



The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America (Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia)

Patricia U. Bonomi

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For more than two centuries, Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury--royal governor of New York and New Jersey from 1702 to 1708--has been a despised figure, whose alleged transgressions ranged from raiding the public treasury to scandalizing his subjects by parading through the streets of New York City dressed as a woman.

Now, Patricia Bonomi offers a challenging reassessment of Cornbury. She explores his life and experiences to illuminate such topics as imperial political culture; gossip, Grub Street, and the climate of slander; early modern sexual culture; and constitutional perceptions in an era of reform. In a tour de force of scholarly detective work, Bonomi also reappraises the most "conclusive" piece of evidence used to indict Cornbury--a celebrated portrait, said to represent the governor in female dress, that hangs today in the New-York Historical Society.

Stripping away the many layers of "the Cornbury myth," this innovative work brings to life a fascinating man and reveals the conflicting emotions and loyalties that shaped the politics of the First British Empire.

"A tour de force of historical detection.--Tim Hilchey, New York Times Book Review

"Bonomi's book is more than an exoneration of Cornbury. It is a case study of what she aptly calls the politics of reputation."

--Edmund S. Morgan, New York Review of Books

"A fascinating, authoritative glimpse into the seamy underside of imperial politics in the late Stuart era.--Timothy D. Hall, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography

"An intriguing detective story that....casts light upon the operation of political power in the past and the nature of history writing in the present.--Alan Taylor, New Republic

For more than two centuries, Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury--royal governor of New York and New Jersey from 1702 to 1708--has been a despised figure whose alleged transgressions ranged from looting the colonial treasury to public cross dressing in New York City. Stripping away the many layers of "the Cornbury myth," Patricia Bonomi offers a challenging reassessment of this fascinating figure and of the rough and tumble political culture of the First British Empire--with its muckraking press, salacious gossip, and conflicting imperial loyalties. -->

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