

LISA HOPKINS and TOM RUTTER, eds. *A Companion to the Cavendishes*. Arc Companions. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2020. Pp 438. \$149.00 (cloth).  
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*A Companion to the Cavendishes*, edited by Lisa Hopkins and Tom Rutter, is a wide-ranging and compelling addition to scholarship on the Cavendish family, their writings, and their artistic, political, and intellectual significance. As the volume's preface states, the collection aims to consider the Cavendishes as a *family*, and accordingly makes an important contribution to scholarship on elite families in early modern England, such as the Sidneys or the Howards. The volume contains twenty-two chapters, including an introduction by Hopkins. The most widely discussed member of the family, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, features prominently, as does her husband, William Cavendish. In addition, the collection includes welcome new research into lesser-known Cavendishes, including George Cavendish, usher to Cardinal Wolsey, and lute composer Michael Cavendish. Hopkins's introduction provides an illuminating overview of the family, analyzing Bess of Hardwick's role in establishing the family's status and "literary culture," and the thematic and political investments shared by its members (4). The collection then traces the cultural contributions of Cavendishes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through the Glorious Revolution.

Following Hopkins's introduction, Gavin Schwartz-Leeper's first chapter interrogates George Cavendish's writings and political role and shows how the writer crafted a poetic historiography, blending "structures from English and Italian authors" (30). Next, Keith Green examines Michael Cavendish's madrigals, lute songs, and political connections (including his links to Arabella Stuart). This chapter establishes one of the volume's ongoing strengths, as interdisciplinary essays link the Cavendishes' literary and philosophical work to their influence in music, architecture, and even horsemanship. In the next chapter, Crosby Stevens considers Charles Cavendish's construction of, and William Cavendish's renovations to, Bolsover Castle, arguing that William developed Bolsover as a space for politically minded entertainments and metatheatrical spectacle for the Cavendishes and their royal visitors.

A subsequent series of chapters examines the intellectual landscape of William Cavendish's life and works. First, Matthew Steggle reads William's plays as those of an amateur aristocratic dramatist who nevertheless hewed to the conventions of professional Caroline playwrights. Richard Wood's essay productively follows Steggle's, examining how William's plays display a form of Elizabethan nostalgia focused on the figure of the Earl of Leicester. Rutter's chapter turns to the relationship between the Cavendish family and Ben Jonson, continuing to explore the impact of key Caroline-era literary figures on the family's works. Rachel Willie argues that the concepts of virtue and virtuosity, particularly as they appear in Hobbes, Castiglione, and Machiavelli, are central to William's political identity. Willie's discussion of virtuous courtiership also provides helpful context for Elaine Walker's analysis of William's horsemanship manuals, where Walker argues that horsemanship becomes for William "a central philosophy" that encapsulates his personal and political sense of self (146).

Subsequent chapters focus on William and Margaret Cavendish's intellectual milieu. James Fitzmaurice explores the significance of the Cavendishes' time in Antwerp, showing a crucial contrast between the intellectual variety available to Margaret in Antwerp, and her more limited intellectual resources upon returning to England, particularly at the Newcastle estates. The Newcastle circle's intellectual connections are also at the center of Lisa Walters's subsequent chapter. Walters argues that Margaret Cavendish's *Convent of Pleasure* shows her engagement with Epicurean philosophy, particularly in relation to women, and in conversation with Hobbes and Charleton. A group of essays then examine the mid-century writings of Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley. Sara Mueller studies the sisters' manuscript collections, arguing that differences between the Beinecke and Bodleian manuscripts suggest questions of authorship and collaboration between the two in new ways. Hero Chalmers juxtaposes

poems by Elizabeth, Jane, William, and Margaret Cavendish, demonstrating their “shared web of influences” and showing how Margaret’s poems may have responded to poems by Jane and Elizabeth. Finally, Daniel Cadman analyzes Jane and Elizabeth’s *The Concealed Fancies*, finding that the play harnesses the framework of the closet to “undermin[e] the patriarchal authority” the text seems to reimpose (252).

Three subsequent chapters return to works by Margaret Cavendish. Catie Gill and Andrew Duxfield trace two of Margaret’s key thematic investments: Gill examines the emblematic significance of war, especially in *Nature’s Pictures* while Duxfield analyzes the multivalent term “nature” as “an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent force in her thinking” (276). Lisa T. Sarasohn then shows how Margaret uses discourses of patronage, first framing her husband as her literary patron and then situating herself as her own patron and favorite, gaining cultural capital through each posture. Several subsequent chapters also unpack Margaret Cavendish’s key literary and historical influences. Domenico Lovascio demonstrates how Margaret uses Julius Caesar to articulate stances towards fame, valor, and marriage, while Line Cortegnies returns to the relationship between Margaret’s writings and Epicurean philosophy, contending that her imaginative works demonstrate how this “heterodox philosophical doctrine” allowed her to “elaborate her own thought” (344).

In the volume’s final three chapters, Brandie R. Siegfried, Sue Wiseman, and Eva Lauenstein offer forward-looking analyses of the Cavendish family’s creative and political work. Siegfried argues that Margaret Cavendish advances generic elements of the romance, anticipating the eighteenth-century novel’s turn to “verisimilitude” (355). Shifting to the Devonshire branch of the family, Wiseman’s discussion of William, 2nd Earl of Devonshire, Christian Cavendish, and William Cavendish, 4th Earl and 1st Duke reveals key insights about the cultural, political, and regional impact of the Devonshire Cavendishes, culminating with William’s involvement in the Glorious Revolution. Finally, Eva Lauenstein concludes the volume with an analysis of the Cavendish family tombs and the fictional monument in Margaret Cavendish’s *Bell in Campo*, contending that these monuments show how women are central to establishing family narratives.

*A Companion to the Cavendishes* is an exciting collection of new scholarship on the Cavendish family, one that will be valuable for literary scholars and historians of the period, as well as those with an interest in this prominent family, its most notable members, or their intellectual milieu. In the volume’s preface, the editors express their hope that this collection will inspire further scholarly engagement with the Cavendish family, and its many stimulating offerings seem certain to do so.

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“The point,” writes Jill P. Ingram in *Festive Enterprise: The Business of Drama in Medieval and Renaissance England*, “is that players must be paid” (44). In this study of “festive economics” and of “the influence of commercial ambition on dramatic artistic expression” (4), Ingram shows how fund-raising, investment, entry fees, commercial sustainability, market competition, publication sales, and other “practical concerns of making the business of playing