



***The Duke of Lennox, 1574–1624: A
Jacobean Courtier's Life***

By David M. Bergeron

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hen Esmé Stuart, first Duke of Lennox, and favourite of James VI (afterwards James VI & I, 1566–1625) died after returning to France, James summoned Esmé's son, Ludovic Stuart (1574–1624), to the Scottish royal court. Ludovic was only nine years old when he arrived in Scotland, where he had his father's title bestowed on him, thus becoming the second Duke of Lennox. Lennox led a life at the centre of King James VI & I's royal courts, both in Scotland and later in England, when James became the first joint monarch of Scotland, England, Ireland, (and Wales) in 1603. Despite Lennox's lived experiences, "[n]o sustained study of [his] life exists" (2), and it is into this void that David M. Bergeron inserts his new work, *The Duke of Lennox, 1574–1624: A Jacobean Courtier's Life*. Bergeron will be familiar to those interested in James VI & I's sexuality, having previously published *King James & Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (University of Iowa Press, 1999). As with that publication, Bergeron's new biography of Lennox takes a close look at the relevant primary sources, often drawing on letters as a significant source through which to reconstruct the events in which Lennox was involved and to uncover Lennox's contemporaries' attitudes towards him.

The first chapter deals with Lennox's time at the Scottish court, exploring his politics, conflicts, his first two marriages, siblings, and connections to the royal family, as well as examining the diplomatic missions to France and England that he undertook during this time. Chapter two concentrates on James' 1603 accession and dedicates significant space to discussing the creation of Henry as Prince of Wales (1594–1612). Lennox's move to London with James at this time demonstrates his significance both to James and within the royal household. Furthermore, Bergeron highlights Lennox's importance within the new English royal court through the location of the lodgings James assigns him (61) and Lennox's participation in the ceremonies surrounding Henry's investiture and death (75–100). The third chapter extensively describes the celebrations and events around the marriage of Elizabeth Stuart (1596–1662) and Frederick V, Elector Palatine (1596–1632), which included Lennox accompanying the newly married royal couple on their journey to Heidelberg. This section also deals with James' favourites, including Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset (1587–1645) and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628), as well as discussing the Anglo-Spanish match, and Anna of Denmark's (1574–1619) death. Although Lennox is occasionally shown as being disgruntled at being passed over for various honours

due to the rise of James' favourites, Bergeron draws a clear distinction between Lennox and these other courtiers, arguing that their "status ... might wax and wane, but Lennox's position continued stable and secure, earned through dutiful service" (142). Chapter four explores aspects of Lennox's "political life [that were] not wholly beholden to the king" (147), examining diplomacy and Lennox's interests in art and performance. The final section of the biography deals with Lennox's third and final marriage to Frances Howard (1578–1639), his letter writing, and finally his death.

Throughout the work, Bergeron attempts to access and reconstruct Lennox's own emotions. This is especially the case in relation to Lennox's arrival in Scotland as a child and his close relationships with Prince Henry and Princess Elizabeth. These reconstructions make the work accessible, help the narrative to flow successfully, and reflect the growing interest in the field of the history of emotions. However, in some cases these emotional reconstructions would benefit from additional referencing and further discussion of evidence to support the assertions. On occasion Bergeron's work appears to reflect Anglo-centric historiography, a historical perspective which has been significantly challenged by a number of scholars. For example, Bergeron recounts a disagreement between James Stewart, Earl of Arran (1545–1596) and Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell (1562–1612) in which Arran placed Lennox in Bothwell's rooms and threw Bothwell's furniture out into the street. Bergeron describes this scene thus: "[w]elcome to Scotland! Young Ludovic had never experienced such behaviour. Furniture being cast into the street must have frightened him" (12). The recounting of this event (and others elsewhere within the publication) and the tone in which it is presented suggests a sixteenth-century Scottish 'roughness' that is problematic. By presenting sixteenth century Scotland in this way, the narrative can be seen to play into traditional Anglo-centric historiography, which portrays early modern Scotland as 'less civilised' than its English counterpart. In addition, Bergeron moves between the Scottish and English spellings of Stewart/Stuart, without providing a rationale for this. It could be argued that, despite the central position of Scotland in the narrative, this further reflects an Anglo-centric historiography with the 'civilised' Lennox being referred to by his anglicised name. Despite these implications, Bergeron's examination of the communication and relationships between the Scottish court and those of England, Denmark, and France portrays a Scotland that is looking outwards and places various events and aspects of Scottish politics into the wider context of international politics.

In terms of the questions around James' sexuality, Bergeron examines the relationship between James and Lennox and argues that it "did not resemble that shared between James and Esmé Stuart, which was more intense and more intimate with some level of homoerotic desire" (41–42). Furthermore, Bergeron suggests that "[e]ven though James was eight years older than Ludovic, he initially regarded him as his child" (42). Bergeron's suggestion that, during its early stages, James and Lennox's relationship was similar to that of a father and son is an interesting assertion and one that highlights the possibility of further research into their early relationship. This could draw on, and contribute to, recent scholarship examining early modern concepts of parenthood. Currently, research in this area often focuses on female experiences of motherhood, including expressions of non-biological motherhood. By exploring this aspect of their relationship, Bergeron could have further examined early modern parenthood, family, and masculinity, and contributed significantly to a growing corpus of scholarship.

In conclusion, *The Duke of Lennox, 1574–1624: A Jacobean Courtier's Life* offers a substantial examination of Lennox's life, filling a significant void. When examining those around James VI & I, certain favourites, such as Buckingham, have often dominated the historical narrative. This biography therefore provides an examination of a life and a relationship that was highly significant to James but has rarely been discussed. As Lennox arrived in Scotland early in James' kingship and lived until 1624, the biography follows James and the events surrounding the king for the majority of his life. The publication's success is found in the contextualization of Lennox's activities and in the in-depth discussions around the ceremonial aspects of the Scottish and English royal courts. The ceremonies and celebrations surrounding births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and the creation of two princes of Wales, are reconstructed in significant detail, and Lennox's role in these events reinforces his significance and his central place as a member of the extended royal family. Despite its academic focus, the biography is easily readable with clear signposting, and is written in an accessible tone, which may help it appeal to a wider audience. In some places the publication would benefit from the extension of certain discussions, and the inclusion of further referencing. Similarly, at times Bergeron could have drawn on more recent academic publications when discussing certain historical figures. For example, the discussions around Anna of Denmark could have utilized more recent works that further contribute to the challenging of Anna's traditional historiographical narrative. These points aside however, Bergeron's new biography brings together over thirty years of research and succeeds in the author's desire to establish

Lennox's central position both at the Scottish and English courts, and in James and the royal families' affections.

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