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**The genealogy of a book collection: an early history of the Cavendish family's
book collection, 1599-1811**

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The genealogy of a book collection: an early history of the Cavendish family's book collection, 1599-1811

This article analyses the early modern book collecting activities of the Devonshire branch of the Cavendish family as an example of elite cultural capital accumulation across multiple generations. The detailed records of seventeenth-century book collection by the first, second and third Earls of Devonshire and their librarian-tutor Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), demonstrate the development of the collection at Hardwick Hall as a resource for investment information, political news, scholarly activity and children's education. The family tradition was continued by the first Duke of Devonshire (1640-1707) who shifted the base of collection to Chatsworth House, and the bibliophile second Duke (1673-1729) who expended vast amounts on works using an array of London booksellers; as did the third Earl of Burlington (1694-1753), and the Duchess Georgiana Cavendish (1757-1806) thereafter. These collections were amalgamated at Chatsworth by the sixth Duke of Devonshire at the start of the nineteenth century, where this account concludes.

Keywords: Chatsworth; Hardwick; Derbyshire; Cavendish; Devonshire; Hobbes; Burlington; book collection; library; cultural capital.

The library at Chatsworth is frequently cited by visitors as their favourite room in the House. As it appears today, the room was largely designed by the architect Jeffrey Wyatt (later Sir Jeffrey Wyattville) for William Cavendish, sixth Duke of Devonshire, and constructed during the first three decades of the nineteenth century to house his collections. There have been alterations to the décor, but most of the fixtures, fittings and books installed at the sixth Duke's instruction remain in place leaving an impression of stability and romantic grandeur; the fine bindings and gilded surrounds suggest a great British country house library, 'frozen at a moment in time'.¹ Its preservation as a tourist attraction and specialist archive in one of the 'finest and best managed of all Britain's country houses' has enabled this study of the Cavendish family's early modern book collections to take place.²

¹ S. West, 'An Architectural Typology for the Early Modern Country House Library, 1660–1720', *The Library*, 14, 4 (2013), 445.

² P. H. Reid, 'The Decline and Fall of the British Country House Library', *Libraries & Culture*, 36, 2 (2001), 360; R. Gaskell and P. Fara, 'Selling the silver: country house libraries and the history of science', *Endeavour*, 29:1 (2005), 14-19. This article ends with a worthy plea to leave historic libraries intact so that future generations can study them.

This article approaches these books as material objects to offer new insights into the history of the family that acquired them, the buildings that housed them and the country in which book collection, consumption and display came to represent a form of cultural capital accumulation. Book collections are examples of ‘objectified cultural capital’ in Pierre Bourdieu’s phrase.³ Instead of the more traditional use of ‘cultural capital’ to explain the reproduction of social privilege amongst the modern professional classes, the article focuses on Cavendish family book collecting as an example of the kind of early modern elite activity that helped to make book collection ‘legitimate’ and ‘prestigious’, anticipating and influencing its institutionalisation in the nineteenth century when socially mobile, self-made men and women recognised that large book collections ‘conferred nobility’.⁴ This text is a case study of one of the most notable, influential and well-preserved examples of book collection across multiple generations, culminating in one of the great ‘status symbol’ libraries of the nineteenth century.⁵ Undertaking the genealogy of the Cavendish book collection in this manner provides an insight into British aristocratic book collection, preservation and presentation as a cultural practice across the early modern period.

This article provides the first scholarly history of the Cavendish family’s book collections before the sixth Duke’s efforts at construction and consolidation. It traces the lineage of this collection to help understand the Chatsworth library as a remarkable amalgam of other historic collections mixed with a multitude of works acquired piecemeal over the centuries by generations of the Cavendish family. Whilst the roles of the first four earls and five dukes from the Devonshire branch of the Cavendish family is discussed, the focus is on five fundamental developments: Thomas Hobbes and the seventeenth-century book collection at Hardwick Hall; the construction of the first Duke’s library at Chatsworth; and the eighteenth-century collecting activities of the second Duke of Devonshire, the third Earl of Burlington and the Duchess Georgiana.

³ P. Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. by J. Richardson (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 241–58.

⁴ Reid, ‘Decline and Fall’, 352.

⁵ Reid, 352.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and the Hardwick collection

The origins of the Cavendish family book collection lie in the development of the family fortune and move to Derbyshire following the marriage of Elizabeth ‘Bess’ Hardwick to Sir William Cavendish in 1547. The first Chatsworth inventory of 1553 recorded the wealth of Sir William, Treasurer of the Chamber, but no books were mentioned, which is evidence of a tendency to overlook books in such documents.⁶ Bess’s subsequent rise as the ‘enormously wealthy’ matriarch of the Cavendish family and founder of the ‘new’ hall at Hardwick has been covered by Philip Riden and Dudley Fowkes, but her will in 1601 recorded only six books: ‘Calvin upon Jobbe, covered with russet velvet, the resolution, Salomans Proverbes, a booke of meditations, too other bookes covered with black velvet...’⁷

This has been taken by some historians to mean there was no significant interest in book collection either by Bess or her family but archival records from the Hardwick accounts reveal a completely different picture.⁸ There was a ‘substantial library at Hardwick’ at this early stage, established by her son, William.⁹ Philip Riden’s calendaring of these manuscript accounts reveal a consistent record of book purchases by the household.¹⁰ At least 310 titles were purchased between 1599 and 1606: around a third of these were pamphlets/broadsides, song books, almanacs and maps.¹¹ Many of these titles are difficult to connect to known volumes due to vague descriptions or

⁶ Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth [hereafter DC], H/143/2, Inventory of Chatsworth and deed of entail, 1553 (1559); See transcription of this in G. White, ‘that whyche ys nedefoulle and nesenary’: The Nature and Purpose of the Original Furnishings and Decoration of Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire’ (PhD Diss, University of Warwick, 2005), Appendix Two, pp. 372-88; For the limitations of such documents as records of book ownership, see M. Purcell, *The Country House Library* (London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 14.

⁷ P. Riden and D. Fowkes, *Hardwick: a great house and its estate* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), pp. 20-28; Purcell, *Country House*, p. 57.

⁸ For examples of this misleading view, see L. Boynton, ed., *The Hardwick Hall inventories of 1601* (London: Furniture History Society, 1971); R. A. Talaska, *The Hardwick Library and Hobbes’s Early Intellectual Development* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Philosophy Documentation Center, 2013), p. 11; J. Pearson, *Stags and Serpents: A History of the Cavendish Family and the Dukes of Devonshire*, Revised edition, (London: Macmillan London Limited, 2002), p. 48.

⁹ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 57; M. Purcell and N. Thwaite, ‘Libraries at Hardwick, 1597-1957’, in *Hardwick Hall: A Great Old Castle of Romance*, ed. by D. Adshed and D. A. H. B. Taylor (London: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 177.

¹⁰ P. Riden, ed., *The Household Accounts of William Cavendish, Lord Cavendish of Hardwick, 1597-1607*, 3 vols (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 2016).

¹¹ My figures are calculated from the account records as published in Riden, *Household Accounts*. Not all

because swathes of everyday works from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have not survived anywhere.¹² A London bookseller named ‘Norton’ was the family’s preferred supplier in these early years. The wide stock, both British and continental, which the seller obviously kept (or could obtain) means that this is likely to have been either Bonham Norton or his cousin John Norton, leading figures in the book trade of Jacobean London, operating in St. Paul’s churchyard.¹³

The most common prices paid for books were between 10d and 5s, with several costing up to ten shillings and one particularly expensive work by Natalis Comes bought for £3-10s in 1606; pamphlets and almanacs usually cost one or two pence.¹⁴ Across these eight years, an estimated £60 in total was spent on books and pamphlets, and several shillings per year on book binding and transport from London to Hardwick.¹⁵ This should be considered modest when compared to some of the determined collectors of the era, such as the ‘Wizard Earl’ Henry Percy, Simonds D’Ewes or Robert Cotton who are known to have spent in excess of £50 per year on their collections.¹⁶ However, there were clear peaks and troughs to the Cavendish expenditure as in 1601 and 1604, when more than £15 was spent on books.

Several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, that there was a collection of several hundred

titles are individually recorded so this is a minimum figure.

¹² D. F. McKenzie, ‘Printing and Publishing, 1557-1700: constraints on the London book trades’, *Cambridge History of the Book, vol. IV: 1557-1695*, ed. by J. Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, with M. Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 553-67. (pp. 559-60).

¹³ The first reference to ‘Norton’ appears at DC, HM/23, ‘The Household Accounts for 1599-1607’, fo. 48 (London payments, Dec 1620). See also Purcell and Thwaite, ‘Libraries’, p. 179. The initial identification of Bonham Norton is to be credited to P. Riden. ‘NORTON, Bonham’ (1565–1635), Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, *British Book Trade Index (BBTI)* <<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=50846>> [accessed 2/12/2019]. However, it could equally be a reference to Bonham’s cousin John Norton. See ‘NORTON, John sr’ (d. 1612), *BBTI* <<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=50868>> [accessed 18/6/2020]. The seniority of John Norton is covered in M. Wakely and G. Rees, ‘Folios Fit for a King: James I, John Bill, and the King’s Printers, 1616–1620’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68, 3 (2005), 467-495.

¹⁴ DC, HM/23, ‘The Household Accounts for 1599-1607’, fo. 179v (London payments, Feb-March 1606). Two works by Comes are recorded in the Hardwick library twenty years later but neither is a good match. See Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, p. 99.

¹⁵ My figures are close to the lower limit of £75 given for book purchases, bookbinding and transport costs given in Purcell and Thwaite, ‘Libraries’, p. 178.

¹⁶ Percy spent £50 per year even whilst imprisoned in the Tower of London. See Purcell, *Country House*, p. 87; For estimates of Cotton’s expenditure, see K. Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586-1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 61; for details of Simonds D’Ewes’ purchases, see A. G. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds D’Ewes* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1966), pp. 24-8.

books, pamphlets, maps and almanacs in the 'new' Hardwick Hall before the death of Bess in 1608. Secondly, it confirms the vital position of London in terms of the book trade, especially of continental works, and likewise endorses the view that Derbyshire was 'a region less well served by bookshops', even though many other parts of England had booksellers, binders and stationers by 1600.¹⁷ Thirdly, the kind of works acquired by William reveal a 'heavyweight' academic knowledge of Latin, Italian and French and reading interests from theology, to contemporary continental politics and Italian music.¹⁸ Most interesting are the large number of books concerning travel and exploration that should be understood alongside William's subscription of £200 to the East India Company's first voyage in 1600 and subsequent investment in its activities.¹⁹ Indeed, there is an intriguing purchase of a work on the 'Isle of Devils' in 1606 (no corresponding book or pamphlet of this title or topic has survived), which anticipated both the first and second Earl's interest in Bermuda and investments in the Virginia and Somers Island Companies.²⁰

The evidence suggests that from its inception, the Hardwick collection was a source of practical information on politics and investments with books likely kept in 'studies' or 'closets' for use by the whole family.²¹ It was normal for figures like William Cavendish to cultivate a gentlemanly interest in history, travel, law and religious questions to justify their rule and inform their investments and a readily accessible collection of books was essential to this endeavour.²² The Anglo-Spanish War had positioned the English aristocracy and London merchants to break the monopoly of Spanish and Portuguese colonial trade and satisfy domestic demand for an array of imported goods such as cottons, porcelain and sugar.²³ The growth of the book collection at Hardwick in its small but significant way should be seen in the context of this shift in financial and

¹⁷ J. Barnard and M. Bell, 'The English Provinces', in *Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. IV, p. 677.

¹⁸ Purcell and Thwaite, 'Libraries', pp. 180-1.

¹⁹ Riden, *Household Accounts*, vol. 2, p. 272; Purcell and Thwaite, 'Libraries', p. 180.

²⁰ See N. Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company' in *Aspects of Hobbes*, ed. by N. Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2004), pp. 53-79.

²¹ West, 'Architectural Typology', 458-460.

²² Watson, *Simonds D'Ewes*, p. 16.

²³ N. Canny, 'The Origins of Empire', in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by N. P. Canny and A. M. Low (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 4.

political power from southern to northern Europe and the rise of disposable incomes in the latter.²⁴

The education derived from such books informed the political and economic strategies of elite families whilst the books as material objects represented another consumer good under increasing demand across the seventeenth century.²⁵

Education derived from book learning was rapidly becoming one of the ‘cultural competencies’ required of those with elite status or aspirations to it.²⁶ This belief that ‘education equipped gentlemen for the service of the realm’ influenced William Cavendish’s decision, in 1608, to employ Thomas Hobbes, recent graduate of Oxford, to deliver a humanist education to his son (also named William).²⁷ To enable the future second Earl to flourish at a court that required expertise in correspondence, diplomacy and problem solving, Hobbes was tasked with accompanying young William on a tour of France and Italy in 1614-15 to expose him to the ‘studious leisure’ of Renaissance Italy.²⁸ Hobbes quickly developed into servant, secretary and friend to the heir apparent and their relationship had a transformative effect on the Hardwick collection, as a humanist education and foreign travel required books. ‘Incorporated cultural capital’ derived from a humanist education directly influenced the acquisition of ‘objectified cultural capital’ in the form of books.²⁹

The accounts of William Cavendish reveal a significant rise in book purchases in 1612 and 1613 when materials for tutoring and for the forthcoming tour of Venice, Rome and Paris were acquired.³⁰ Over 125 titles were procured and £347s9d spent on books and pamphlets in the years

²⁴ J. Raven, ‘Country houses and the beginning of bibliomania’, in *The Intellectual Culture of the English Country House, 1500-1700*, ed. by M. Dimmock, A. Hadfield and M. Healy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 172; For more on this debate about the Atlantic World and shifting European power dynamics, see C. Shammas, ‘Introduction’, in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. by E. Mancke and C. Shammas (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 2-3.

²⁵ Raven, ‘Country houses’, p. 172.

²⁶ A. Goulding, ‘Libraries and Cultural Capital’, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 40, 4 (2008), 235.

²⁷ Sharpe, *Robert Cotton*, p. 48.

²⁸ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 72; See also L. L. Peck, ‘Hobbes on the Grand Tour: Paris, Venice, or London?’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57, 1 (1996), 177–83.

²⁹ Malcolm, *Hobbes*, p. 5; S. Sieben and C. M. Lechner, ‘Measuring cultural capital through the number of books in the household’, *Measurement Instruments for the Social Sciences*, 2, 1 (2019), 1.

³⁰ DC, HM/29, ‘Book of accounts of various stewards of William Cavendish, 1st Earl of Devonshire’ (1608-1623).

before the two departed: a figure dramatically higher than the period before and after.³¹ These years also saw ‘Norton’ eclipsed by ‘Mr Bill’, almost certainly John Bill, ‘the Figaro of the London Book Trade’, and ‘Mr Saladine’ as the family’s preferred booksellers.³²

Upon returning, Hobbes was retained as a scholar-in-residence until 1640, remarking that ‘he [the second Earl] gave me leisure and supplied me with books of every sort for my studies’.³³ Hobbes was an example of the ‘increasingly common’ patronage of natural philosophers and mathematicians by royalty and nobility that underpinned the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.³⁴ He was expected to be a tutor, social companion and presence in the public arena. In return the scholar could expect money, time, a degree of political protection and access to a collection of books. Indeed, Hobbes allowed this relationship to inform his own philosophy by tying the life of wealth, leisure and pleasure enjoyed by his patron, and increasingly by himself, to the concept of gentlemanliness and hence freedom (and the free *man*).³⁵ By engaging in public spats with other client-philosophers, such as Galileo, Hobbes may appear as ‘the (rather aggressive) pet of the Cavendish family’ but he was also exercising the independence that came with his gentlemanly position, book collection and the newfound reserves of cultural capital these bestowed.³⁶

This first period of Hobbes's employment saw the Devonshire branch of the Cavendish family established as one of the wealthiest and most influential families in the country, with Hobbes

³¹ My figures are compiled from DC, HM/29, ‘Book of accounts of various stewards of William Cavendish, 1st Earl of Devonshire’.

³² Wakely and Rees, ‘Folios’, 495; ‘Mr Bill’ and ‘Mr Saladine’ account for the bulk of Cavendish book purchases between 1610 and 1616. John Bill (d. 1630) with Bonham and John Norton once formed ‘the single most powerful consortium of booksellers in London’. J. Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade 1450-1850* (Yale University Press, 2007), p. 43; See ‘BILL, John I’, *BBTI* <<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=6362>> [accessed 16 December 2019]; ‘Mr Saladine’ remains a mystery. A ‘Saladine’ is mentioned in John Evelyn’s diaries as tutor to the young Earl of Caernarvon in 1646. See J. Evelyn, *The diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by W. Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), p. 235.

³³ Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, p. 13

³⁴ P. Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences: European Knowledge and its Ambitions, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 109. Other contemporary examples include Thomas Harriot and William Harvey.

³⁵ S. Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth Century England* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 52.

³⁶ Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences*, p. 109.

at the heart of family affairs.³⁷ Indeed, the twenty-five years from the 'grand tour' of 1614-15 to the departure of Hobbes from the family's service in 1640, represent the transformation of the Hardwick collection from a functional aristocratic book collection into a one of academic and historical significance with a catalogue, shelving system and 'library room' to match.³⁸ In the mid-late 1620s Hobbes drew up a catalogue of the books at Hardwick, commonly referred to as the 'Old Catalogue'.³⁹ This catalogue gave shelf marks to 1,416 books, divided into three main sections: 'Theological works', 'General Works in Classical Languages and English', and 'General Works in Contemporary European Languages'.⁴⁰ As the collection functioned at times as Hobbes's 'personal library', the 'Old Catalogue' has served as a vital resource for Hobbes scholars seeking to understand his intellectual developments after leaving Oxford.⁴¹ His relationship with the second Earl, just two years his junior, changed the character of the book collection as initially works were purchased for educational value, such as French and Italian dictionaries or Francis Bacon's *Essayes* that the young heir was tasked with translating.⁴² Later they pursued their own literary and scientific interests and built a collection numbering c.1,400 titles. It was not a 'strikingly large collection' compared to that of John Selden or Richard Holdsworth and it certainly lacked the contemporary importance of collections such as those of Robert Cotton or Simonds D'Ewes, but it was 'significant' by the standards of the day and its contents were of a range and quality that few other scholars in the country would have been able to readily access.⁴³

³⁷ The Earldom of Devonshire was purchased for £10,000 in 1618 and the marriage of William's son was arranged to the heiress Christian Bruce, daughter of Lord Kinloss, a key ally of King James I. See Pearson, *Stags*, p. 47.

³⁸ Purcell, *Country House*, pp. 89-90. This was likely to be a panelled library room independent of the bedchamber and designed to house other artworks as well as books. See West, 'Architectural Typology', 449.

³⁹ DC, HS/E/1A, 'Systematic catalogue in Hobbes's autograph, c.1620'; Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, p. 2; Revisions and additions to this catalogue were made after Hobbes's return to the family's service in 1631; Although there has been some debate it is highly likely that this was a catalogue of books at Hardwick, and not Chatsworth. See, Purcell and Thwaite, 'Libraries', p. 185.

⁴⁰ DC, HS/E/1A, 'Systematic catalogue in Hobbes's autograph, c.1620'. An edited version of this catalogue with commentary by Richard Talaska was published in Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, pp. 41-130.

⁴¹ Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, pp. 2, 20; J. J. Hamilton, 'Hobbes's Study and the Hardwick Library', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 16, 4 (1978), 445.

⁴² Malcolm, *Hobbes*, p. 7.

⁴³ D. Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library*, 13, 4 (2012), 380; Raven, 'Country houses', 168; Watson, *Simonds D'Ewes*, p. 40; Sharpe, *Robert Cotton*, p. 75; E.

When the third Earl reached maturity and Hobbes's work on *The Elements of Law* attracted fierce criticism from the 'Long' Parliament of England, he left for Paris, only returning into the service of the third Earl in 1652. He was thereafter employed in a much-reduced role given his advancing years and his winter residence in London. His impact on the collection at Hardwick between his return and his death in 1679 is best understood through the two surviving catalogues drawn up by Hobbes's amanuensis, James Wheldon.⁴⁴ Various attempts to date these catalogues have suggested that one was written in 1657 and the other some fifteen years later.⁴⁵ When analysed together with Hobbes's 'Old Catalogue' they demonstrate a steady expansion of the Hardwick library from 1,416 titles in the early 1630s to 1,583 titles in 1657 and 1,703 in a vellum-bound catalogue from the late 1660s or early 1670s.⁴⁶ Acting on the advice of the former keeper of the collections at Chatsworth, Richard Talaska claimed that it was not possible to identify the actual texts from the 'Old Catalogue' amongst the current collection, but my research demonstrates that it was not only possible but practical and around a quarter of the c.1,400 works listed in the 'Old Catalogue' are still at Chatsworth with easily identified shelf-marks and provenance.⁴⁷ Indeed, a volume of *Delle lettere di M. Pietro Bembo* remains at Hardwick Hall and was identified by this method.⁴⁸

Little is known about the collecting practices of the Cavendishes at Hardwick or elsewhere during the intervals between these catalogues, but the implied growth of around ten works per year

Leedham-Green and D. McKitterick, 'Ownership: private and public libraries', in *Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. IV, p. 325; Purcell, *Country House*, p. 90.

⁴⁴ N. Malcolm, 'Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* <<http://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13400>> [accessed 1 December 2019]; DC, HS/ADD/1, 'Catalogue of Books' (c.1657); and DC, HM/16* (c.1672).

⁴⁵ Apart from an entry in the Hardwick accounts for a payment of £1 to James Wheldon on 26 December 1657 for 'drawing a Catalogue of ye Bookes in ye Library at Hardwick' there is no precise evidence for these two dates beyond the publication dates of texts cited in the catalogues. See DC, HM/14, 'Privy purse accounts of William Cavendish, 3rd Earl of Devonshire', 1653-7. For the broad agreement on these dates, see Hamilton, 'Hobbes's Study', p. 448; Malcolm, *Hobbes*, p. 80; Purcell, *Country House*, pp. 89-90; and Purcell and Thwaite, 'Libraries', p. 186.

⁴⁶ DC, HS/ADD/1, 'Catalogue of Books' (c.1657); and DC, HM/16* (c.1672)

⁴⁷ Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, p. 25; My initial findings were published in a blog on the Chatsworth website: W. Jack Rhoden, 'A nasty, brutish, and short blog entry on Thomas Hobbes and the Chatsworth Library', <<https://www.chatsworth.org/news-media/news-blogs-press-releases/a-nasty-brutish-and-short-blog-entry-on-thomas-hobbes-and-the-chatsworth-library>> [accessed 4 December 2019].

⁴⁸ Purcell and Thwaite, 'Libraries', p. 178.

seems low. There are several possible explanations for this beyond the disruptions of the Civil War from which the family book collection was fortunate to survive unscathed.⁴⁹ Certainly, the absence of Hobbes for over a decade removed one impetus to purchase scholarly books on a significant scale, though more work is needed on the collecting interests of the dowager Countess Christian Bruce, the dominant figure in the family between the death of the second Earl in 1628 and the Restoration, who was part of a circle of royalist men of letters.⁵⁰ It is also worth considering how the need to tutor the third Earl in the 1630s led to the acquisition of everyday educational works that were frequently overlooked by cataloguers.

Upon Hobbes's return, his winter residence in London meant that many works purchased by himself or by the third Earl on his behalf were likely to have been kept there. The few existing archival records indicate regular book purchases in 1673-4, but these may never have made it into the Hardwick catalogues.⁵¹ Notes on the first page of the final Wheldon catalogue seem to support this explanation of a shift in focus of the collection away from Derbyshire by listing twenty-seven works that were taken to London from Hardwick in 1672, presumably for use by Hobbes or the third Earl.⁵² Indeed, the third Earl of Devonshire, as fellow of the Royal Society and active in the management of his estates, is likely to have kept a significant number of books at his other properties, thereby explaining the apparently slow expansion of the Hardwick library once both he and Hobbes returned from exile.

William Cavendish, fourth Earl/first Duke of Devonshire (1640-1707)

The fourth Earl, later first Duke of Devonshire achieved national renown as one of the seven signatories requesting the intervention of William of Orange to prevent the succession of the

⁴⁹ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 93.

⁵⁰ Fran Baker, Archivist and Librarian at Chatsworth, brought my attention to a '17th-century MS commonplace book [...] in more than one hand but the poets represented in it are mostly cavalier/royalist poets, many of whom knew her personally [...]'. [Private correspondence, 16 November 2019].

⁵¹ DC, AS/835, 'Household Accounts', 1670-5.

⁵² See DC, HM/16*; Talaska, *Hardwick Library*, p. 13.

Catholic son of James II.⁵³ During the years preceding the ‘Glorious Revolution’, he had been ostracised from court for his part in a brawl and withdrew to Derbyshire to focus on the reconstruction of Elizabethan Chatsworth. The redevelopment was accomplished over the course of twenty years, with the south and then east fronts the first to face demolition just as James II was swept from the English throne. The construction of a new east front proved crucial for the history of the Chatsworth library as the first Duke desired a long room for the exhibition of his paintings. In the early nineteenth century this gallery was converted into ‘the most beautiful room in Chatsworth’, the main library, filled with most of the book collections examined in this article.⁵⁴

Building work resumed in 1700 with the reconstruction of the west and north fronts. The extensive archival records from this period indicate that several rooms in the north wing were to be devoted to the storage and display of books. One of these, the room that adjoined the ‘Little Dining Room’, served as a library for a few years but it was the ‘Den’ on the north-west side that acted as the main repository of books at Chatsworth from 1711 until the sixth Duke’s renovations roughly a hundred years later.⁵⁵ It was to this ‘Den’ that much of the Hardwick collection was moved as the Cavendish family shifted their primary Derbyshire residence to Chatsworth. A ‘catalogue of all the books that are in this library at Chatsworth’ from the last decade of the seventeenth century lists around 500 titles, indicating a sizeable collection there during the first stage of renovation work.⁵⁶ Another book list, placed on a loose sheet in the inside cover of the final Hobbes catalogue specifies a further forty-eight works that were taken from Hardwick to Chatsworth in July 1699, and it is reasonable to assume more were moved to the ‘Den’ as building work was completed around 1711.⁵⁷ Indeed, the Chatsworth building accounts of 1698 contain payments for book cases and provide glimpses of a significant collection being assembled and reorganised at Chatsworth with a ‘Mr

⁵³ G. S. De Krey, *Restoration and Revolution in Britain: A Political History of the Era of Charles II and the Glorious Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 247.

⁵⁴ F. Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth, being a supplement to the Sixth Duke of Devonshire’s Handbook* (London: Country Life Ltd, 1949), p. 56.

⁵⁵ Thompson, *Chatsworth*, p. 19.

⁵⁶ DC, HS/ADD/2, ‘Catalogue of all the books that are in this library at Chatsworth’; Purcell and Thwaite, ‘Libraries’, p. 187.

⁵⁷ DC, HM/16*; Thompson, *Chatsworth*, p. 166.

Hodges' being paid for 'Printing 500 Coats of Armes for the Books in the Library'.⁵⁸ These moves are an early example of what Susie West identified as increased investment in the book collections and library rooms of country houses across the eighteenth century, as care for the collection came to involve care for its appearance to those beyond the household.⁵⁹ The mass printing of bookplates for the first Duke helps to pinpoint a shift from the practical, scholarly, family-focused Hardwick collection to the development of a Chatsworth collection and library room that was devoted to both study and display. It demonstrates that the family's identity was increasingly bound up with its book collection in recognition of the cultural capital it represented.⁶⁰

Little evidence remains of the specific books acquired by the first Duke, because the London accounts where his major book purchases would have been recorded have not survived. One London payment of £5913s00d to 'Mr Frazier for Books' in 1701 stands out as a noteworthy indication of the Duke's collecting activity.⁶¹ Similarly, a dedication by Nahum Tate of the 1693 translation of *Life of Louis of Bourbon* to the first Duke indicates the latter's role as a patron and purchaser of books.⁶² These signs indicate that he was an active book collector at a time when it was becoming positively 'fashionable', even if the only surviving London daily accounts from the 1690s record purchases of almanacs, copy books and cheap works 'for my lady'.⁶³

Further evidence of the first Duke's book collecting are found in a catalogue of 237 political pamphlets primarily from the years between 1679 and 1693, which are overwhelmingly concerned with the Popish Plot, Rye House Plot and questions of politics and Catholicism.⁶⁴ It is likely that

⁵⁸ For the payment of £11 6s 0d for four cases for books, see DC, CH37/1, 'James Whildon's disbursement accounts for Chatsworth' (July 1698), fo. 147; For the 00-15-0 'Paid Mr Hodges for Printing 500 Coats of Armes for the Books in the Library', see DC, CH37/6, 'Household, garden, husbandry and building accounts at Chatsworth' (1701), fo. 29.

⁵⁹ West, 'Architectural Typology', 463.

⁶⁰ West, 464.

⁶¹ DC, CH37/6, 'Household, garden, husbandry and building accounts at Chatsworth' (1701), fo. 24.

⁶² N. Barker, *The Devonshire Inheritance: Five Centuries of Collecting at Chatsworth* (Alexandra, Virginia: Art Services International, 2003), p. 114.

⁶³ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 100; DC, AS/836, 'Household accounts, 1693-99', vol. 1: relevant entries at Jan 1694, Sept 1695 and Jan 1697.

⁶⁴ DC, H/146/12, 'Catalogue of pamphlets at Hardwick' and 'Catalogue of books in quarto'. This list is distinct from the 300 or so pamphlets on similar themes that remain at Chatsworth having been originally collected by Narcissus Luttrell and obtained after 1749. See 'The library in focus: The pamphlet collection of Narcissus Luttrell' (2 August 2019) <<https://www.chatsworth.org/news-media/news-blogs->

most of these 237 pamphlets were purchased by or on behalf of the future first Duke whilst he was MP for Derbyshire and a leading figure of the ‘Country Party’, who stood collectively accused of aiding Titus Oates and of formulating the Rye House plot.⁶⁵ A taste for the collection of pamphlets on topics that personally fascinated or directly involved the governing classes and their legacy was common in the 1680s when we see pamphlets being designed with the collector in mind and catalogues and auctions of these works appearing with a clear eye on the collectors’ market.⁶⁶ These works, though, were not collected by the first Duke to act as a store of wealth or even as a bank of knowledge; as with the books at Hardwick collected and utilised by Hobbes, they were bought and read to inform and shape the attitudes of a man who played a central role in one of the landmark political events in English history.

When looked at from this perspective the library at Chatsworth, where I have been able to locate over 180 of these original pamphlets, it becomes both a chart of a notable family’s collecting habits and a history where the contents impacted upon the family, the estate and the country.⁶⁷ After 1688, the first Duke’s son married the daughter of Lord Russell, who had been executed for his part in the Rye House plot, uniting two great Whig families. It is hard to tell what precisely turned the fourth Earl into a committed revolutionary in the 1680s but the virulent anti-Catholic arguments in the popular press of the 1680s that he appears to have been buying, reading and cataloguing surely played a role.

William Cavendish, second Duke of Devonshire (1673-1729)

The second Duke of Devonshire became part of the Whig establishment under King George I. He was a close friend of Sir Robert Walpole and helped him gain entrance to the Kit-Kat Club of influential writers, artists and politicians. He was also renowned as a great collector: his passion for

[press-releases/the-library-pamphlets-of-narcissus-luttrell/>](#) [accessed, 4 December 2019]

⁶⁵ De Krey, *Restoration and Revolution*, Chapter 4.

⁶⁶ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 95; H. Love, ‘The look of news: Popish Plot narratives, 1678-1680’, in *Cambridge History of the Book*, vol. IV, p. 656.

⁶⁷ The identification of the c.180 pamphlets that remain at Chatsworth was done with the help of Gary Rivett, Cathy Shrank and Marcus Nevitt on 29 April 2013.

collecting artworks saw him purchase large numbers of 'Old Master' drawings from the Netherlands and he reportedly thwarted Louis XIV of France in order to obtain Claude Lorrain's book of sketches, the *Liber Veritatis*.⁶⁸ His political influence, personal wealth and cultural interests placed him in the vanguard of an English aristocracy whose claims to gentility, good sense and capacity to rule came to rest not simply on their land, money and political power, although these were paramount, but increasingly on their role as taste-makers and patrons. The gentleman's capacity to make enlightened, reasoned judgments rested on a level of 'disinterestedness', which could only come from possession of wealth and education.⁶⁹ Gentlemen like the second Duke could leverage their wealth, education and the integrity these conveyed to build up their social 'credit' still further.⁷⁰ His enthusiasm for collecting is best understood in this manner, with the library, like the gallery, coming to be regarded as 'an essential element of a gentleman's house and an index to his learning, cosmopolitan tastes and, in theory at least, his magnanimity.'⁷¹

In newly reconstructed Chatsworth, he possessed a grand country seat built in the fashionable classical style that could serve as repository for his collections. His 'grand tour' of Italy and France in 1689-91 was both a family tradition and an aristocratic rite of passage, serving as an opportunity for both education and collection: an opportunity for the accumulation of incorporated and objectified cultural capital.⁷² Amongst the detailed accounts of his tour, alongside extravagant spending on clothing, there are records of payments to tutors, the purchase of books for Italian language instruction, and the acquisition of books on Italian history, philosophy and politics.⁷³

Although his reputation as a collector and connoisseur is most associated with paintings and drawings, book collecting was as much a passion for the second Duke as it was for contemporaries

⁶⁸ W. G. S. Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire, *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick* (London: Frederick Shoberl Jr, 1844-5), p. 73; W. Crowther, 'Chatsworth and its Library', *The Library*, 8, 1 (1896), 442; Pearson, *Stags*, p. 91.

⁶⁹ Shapin, *Social History of Truth*, p. 83.

⁷⁰ Shapin, p. 93.

⁷¹ Leedham-Green and McKitterick, 'Private and public libraries', p. 328.

⁷² Purcell, *Country House*, p. 119; For another example of similar activity, see A. Brundin and D. Roberts, 'Book-Buying and the Grand Tour: the Italian Books at Belton House in Lincolnshire', *The Library*, 7th ser., 16, 1 (March 2015), 51-79.

⁷³ DC, L/31/3, 'Mr Cavendish's accounts for 2 years and 2 months' (1689-91).

such as Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington and Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland. Although Mark Purcell claims that bibliomania and antiquarianism could carry a politically suspect whiff of Jacobitism in early Hanoverian Britain, this clearly was not applicable to the second Duke, scion of a Whig dynasty.⁷⁴ An account book for the years 1712-27 records his expenditure on thousands of works from various London booksellers, mostly on The Strand, and the acquisition of works from continental auctions at Paris and The Hague on his behalf.⁷⁵ A key figure who appears time and again in these records is Paul Vaillant who hailed from a Huguenot family in Saumur, western France, and established a booksellers' at 82, The Strand; his son and grandson continued the business into the nineteenth century.⁷⁶

The subject matter of the books acquired by the second Duke tended to be classical literature, poetry, architecture, sculpture and philosophy, alongside works on history, architecture, art, natural philosophy and mathematics. Indeed these tastes were established from the beginning of the purchase records. In 1714 the second Duke used Vaillant and the booksellers Moetiens & Le Céne, also of The Strand, to acquire almost a hundred books from auctions at the Hague and Rotterdam, including Carlo Ridolfi's life of Tintoretto, a two volume edition of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (Madrid, 1637) and three separate editions of Vitruvius's architecture (1511, 1522 and 1525).⁷⁷

Over the course of fifteen years, thousands of works mostly in batches of between five and and twenty were purchased in this manner. The costs cannot be precisely tallied because not all records carried a price, but including the expenditure on agency commission, freight and binding, it was likely to have exceeded £1,000.⁷⁸ The acquisition in small batches from auctions and trusted

⁷⁴ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 101.

⁷⁵ DC, DF32/2/3, 'Booksellers' Accounts', 1712-1727

⁷⁶ Vaillant, Paul I (1686?-1739), *BBTI* <<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=71402>> [accessed 16 December 2019]; See also 'Paul Vaillant, Bookseller and Magistrate, 1713-1802', *The Twickenham Museum* <<http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/detail.php?aid=292&cid=12>> [accessed 1 November 2019].

⁷⁷ DC, DF32/2/3, 'Booksellers' Accounts', 1712-1727. See fo. 9 (7 December 1714), fo. 7 (5 November 1714) and fo. 5 (19 February 1714).

⁷⁸ My own calculations from DC, DF32/2/3, 'Booksellers' Accounts', 1712-1727.

booksellers, the purchase of many works that were well over a hundred years old, including some incunabula, and of multiple editions of the same work, point to a dedicated book collector of the type that caused the phrase 'bibliomania' to enter English usage in 1719.⁷⁹ This was a quality that has never been truly appreciated in the second Duke, but he was a central figure in the history of the Cavendish family's book collection and an example of how book collecting developed into a mark of family status in this period. Book buying on this scale was not economically profitable, at least not directly, and went far beyond the practical and educational motives of the Hardwick collection. Indeed, given the second Duke's collecting activities and his place at the pinnacle of early Hanoverian society, it is fair to conclude that book collections of this type had become legitimate cultural capital, intrinsically valuable, conveying prestige and status; no longer merely 'fashionable' as they may have been for his father.⁸⁰

Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington (1694 -1753)

The third Duke of Devonshire does not appear to have played a major role in the history of the Cavendish family book collection but he had an indirect influence by arranging the marriage of his son to Charlotte Boyle, second daughter of Richard Boyle, the 'Apollo of the Arts', who had been at the forefront of the neo-Palladian architectural revival in eighteenth-century England. As a wealthy and learned gentleman scholar, the third Earl of Burlington amassed a large collection of books that complemented and informed his work and there are records of him utilising the services of Paul Vaillant, bookseller to the second Duke.⁸¹ When Charlotte died in 1754 the Burlington inheritance passed to her husband who became the fourth Duke of Devonshire the following year, uniting the Cavendish and Burlington book collections. Mansions in Piccadilly and Chiswick, estates at Londesborough and Bolton Abbey, extensive lands in southern Ireland and Lismore Castle in

⁷⁹ Raven, 'Country houses', p. 172; A few examples of items that feature in DC, DF32/2/3, 'Booksellers' Accounts', 1712-1727, and in the current Chatsworth library, complete with eighteenth-century bindings, are: DC, DEV/008888, Tranquillus Cajus Suetonius, *De vita XII Caesarum liber* (1480); and DC, DEV/000837, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In omnes de Arte rhetorica* (1551).

⁸⁰ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 100.

⁸¹ DC, Burlington Misc. Box 5, 'Joint Account of Richard Graham and J.A. Collier', 1719-22.

County Waterford all passed into the Cavendish family.

Chiswick House takes pride of place in this history as it was one of the most famous of the 'villa libraries' of the eighteenth century, created with an eye on both private education and public prestige.⁸² An immaculately preserved and detailed library catalogue from January 1742 has survived, to give us a clear idea of the scope, content and layout of the third Earl's collection at Chiswick.⁸³ The library was organised primarily by subject matter with some concessions made to size. The c.1,300 titles were arranged on forty-three numbered shelves and on additional book tables and miscellaneous shelving; some shelves, we are informed, were temporarily empty at the time of the catalogue's compilation.⁸⁴ As this catalogue was written over a decade before the third Earl's death it is not a complete picture of the collection that was inherited by the fourth Duke; clearly the shelving system was designed so that additions could be made.⁸⁵

The range of subject matter reveals the third Earl's central interests with five shelves devoted entirely to 'Architecture, Antiquities, Sculpture, &c'. There are 134 titles listed on these shelves alone indicating the professional use of the library by the man who was dubbed the 'Architect Earl' and the use of books on the architecture of country houses to enable reflection on the place of Chiswick in the pantheon of neo-Palladian achievements.⁸⁶ The presence throughout the rest of the library of sections devoted to classics, histories and travel literature in English, French, Latin and Italian suggest the use of books to inform his repeated tours of the continent. As an eighteenth-century collection it was modern and utilitarian consisting largely of works purchased by the third Earl (not inherited); it was rooted in his interests and neglected the incunabula, Caxtons and fine bindings that were so often the focus for bibliomaniacs of the eighteenth century such as Edward

⁸² Purcell, *Country House*, p. 217.

⁸³ DC, DEV/011785, 'Catalogue of the Earl of Burlington's Library, at his Lordship's seat at Chiswick' (1741-2).

⁸⁴ My estimate of the library size in terms of titles, not volumes, on the basis of the catalogue entries is 1,329.

⁸⁵ Two separate sheets list further additions after 1742 and it is clear that book purchases were ongoing after the catalogue was drawn up. See P. Ayres, 'Burlington's Library at Chiswick', *Studies in Bibliography*, 45 (1992), 116.

⁸⁶ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 127.

Harley, second Earl of Oxford.⁸⁷

In terms of specifics, there were multiple editions of works by Vitruvius and Palladio and several copies of works by Inigo Jones, including the landmark *Designs of Inigo Jones*, published by William Kent in 1727.⁸⁸ Account records from 1720 indicate that some works such as Jacomo Da Vignola's *Regola delli cinque Ordini d'Architettura* (Roma 1644) and Roland Freart's *Parallele del'Architecture Antique & Moderne* (Paris 1702) were purchased on the Earl's behalf from booksellers like Vaillant and cost several pounds each, though far greater amounts were spent on collections of architectural and artistic prints.⁸⁹ Indeed, in 1720 the third Earl bought 'a Book of designes & Planns by Inigo Jones' for £170 and a 'Architectural Designs and Drawings by Palladio' for a further £170.⁹⁰ The latter were purchased from John Talman, a noted antiquary, who was the son of William Talman, the architect who had been instrumental in the reconstruction of Chatsworth House under the first Duke of Devonshire.

By following the history of Cavendish book collection we can see the formation of intricate commercial and familial connections against a broader background of cultural and political change. The Baroque-style architecture of William Talman transformed Chatsworth from an Elizabethan ruin into a model for the English country house just as the first Duke became a model aristocrat of the new constitutional monarchy after 1688. Chatsworth House then provided a focal point for the second Duke's collection of paintings and books, which further aided his social and political pre-eminence. Concurrently, John Talman acted as a commercial and intellectual contact for the third Earl of Burlington in the acquisition of Palladian architectural designs which enabled him to design Chiswick and usher in the neo-classical revolution of the English country house.

The marriage of Charlotte Boyle and the (future) fourth Duke of Devonshire united these

⁸⁷ Ayres, 'Burlington's Library, 123; Purcell, *Country House*, p. 102.

⁸⁸ DC, DEV/011785, 'Catalogue of the Earl of Burlington's Library, at his Lordship's seat at Chiswick' (1741-2), fo. 10 (p. 2).

⁸⁹ DC, Burlington Misc. Box 5, 'Joint Account of Richard Graham and J.A. Collier', 1719-22. See especially, fos. 2-10 (1720).

⁹⁰ DC, Burlington Misc. Box 5, 'Joint Account of Richard Graham and J.A. Collier', 1719-22. See fo. 2 and fo. 8 (1720).

two great influences upon British aristocratic culture. The union was emblematic of wider trends that saw intellectual and cultural innovations of the previous century, such as book collection, become legitimised amongst political and social elites. To have one's country house designed and furnished in a 'modern' style alongside a library stocked with the latest literature from London and the continent, was crucial to the self-representation of those claiming to be members of polite and sociable high society. Members of the aristocracy in the previous century had been educated in the latest intellectual and cultural innovations as Hobbes's role as tutor to the Earls of Devonshire testified. However, the second Duke of Devonshire and third Earl of Burlington mark the point at which ostentatious display of one's cultural education became the norm for the aristocracy: the 'grand tour', the country house, the art and sculpture collection and the library became part of the cultural furniture of any gentleman with aspirations to the 'aristocratic elite'.⁹¹ This fed into the aristocratic sense of a 'right to rule', building on the 1688 Revolution, which had established, in effect, a constitutional government on an aristocratic, but not monarchic, footing.

The fourth Duke was more concerned with political activity than any of his predecessors, briefly serving as Prime Minister during the Seven Years' War and became known as 'King of the Whigs'. His major acquisition of cultural capital was the overhaul of the gardens at Chatsworth. He employed Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to replace the classical symmetry of the estate with a naturalistic landscape that encouraged guests to treat house and grounds as a single work of art.⁹² Unfortunately few account records remain which would permit a conclusive study of his stewardship of the Cavendish book collection. A few references to book purchases occur in his letters but his focus on political life led the Earl of Strafford to predict that the Duke would be 'rather indifferent' to his inheritance of the book collections at Chiswick.⁹³ As a result of the fourth Duke's neglect, the third Earl of Burlington's library remained at Chiswick House well into the nineteenth century, when it was transplanted to Chatsworth as part of the sixth Duke's

⁹¹ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 111.

⁹² See S. Rutherford, *Capability Brown and His Landscape Gardens* (London: National Trust, 2016), Ch. 4.

⁹³ DC, CS4/1064, '4th Duke letter collection': Earl of Strafford, to William Cavendish, 4th Duke of Devonshire, 26 September 1758.

consolidation, and there were no significant additions to the Cavendish book collections on his watch.

Duchess Georgiana Cavendish, née Spencer (1757-1806)

Historians and Hollywood screenwriters have found a great deal of fascination in the lives of Duchess Georgiana Cavendish (née Spencer) and her husband the fifth Duke of Devonshire.⁹⁴ This is hardly surprising given the extraordinary reception she received as a young woman entering London society in the mid-1770s and the prominent role they played in the political campaign of the radical Whig, Charles James Fox, in 1784. Furthermore, biographers have repeatedly shone light on Georgiana's complex, compelling and frequently tragic life story.⁹⁵

A deeper understanding of the famous Duchess can be gained by examining her commitment to reading, writing and book collecting. She was an avid writer of colossal numbers of letters throughout her lifetime and wrote verse and prose in the developing Romantic style of the 1790s.⁹⁶ Indeed, her writing was no mere aristocratic fancy; one of her poems, *Passage of the Mountain of Saint Gothard*, was translated into French by Jacques Delille, a member of the Académie Française.⁹⁷ The Duchess was a Francophile and an avid reader of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose *Emile* and *Confessions* she frequently discussed in her letters.⁹⁸

The hub of the Duke and Duchess's life was, for a long time, Devonshire House in Piccadilly. In the 1770s she transformed it into 'the most influential great house in London' and it appears to have housed most of her thirty-year run of purchases from booksellers.⁹⁹ She was

⁹⁴ *The Duchess*. Dir. by Saul Dibb. Pathé Distribution. 2008; A. Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999); C. Chapman and J. Dormer, *Elizabeth and Georgiana: the Duke of Devonshire and his two duchesses* (New York: J. Wiley, 2003); L. Porter, *Duchess Georgiana: Georgian Britain's most popular woman: a new study* (Stoke on Trent: Guidelines Books & Sales, 2015); I. L. Gower, *The face without a frown: Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Fonthill Media, 2016); V. Foster, *The two duchesses: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Fonthill, 2018).

⁹⁵ Foreman, *Georgiana*, p. xvi.

⁹⁶ DC, CS5, 'Correspondence of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire, and his wife Georgiana'.

⁹⁷ Multiple copies reside in Chatsworth library: the French translation by l'Abbe de Lille (London, Poland St: Nardini, 1802); the Italian translation by G. Polidori, with illustrations (1803).

⁹⁸ Examples include DC, CS5/297; CS5/444; CS5/448; CS5/1033.

⁹⁹ Pearson, *Stags*, p. 136.

motivated to some extent by the desire to acquire large amounts of 'new', fashionable books, such as Rousseau, and read them to the point of destruction, scribbling notes all over her favourites, loaning out and borrowing works to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to identify or locate the precise volumes that she owned in the current collection.

Indications are that she bought books compulsively, more than she could ever read or afford, and thus represents an example of a female bibliomaniac in a period when it was considered largely the pursuit of men.¹⁰⁰ Vouchers, letters and accounts of debts at her death in 1806 reveal that, amongst her other significant expenditures, Georgiana had been a regular client of booksellers across London, from the fashionable surrounds of William Earle of Albermarle Street to Didier & Tebbett, specialist in juvenile toys, games and books.¹⁰¹ The Duchess also used books from the Cavendish family collection as security on her debts.¹⁰² A single voucher from September 1798 listing some of the Duchess's debts under £50 cites seven booksellers to whom she owed a total of £150, whilst a note from 'White', a Fleet Street bookseller, testifies to the use of a Petrarch as security on a debt of £326.¹⁰³ This reveals a combination of insatiable appetite and an undeniable expertise that was in the Cavendish and Spencer family traditions.

Georgiana's letters reveal a consistent interest in reading and book collection that was shared with her mother, the Countess Spencer, even if the latter disapproved of some of her reading such as *Les liaisons dangereuses*.¹⁰⁴ Georgiana had a collectors' eye that could spot an excellent copy of William Hodges' *Select Views in India*, which is hardly surprising given that her brother,

¹⁰⁰ Purcell, *Country House*, p. 163.

¹⁰¹ Relevant records include DC, L/24/104, 'Debts under £50'; DC, L/24/107, Sept 10th 1806: Bill paid on behalf of Duchess of Devonshire for £45, 7s. Paid to William Earle for 47 books purchased between 1802 and 1806; DC, L/24/112/2 and DC, L/24/112/3, 'A-Z list of some debts incurred by Georgiana', including £1 owed to Didier & Tebbett.

¹⁰² DC, L/24/112/1, 'Heads of Claims (Duchess of Devonshire)'.

¹⁰³ DC, L/24/104, 'Debts under £50'; DC, L/24/112/1, 'Heads of Claims (Duchess of Devonshire)'. This is likely to be John White, son of Benjamin White, Fleet Steet bookseller. See 'WHITE, John' (d. 1816), *BBTI* < <http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=74985> > [accessed 16 December 2019].

¹⁰⁴ Examples of the mother-daughter discussion of reading and book collection include: DC, CS5/10; CS5/32; CS5/49; CS5/123; CS5/368; CS5/605; CS5/690; CS5/725; CS5/762; CS5/775; CS5/918; CS5/1178; CS5/1188; CS5/1223; CS5/1254.1. CS5/444, 20 October 1782: 'Letter from Countess Spencer to Duchess Georgiana' contains the reproach regarding Georgiana's enjoyment of Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782).

second Earl Spencer, was also a book collector, although there is sadly no written evidence of their conversations on this topic amongst surviving letters.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, one of the great mysteries of the Cavendish collection revolves around some unknown books of great value given to second Earl Spencer by the fifth Duke that inspired Spencer to return the favour by gifting a 1514 edition of Petrarch, valued at £106, to the Duchess.¹⁰⁶ We also learn from a letter to her mother that many of Georgiana's purchases of 'new' books were not inspired by a rapacious desire to read but by the desire to use these objects, much like male members of the family had done, as cultural capital to enhance and entrench her privileged social status. The Duchess claims to have acquired 'Gibbon, Smith on Trade, Anderson's Commerce, Watson's Chemistry, Life of Henry of Prussia, etc.' in an effort to copy the collection of Lord John Cavendish at Billing Hall.¹⁰⁷ Alas, these efforts at imitation ended in tragedy as Lord John dismissed her new works as 'trash', despite them mirroring his own, and teased her for her collections, therein providing an early example of how gender dynamics can determine the social value of both incorporated and objectified cultural capital; Georgiana as a woman was mocked for being an educated bibliophile in a way her brother and son were not.

Georgiana's passion for reading, writing and book collecting had a serious impact on the collection, adding large numbers of late Enlightenment works on political, economic and moral philosophy, and greatly expanding the presence of Romantic poetry and the increasingly popular genre of the novel. Georgiana's bibliomania also appears to have influenced her son, the sixth Duke, to follow in her footsteps, normalising the cultural practice of book collection for him in a way that his father and grandfather did not. He would later fondly recall, whilst accounting for his own extensive collecting exploits, the memory of his mother cataloguing books in a room on the ground floor in the north-west corner of Chatsworth, now known as the Brown Study, with a statue

¹⁰⁵ DC, CS5/1223, 17 April 1794, 'Letter from Duchess Georgiana to Countess Spencer'.

¹⁰⁶ DC, CS5/1115, 27 January 1792: 'Draft of Duchess Georgiana's will, in her hand'; Barker, *The Devonshire Inheritance*, pp. 35-6 (cat. 144). It is possible that this is the same Petrarch that Georgiana used as security on a debt to 'White': see footnote 101.

¹⁰⁷ DC, CS5/905, 19 September 1788: 'Letter from Duchess Georgiana to Countess Spencer'.

of Rousseau at her back and a writing desk by her side.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion: William Spencer Cavendish, the sixth Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858)

After his father's death in 1811, William Spencer Cavendish became the sixth Duke of Devonshire at twenty-one years of age. He inherited the book collections at Chiswick, Hardwick Hall and Devonshire House, in addition to those already at Chatsworth. The inventories drawn up for these properties listed the total collection at 16,352 volumes.¹⁰⁹ To understand their scope, the sixth Duke commissioned book catalogues for the separate sites in 1813. Their partial survival provides a unique insight into two centuries of book collection before the Cavendish family collection entered the modern age and a period of significant upheaval.¹¹⁰ The preservation by one family of such distinct, historically significant libraries, with strong provenance records is remarkable.¹¹¹ The almost unfettered political and economic rise of the Cavendish family and persistent interest in book collecting across the generations meant that unlike other aristocratic collections, there had been no great sales and no donations to the British Museum before the nineteenth century.

Despite the size, value and variety of his inheritance the sixth Duke devoted the next thirty years to the expansion and wholesale relocation of his book collections to a new library room, the former long gallery, at Chatsworth. This relocation along with the re-binding of thousands of works and purchase of thousands more served to obscure the fascinating complexity and historic nature of the early modern collections. The scale of the changes the sixth Duke instituted, and their long-lasting impact, makes him the real founder of the current Chatsworth Library, but this article has endeavoured to demonstrate the diverse and historic nature of the earlier book collections he

¹⁰⁸ 6th Duke of Devonshire, *Handbook*, p. 73; p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Chatsworth, Devonshire House, Hardwick and Chiswick inventories, compiled and signed by Edw. Swift, Chapel St, Grosvenor Place, London (August, 1811). DC, CH36/5/3, Chatsworth; DC, CH36/5/5, Devonshire House; DC, CH36/5/6, Hardwick; DC, CH36/5/3, Chiswick.

¹¹⁰ DC, uncatalogued material. The catalogues of Hardwick (194 titles), Devonshire House (2,292 titles) and Chiswick (2,825 titles) are virtually complete whereas only the final volume of the Chatsworth library (T-Z) has survived. The size of this volume and the number of volumes cited in the Chatsworth Inventory (DC, CH36/5/3, Chatsworth) suggest a minimum of 3,000 titles at Chatsworth in 1813. Figures my own.

¹¹¹ Reid, 'Decline and Fall', 349.

inherited, augmented and assimilated.¹¹²

In tracing the lineage of the collection in this manner it is possible to understand the sixth Duke's efforts to purchase, relocate, catalogue and display thousands of books as a continuation of the Cavendish family tradition which this study has traced back as far as the seventeenth-century earls of Devonshire. His recognition that book collecting and library construction were part of his role as leader of a social and cultural elite displayed a dynastic awareness of the cultural capital such collections could bestow upon their owners. As this article reveals, the Cavendish family were a family of book collectors who had grown and thrived along with their collections.

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¹¹² Crowther, 'Chatsworth', 443.