



Bombast And Broadside: George Johnstone, 1730-1787

Robin F. A. Fabel

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George Johnstone has never received the scholarly attention he fully merits. Historians have assessed him, usually briefly, as governor of West Florida, or as naval commander, or as a member of parliament. Nevertheless, none has considered his important role in East India Company politics, nor, until *Bombast and Broadsides*, has one synthesized the various roles in which Johnstone was entrusted with high responsibilities.

Through research in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Kew, London, Philadelphia, and Washington in largely unpublished manuscripts, together with the use of secondary sources, the author has been able to present the first coherent picture of Johnstone, a vigorous and intelligent but turbulent and always controversial figure. Johnstone was effective as a colonial governor at a difficult time; in the navy he performed several *coups de main*; in parliament he was formidable in debate but an opportunist; and at East India House he was a doughty, conservative, and largely successful defender of the proprietary interest.

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