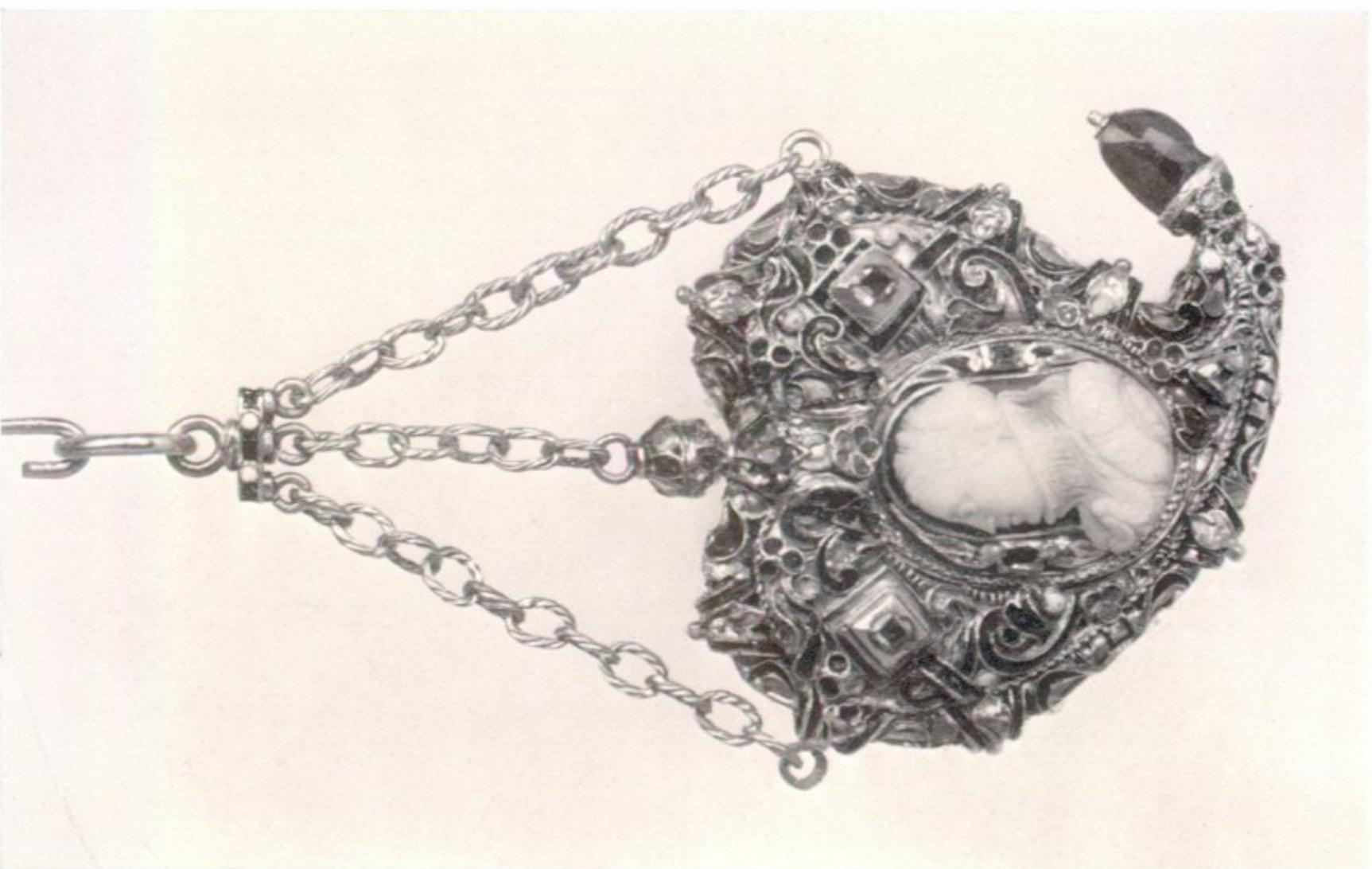
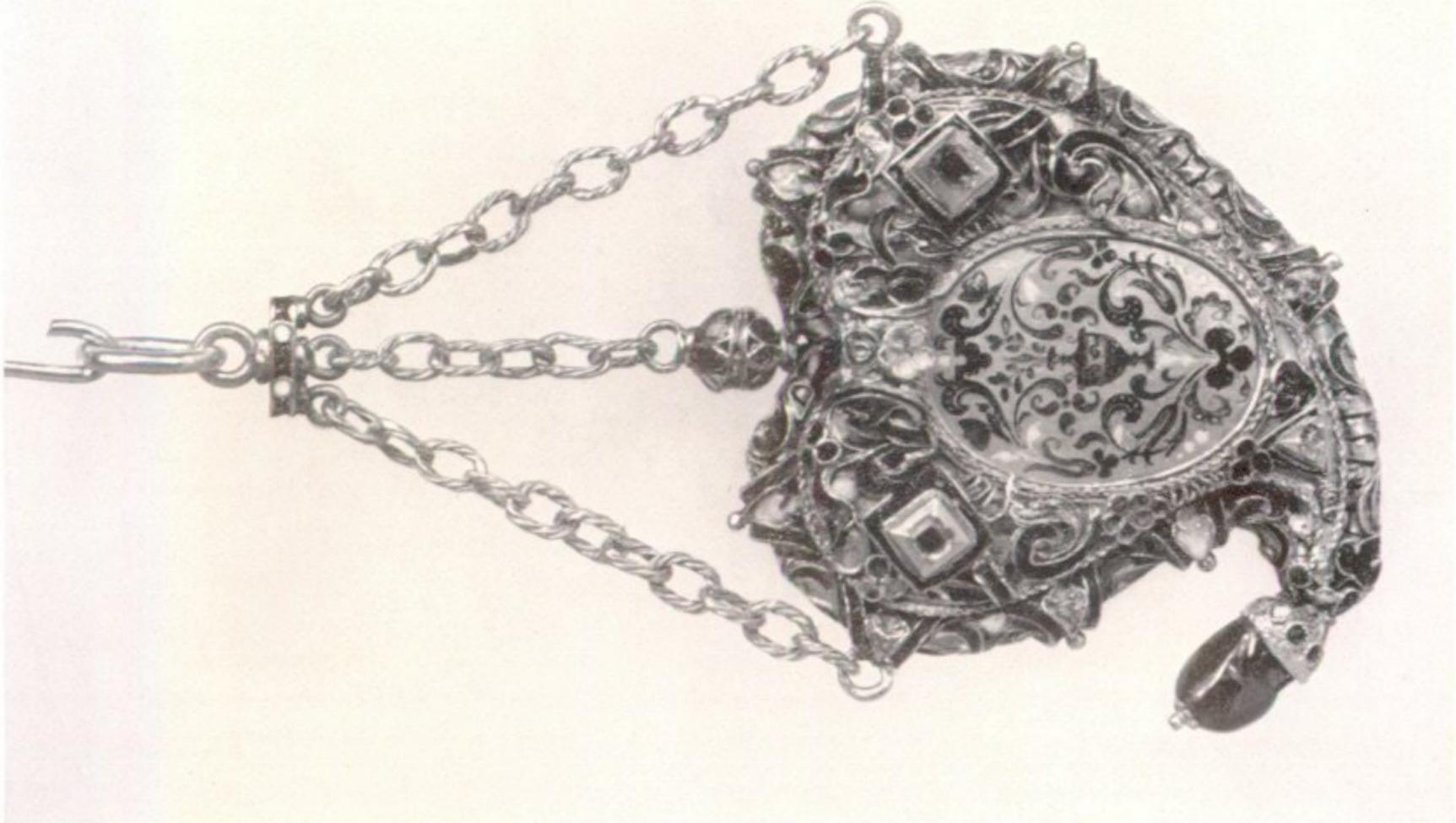
The jewel (Pl. XIV) is suspended from three short gold chains. The front is ornamented with deeply wrought flowers and leaves enamelled in subdued greens, blues and white, and set with small diamonds; the faceted terminal is amethyst-coloured. In the centre, within an oval frame, is an onyx cameo delicately cut with a bust of Mary, Queen of

Scots in profile, wearing an elaborate dress with a high collar. The identification of the portrait, first made by Dr Joan Evans,¹ is confirmed by the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and by their colleagues in London. The back is similarly decorated, but has an enamelled panel bearing a vase and scrolls in bright colours instead of the cameo.

The history of the jewel is unknown. There is evidence, however, that mid-sixteenth-century monarchs were in the habit of giving mounted cameos of themselves as marks of favour; it is suggested that this elaborate jewel was probably given by Queen Mary in return for a service of considerable importance. Workmanship and design suggest a French craftsman, with perhaps South German influence. The locket is 2 inches in width, and the cameo $\frac{7}{8}$ inch long.

STUART MAXWELL

¹ Dr Joan Evans, *History of Jewellery* (1953), p. 129, Pl. 84c; coloured illustration, *Ill. Lond. News*, 6th Jan. 1951.



MAXWELL: THE QUEEN MARY CAMEO JEWEL