



James VII: Duke and King of Scots

Alastair Mann

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James VII and II is one of the least studied monarchs of Scotland, and has previously mostly been studied from an English perspective or as the muddled victim of the revolution of 1688/9 which delivered for Britain much-vaunted political emancipation. This book provides the first complete portrait of James as a Stewart prince of Scotland, as duke of Albany and King of Scots. It re-evaluates the traditional views of James as a Catholic extremist and absolutist who failed through incompetence, and challenges preconceptions based on strong views of his failings, both in popular belief and serious history. Investigating the personality and motives of the man, this biography assesses James as commander, as Christian and as king, but also as family man and Restoration libertine - a prince of his time. Painting a picture of James from cradle to grave, from childhood to resigned exile, it brings him to life within his Scottish context and as a member of the royal line of Scotland. The journey from dashing young cavalry commander to pious prince in exile appears oddly incongruous given the political and personal trials that lay between. That journey was much more of Scotland than previous studies have suggested - indeed, James was in many ways the last King of Scots.

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