

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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JILL P. INGRAM. *Festive Enterprise: The Business of Drama in Medieval and Renaissance England*. ReFormations: Medieval and Early Modern. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021. Pp. 260. \$50.00 (paper).
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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

profitable" (7) spurred and shaped the development of early drama. As is fitting for the newest offering in the excellent ReFormations series, Ingram aims "across the medieval/Renaissance divide" to "join the artificially separated periods" (19), by way of three claims: that early modern commercial play productions were community-based and collaborative in ways previously considered definitive of medieval performance; that threads in early modern dramatists' handling of finances, both in their plays' depictions and in the real economics behind productions, can be traced back through medieval festive traditions; that the "pragmatic financial concerns" (8) that shaped medieval performance, in the first place, differed from London theaters' economics mainly "in degree, not in kind" (11). Across the chapters, Ingram executes a powerful, radical case for those first two claims; she does not gain much traction on the third claim, which would require deeper study into pre-Elizabethan plays and records than there is room for here, but that does not undermine Ingram's sophisticated re-framings of Renaissance playmaking overall.

In chapters 1 and 2, Ingram reframes early modern commercialism as persistently communal, foregrounding a "common theatrical experience" that was "dependent on the participation of audience members . . . surviving only with their support" (41); that participatory model, because it is drawn from medieval festivity, brings with it a "complicated ethical relationship between charity and compelled donation" (74). Chapter 1 describes a "legacy of festive gatherers" (18)—born from the playfully "hostile" or "combative" fund-raising of the "quête" (29–30), visible in parish fund-raisers' Robin Hood games (19–25), morris dances (27), and *Mankind's* money-gathering scene (30–33)—who emerge as "Vice/gatherer" or "empathetic thief" characters in the work of Heywood, Preston, Fulwell, Shakespeare, Nashe, Munday and Chettle, and others (32–44). Their "gathering function [was] no longer necessary to fund productions," but would "recall older communal funding models" (37) still familiar to audiences. In chapter 2, Ingram considers numerous early modern pleas for applause (56–69), which, she proposes, are continuations of the community-based investment emblemized by medieval expositors', prolocutors', and bann-criers' instructions (46–50) and by mummers' ritualized gift exchanges (51–56). Because "[a]ppause served as the aural sign of profitability" (57), scripted pleas position spectators as "marketplace agents" (56), whose giving or withholding of applause determines the play's financial viability (there is a gorgeous survey, at 64, of creative reimaginations of audiences' hands). In chapter 3, on *The Winter's Tale*, Ingram finds in Autolycus's marketplace antics, begging, and appeals for admission to court (72–80, 88–91), taken alongside that play's miraculous reconciliations, resonance with the socio-economic work of medieval civic, religious, and guild recreation (82–87), in which drama's "union of commercial and religious priorities" provided "a venue and structure for various strata of society to negotiate differences" (87).

In each of the remaining three chapters Ingram zooms in on one or two performances, from between 1594 and 1618: in chapter 4, she treats John Taylor's *Penniless Pilgrimage* (his "subscription-driven" walk from London to Scotland and back in 1618, and the resulting publication); in chapter 5, she takes on two holiday revels, the *Gesta Grayorum* (Gray's Inn, 1594) and *The Christmas Prince* (St. John's College, Oxford, 1607–8); in chapter 6, she returns to Shakespeare, reading *Love's Labour's Lost* vis-à-vis the Marprelate controversy. Ingram finds echoes of Catholic pilgrimage and procession in Taylor's perambulation (95, with "[a]nti-Catholic" parallels to biblical drama at 106–12), repurposed as a "social pilgrimage to the 'shrines' of the upper gentry" (97–98), manifesting early modern solo performers' concerns with patronage, ambition-as-mobility, and especially with extracting money from audiences. Ingram's analyses shine brightest, as does her straightforwardly enjoyable academic prose, where they take the fullness of production processes into account: when Taylor's subscribers renege (113–15), for instance, or when student revelers send parodic donation solicitations "modeled . . . on the actual privy seal loan requests sent out by Elizabeth I and James I" (120). "By signaling forgiveness of debts within a ritual of satirical self-mockery," writes Ingram, "students defined debt as something shared and potentially forgiven within a small community, not

imposed by a central authority” (127). Ingram reads the revels’ texts alongside donor lists to prove that these productions’ communalism “elicited factional sympathies” (136) with avant-garde conformists. Ingram approaches the Marprelate business as a “festive media sensation” (154) that cheapened public discourse in order to sell copies (14); she finds in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* a sustained attempt to respond to that cheapening—“to shape attitudes toward biting, satirical critique on multiple planes” (146). Here and during Taylor’s histrionic crowdsourcing, Ingram lets her readings’ remarkable relevance to present-day public culture remain implicit—and they speak more eloquently that way.

As a summary of its chapters makes clear, in *Festive Enterprise* (its subtitle notwithstanding) Ingram relegates medieval drama mostly to bird’s-eye surveys that lead into deep excavations of Renaissance texts; these surveys compellingly identify medieval beginnings for broad trends, but cannot support reinterpretations of medieval plays—only reassertions of the well-known fact that they, too, were shaped by economic concerns. Ingram’s jarring claim in the conclusion that “early modern London[’s]. . . commercial theater was actually more participatory than medieval communal theater” (160) is based instead on a comparison between two cherry-picked, hypothetical playgoers, simplifying medieval performance into a “didactic” monolith in which participation was typically “elicited by force or compulsion” (160); what relief when the “more complex” (162) plays on London’s commercial stages offer “greater opportunity for intense connection” (161) and “interpretive freedom” (160). Ingram is hardly the first, by way of an attempt to bridge these two dramatic periods, to flatten one so that it can bear the weight of the other; such constructions are widespread enough in our field that only a little responsibility should be laid on this otherwise impressive book. Indeed, as an innovative, deeply detailed study of Renaissance drama’s interrelation with pre-commercial economic practices, *Festive Enterprise* deserves much applause: it reveals the humanity and sense of community in the rise of theatrical commercialism.

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VICTORIA KAHN. *The Trouble with Literature*. Clarendon Lectures in English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 208. \$40.00 (cloth).
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In *The Trouble with Literature*, Victoria Kahn proposes a theory of poetics. Kahn begins by expressing dissatisfaction with the theoretical inheritance on which the academic study of literature is built. She faults formalist and deconstructive theorists such as Roman Jakobson and Paul de Man for reducing literariness to a system of figures and tropes and thus implausibly ignoring the real-world effects much literary writing palpably tries to achieve. Simultaneously she faults new historicists (Stephen Greenblatt) and Marxists (Jacques Rancière) for focusing so exclusively on social effects as to leave literary writing indistinguishable from any other type of discourse. Against those two well-worn paths, Kahn proposes to define literature as “our more general capacity to construct the world in which we live” (11). Literature consists, in other words, in the social construction of certain kinds of knowledge and meaning. It includes *Hamlet* and *The Iliad*, but also a wide range of other cultural artifacts and practices. Yet in Kahn’s narrative these other forms of human making never eclipse literature in the traditional sense of culturally valuable writing. What sets Kahn apart from new historicist notions of cultural poetics is that she charts a distinctive tradition of thought centered on writers who were poetic also in the normal sense of the word—Homer, for example, or William