

ALASTAIR BELLANY and THOMAS COGSWELL. *The Murder of King James I*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. xxvi + 618. \$65.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.39

Alastair Bellany and Thomas Cogswell's brilliant *The Murder of King James I* is about something that never happened. James I and VI died of his ailments in March 1625, at the age of 58, with no indication of foul play. Nonetheless, for more than a quarter of a century, rumor circulated that the king had been killed by his intimate advisor, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, perhaps with the connivance of his successor Charles I. The rumor was unfounded, but it proved a useful story for enemies to propound. Bellany and Cogswell have examined a multitude of sources in a variety of media to trace the germination and spread of this canard. It appeared in anonymous and seditious publications, at home and abroad, and spread verbally and scribally among folk who thought ill of the Stuart regime. They trace every manifestation of the alleged secret history, from the bedside drama of 1625 to the last guttering of the story after the Restoration.

Bellany and Cogswell are leading scholars of early Stuart England, each especially expert on the 1620s. Each has published extensively on the politics of aristocratic scandal, the divisiveness of faction, and the tensions of court and country. Their collaboration appears seamless, with confident displays of wit and erudition. They have produced an original and fascinating contribution to early modern studies, though their grip is less secure on the later part of Charles I's reign and its aftermath, which they examine in the final sections of the book. Medical historians will find a detailed account of high-level bedside practice and end-of-life care. Students of early Stuart communications will find rich material on the international and provincial trade in printed polemic, manuscript separates, and gossip. The book is handsomely produced and generously illustrated, and it has extensive notes but no bibliography.

A shrewd assessment of the intimacies between the king, the duke, and the prince prepares the ground for discussion of James I's death. Buckingham became liable to criticism because his well-intentioned medical intervention, in violation of doctors' orders, may have hastened the king's end. Seeking to alleviate James's suffering and to hasten his recovery, Buckingham applied a plaster and a potion that failed to bring about their intended effect. It took a venomous pamphleteer to turn this into a murder, and the role was filled to vicious perfection by the religious turncoat doctor George Eglisam. Eglisam's pamphlet *The Forerunner of Revenge*, printed in Brussels in 1626 and distributed throughout Europe, proclaimed Buckingham as a poisoner, not just of King James but of other members of the British aristocracy. Bellany and Cogswell reveal the confessional background and bibliographic context for this hatchet job and show how it leached into political discourse and political memory. Allegations of Buckingham's role in the death of King James were added to Parliament's impeachment proceedings against the duke, although they were not at the heart of the matter as here claimed.

The story of murder became muted after Buckingham's assassination in 1628, but was kept alive surreptitiously in the 1630s, and reenergized at the time of the civil war to throw dirt on King Charles. Eglisam's account was republished, adapted, and answered amid the volley of paper bullets that accompanied the English Revolution, especially in the postwar crisis of 1648 that preceded the Regicide. A spate of scandalous histories in the early 1650s dredged every defamatory story about the Stuart monarchs. The royalist recovery later in the decade drove the secret history underground, or exposed its falsehoods. The Restoration quelled public discourse that dishonored recent kings.

Bellany and Cogswell employ meticulous scholarship to trace every utterance of the Stuart black legend. But in resuscitating the secret history of the murder of James I they risk making it seem more central to Stuart politics than it warrants. Claims for its significance for understanding the origins and nature of the English Revolution are overstated. There were many more reasons to oppose the Duke of Buckingham in the 1620s and to question the kingship of

Charles I in the 1630s and 1640s. Arbitrary government, illegal taxation, erosion of liberties, innovations in religion, and sheer administrative incompetence were much more worrisome than lingering legends about the death of James I. The Regicide resulted from recent events, not from a scandal more than two decades earlier. The story of skullduggery, poison, and deception was kept alive because it was politically useful, a rod to beat the malignants. Told with skill by Bellany and Cogswell, it illuminates the perilous path of politics and paranoia that linked high statecraft and gutter gossip from the 1620s to the 1660s. It barely mattered that it was not true.

David Cressy, Ohio State University

JANAY NUGENT and ELIZABETH EWAN, eds. *Children and Youth in Premodern Scotland*. St. Andrews Studies in Scottish History 4. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015. Pp. 235. \$99.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.40

Children in premodern Scotland have received little attention as objects of historical research, a fact that Janay Nugent and Elizabeth Ewan's edited collection aims to correct. *Children and Youth in Premodern Scotland*—a follow-up to Nugent and Ewan's *Finding the Family in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (2008)—draws together a collection of twelve carefully researched essays that endeavor to put Scotland's youth squarely at the center of historical inquiry. At the same time, the editors acknowledge that both the experience of being a child and broader cultural conceptions of childhood are embedded within the larger world. Studying young people, then, is not only an end in itself, but it also helps to illuminate broader historical issues.

The contributors to the volume face difficulties in researching the youngest Scottish premoderns. The historical record is thin, for these subjects are unlikely to have recorded their experiences. Furthermore, thinkers did not agree on how many life stages there were or on when a child transitioned from one stage to another, making it difficult to delimit the categories of childhood and youth. Language, too, presents a barrier: words applied to young people were also applied to social inferiors, making it difficult to know, for instance, whether a "boy" was a child or a male servant. To overcome these obstacles, the authors of the essays deploy delightfully diverse methodologies and draw upon a wide range of literary, historical, visual, and material sources.

Taken as a body, the essays establish that childhood was indeed a distinct (albeit muddily defined) stage in a person's life. Evidence of parental affection for children abounds, driving parents to educate, protect, and provide for their children; indeed, many of the essays make the perhaps unnecessary step of disputing the conclusions of Lawrence Stone and Philippe Ariès. The volume also offers a nuanced exploration of the darker side of parental control in the forms of child marriage, forced apprenticeship, and slavery. Nevertheless, the historical record reveals that children and youth did have some degree of choice and that they could actively resist their parents. Several of the analyses compare the experiences of boys and girls, concluding, not surprisingly, that whatever freedoms boys had, girls enjoyed to a significantly lesser degree. Finally, the collection demonstrates that while childhood was seen as a distinct stage, it was also understood as a training ground for adulthood. Children were guided along vocational paths and positioned to perpetuate and advance family lineage. While these claims are not especially revelatory, they provide a solid framework for advancing scholarly work in the field.

The volume is organized into three sections. The first section is probably the strongest because the essays all foreground the experiences of children. Mairi Cowan and Laura