

for all its heft, the book is well illustrated—contemporary medallions and coins heading each chapter, playing cards retelling the story of the 1680s—and clear descriptions accompany the images. Scholars working on the meaning of modernity in late-Stuart Britain and beyond must read this book. Lengthy critiques of the work have been released (we especially await Scott Sowerby's book on the religious politics of James II's reign), which question Pincus's ascription of groupings based on inferred motives, his downplaying of confessional politics, and on his use of quotes for proof without due context. and others. But at least one group of graduate students have appreciated *1688's* clear, at times dogmatic, arguments, which help situate existing scholarship and will likely spark future work on the Revolutionary era.

Brenda M. Pask with Margaret Harvey, eds. *The Letters of George Davenport 1651-1677*. Rochester, NY: The Surtees Society Publication by The Boydell Press, 2011. xv + 296 pp. + 1 illus. \$90.00. KAY J. BLALOCK, ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

Letters, especially in an age in which text messages, emails, memos, and other forms of quick, easy, got-to-have-it-today communication, offer a more personal touch at a time when social media is actually not that social. Letter writing is an art, a decorative mirror into the past. Reading a letter allows one to identify with the writer on a more intimate level; it offers a conversational communication between two individuals and can provide the reader with a picture of everyday life during the letter writer's era as well as an insight into the thoughts and character of the one speaking through the written word. Brenda Pask and Margaret Harvey's edited collection introduces the reader to George Davenport, not just the man of note, the bibliophile, the caretaker of Bishop Cosin's library, but the personal man, described in his memorial as an intelligent, charitable, caring individual to members of his parish, friends, and family.

The editors place the personal man within the context of England's political turmoil and religious troubles of the 1640s through the post-Restoration period of the 1660s. *The Letters of George Davenport 1651-1677* includes 148 epistles written, mainly to his former tutor

at Cambridge, Dr. William Sancroft, from the time of Davenport's Episcopal ordination until a few months before his unexpected death at the age of forty-six. Though the letters, in and of themselves, are well-written and interesting, it is the edited collection with its twenty-nine page introduction that contributes to this book's value as a resource for scholars as well as an enlightening read for the less academically inclined seeking to find a personal image of a well-known man through his own words.

Davenport's words, his letters, describe everyday events, duties, professional and personal, to which he attends for both Sancroft and Crosin, greetings and advice to family and friends, as well as their children, and occasional thoughts on the political and religious situation during the years covered by the collection. The book's introduction, in its overview of the writings, provides a direction, of sorts, indicating which numbered letters in the collection contain what information. Much of the content of the letters suggest a humble, though rich, life filled with numerous building projects and attention to the "glebe land of the parish," untilled by previous holders, including Sancroft, which provides a portion of Davenport's living. Attention to these agricultural details can be found in letter 121 and the inventory of 1677 (Appendix III) after his death. Though his "living" comes from his duties as rector at Houghton-le-Spring in Durham, Davenport appears to find satisfaction and success as a farmer too.

In mid-November 1669, Davenport writes, "I have now sown all my winter-corn, 38 good acres upon Howden Hill ... I have about 20 more there for sowing in the spring. Where furze [sic] did grow, now ploughs do go. The oldest man in the parish never saw it so before" (217). At his death, his "cropp of corn" and "the barne" (which includes oxen, swine, a Bull, horses) account for approximately sixteen percent and twenty-eight percent of his worth, respectively. Only the books in his library come close to being comparative in monetary value (approximately twenty-three percent of total assets). Davenport does not hoard his money and the letters and his will (Appendix II) show evidence of his funding of building projects, his philanthropy, and recognition of those who mattered to him in various capacities throughout his life. He writes in letter 126 of the "bowling green" he is constructing, with his own funds, upon the request of some local

gentlemen, and how the money generated from this endeavor will go to the Hospital; Davenport had built the south wing of the Hospital, on the rectory property, which came to be known as “Davenport’s End” (18). With this project (the bowling green), he indicates:

I have told them I am content to do it at myne [sic] own charge, provided they will submitt [sic] to these conditions, to pay 4d for every oath / sworn in it by them \ & a tenth part of their clean winnings (for who knows some may play the fool & lose 10£) & this they promise. If I do this, the Hospitall [sic] people shall have the keeping of it, & all advantage for their further maintenance which may do them some good. So God bless us in all our honest endeavours (225).

Over fifteen letters focus on the time and money Davenport spends refurbishing the rectory. Others mention the raising of funds and direction of building projects elsewhere. Much time, energy, or money find their way to the benefit of friends and family, or the family of Cosin (over twenty-two letters) in which Davenport intercedes for his sponsor with the latter’s brother-in-law, son, and daughters.

Family and friends form a tight network in which Davenport finds support for his livelihood and to which he often offers advice and counsel. He met Cosin as a young man, and succeeded his tutor and mentor, Sancroft through most of his career, first as Bishop Cosin’s domestic chaplain in 1662 and eventually as rector at Houghton-le-Spring in 1665. His last surviving letter seeks a better appointment for a nephew who he believes had been “grievously wronged” at university. He minces no words in writing about those responsible: “the whore & her mother ... did both acquit him and ... another scholar took the child and kept it” (252) evidences his nephew’s innocence in the matter, as far as this uncle is concerned.

Righting wrongs may have been a natural instinct for the good churchman, yet it appears he has a sense of humor, particularly when it comes to his own life. In responding to a letter, perhaps congratulating him on his wedding, Davenport tells his friend and mentor Sancroft:

Sir, Mine and my wife’s true love to you remembered ...
But why should you be amused at my marrying a Lady. A man may affect a Lady as well as a woman of worse qual-

ity, & love where there is money as well as where there is none ... [and in a postscript] ... I perceive I have not told you the womans [sic] name, which thing is enough with some to say matrimony makes men mad. But I had rather acknowledg[e] my error than write this over again. Know ye therefore, in all earnestness, that I am neither marryd [sic] nor about to marry: but verily think I am as / good as\ married [sic] that is, better than married. How these reports are raised about me I cannot imagine. Almost every week I am likened ... to one body or other, widows old & young, maidens rich & poor, fair & foul (155-55).

No wife, in evidence, it would seem. His will provides for only his “kinswoman Mistress Mary Hales.” His sister-in-law receives his diamond ring. Relatives, friends, the poor, and those who have served him in some capacity during his life are recipients of other personal effects or monetary portions.

Buried on the property on which he spent most of his later years, the grounds of the rectory, beneath a memorial in which those he touched during his life testified to his charitable nature, George Davenport takes his final rest. Yet, he lives on in his letters, which chronicle one man’s everyday life in a small corner of England, within the broader context of the country as a whole. The political and religious transformation of the late seventeenth century and the occasional intellectual musings of an educated, well-connected cleric are offered to the reader in this well-structured collection, *The Letters of George Davenport 1651-1677*.

Federico Barbierato. *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop. Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice*. London: Ashgate, 2012. xxxiii + 396 pp. \$124.95. Review by R. BURR LITCHFIELD, BROWN UNIVERSITY.

This erudite and detailed book is a discussion of popular anti-religious opinion in Venice in the years 1640-1740, the period of the early Enlightenment. It is based on records of the local inquisition. The Venetian Republic declared against irreligion and blasphemy,