

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.

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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).
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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

E. Walking open the section by examining the world of the court of James I, drawing comparisons among children from vastly different social positions. Similarly, Nugent explores the Celtic practice of fostering through the case of Archie Campbell of Argyll, identifying the role that the foster child had in solidifying clan relationships. While these approaches collapse some marked differences among children, they also remind us that all children shared the experience of growing up; as Cowan and Walkling put it, they were “a group by virtue of the commonality of age” (31). Farther down the social scale, young women who were apprenticed into the world of perling to pay debts receive Cathryn R. Spence’s careful attention. Spence argues that while these agreements curtailed young women’s agency, they also offered some possibility for economic opportunity. Stuart Campbell also examines the world of the everyday Scot. He provides a smart reconstruction of childhood through an examination of recovered toys, concluding that these objects allowed their owners to indulge in childish play even as they offered occupational (and sometimes aspirational) training.

The essays in the book’s second section analyze representations of childhood in a range of discourses. Here, Dolly MacKinnon’s contribution on slave children, who can be seen at the margins of a range of historical documents, stands out. She respects the complex experience of slave children and pays due attention to how the topic deepens our understanding of larger issues of gender, sexuality, parental affection, and family lineage. Fostering as a unique aspect of Highland society is at the heart of Anne Frater’s essay, which, when paired with Nugent’s, offers a helpful glimpse into a culturally specific way of perpetuating family lineage. The family is also the site of interest for both Nel Whiting and Katie Barclay. Whiting suggests that visual culture revealed dynastic concerns even as it shaped the nature of the family; Barclay details the ways in which legal discourses surrounding inheritance practices shaped the expression of family affection.

The last three essays in the collection examine how young people transitioned into adulthood. Cynthia J. Neville investigates the dynastic concerns woven into the rites of passage in elite childhood in the medieval period as she traces Prince Alexander’s development. Heather Parker’s engaging essay on elite child betrothal reveals sites of resistance at both the individual and the state levels. Her analysis reveals a codified effort to protect children against age-specific power structures. Venturing into the literary realm, Sarah Dunnigan uses the Maitland manuscripts to investigate both the state of family and possibilities for its reconfiguration. Finally, Elizabeth Melville’s letters provide a way to understand the vexed ties between mother and son in Jamie Reid Baxter’s essay, the volume’s coda.

In sum, this volume tries to have it both ways: each contributor analyzes a specific aspect of childhood or youth and then links that analysis back to Scottish social structures. Some of the essays err in one direction or the other, maintaining a narrow focus or subsuming age within a larger context. Yet that is the strength of the collection: when gathered together, the essays provide a very successful study of both young people and fundamental issues like family, gender, power, and vocation in medieval and early modern Scotland.

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Throughout today’s world, bureaucratic authority remains as much an ideal type as it was for Max Weber when he formulated it more than a century ago. Weber envisioned it as structured, efficient, disciplined, and disinterested—in short, as “rational.” Yet in many countries today,