

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



‘Oh, to make boards speak! There is a task’: understanding the iconography of the applied paintings at Bolsover Castle

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The paintings on plaster and panel that decorate the walls of the Little Castle at Bolsover in Derbyshire have long been recognized as important and rare survivals, but their iconography has proved an enduring enigma.¹ Despite the value of recent research, fundamental questions about the genesis, purpose, meaning and reception of the decoration remain. The paintings feature a bewildering selection of subjects, curiously arranged across seven rooms, and the ensemble is, as Mark Girouard has said of the building, ‘like nothing else in England’.²

Several scholars in recent years have contributed to their interpretation. Karen Hearn, Lynn Hulse, Nick Rowe, Timothy Raylor, James Knowles and Julie Sanders have explored the artistic, musical, scientific and literary patronage of William Cavendish, later 1st Duke of Newcastle (1592-1676), who commissioned the decoration.³ Although a lead artist has not been identified, the works can be securely situated in the context of the sophisticated cultural activities of the Cavendish circle in the Midlands, in London and at court.⁴ Forensic technical investigation and conservation work by

¹ The Little Castle is the large keep-like structure at Bolsover Castle. OS Grid Reference SK471707.

² Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 209. Girouard stepped cautiously around the pictures, offering only: ‘With the exception of some of the paintings the impression – rare enough for the period – is of one controlling mind at work’ (p. 244).

³ For collections of papers in this area see *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994); and *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648-1660*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (Antwerp: Rubenshuis and Rubenianum, 2006).

⁴ Paine notes the similarities in style and the handling of paint across several rooms. He summarizes limited research carried out by Jane Davies but observes that there has been no systematic analysis of the painting techniques and

Stephen Paine and Helen Hughes have established a chronology for the decoration, dating most of the work to between 1619 and 1621, and demonstrating the high quality and richness of the original interior schemes.⁵ Anthony Wells-Cole and Edward Town have placed the cycle in the early-modern tradition in the decorative arts of borrowing and adapting images from continental prints.⁶

Peter Brears, Paul Drury, Mark Girouard, Nicolas Helm, Paula Henderson, Simon Jervis, Tom Williamson and Lucy Worsley have analysed the buildings at Bolsover, establishing the dates of construction and the purpose of the various spaces. It has been revealed that the remains of standing medieval structures on the site were razed, and the shell of the Little Castle was constructed by William's father Sir Charles Cavendish (1553-1617) between 1612 and 1617. Endowed with large kitchens that included pastry ovens, multiple dining and banqueting spaces of varying sizes, and comparatively few bedchambers and services, Bolsover was conceived as a fanciful lodge, providing an arena for convivial cultural pursuits and extravagant hospitality.⁷ Development of the range along the terrace from about 1630 added state apartments, further extensive kitchens, and a spectacular gallery. A riding school was built after the Restoration to add a venue for manège.

materials used on the pictures: Stephen Paine, 'The Little Castle, Bolsover: The Conservation of the Wall Paintings' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2000), pp. 12, 28-34.

⁵ Helen Hughes, "...with the edge of Goose-Quill feather...", in *Architectural Finishes in the Built Environment*, ed. by Mary A. Jablonski and Catherine R. Matsen (London: Archetype, 2009), pp. 123-33; Helen Hughes, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Understand and Recreate the Splendor of the Marble Closet at the Little Castle Bolsover' (paper presented at ICOM-CC Interim Meeting Rome, 23-26 March, 2010). I am grateful to Hughes and Paine for access to additional unpublished papers.

⁶ Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558-1624* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 112-13, 212-13. Wells-Cole acknowledges unpublished notes by Rosalys Coope who identified several of the print sources, *ibid.*, p. 212. Edward Town, 'The Painted Scheme of 1619-21 at Bolsover Castle – Sources and Context' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013); Edward Town, 'A House "Re-edified" – Thomas Sackville and the Transformation of Knole 1605-1608' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2010), pp. 190-96, 275-7.

⁷ Adam Bowett, 'Furnishing Bolsover Little Castle' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013); Peter Brears, 'Bolsover Castle: Proposals for Displaying the Cooking and Dining Areas' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013); Paul Drury, 'Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire: a Conservation Plan', 2 vols (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2012); Paul Drury, *Bolsover Castle* (London: English Heritage Guidebooks, 2014); Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 206-69, 279; Nicholas Helm, 'Bolsover Castle: Architecture and Play Structure' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013); Nicholas Helm, 'Love's Welcome at Bolsover Castle: Architecture and Play Structure' (forthcoming); Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 207-11; Simon Swynfen Jervis, 'Bolsover Castle: A Report on Room Use and Function' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013); Lucy Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage of William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle, 1593-1676', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2001); Tom Williamson, 'Bolsover Castle: the Landscape Context' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013).



Fig. 1 Aerial view of Bolsover Castle (English Heritage)

Addressing the iconography of the paintings, Timothy Raylor has pointed to their dynamic, theatrical character.⁸ He has argued that Bolsover Castle ‘emerges as a witty apologia for its owner’, and he has shown that the paintings centred on Cavendish himself, implying his physical presence. He was to be identified with Hercules in an extended allegory of virtue triumphing over temptation. For Raylor, the paintings expressed Cavendish’s characteristic sensuality, and, borrowing ideas from Ben Jonson’s masque *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* of 1618, they offered a justification for his habitual pursuit of erotic pleasure.⁹ Raylor’s analysis focused on the theme of the senses, the subject of the paintings in the Pillar Parlour, and he found allusions to the topos of the banquet of sense.¹⁰ He endorsed the established view that these themes were picked up at the

⁸ Timothy Raylor, “‘Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue’: William Cavendish, Ben Jonson, and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 (1999), 402-39.

⁹ See also Richard S. Peterson, ‘The Iconography of Jonson’s “Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue”’, *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5 (1975), 123-53; Timothy Mowl, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Style* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), pp. 119-23, 185.

¹⁰ For links between the paintings and the treatment of moral choice in Jonson’s masque see Raylor, “‘Pleasure Reconciled’”, 415; For the banquet of sense, including a discussion of the theme in Ben Jonson’s *The New Inn*, see J. F. Kermode, ‘The Banquet of Sense’, in J. F. Kermode, *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 68-99.

start of Jonson's entertainment of 1634, *Love's Welcome at Bolsover*, and that, fittingly, the opening song was performed during a banquet in that room.¹¹ A number of scholars have pointed to two further links between the text and the building: the statue of Venus in the garden, and the painting of Eros and Anteros on a cornice in the Elysium Closet.¹²

This work notwithstanding, many contradictions and questions remain.¹³ If the images conveyed complex messages, as Raylor has argued, then they departed from the usual, relatively simple, decorative and emblematic purpose of adapting continental print sources, which Wells-Cole and Town have described. Were the compositions strikingly original or not? If they were, who could have invented such an intricate and dynamic programme at this date? If the building was designed for feasts and banquets (of which the royal visit of 1634 was the prime example), and if the paintings had a kinetic and theatrical character, were the schemes linked to banqueting? How did this relationship operate in practice? How can we describe entertainments and hospitality at Bolsover, including the lavish event of 1634?

Further, if the images were a product of Cavendish's taste for the bizarre, and if the allusions to the banquet of sense, and the related theme of the reconciliation of pleasure to virtue, ultimately expressed lewd aspects of Cavendish's character (albeit wittily delivered), which Worsley in particular has advocated, is Cavendish likely to have shown them to King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria during their visit, especially if he was already manoeuvring to secure the

¹¹ John P. Cutts, "When were the senses in such order plac'd?", *Comparative Drama*, 4 (1970), 52-62 (p. 53); *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, ed. by James Knowles, *CWBJ*, VI, pp. 681-96 (pp. 683-4, 687). All references to the works of Ben Jonson are to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), unless otherwise stated. The title of the Newcastle manuscript version, BL Harley 4955, fols. 199-202 (JnB 680), is *The King and Queene's Entertainement at Boulsover July 1634*. The titles of the F2 Folio version is *LOVES WEL_COME. THE KING AND QUEENES ENTERTAINMENT AT BOLSOVER: AT The Earl of Newcastles, The thirtieth of Iuly, 1634*. Herford and Simpson, VII, pp. 805-807. For a discussion of the two surviving versions see James Knowles, 'The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover: Textual Essay'. *CWBJ Online*: http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/benjonson/k/essays/Bolsover_textual_essay/1/ (Accessed 19 May 2016). The title *Love's Welcome* is used in this paper to avoid confusion with *The King's Entertainment at Welbeck* of 1633.

¹² Timothy Mowl, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Style* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), p. 185. Henderson argues that the statue may be of Bathsheba not Venus in Henderson, *The Tudor House*, pp. 208-9.

¹³ I am grateful to English Heritage and the National Trust, and to the participants in the seminars at Bolsover Castle in January 2013, and at Montacute House in November 2014, for discussions highlighting unresolved issues.

governorship of Prince Charles?¹⁴ (Cavendish was appointed sole Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Prince Charles in March 1638, and became his Governor four months later.) Is it more plausible that the royal couple and their companions saw only a few of the less problematic rooms?

Knowles has noted that that the ground floor of the Little Castle appears too constricted to accommodate a royal entourage. The King and Queen are likely to have brought a sizeable group of courtiers to Bolsover, and he has suggested that the company might therefore have needed to enter and exit from the wall walk on the first floor (if, indeed, they came inside at all). He has also made the point that entering an inferior's bedchamber might have constituted a breach of decorum. Thus the royal couple may only have seen the Star Chamber and the Marble Closet.¹⁵ This is puzzling when we remember that if they had not entered the Pillar Parlour or the Elysium Closet, the royal couple (and 'all the gentry of the country' whom Cavendish had sent for 'to come and wait on their Majesties', and who are presumed to have watched *Love's Welcome* in the garden) would have missed the connection to the interior decoration in the allusions to the senses, and to Eros and Anteros, in Jonson's text.¹⁶ Why, then, did the poet include them?

We can make progress in answering these questions if we look at the paintings in detail and if we compare them with their print sources. I wish to argue that there is more to notice in the selection, adaptation and arrangement of the images on the walls than scholars have hitherto realized. Changes to the prints created complex allusions to Cavendish and his family, assigning them multiple interlinked roles, beyond Cavendish's role as Hercules, and they added references to masquing, theatre and poetry that were suitable for convivial entertainments. If we read *Love's Welcome* with the pictures in mind we can see that Jonson was exploiting the dramatic potential of the building with characteristic wit and humour. He clearly had an intimate knowledge of the interiors and how they could facilitate a blend of banqueting and drama. The paintings and the customary use of the building were a starting point for his invention.

¹⁴ See Lucy Worsley, *Cavalier: The Story of a 17th Century Playboy* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 206 for the view that the paintings are 'an increasingly explicit celebration of sexual pleasure' and that Cavendish undertook a high-risk strategy in showing them to the King and Queen: the royal couple 'will either be charmed by his nerve in justifying himself as a lover of pleasure, or else they will be slightly disgusted'; Mowl, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Style*, pp. 119, 121-23.

¹⁵ Verbal communication.

¹⁶ Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish* (London: 1667), ed. by C. H. Firth (London: John C. Nimmo, 1886), p. 103.

I wish to take another step and propose that *Love's Welcome* points up the poetic character of the iconographic programme, and Jonson's investment in its method and messages. I want to explore the possibility that he guided the composition of the paintings after his visit to Bolsover on his foot voyage from London to Scotland in 1618, and that the imagery expressed his poetic vision. References to these schemes may appear among the allusions to the Cavendish family embedded in several of his later works. More research is needed, but I suggest we can show that Little Castle provided the poet with inspiration, a source of compliments for the Cavendishes, and a location for real or imagined performance over many years. Likewise, if we take a fresh look at poems, masques and plays written by Cavendish and his daughters we can find that the debts to Jonson and borrowings from his work, which are well attested, include a shared referencing of the painted schemes.¹⁷ Thus we can reveal a tradition of site-specific theatre at Bolsover that incorporated allusions to the building.

A fuller understanding of the iconography in the Little Castle and its connection with *Love's Welcome* can inform a number of debates in Jonsonian studies: Jonson's relationship with Cavendish; his connection with private theatre outside London; his involvement in the visual arts; his reception of Neoplatonism; his abilities in his later years; and his long-standing drive to establish the primacy of poetry in court culture which erupted in his quarrel with Inigo Jones. It may also shed light on issues in early modern cultural and political history: the nature of royal progresses; interchanges between London and the north; approaches to Catholicism; the contribution of women in domestic drama; and the ways in which masquing, theatre and banqueting were used to establish personal relationships with the royal family.

In Section I of this paper I will begin by examining four densely-packed paintings in the Ante Room. I will compare this first scheme with the schemes in the Pillar Parlour and the Hall, showing a progression of ideas and allusions. Section II will show how themes introduced on the ground floor continue through the decorated rooms of the first floor, culminating in a pair of complex schemes in the Elysium and Heaven Closets. We may be able to identify portraits of members of the Cavendish family and Jonson. In Section III I will reflect on how the paintings can be

¹⁷ Anne Barton, 'Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia', *A Journal of English Literary History*, 48 (1981), 706-31 (pp. 706-10, 728-29); Robert C. Evans, "'Making Just Approaches": Ben Jonson's Poems to the Earl of Newcastle', *Renaissance Papers* (1988), 63-75; Nick Rowe, "'My best patron": William Cavendish and Jonson's Caroline Dramas', *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 197-212; Julie Sanders, 'Jonson's Caroline Coteries' in *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson*, ed. by Takashi Kozuka and J. R. Mulryne (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 279-94 (pp. 284-87); Helen Ostovich, 'Patronage' in *Ben Jonson in Context*, ed. by Julie Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 296-302 (pp. 299-301).

characterized, offering some comparators. I will look in detail at *Love's Welcome* in Section IV, indicating that a fuller understanding of the paintings alters our reading of the text. It becomes clear that the piece was performed inside the Little Castle, and that other Cavendish masques and plays can shed light on its interpretation. The conclusion summarizes the findings and points to paths for future research.

I

The Ante Room is a panelled chamber to the left of the front door of the Little Castle, accessed from a vaulted porch and a narrow lobby. Although it is evidently of high status, the function of the room has been disputed. It is generally considered to be an anomaly in Sir Charles Cavendish and Robert Smythson's architectural design of c. 1612. The entry in the earliest extant inventory (probably taken after the death of Cavendish in 1676) gives few clues: 'In the little roome next the hall stares, 2 armed Chares, 6 backt Chares, I table, I Carpitt.... I iron grate'.¹⁸ Worsley has suggested it may have been a place for a porter or steward to greet guests, and English Heritage currently interprets it as a preliminary reception room or a place for household business, despite its small size, the unusual location in advance of the Hall, and its mildly erotic decoration.¹⁹

It is usually argued that the choice of images here and throughout the building demonstrates Cavendish's contradictory personality.²⁰ On the one hand, they exhibit his cultured familiarity with fashionable continental prints – part of a campaign to update the already outmoded style of his father's architecture.²¹ On the other hand, they set the scene for unsavoury private pleasures, betraying his trademark peccadilloes.²²

¹⁸ London, British Library, Add MS 70500, fols. 110^v-111^v.

¹⁹ Lucy Worsley, *Bolsover Castle* (London: English Heritage Guidebooks, 2000), p. 16; Paul Drury, *Bolsover Castle* (London: English Heritage Guidebooks, 2014), p. 16.

²⁰ For assessments of Cavendish's personality see Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 246-47: 'He had many interests [...] He had his weaknesses. He suffered from a certain flabbiness; he was perhaps a little absurd [...] He was, in fact, a hopeless and incurable dilettante [...] There could be no greater contrast than that between the splendid and sprawling Duke and his grandmother [...] tough, concentrated and on the make'; James Knowles, 'From Gentleman to Prince: William Cavendish in Context' in *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648-1660*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (Antwerp: Rubenshuis and Rubenianum, 2006), pp. 13-20 (pp. 13-14, 19-20).

²¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 247-51.

²² Worsley, *Cavalier*, pp. 105-6: 'William's programme of fabulous paintings at his palace of pleasure began to include an increasingly explicit celebration of sexual pleasure, and the Little Castle has become a monument to his lifelong



Fig. 2 View on entering the Ante Room (Crosby Stevens)

love of women [...] William is probably more deeply addicted to pleasure than most, and criticism for his *affaires*, his foppishness and his indolence dogs his career as the Puritans grow in strength’.



Fig. 3 Floor plans of the Little Castle by Paul Drury (Mark Fenton, English Heritage)

These accounts privilege a view of the building as a great house in miniature and a secluded lodge, tending to neglect its assumed function as a place for hospitality.²³ By contrast I wish to argue that the Ante Room and the decorated rooms throughout the building are best understood in relation to sportive and celebratory events with which both Cavendish and his father were familiar: processions, entries, pageants, tournaments, masques, feasts, and banquets – a range of choreographed sociable amusements for well-born guests of mixed age and sex, marking dynastic events, notable visits, and the calendar year. We might remember that Cavendish's passion for manège had a ceremonial as well as a sporting and military purpose. He wrote to Sir Edward Nicholas, 13 May, 1659, from Antwerp, 'My service to my Lord Chancellor [Sir Edward Hyde] and tell him that now I hope to wait on him to Westminster to see him take possession of the Chancery, and upon one of my horses of manage, which will be the quietest, safest, and surest he or any man can have'.²⁴ These celebratory events might be characterized as dramatically-inspired enactments of status: rituals of inclusion and exclusion, expressing magnificence. A focus on festivity can transform our reading of the Little Castle, altering our understanding of both the fashionable character and the erotic charge of the decoration.

Participants in extravagant entertainments commonly moved through landscapes, gardens, and buildings. The journey could be understood as part of a shared performance.²⁵ It is therefore important to locate the Ante Room in a web of spaces across the site, and across the Cavendish estates. We can understand it not only as a room that was occupied, where people might do something, but also as a space to pass through en route to somewhere else during a social and performative event. If we consider entry into the Ante Room as one episode in a series of contrived experiences that were connected to mirthful (though nonetheless highly-cultured) entertainments, we can recover something of the intention behind the painted decoration there.

It is worth looking at the paintings in the order in which they would have been encountered. The first picture viewed directly ahead of the doorway in the Ante Room is a scene of amplified

²³ Worsley concurs with Patricia Fumerton in seeing the organization of space at Bolsover as a series of dispersed private retreats used for banqueting, and she points to the comparatively few letters written by Cavendish from there. Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics, Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 142, cited in Lucy Worsley, 'Building a Family: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle, and the Construction of Bolsover and Nottingham Castles', *The Seventeenth Century*, 19, (2004) 233-59 (pp. 239-40).

²⁴ Cavendish, *The Life*, p. 208.

²⁵ Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Europe, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 101-7, 219-23; *The Entertainment at Britain's Bourse* (1609), ed. by James Knowles, *CWBJ*, III, pp. 353-56.

classical architecture with a tempietto in the distance (Figure 2). This image comes as a surprise after encountering the west façade of the building, and after passing through the courtyard and porch, all of which are predominantly mock-medieval (Figure 4). However, if we notice subtle continuities across the site we can see that, although there is a marked contrast between the uncompromising classicism of this image and the anterior spaces, Renaissance classical elements were not being introduced for the first time. They were also incorporated into the preceding structures.²⁶ In the Ante Room the two styles were separated out, but I suggest this painting was still closely related to what had gone before.



Fig. 4 The approach to the Little Castle (Crosby Stevens)

²⁶ Drury, 'Bolsover Castle', I, pp. 49-50; Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 221 argues that a blend of medieval and post-medieval content characterizes Bolsover, and was typical of sixteenth-century chivalric literature, buildings and entertainments; Lucy Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle (1593-1676)', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 50 (2006), pp. 49-50.

Roy Strong has pointed to the correspondence between the west façade of the Little Castle and one of Inigo Jones' set designs for Jonson's *Oberon the Fairy Prince* of 1610: Bolsover is 'the visual equivalent of *Barriers* and *Oberon*'²⁷ (Figure 5). Jones' fanciful building has a lantern, chimneys and a pedimented entrance, as well as castle-like turrets and arrow slits, which are all similar to those introduced at Bolsover. I suggest the temple painting in the Ante Room was an indoor sequel to this façade – it marked a change of scene. Like a series of sliding flats drawing the viewer into the setting, the west façade and the temple painting were sequential prompts for theatrical and poetic imaginings. There are further similarities with Jones' design for Oberon's 'Palace within a Cavern', also created for *Oberon*²⁸ (Figure 6). Within masquing culture, their melding of styles spoke of a recovered Golden Age, founded in a Roman past and overlaid with chivalric traits.²⁹ To enter the Little Castle was to be drawn into that magic time.³⁰

²⁷ Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), pp. 134-35 (p. 134).

²⁸ *Oberon the Fairy Prince*, ed. by David Lindley, CWB, III, pp. 713-43 (pp. 715-17).

²⁹ Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981); for Jonson's idea of the resurfacing of the Roman past in *The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* see Richard S. Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2nd edn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 45-49.

³⁰ Strong, p. 135: 'Bolsover remains architecture's solitary but supreme monument to the lost Renaissance [...] Here is a building which matches exactly the scenario of the Prince's court, the super-imposition onto the Gothic past of the new classicism as an expression of an historic British continuum'.

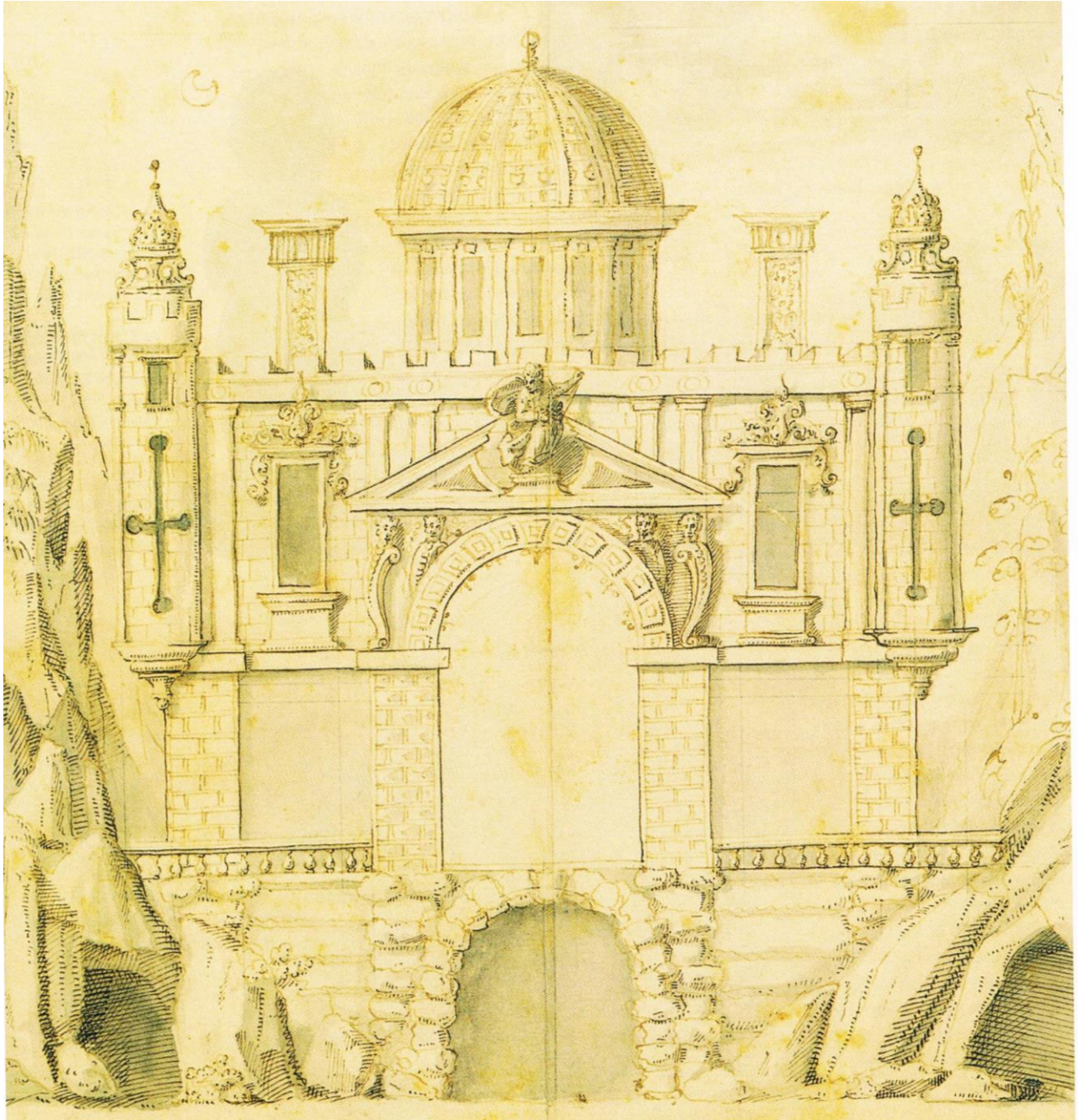


Fig. 5 Inigo Jones' stage design for Oberon's palace for *Oberon the Fairy Prince* (1610)
(© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth)³¹

³¹ The Bridgeman Art Library. I am grateful to the Humanities Research Centre of Sheffield Hallam University for financial support to obtain image permissions.

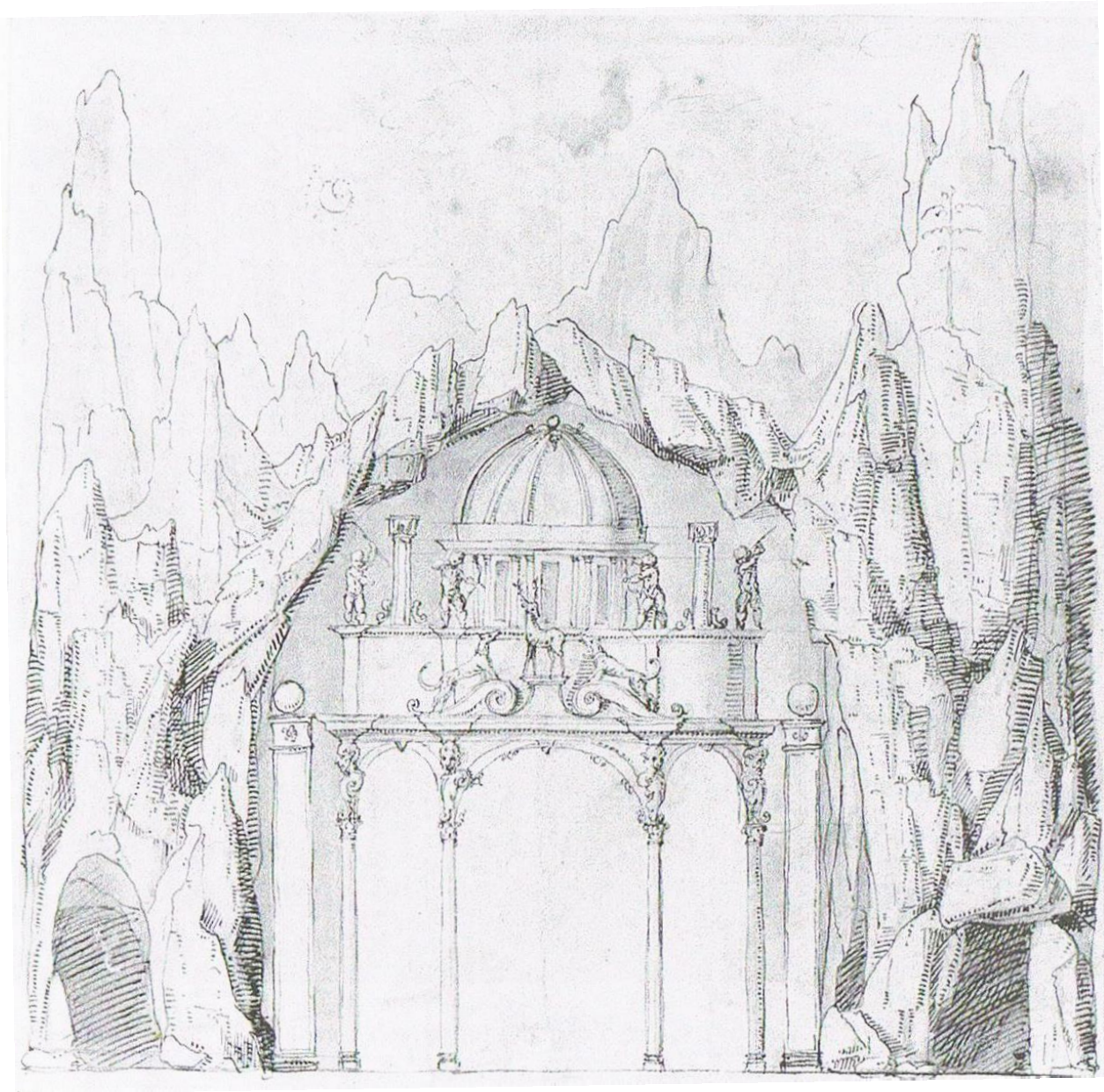


Fig. 6 Inigo Jones' preliminary design for a palace within a cavern for *Oberon the Fairy Prince* (1610) (© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth)³²

³² The Bridgeman Art Library.

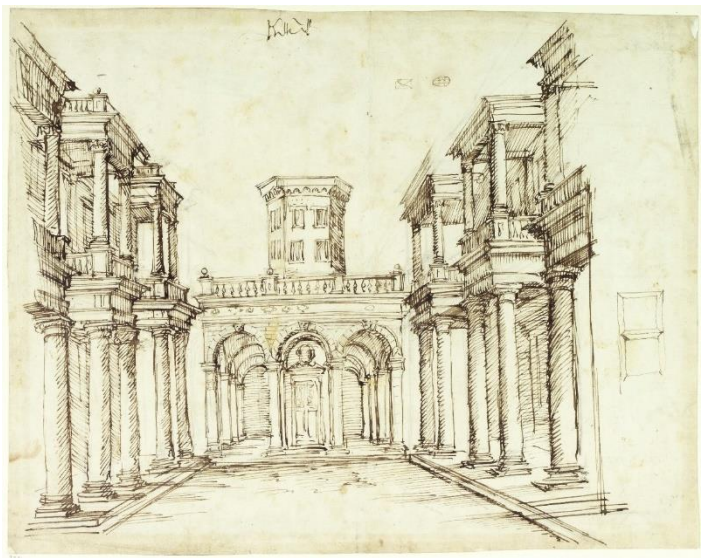


Figs 7, 8 The temple painting in the Ante Room, with a detail of the temple and the statue of Mercury (English Heritage)

If we examine the temple painting we can see that heavy square pillars and a platform dominate the foreground, and the setting is a skyscape. In the distance a stone temple surmounted by a statue

of Mercury rests on a mound of pink and blue cloud. The sun may be rising. The picture is one of four paintings of identical size in the room, but it is the only one without animated, life-size figures. Its classicism is striking; so too, however, is its emptiness.

I wish to make a case that this painting references a masque set. There is a general compositional likeness between the Bolsover painting and sets designed by Inigo Jones over several decades.³³ The organization is symmetrical, there is a framing arch, three pairs of upright elements at the sides which extend upward beyond the arch, a space in the centre foreground, an open structure at the centre back, and single-point perspective.



Figs 9, 10 A detail of the Bolsover temple painting compared with Inigo Jones' design *Scene 4: The Palace of Fame*, probably for *Britannia Triumphans* (1638) (© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth)³⁴

If we compare the temple painting with, for example, Jones' design for *The Palace of Fame* of 1638 we see that the angle of viewing is the same, and the sliding flats of the set are similar to the three pairs of pillars. The truncated triangle of the stage, and the proportions of its depth and width, were standard: employed to create perspectival effects. They closely resemble those of the platform in the Ante Room painting.

³³ Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), II, p. 677; John Orrell, *The Theatres of Inigo Jones and John Webb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³⁴ Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

Pairs of parallel lines have been drawn on the right at the front of Jones' stage to reference parallel grooves for sliding flats. I suggest pairs of channels at the sides of the platform in the temple painting may similarly represent these characteristic tracks, although in the painting they run vertically instead of horizontally. (I will return to this below.)

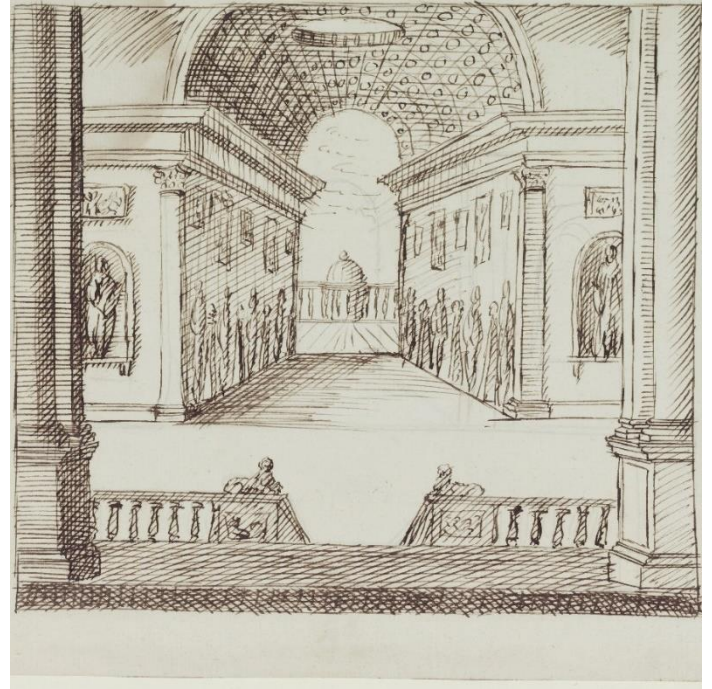
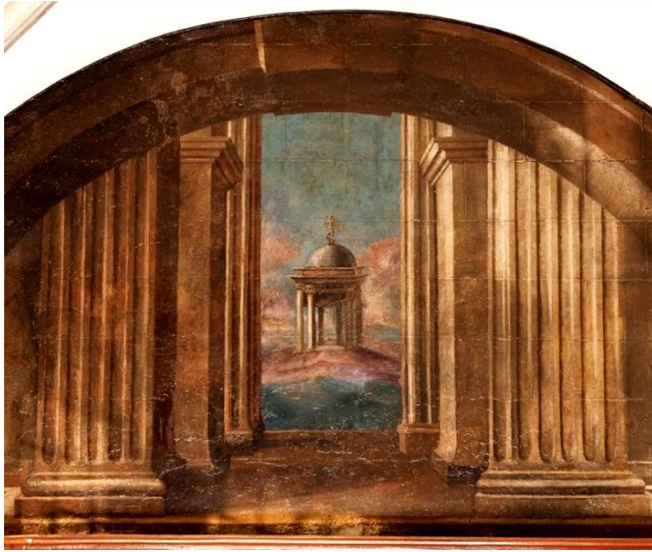
There are also wedge-shaped indents to the left and right at the lower edge of the temple painting that could represent slots for lights, scenery or a proscenium arch.



Fig. 11 Detail of the temple painting showing a pair of grooves at the side of the platform, and a wedge-shaped slot at the front

John Webb's drawing of an architectural set for *Cleodora* of 1640 is another helpful comparator.³⁵ Here the lines of perspective have been traced on the backdrop, and the shape of a domed building on vertical supports (which is similar to the temple in the Ante Room painting), enhances the illusion of distance. There is a sharply-defined, terminating edge to the stage in the drawing, where it meets the backcloth or backshutters. This resembles the edge of the platform in the Ante Room picture. The vertiginous effect is identical.

³⁵ Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, II, p. 791.



Figs 12, 13 A detail of the temple painting compared with John Webb's drawing 3: *sceane A shutter with statues and figures a farr of*, probably a set for *Cleodora* (1640) (© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth).³⁶ Sunlight from the real windows of the Ante Room falls onto the lower left edge of the painting.

Taking an earlier example, we might point to the street perspective probably created by Jones for Jonson's *The Vision of Delight*, performed in the Banqueting House at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, 1617.³⁷ Here again there are vertical architectural elements at the sides, and the scene at the back features a small classical building with pillars and a central opening. Cavendish may have attended *The Vision of Delight*. He ran at the ring during the investiture celebrations for Prince Charles in November 1616; and, as a Knight of the Bath, he was probably present at the associated Lord Mayor's banquet at the Drapers Hall – a lavish and notoriously debauched occasion.³⁸

³⁶ Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

³⁷ Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, I, pp. 274-75.

³⁸ Geoffrey Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 43.



Fig. 14 Inigo Jones' design for a street perspective, probably for *The Vision of Delight* (1617) (© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth)³⁹

The lighting in the temple painting also deserves attention. The light on the platform cannot be coming from an imagined sun in the painted sky. This would illuminate the picture space from behind, and so appear to direct light into the Ante Room. The shadows from the pillars would fall forward. Instead the scene appears to be lit from the real windows of the room.

³⁹ The Bridgeman Art Library.



Fig. 15 View of the temple painting with strong sunlight from the window (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 16 The temple painting, softly lit from the real windows of the room, showing the painted light and shadows on the platform (Crosby Stevens)

A dominant painted shadow is more or less correctly cast by the front left pillar. However, if we look at the tops of the pillars at the back, and at the grooves on the platform at the sides, we can see that the scene is also lit, to a lesser extent, from inside the arch, as it might be in a theatre.

If light was coming solely from the real window and from behind the arch we might expect the front faces of the pillars on the left side at the back of the platform to be in partial shadow, each one blocked by the pillar in front of it. However, the front faces of all the pillars on the left are well lit and there is a short, thin shadow cast by the rear left pillar. There would have to be lights behind each pillar to create this effect, as would be the case with theatre flats.

Overall the lighting is contrived to support the strong symmetry of the composition while still suggesting that the viewer is looking at a scene which is part of the real room in which he or she is standing. The light in the other paintings in the Ante Room is skilfully rendered, and it seems unlikely that this illusion of a combination of real and dispersed artificial lighting was unintended.

Finally, we might note that the sky in the painting continues behind the platform at the sides. On the left in particular it appears to wrap around the platform. The modelling of the clouds suggests two walls meeting at a corner.





Figs 17, 18 Details of the temple painting showing the lighting on the left edge of the platform, the area of sky at the side, and the thin shadow cast by the rear left pillar.

I propose that for contemporary viewers familiar with London theatres and masque sets by Inigo Jones (and perhaps also with continental drawings or prints of sets) it would have been obvious that this painting was showing a stage made ready for a performance, and that the stage was meant to appear to be in the Ante Room, in present time.

No source for the temple painting has been found, but the other three pictures in the room are based on engravings of *The Humours*, after Maerten de Vos. The temple painting replaces *Sanguine*, and Raylor has convincingly suggested that Cavendish, who was a skilled lutenist, and said to be of sanguine complexion, could have amused his guests by standing in for the painting, welcoming them into the castle.⁴⁰ He has pointed out that the temple might have represented air to complete a set of four elements, linked to the four humours.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Cavendish, *Life*, p. 111.

⁴¹ Raylor, “Pleasure Reconciled”, pp. 405, 409-10, 418.



Figs 19, 20, 21, 22 The print sources for three of the paintings in the Ante Room: Engravings of *The Four Temperaments*, c.1595, Pieter de Jode (1606-74), after Maerten de Vos (c.1532-1603) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)⁴²

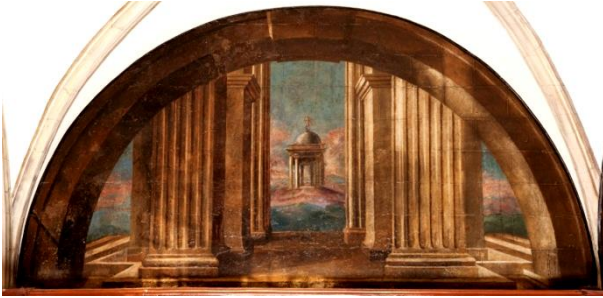
⁴² <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-1952-218>

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-7733>

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-7734>

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-7732> (Accessed 19 May 2016). Public Domain.

Purchased by the Rijksmuseum with the support of the F.G. Waller Fund.



Figs 23, 24, 25, 26 The four paintings in the Ante Room (English Heritage)

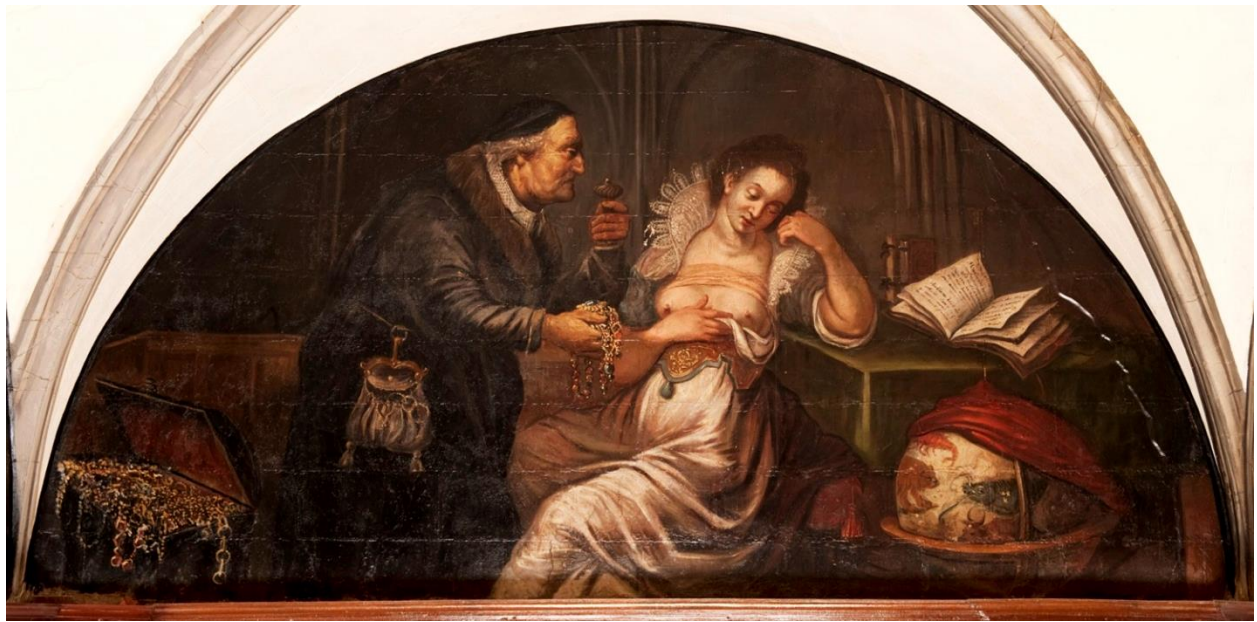


Fig. 27 The position below the temple painting where *Sanguine* might have been enacted

We can take this further. If we note changes to *Choleric* and *Melancholic* we can see that Cavendish (and perhaps his wife Elizabeth, née Bassett [1599-1643]) would also be completing a set of the five senses, placed in a conventional order. If the temple painting represented **sight**; their tableau (which might include real music) would give **sound**; *Phlegmatic* with the fish would give **smell**; *Choleric*, with the altered image of a girl eating food, would give **taste**; and *Melancholic*, with the lascivious man and perhaps the added veiled globe, would give **touch**.



Figs 28, 29, 30 Detail of the girl in the painting of *Choleric*, compared with the cockerel in the print source



Figs 31, 32 *Melancholic* and a detail of the veiled globe

An allegorical presentation of the humours, the elements *and* the senses would have appeared to be taking place. If the conceit was that the hosts were enacting the missing print, it would seem that they had magically come to life, and had stepped out of the print to stand below a stage set. They would then have appeared to be performing in the space in front of the stage where most of the action in a masque would normally take place – in the ‘court sphere’.⁴³ This resonates with

⁴³ For the idea of ‘spheres’ and the masque-in-performance see Jerzy Limon, *The Masque of Stuart Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), pp. 56-74; Jerzy Limon, ‘The Masque of Stuart Culture’, in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 209-29.

Jerzy Limon's discussion of masques as 'a theatrical transmutation of emblem books that "come to life" during the performance'.⁴⁴

Remembering masquing conventions a viewer might have found himself or herself looking at the performers from the central position reserved for the monarch (whose divine powers had, perhaps, triggered the spectacle). More characters could, in the imagination, emerge from the 'metaphysical sphere', or members of the visiting party might (as masquers) join the Cavendishes in the performance space. Thus every person reading the pictures would be, in a sense, masquing – participating in a live performance. The distinction between monarch, audience, performers and painted figures would become blurred, as would the distinction between the real room, the imagined masquing house, the imagined dramatic setting below the temple, and the other painted locations.⁴⁵

This is reminiscent of masques and cycles of festive entertainments of the 1610s where the boundaries between the masquing and real worlds, and between present time and the classical and chivalric past, were blurred. There were notable examples in the extended celebrations for Princess Elizabeth's wedding of February 1613. Jerzy Limon notes of *The Masque of the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* by Francis Beaumont: 'The boundaries between the fictitious world on stage and empirical reality are lost completely. James's court is the Mount Olympus of knighthood'.⁴⁶

The 'tableau' of *Sanguine* might have been a fully enacted, multi-sensory performance, or simply a visual quip. Perhaps it could have been realized either way, depending on the occasion. The conceit depended only on noticing the connection to the decoration when the host was standing in a particular position, although here (as in the Heaven Closet to which I will return below) music (perhaps also real fruit and real floral scents derived from the print) would have made the association more obvious.

Thus the temple painting functioned as an amuse-bouche to prompt the viewer to look carefully at the rest of the decoration. The effect would have been to sharpen the senses, to stimulate witty conversation, to encourage movement, and to set up a dynamic between real and imagined performers and audience. More scene changes could be expected, and the company might anticipate further allegorical messages, transformations, and multisensory experiences in this room

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 228.

⁴⁵ Limon, *The Masque*, p. 163.

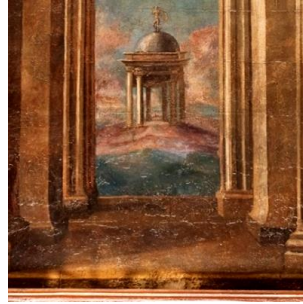
⁴⁶ Ibid.

and beyond. The interior of the whole of the Little Castle would be defined as a theatrical and poetic space, distinct from the world outside.

In her discussion of *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), performed in the Elizabethan Banqueting House at Whitehall, Alison Findlay has noted the high ‘information rate’ in purpose-built banqueting houses of the period. Typically, ‘they confront spectators with a much greater density of visual stimuli than other theatre spaces and non-performance venues, even in palaces. The wealth of visual decorations, full of colour, is intended to psychologically arouse inhabitants. They are designed to provide pleasure, stimulus, and excitement and to work in concert with the masque presented there to inspire awe.’⁴⁷ It thus seems likely that guests coming to the Little Castle for an entertainment which included banqueting and dramatic performances might have expected prominent and complicated decorations – these would be understood as enrichments relating to the event.

If we revisit the experience of discovering the Ante Room we can see that the imagined entry into the temple in the sky came at the end of a staggered ascent: by the steep road from the Doe Lea valley to the terrace, by steps to the courtyard, and again by steps to the ground floor of the Little Castle. The sequence of spaces gradually narrowed: the open countryside was followed by the terrace, then the courtyard, the porch, and finally the constricted entrance lobby. The steps from the courtyard to the front door (which also described a truncated triangle like a Baroque stage) had a funneling effect and a group would have been compressed and brought into greater intimacy (a significant occurrence in the context of rituals of precedence), before entering the Ante Room.

⁴⁷ Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women’s Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 122-23. Bruce R. Smith similarly discusses stage curtains and hangings, and their role as a medium rather than a barrier: ‘The curtain at the Curtain invites us to imagine a visual matrix alive with motion out of which figures emerge with quickness and volubility, before they are fixed for contemplation by our understanding. Hangings in Renaissance theatre provided a constantly present focal point for curiosity, expectation, desire, passion’. Bruce R. Smith, *The Key of Green* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 232-47 (pp. 243, 247).



Figs 33, 34, 35 A view of the west façade of the Little Castle, a detail of the temple and a group of visitors entering the building. The steps have a foreshortening effect that echoes the temple painting. (Crosby Stevens)

We might say that the perspectival effect of rising and narrowing extended from the real world into the painting. Both the steps to the front door and the stage of the temple painting could be understood as channels into new, intriguing spaces. Thus a group of revelers entering the castle may have been surprised to discover the classical painting in the Ante Room, around the corner, but we can assume it would have made perfect sense to them in the context of a masque-related, journeying entertainment, a continuation of their performative twisting passage upward and inward.

We may gain insight into how the Ante Room was used from a fanciful account of the royal visit (dedicated to Cavendish's brother Charles) written in 1634 by John Westwood.⁴⁸ Taking the form of a Latin poem the *Royal Journey Ode* borrows both classical and medieval motifs. It may conflate events at Welbeck and Bolsover in describing the procession of the king: his arrival at the great house, his movement through the building, and finally, after various entertainments, his

⁴⁸ Charles Cavendish (1594-1654), the noted mathematician, was knighted by King James at Welbeck in 1619. His title is omitted in this paper, to avoid confusion with his father.

departure.⁴⁹ The moment of entry is suggestive for the Ante Room at Bolsover. This consists of two phases – the King first pauses in something like a courtyard, atrium, or portico, welcomed by an anthropomorphized building, before penetrating deeper to be greeted by his subjects:

Bestowing thanks upon the Lord, he [the King] takes possession of his house. He enters and observes a while; looks on the columns, steps through the portals. Standing high he plants his steps with tranquil gait. Lo, the doors, the pavements, the windows genially welcome him (how pleased they would be to know his gaze!). Joyful sights captivate the approaching king.

Now the terror-sounding trumpet cuts the breeze with its clangour, publicly proclaiming that he whom their vows desire is come. Thus finally he enters the house prepared for him. He ascends the stairs; gold shines out from the gleaming lamps above; the floors swell with carpets, and roundabout the wall provides dark shadow with its painted carving. [...] Here is the king, here his throne, here everything replete with majesty; nor are delights lacking to move his manly sensibilities: fragrances, music – what is lacking to please, what to glorify so great a king?

[...] Who in speech or song could do justice to such greatness? It must be celebrated by a brand new buskin. Therefore may people of talent be thine, O lord, and may thou grow old slowly. May the queen, consort of thy couch, be more fruitful than any wife; may thou also be ever rich in long-lived heirs. Thus may such royal progeny be rightly called dear offspring of the gods, descendants of Jove himself. Long live the King!

(Royal Journey Ode)

I suggest that the Ante Room functioned as a space to steady the pace of entry into the Little Castle.⁵⁰ It offered a moment of initiation, transition and delight as the exploration of the building began, providing one of a series of locations to pause and ‘observe a while’ during an ascent. We might compare this with the practice of moving through and ‘reading’ gardens, including contrived stops and multisensory delights.⁵¹ The visual attractions on offer in the building would have included puzzling paintings, curious interiors, and increasingly dramatic views of the countryside,

⁴⁹ Timothy Raylor and Jackson Bryce, ‘A Manuscript Poem on the Royal Progress of 1634: An Edition and Translation of John Westwood’s “Carmen Basileuporion”’, *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 173-95.

⁵⁰ Simon Jervis has suggested a similarity between the Ante Room and a loggia, pointing to the vaulting, the rhythm of the lunettes, and the large windows that look onto the courtyard. Jervis, ‘Bolsover Castle’, p. 11.

⁵¹ For the reading of symbolism in gardens, and habits of walking and pausing, see Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces*, pp. 66-8.

culminating in a spectacular vista from the flat roof. (The view extends fifteen kilometers to the north and west, one of the most impressive prospects in the Midlands.)⁵² The importance of visual pleasures in banqueting has been noted by Jennifer Stead: ‘After a rich and heavy meal in the main house, diners would no longer be hungry, and so the nature of the banquet was not to satisfy the stomach, but to delight the eye. The banquet and banqueting house were designed to titillate and refresh. [...] Enchanting settings which distanced guests from the ordinary and familiar and gave them a newly awakened sense of self-awareness could be found also in purpose-built grottoes, water houses, fishing lodges, hunting lodges, towers, pavilions and belvederes: the more fanciful the better.’⁵³

As visitors turned from the temple painting to the remaining three pictures in the room they would undoubtedly have realized that these were based on a well-known series by Maarten de Vos, but that the images had been altered. *Melancholic* in particular had been extensively changed. It seems likely that it was an amusing challenge to notice and interpret the adaptations, and the resulting game provided an opportunity for a shared display of wit and learning. Cavendish and his circle would have known the answers, and they would undoubtedly have been called on to verify guesses. This was part of the concept. Explaining the allusions and guiding others to unpack them little by little, revealing the sudden surprises and unexpected connections, would have reflected well on the family, boosting their charisma as hosts. As guests were enlightened they would join the ranks of an initiated Cavendish set. I will argue below that they would find themselves equipped to appreciate a growing set of in-jokes, and an expanding body of related dramatic texts.

As I will show, many of the altered details in the Ante Room paintings added allusions to Cavendish and his wife. Thus the couple might have appeared to be present both in person, and in multiple roles in their painted ‘metaphysical sphere’. The fictional figures were frozen in action and two-dimensional, viewed from the ground without sound, taste, smell or feeling, although being coloured and life-size they appeared more alive than their counterparts in the small black and white prints. Prompted by the conceit of the missing print of *Sanguine*, there was a distinct possibility that they could continue their partial transformation and become completely real. Thus any of the painted characters in the Ante Room might swell and descend, appearing in the flesh in the room. Indeed, several versions of Cavendish and his wife could step down all at once. Likewise, the real couple might notionally incorporate all the characteristics of the figures on the walls.

⁵² Williamson, ‘Bolsover Castle’, pp. 5-10.

⁵³ Jennifer Stead, ‘Bowers of Bliss: The Banquet Setting’ in *‘Banqueting Stuffe’: The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet*, ed. by C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 120.

This was the central premise of *Love's Welcome*: the characters in the paintings in various rooms in the Little Castle that represented members of the Cavendish family (and possibly Jonson as well, as we will see) had the potential to come to life in a dramatic performance, singly or in combination. Watching this actually happen in the building extended the notion of a tableau that was established in this first room. The conceit was novel and amusing, and I propose that Cavendish and his daughters continued to play with Jonson's idea in their own writing, after the royal visit. I will discuss this further below.

Turning clockwise from the temple painting to *Phlegmatic* we can see that a fisherman's rope has been added in the bottom right corner of the picture. This takes the shape of a horizontal, nowed snake (the heraldic knotted snake), a distinctive Cavendish emblem. Thus the fisherman might be associated with the Cavendish family.



Figs 36, 37, 38 Two details of the painting of *Phlegmatic* compared with the print source, showing the added rope.



Fig.39 View of the tomb of Sir Charles Cavendish and Katherine, Lady Ogle showing the Cavendish nowed snake on the central plaque (Crosby Stevens)

We might notice, too that on the left side of the painting, the fisherman's oar has been changed to a club. We can assume this referenced Hercules, whose association with Cavendish has been explored by Raylor.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Raylor, "Pleasure Reconciled", pp. 404-5, 410-15, 418, 421.



Figs 40, 41, 42, 43 Two details of the oar in the print source of *Phlegmatic* compared with the painting

As we have seen visitors entering the Little Castle had first encountered Hercules as a statue on the west façade. There he had appeared to be carrying the balcony like the globe of Atlas, and his

hands supported a shield bearing the Cavendish arms (Figure 33).⁵⁵ Both the balcony and the statue were insertions, probably part of Cavendish's decorating programme of c. 1619-21, and so it is likely that they were part of the same iconographic invention as the paintings. We can assume that the viewer was expected to make a connection between the statue outside and the painted club in the first room.



Fig. 44 The statue of Hercules bearing the arms of Sir Charles Cavendish, over the front door to the Little Castle (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

On one level Hercules was a conventional symbol of fortitude, trumpeting the virtues of the host. (Raylor has shown how if the king were to stand on the balcony he would complete a scene showing the Cavendish family upholding the monarchy.)⁵⁶ However, the appearance of the club in the Ante Room signalled a parallel, more playful allusion. The club is phallic: it is placed above the oysters and the knife of the fishwife, which were added to the painting from the source print, and its erect angle echoes the fisherman's shuttle, the anchor, and the fishing gaff. It might be

⁵⁵ The statues of Hercules now in position under the Marble and Elysium Closet balconies are replicas commissioned by English Heritage. Worsley had suggested the design of the statue of the west façade was based on a detail in a ceiling in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, known in England through a drawing: Worsley, 'Architectural Patronage' (2006), p. 50; for *An Allegory with Hercules Carrying the Globe*, copied by Francesco Albini from the original by Annibale Caracci see Worsley, *Bolsover Castle*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ Raylor, "Pleasure Reconciled", pp. 404-5.

remembered that Hercules was said to have slept with the fifty daughters of Thespius in one night. Crucial to the story, he left them all pregnant. Hercules had a heroic sexual appetite and he was prodigious in his ability to father children.⁵⁷ The Heracleidae or descendants of Hercules were legion. Thus the club and his strong back were symbols of his virtue and endurance, but also of his potency. Visitors conversant with contemporary theatre (or who knew the 1616 Folio of Jonson's works) might have recalled the passage from *The Alchemist* of 1610 where Mammon says:

For I do mean
To have a list of wives and concubines
Equal with Solomon, who had the stone
Alike with me. And I will make me a back
With the elixir that shall be as tough
As Hercules', to encounter fifty a night.
(II. 2. 34-8)⁵⁸

I will indicate below that the theme of gold runs through the iconography in the Little Castle, and there are repeated echoes of *The Alchemist*.

The heraldic arms that Hercules supported were those of Sir Charles, not of Cavendish himself as might have been expected after his father's death in 1617. If Cavendish rather than the King stood on the balcony he would have appeared to be supported by his late, virtuous and potent father. The strong back of Sir Charles had, then, ensured his conception, just as his own would ensure the conception of Sir Charles' grandchildren. Thus it might be noticed that in *Phlegmatic* Cavendish was translated to the fisherman and the libidinous mythical hero, but, with the nowed snake, both characters might reference father *and* son.

The statue of Hercules is one link in a chain of references to Sir Charles and his sons that begins with the tomb of Sir Charles in the Bolsover parish church. Family and guests travelling down the main street of Bolsover village (which continued straight to Bolsover Castle, leading to the main gate, the terrace and then the Little Castle) would have passed close by the parish church. The private chapel that was added to accommodate the tomb of Sir Charles was embellished with the

⁵⁷ See, for example, Borachio's speech in *Much Ado About Nothing* III.3.131-2: 'like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club'.

⁵⁸ *The Alchemist*, ed. by Peter Holland and William Sherman, *CWBJ*, III, pp. 543-710.

Cavendish motto ‘cavendo tutus’ on the crenulated roof, facing the street. This and the tomb inscriptions inside served as a prelude to the iconography of the castle. They included a list of the virtues that had made Sir Charles happy (presented in the form of a mathematical table), together with an epitaph and a prose note by Jonson.⁵⁹



Fig. 45 The Cavendish chapel at the church of St Mary and St Laurence, Bolsover (Crosby Stevens)

⁵⁹ Graham Parry, ‘Cavendish Memorials’, *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), pp. 275-87; *Charles Cavendish to his Posterity*, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, V, p. 350.



Fig. 46 The upper section of the tomb of Sir Charles Cavendish showing the three plaques that carry Jonson's epitaph (Crosby Stevens)

The duality in the figure of Hercules (implying the constant presence of Sir Charles) may have been developed further in the Hall, the next room on the linear route after the Ante Room. Hercules and Vulcan were mythical half-brothers. If Hercules was being associated with Cavendish, then a depiction of these gods on either side of the chimneypiece would most obviously have referenced him and his younger brother Charles, to whom he was exceptionally close.⁶⁰ However, it may well also have been remembered that the date of 'ANO 1616', carved, as if by Vulcan, on the hood, was the date of the deaths of both Henry Cavendish (1550-1616), Sir Charles' eldest brother, and Gilbert, 7th Earl of Shrewsbury (1552-1616), their step-brother and brother-in-law. The three men of this older generation had lived in close proximity, and Gilbert and Sir Charles were inseparable.⁶¹ Thus Vulcan and Hercules could have alluded to several pairs of brothers, brothers-in-law, and step-brothers in the family, all at the same time, with Hercules and Vulcan as roles for any pair of them. I suggest this ambiguity was intentional.

⁶⁰ Charles Cavendish (1594-1654) was knighted when James I visited Welbeck in 1619, but he is referenced here throughout without his title, to avoid confusion with his father.

⁶¹ For the relationship between Sir Charles and Gilbert Talbot see Lynn Hulse, 'Apollo's Whirligig: William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle and his Music Collection', *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 213-46 (p. 216).



Fig. 47 Detail of *Vulcan* in the Hall, looking towards the date 'ANO 1616' (English Heritage)

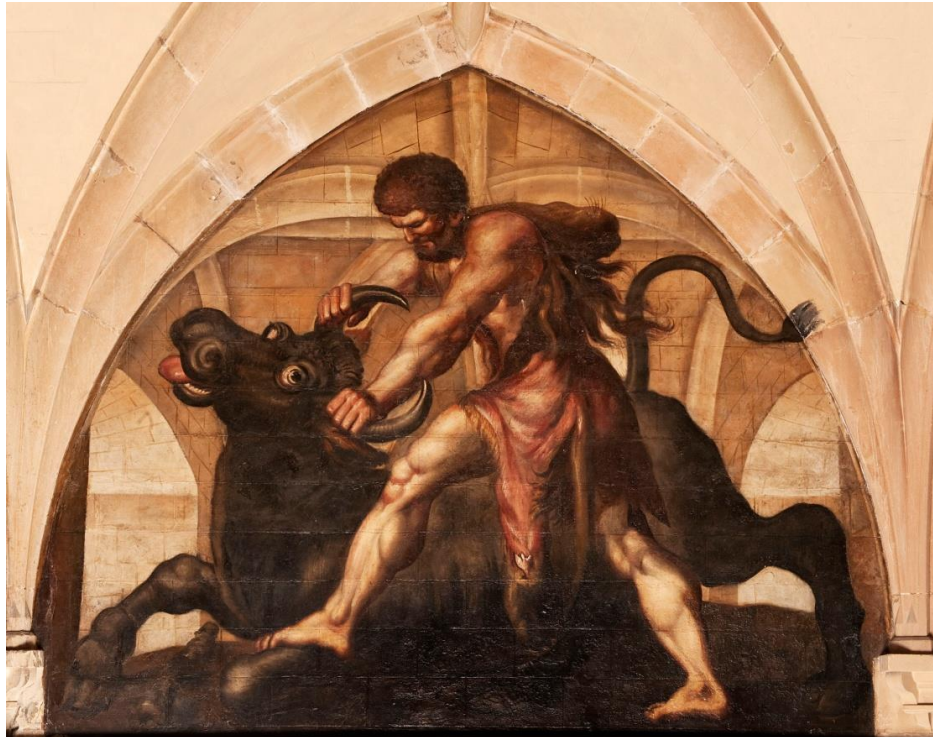
The four labours of Hercules that were chosen for the decoration in the Hall spelled the acronym **CVEND**. Viewed in clockwise order, and excluding Hercules himself, the paintings showed the Cretan Bull, **V**ulcan, the **E**rymanthian Boar, the **N**emean Lion, and the Mare of **D**iomedes. This underscored the Cavendish identities of Vulcan and Hercules by gesturing to the Cavendish motto 'cavendo tutus': 'safety through caution' or 'safe by taking heed'.



Fig. 48 View of the Hall (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Fig. 49 View towards the painting of *Hercules and the Mare of Diomedes* in the Hall, showing the trompe l'oeil effect of the fictive vaulting (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Figs 50, 51 *Hercules and the Cretan Bull* (English Heritage) compared with the print source from the series of etchings of *The Labours of Hercules*, 1608, by Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)⁶²

⁶²<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-52.355>

<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en>

(Accessed 19 May 2016).



Fig. 52 *Vulcan and Hercules* (English Heritage)



Figs 53, 54 *Hercules and the Erythmanthian Boar* (English Heritage), compared with the print source from the series of etchings of *The Labours of Hercules*, 1608, by Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630) (© The Trustees of the British Museum, London)⁶³

⁶³http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1495421&partId=1&searchText=Tempesta+The+labours+of+Hercules&page=1
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> (Accessed 19 May 2016).



Figs 55, 56 *Hercules and the Nemean Lion* (English Heritage), compared with the print source from the series of etchings of *The Labours of Hercules*, 1608, by Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)⁶⁴

⁶⁴<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objects?p=12&ps=12&maker=Simon+Frisius&ii=10#/RP-P-1882-A-6103,141> <http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016).



Figs 57, 58 *Hercules and the Mare of Diomedes* (English Heritage), compared with the print source from the series of etchings of *The Labours of Hercules*, 1608, by Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)⁶⁵

⁶⁵<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-1882-A-6111&ii=0&p=1>
<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

The Cavendish motto would have fitted neatly with the themes of moral peril and the journey to wisdom in the story of Hercules. Perhaps Cavendish's guests at a tempting sensual banquet would be morally safe if they took heed of the messages in the paintings: at Bolsover, William and his male relatives could, like Hercules, stand as patterns and protectors in this place of pleasure.

There may be a parallel reference to the Cavendish motto in Jonson's *The New Inn* (1629): Lovel defines love in opposition to appetite that is 'degenerous' (meaning fallen from an ancestral state of excellence, or unworthy of one's ancestors) (III.2.166), and he says soon after, 'though for a while we may / Be both kept safe by caution, yet the conscience / Cannot be cleansed' (*The New Inn* III.2.190-93).⁶⁶ I will suggest below that the association between the Cavendish family and the debate between Lovel and Beaufort over the merits of earthly and spiritual love could have roots in the Bolsover decoration.

Just as the dominant painted shadow from the window in the Ante Room set up an illusion that the stage was located in that room, in present time, so Hercules (either a living or a deceased Cavendish) might seem to be fighting real beasts inside the castle. Paint analysis by Paine has shown that originally the tails of the Nemean lion and the Cretan bull were continued onto the stone vaulting (beyond the frames of the plaster lunettes), swishing out of the pictures and into the mortal world (Figures 50 and 55).⁶⁷ The fictive vaulting which replaces the backgrounds in the source prints adds to the illusion. Thus multiple Cavendishes might be in and out of their humours in the Ante Room, and in and out of the myth of Hercules in the Hall. They were present at the interface between the real and the metaphysical worlds. Perhaps, if a theatrical allusion was sustained, they were acting their part at the front of the stage.

Returning to the Ante Room, we can see that a red sash was added to the costume of the foot soldier in the print of *Cholerick*. This could have denoted the ribbon of the Order of the Bath, an honour Cavendish received in 1610 at the investiture of Prince Henry.⁶⁸ Thus the soldier might be recognized as another role for Cavendish.

⁶⁶ *The New Inn*, ed. by Julie Sanders, *CWBJ*, VI, pp. 167-313 (pp. 260, 261).

⁶⁷ Paine, 'The Little Castle', p. 30.

⁶⁸ I am grateful to James Knowles for the suggestion that the sash could refer to Cavendish's ribbon, and to Steven Shapin for noting the similarity to the fabric over the globe in *Melancholic*.



Figs 59, 60 *Choleric* compared with the print source



Fig. 61 *William Cavendish* by Anthony van Dyck (late 1630s) showing the red ribbon of the Order of the Bath (From the Collection at Althorp)

Other changes to the prints in the Ante Room referenced features and natural resources of the region, and so gestured towards places where Cavendish belonged, or places that belonged to Cavendish. There was undoubtedly an element of posturing here. Little is known of who attended entertainments at Bolsover before the royal visit of 1634, but it is safe to assume that the intended

guests included Cavendish's clients, political patrons and extended family: people who shared local identities and alliances, but who had nonetheless been party to myriad rivalries and territorial disputes over several generations.⁶⁹ There was a network of highly literate families in the Midlands, and, for example, the various branches of the Markham and Clifton families were well known to the Cavendishes and Talbots.⁷⁰



Figs 62, 63 Detail of the fish in *Phlegmatic*, compared with the print source

In *Phlegmatic* three alterations were topographical. First, the fish were made to look less exotic. Together with the wide river added to *Cholerick* I suggest they alluded to the great waterways that ran through the Cavendish and Talbot estates, including the Derwent, Idle and Trent. The family's identification with the Trent had been underscored by Arbella Stuart's role as that river in Samuel Daniel's *Tethys' Festival* of 1610. We can find an example of the importance of fish (used as both a status symbol and a token of friendship within the local patronage network) in a message from

⁶⁹ Sanders, *Cultural Geography*, p. 91: 'An extravagant list of fish and fowl consumed at Bolsover in 1634 has been identified among the papers of another Midlands magnate thought to be the author of manuscript drama in this decade, John Newdigate III, and this contributes further to the notion of the early modern cultural networking being reconfigured in *The Sad Shepherd*: of people in a locality receiving each other's hospitality, watching each other's entertainments and seeking to emulate and even outdo them. That, in turn, gives a competitive edge to the preparations for Robin's feasting of his 'friends' in this play'. Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, pp. 150-51 suggests there was competition through dining between Cavendish and Christian, Countess of Devonshire. Worsley, 'Building a Family' argues that Bolsover was used primarily by Cavendish's argumentative family.

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Cultural Geography*, pp. 101-17; Ben Jonson's *Walk to Scotland: An Annotated Edition of the 'Foot Voyage'*, ed. by James Loxley, Anna Groundwater and Julie Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 47- 59.

Gervase Markham to the Earl of Shrewsbury announcing a gift of a pike taken from the River Trent and boiled by the fish cook of Prince Henry.⁷¹

Second, there was a change to the long fish on the table, transformed into a utilitarian knife. Simple working knives were typical of locally-produced artefacts.⁷² This alteration is likely to have referenced the knife-grinding and metalworking industries for which Derbyshire and Sheffield were famous, and the associated reserves of ironstone, gritstone and coal on the Cavendish estates. These holdings were clearly of practical and financial value to the family, but they were also important assets within social networks. For example, Anne, Countess of Arundel corresponded with Gilbert Talbot about leases on his ironstone workings.⁷³

Third, the wall, added on the left in the painting of *Phlegmatic*, could have been a reminder of the plentiful building stone in Derbyshire, and the ambitious architectural projects of Cavendish and his family.⁷⁴ Hardwick Hall, the most celebrated of their houses, faced Bolsover Castle across the Doe Lea Valley. Local decorative minerals were particularly prized and they were proudly displayed in the Little Castle chimneypieces.

⁷¹ London, Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers, [n.d.], [n.p.], MS 3203, fol. 335.

⁷² I am grateful to Dorian Church for examples from the cutlery collections of Sheffield Museums.

⁷³ Talbot Papers, [n.d.], [n.p.], MS 3205, fol. 133.

⁷⁴ For the mineral supplies on Cavendish's estates see, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, pp. 91-95; David N. Durant, *The Smythson Circle: The Story of Six Great English Houses* (London: Peter Owen, 2011), pp. 173-76. Worsley argues that there was competitive building in the region in this period, which included copying borrowed classical sources: Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2006), p. 47.



Figs 64, 65 The chimneypiece in the principal bedchamber on the first floor, and a detail of the chimneypiece in the best bedchamber on the second floor (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

The painted wall in *Phlegmatic* is a dominating addition.⁷⁵ If we read the grooves on the right edge of the adjacent temple painting as tracks on a stage, then this heavy wall could resemble sliding theatrical scenery that has been transferred from one painting to the other (Figure 15). It fills approximately the same area in the composition as the pillars on the left of the temple painting.

⁷⁵ Originally the wall behind the fisherwoman appeared plainer. The pronounced pale grid pattern across the surface has been caused by damage from salts migrating through the paint layer where the plaster was incised and beaded to imitate masonry, before the paint was applied.

The fisherman and his wife would then appear to be acting on the left side of another stage, or perhaps on the same stage in a new scene, viewed close-up. It would follow that *Choleric* and *Melancholic* might also depict actors on a stage. There might then be a nod to stock dramatic roles.



Figs 66, 67 *Phlegmatic* with a detail of the wall, showing the plain painted masonry and the pale lines of damage from migrated salts



Figs 68, 69 The background scene in *Choleric* compared with the print source

In *Choleric*, a peaceful pastoral scene has been introduced to replace the original ravaged landscape. Woodland was another defining feature of the Midlands. Cavendish and his family owned extensive wooded estates in Nottinghamshire, especially near Welbeck. There was considerable prestige in the attendant game, hunting rights, and offices they enjoyed, including responsibilities for the royal forest.⁷⁶



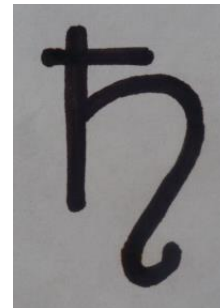
Fig. 70 View of the Ante Room towards *Melancholic* (Crosby Stevens)

⁷⁶ *A Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, ed. by James Knowles, *CWBJ*, V, pp. 401-15 (p. 405); Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, pp. 168-69.



Figs 71, 72 *Melancholic* compared with the print source

Melancholic, the fourth painting in the Ante Room, was the most radically altered from its source print. It, too, could now reference the region. If we look closely at the celestial globe we can see that the whiskers of Pisces and the horns of Taurus have been arranged to create the alchemical symbol for lead: the scythe of Saturn. I suggest that this pointed to the standard association between melancholy and lead, and so to the mining interests of the interlinked Cavendish, Talbot and Mannors families.⁷⁷ Bess of Hardwick, Cavendish's grandmother, had made a fortune from lead in the Peak District; and as executor of the will of Gilbert Talbot (at the time the paintings were probably planned and executed) Cavendish, too, had control of several lucrative lead-producing manors.⁷⁸



⁷⁷ Andy Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country 1520-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 35, 58, 207-12.

⁷⁸ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, pp. 59-60 describes the responsibilities of Shrewsbury's bailiff Richard Richardson: 'He hath the impost for wines and the weighing of the lead. In this place is the greatest trade of lead in Christendom or the world. It is brought hither by wains; [...] These are conveyed by catches to Stockwith, and there taken into keels, and so carried to Hull and all places. The wains that brings these to Bawtry carries all other commodities back into Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire'.



Figs 73, 74, 75, 76 Details of the globe in *Melancholic* and the symbol for lead



Figs 77, 78 Details of *Melancholic* showing the added chest

Further, a chest of gold and jewels was added to the left of the painting as a pendant to the celestial globe on the right.⁷⁹ The two metals, lead and gold, might represent earth in the series of the

⁷⁹ There are small deposits of gold and silver in Derbyshire, and there were rumours of rich sources on Talbot land. A letter from William Wingfield to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 15 April 1600, noted that he had secured samples of various ores found on the Earl's local estates which were supposed to contain gold or silver, and he had sent Richard Brown, Bailiff of Barlow, to enquire of Robert Eyre the whereabouts of the 'golden hill', though Eyre denied knowledge of such a place: Talbot Papers, MS 3201, Fol. 5. Anne, Countess of Arundel wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury saying that she did not marvel that gold was procured from coal and stone only with great difficulty: Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers, MS 3205, [n.d.] [n.p.] Fol. 131.

elements. Earth was a pair to heaven, appropriate to the position of *Melancholic* opposite the temple painting. More mischievously the addition of lead and gold to the source print could have triggered the thought that the Cavendish family, like alchemists, had turned lead to gold. This quip unlocks the meanings in the rest of the changes to the print, and it is central to the iconographic programme through the rest of the building: I will argue that the painting alludes to both alchemy and the miraculous conception of Jesus, amusing and poetic ways of exploring the transformation and promise of Cavendish succession.

The theme of succession would have been of personal significance to Cavendish following his own succession to his father's estates in 1617, and his marriage soon after.⁸⁰ It would also have struck a chord in a period in which he and his wife Elizabeth were experiencing disappointments in producing an heir. I suggest *Melancholic* explores the miracle of generation, and the intention was to encourage Cavendish and his young, fertile wife to keep producing male children, in spite of repeated losses.

Elizabeth had given birth to two sons during her previous marriage to Henry Howard, a younger son of the 1st Earl of Suffolk. Their first baby, James, died in December 1614, aged two months.⁸¹ Their second, unnamed, was still-born. A daughter, Catherine, was born in 1616, soon after her father's death. She came to live at Welbeck, and lived to adulthood.⁸²

Elizabeth's first child by Cavendish was another boy, probably named Charles. He died in April 1620. Their second child was Jane (later Lady Jane Cheyne), probably born in 1621.⁸³ A third Cavendish child, a boy named William, was probably born in 1623. He died in 1626.⁸⁴ The next baby, a second Charles, was Elizabeth's fifth son (her third by Cavendish). He was born around the time his brother died, and he became the first boy to survive to adulthood. Another daughter appeared a year later in 1627: Elizabeth (later Countess of Bridgewater). After her, in 1628 or

⁸⁰ The date of Cavendish's marriage is disputed. Worsley, 'Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, p. 127 suggests a date after June 1618. The Foot Voyage account shows Cavendish and Elizabeth were married by 30 July 1618 when Jonson came to Welbeck. Thus he probably found them newly-wed.

⁸¹ Laura Houliston, *The Suffolk Collection: A Catalogue of Paintings* (English Heritage, 2012), pp. 156-59.

⁸² An elaborate tomb sculpture in the parish church of St Bartholomew at Blore commemorates Elizabeth's parents, her first husband Henry Howard, and her first two sons, with an inscription written by Cavendish. The tomb includes statues of Elizabeth and possibly her eldest daughter Catherine. David and Martine Swinscoe, *Swinscoe, Blore and the Bassets of Blore* (Staffordshire: Churnet Valley Books, 1997), pp. 11-14, 24-25.

⁸³ Lady Jane Cheyne's tomb in Chelsea Old Church, London, states that she died on 8 October 1669 aged forty-eight.

⁸⁴ For the uncertainties over the birth dates of the first two Cavendish boys see Knowles, *Cavendish Christening*, pp. 401-3.

1629, came a second child named William, who died in 1633.⁸⁵ Next, the Cavendishes' fifth son (Elizabeth's seventh), was born in 1630. He was Henry (later 2nd Duke of Newcastle). Henry's twin sister Frances, lived; but Elizabeth's last child, Katherine, died young. Thus Elizabeth had at least twelve children, of whom four girls and two boys survived infancy. There were plenty of pregnancies, but the paucity of healthy boys may well have caused anxiety over many years.

The pictures in the Little Castle (apart from three in the Marble Closet which, as I will discuss below, were probably added later) have been provisionally dated to between 1619, based on the date painted above the window in the Heaven Closet, and 1621, based on the date painted on the tablet of Moses in the Star Chamber. (Stylistic evidence and the costume would confirm these approximate dates are plausible.)⁸⁶ It therefore seems probable that the first ill-fated Cavendish boy, Charles, was conceived, in utero, born, and died while the decoration was being planned and executed. The hope and loss associated with that birth could have informed the iconography.

I suggest the female figure in *Melancholic* may be a portrait of Elizabeth. The name 'William' is written in her book, revealing that the figure is to be understood as Cavendish's wife, faithful to her husband and lover.



Fig. 79 Detail of *Melancholic* showing the name 'William' inscribed in the book

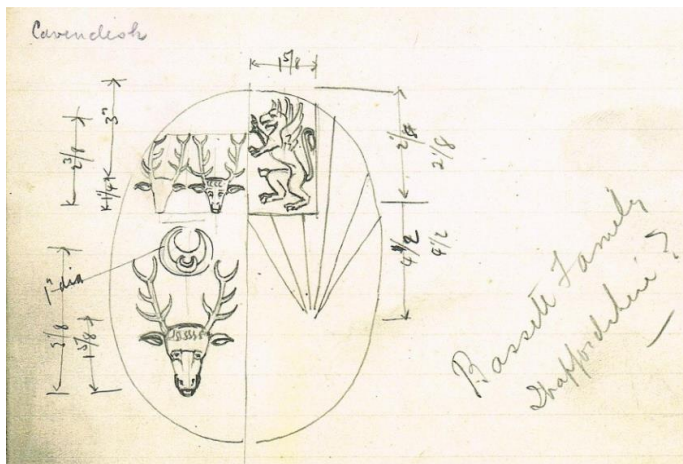
⁸⁵ For the two children named William who died at about the same age see William Sampson, *Virtus post funera vivit or, Honour triumphing over death Being true epitomes of honorable, noble, learned, and hospitable personages* (London: John Norton, 1636), p. 27.

⁸⁶ Maria Hayward, 'Clothing at Bolsover Little Castle' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013), p. 1.

This is supported by a correspondence with the female figure in *Visus*, a painting on panel in the Pillar Parlour. Here the lady is seated on a chair decorated with a carving of a griffin, suggesting that she, too, represents Cavendish's wife. A griffin device featured in the Bassett coat of arms, carved on the chimney piece opposite the painting. The inclusion of the Bassett motto 'E:D'AVOYR' for 'En Esperance d'Avoir': 'hope to have', beside 'cavendo tutus' could have made a witty gesture to their mutual desire for heirs.⁸⁷



Figs 80, 81 Details of *Visus* showing the carving of a griffin on the chair



Figs 82, 83 Details of a drawing in *Measuring Book* (1899) showing the coat of arms of William Cavendish and his wife, carved on the chimney piece in the Pillar Parlour (Crosby Stevens)

⁸⁷ The sculpture is now damaged, but the text is recorded in a manuscript notebook, held in the English Heritage collections, inscribed 'Measuring Book, FWCG, July 8th, 1899'.

Like *Melancholic*, *Visus* is the picture in its series most extensively changed from the print source, inviting attention. There are similarities between the faces of the ladies, and there is some correspondence with Daniel Mytens' portrait of Elizabeth of 1624.⁸⁸



Figs 84, 85, 86 The faces of the ladies in *Melancholic* and *Visus*, compared with the face of Elizabeth Cavendish in a detail from a portrait by Daniel Mytens of 1624 (Privately owned)

The extravagant costume of the lady in *Visus*, which includes a feather headdress, cloth of gold, a generous train, antique sandals and a band below bare breasts, is reminiscent of masquing dress.⁸⁹ It is not known whether Elizabeth danced in a masque, or owned masquing costume, but she was certainly familiar with court entertainments. She had lived in London as a child (her mother owned a house in St Lawrence Lane), and the family of her first husband Henry Howard included eminent courtiers.⁹⁰ Elizabeth and Henry's first child was born in October 1614, as we have seen, and they were thus probably married around the time of the marriage of Henry's sister Frances to the King's favourite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, on 26 December 1613. Henry had performed in Jonson's *A Challenge at Tilt* as part of the lavish celebrations.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Houliston, *The Suffolk Collection*, p. 158. See *ibid.*, pp. 156-57 for William Larkin's portrait of Elizabeth Howard, née Bassett, c.1614-18

⁸⁹ For eroticism and bare breasts in the costume of female masquers see Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 125-166; Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 172-73.

⁹⁰ Swinscoe, *Swinscoe*, p. 171.

⁹¹ Houliston, *The Suffolk Collection*, pp. 156-59; David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 123-44; *A Challenge at Tilt*, ed. by David Lindley, *CWBJ*, IV, pp. 227-38; Martin Butler, 'Masquers and Tilters', *CWBJ*, I, pp. cxliv-cl, clix-clx.

Elizabeth attended the visit to Cambridge by King James and Prince Charles in March 1614, for which a grand entry and a series of feasts and plays were hosted by her father-in-law Thomas Howard, 1st Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Treasurer. The ‘great port and magnificent table’ he kept were rumoured to cost £1000 a day, excluding presents. According to John Chamberlain there were few ladies ‘but of the Howards or that alliance, as the Countess of Arundel, with her sister the Lady Elizabeth Grey; the Countess of Suffolk, with her daughters of Salisbury and Somerset; the Lady Walden and Henry Howard’s wife’.⁹² Henry appeared in the Accession Day tilt on 25th March, later the same month, alongside the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke and it is likely that Elizabeth was once again present.⁹³ Thus, though young, she would have been intimate with the Howard family (including her future husband’s relations, the daughters of Gilbert Talbot and their spouses) in the period when the Howard circle was at its most powerful at court.⁹⁴ We might wonder whether her first-hand knowledge of extravagant aristocratic and royal entertainments, and the great houses of the extended Howard ‘alliance’, informed plans for the use of Bolsover and its related furnishing and decoration.

Returning to the painting of *Visus* it may be no accident that the cloth of the lady’s gown falls into the shape of a large book, pointing to a connection with the book in *Melancholic*, and, perhaps, to literary texts and knowledge more generally. If we compare the painted image with the print of *Visus* we can see that in the painting the gown takes up more of the picture space. It, and the lady’s breasts, are the focus of the composition. She may be pregnant. Her swollen belly and full (perhaps engorged) breasts echo the pomegranate design in the cloth of her gown, and the waisted profile of the ewer beside her. Likewise, the contours of the gold chains that spill down and onto the dish under the ewer describe the same shape as the folds of her gown (and mimic the wings of the eagle). Strong reflections link her flesh to the cloth, and to the ewer and the treasure. We might think that the casket of jewels and the ewer could be a transposed version of her. (In *Melancholic* the open chest again echoes the shape of the seated woman: orientated in the same direction as her body.)

⁹² John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, 16 March, 1614, cited in John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*, 4 vols (1838), III, pp. 48-9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 76. Henry Howard’s success in fathering a child would have contrasted with the alleged impotency of the Earl of Essex. There had been reports in September 1613 of a proposed duel between the two men over insults to the Earl’s virility, *ibid.*, pp. 95, 119.

⁹⁴ Houliston, *The Suffolk Collection*, pp. 14-16, 156-59.



Fig. 87 *Visus* in the Pillar Parlour (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Fig. 88 *Visus* from the *Five Senses* (1561), engraving by Cornelis Cort (c. 1533-c. 1578) after Frans de Vriendt, called Floris (1517-1570) (National Gallery of Art, Washington)⁹⁵

⁹⁵https://images.nga.gov/?service=asset&action=show_zoom_window_popup&language=en&asset=50888&location=grid&asset_list=50888&basket_item_id=undefined
<https://images.nga.gov/en/page/openaccess.html> (Accessed 16 May 2016).

The elements added to the source print of *Visus* are redolent of Jonson's poetry of praise. If we 'read' the picture with a lexicon of Jonsonian imagery in mind we might say that we have, on the left, a metaphor: a heap of gold (including a Christian cross) that flows into a moulded, round-bodied vessel that will take in and pour out; and, on the right, the person whose soul, mind and virtue might be revealed and further shaped, and who is formed from, or has been transformed into, precious gold. We can infer that that the painting embodies compliments and advice for Elizabeth. It can be understood as a visual rendition of Jonson's concept of *imitatio*, described by Richard Peterson as, 'that process of judicious gathering in, assimilation and transformation or "turning" whereby a good writer, and by extension a good man, shapes an original or coherent work of art or a virtuous life'.⁹⁶ The idea of an inner essence or form that can be shaped and 'informed' was at base a Platonic concept, but one that Jonson made his own. The metaphors of malleable or liquid gold, flowing fullness, and the poet's power to sculpt an inner soul and make it 'stand', which Peterson shows embedded in the poems for Lady Venetia Digby, Lady Wroth, Lady Rutland and Sir William Uvedale, are strikingly apposite for *Visus*.⁹⁷

Uvedale, thou piece of the first times, a man
 Made for what nature could, or virtue can,
 Both whose dimensions, lost, the world might find
 Restored in thy body and thy mind!
 Who sees a soul in such a body set
 Might love the treasure for the cabinet.
 But I, no child, no fool, respect the kind,
 The full, the flowing graces there enshrined;
 Which (would the world not miscall't flattery)
 I could adore almost t'idolatory.
 (*Epigrams*, 125, 1-10)⁹⁸

We might also recall Hymen's speech in Jonson's *The Haddington Masque* of 1608: 'She... hath her dowry weighed / No less in virtue, blood, and form, than gold' (199-201). Connections with Jonson's poetry will be explored further below.

⁹⁶ Peterson, *Imitation*, p. xiv.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 52-73.

⁹⁸ *Epigrams*, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, V, pp. 103-98 (p. 185).

The coffer is the only object carried over from the series in the Ante Room to the series in the Pillar Parlour. The viewer is likely to have been reminded that Elizabeth was a great heiress. She had been courted by Henry Howard, then, after his death, the younger Walter Raleigh, and finally Cavendish (in competition with Christopher Villiers, brother of the Duke of Buckingham).⁹⁹ They had all pursued her for her fortune as much as for her person.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps Cavendish had realized an alchemical dream in securing such a financially advantageous marriage, and this was a matter for congratulations.

If a long dining table was set up parallel to the windows in the Pillar Parlour, then we might suppose that Elizabeth could have sat directly below this painting.¹⁰¹ Both she and the painted figure would be lit from the direction of the real windows in the room. The painting would become an extension, or poetic interpretation, of her. The conceit could be enjoyed by everyone at the table. She would appear golden – a living metaphor, and her transformation would be linked to pregnancy.¹⁰²

I will argue below that Cavendish can be identified with Jupiter in the iconography of the Elysium Closet. The eagle (which in the series of the senses normally represents acute vision) might also reference Jupiter in this context, and so represent Cavendish, husband to Elizabeth and father of the (presumably golden) baby in her womb.

With her mirror, Elizabeth might be elided with Venus. I will indicate below that there are allusions to Venus in *Melancholic*, and in three of the four cornice paintings in the Elysium Closet, as well as the ceiling there. I will argue that all of these representations of Venus reference Cavendish wives and mothers, and the goddesses are depicted as both alluring and chaste. The lady in *Visus* might likewise be presented as both a temptress (fitting for the topos of the banquet of sense) and a pattern of virtue. She might be a mixture of the two women who tempted Hercules in Xenophon. Viewed this way she could also be compared to Charis in Jonson's *A Celebration of Charis*

⁹⁹ Swinscoe, *Swinscoe*, pp. 175-6.

¹⁰⁰ Cavendish, *The Lives*, p. 72, 'My Lord's first Wife.... brought my Lord £2400 a year inheritance, between six and seven thousand pounds in money, and a jointure for her life of £800 a year'. See Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, p. 126 for Cavendish's dispute with the Howard family as he tried to reclaim her money.

¹⁰¹ This is the position suggested for a recreation of the room setting in Bowett, 'Furnishing Bolsover', pp. 19-20. The room is called the 'Lower Dining Room' in the inventory of c. 1676.

¹⁰² For the metaphor of a mirror and the concept of character see Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 11.

(composed between 1616 and 1623: Jonson recited the seventh lyric to Drummond in Scotland).¹⁰³ The duality of male and female figures representing both physical and spiritual love is central to the Elysium Closet scheme, as will be shown below. It also emerges as a common theme in dramatic works associated with Cavendish.



Fig. 89 View of the Pillar Parlour showing *Visus* opposite the chimneypiece (Crosby Stevens)

¹⁰³ Peterson has explored the contrast between pleasure and virtue in Jonson's *A Celebration of Charis* in Richard S. Peterson, 'Virtue Reconciled to Pleasure: Jonson's *A Celebration of Charis*', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 6 (1973), 219-68 (p. 256): 'But as this lady is compared to Minerva and then to Venus, it becomes clear that her lover is not a conventionally "amorous" Hercules any more than he is a conventionally "virtuous" one. Instead, I would suggest, he is a Hercules "at the crossroads", cast in the unfamiliar role of lover – or to put it another way, he is a lover who apparently finds himself miscast as the Hercules at the crossroads, presented with the rival paths of pleasure and virtue. Charis has something in common with each of the women who appear to Hercules in the original account in Xenophon: the demurely attractive *Arete* and the *Kakia* who, carefully made up and richly dressed, continually admires herself, and offers the satisfactions of the five senses culminating in sexual love'.

Returning to *Melancholic*, after the alterations to the source print the figure on the left was still an avaricious old man trying to seduce a reluctant young woman, but he was no longer a chapman.¹⁰⁴ He was dressed in contemporary professional costume with a quasi-clerical cap and a vestigial cowl so that he would be understood to be an astronomer or an alchemist. His face may have been taken from an image of Albertus Magnus, the thirteenth-century Dominican scholar.



Fig. 90 Count Albert Bollstaedt (Albertus Magnus), engraving by Theodore de Bry (1528-98), 1597 (© Wellcome Library, London)¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Hayward, 'Clothing', p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ http://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/result.html?*sform=wellcome-images& IXACTION =query&%24%3Dtoday=& IXFIRST =1&%3Ddid_ref=V0000637& IXSPFX =templates/t & IXFPFX =templates/t& IXMAXHITS =1 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/



Figs 91, 92 Detail of the print source of Albertus Magnus (reversed) compared with the man in *Melancholic*

Albertus Magnus was a founding father of alchemy and astrology. He was credited with discovering the philosopher's stone and the secret of elemental transformation. It would have been amusing to recall that his name was Count Albertus Bolstadius, implying that he was the ancient lord of Bolsover, the first of the Cavendish dynasty to turn lead to gold.

The figure of Vulcan by the chimneypiece in the Hall might also have connected the various Cavendishes and their forebears to alchemy. Alongside a cyclops attending his forge, Vulcan had been the philosopher-chemist in Jonson's *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*. This masque was performed in the Banqueting House at Whitehall in January 1615, and it was included in Jonson's 1616 Folio. Mercury bemoaned a profusion of Cyclops alchemists:

Oh, the variety of torment that I have endured in the reign of the Cyclops, beyond the most exquisite wit of tyrants! The whole household of 'em are become alchemists, since their trade of armour-making failed them, only to keep themselves in fire for this winter (29-33); [...] I am their crude and their sublimate, their precipitate and their unctuous, their male and their female, sometimes their hermaphrodite (39-41).¹⁰⁶

(Accessed 16 May 2016).

¹⁰⁶ *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, ed. by Martin Butler, *CWBJ*, 4, pp. 431-43.

Once an allusion to alchemy was recognized, it might have been remembered that the humours, linked to the four elements, were fundamental to alchemical science. Mercury (the statue on the temple) was not only a messenger between mortals and gods, and a key figure in Neoplatonism, he was also the central figure in the mythology of alchemy. Elizabeth in *Melancholic* might be the White Woman to Cavendish's Red Man, and also Venus (with her gold embroidered girdle) to his Mars.

With the borrowed face of Albertus Magnus, and a churchlike setting that featured a wooden structure resembling a box pew, *Melancholic* could also reference Dominican or black friars. This would make a link to Jonson's play *The Alchemist* which was both set in Blackfriars and performed there. Peter Holland and William Sherman have noted the area was 'known for its chemical experts, scientific instrument makers, and surgeons, so that it was a natural home for an alchemist. Blackfriars is, in the play, also the sanctuary, the space for the characters' fantasies of transformation (whether to become rich or to begin the religious revolution, to meet one's relatives, especially if she is the Queen of the Fairies, or to live the ultimate epicurean dream), fantasies that in their different ways epitomize early modern aspirations, especially the extreme Golden Age indulgences out of which Mammon spins his rich web of dreaming.'¹⁰⁷ Perhaps Cavendish and his father saw the Little Castle as another such place.



Fig. 93 Detail of *Melancholic* showing the wooden structure that resembles a church pew

Using the flowers in *Sanguine*, and the anchor in *Phlegmatic*, we can see that the four paintings in the Ante Room, with their various alterations, could allude to The Theatre, The Rose, The Hope,

¹⁰⁷ *The Alchemist*, ed. by Peter Holland and William Sherman, p. 547.

The Swan, The Curtain, The Red Bull, The Bear Garden, The Fortune and the Globe, in addition to Blackfriars. (Hercules over the front door might also have reminded viewers of The Globe, providing a first clue to the puzzle.) This would reference most of the indoor and outdoor theatres of Jacobean London. The 'metaphysical sphere' at Bolsover would then clearly encompass plays as well as masques. The projecting platform in the temple painting might bring to mind a conventional apron stage as well as a Jonesian masquing stage, which would help to explain its curious shape, and why the areas beyond the flats are exposed.

If the speeches on earthly and heavenly love in *The New Inn* referred to above resonated with the decoration of the Hall, then perhaps we might think that the aside by Lady Frampul in the same scene could have alluded to *Melancholic* and *Visus*, as well as *The Alchemist*:

LADY FRAMPUL: How am I changed! By what alchemy
Of love or language am I thus translated!
His tongue is tipped with the philosopher's stone, again,
And that hath touched me thorough every vein!
I feel that transmutation o' my blood,
As I were quite become another creature,
And all he speaks, it is projection!
PRUDENCE Well feigned, my lady; now her parts begin!
LATIMER And she will act them subtly.
(III. 2. 169-77)

Knowles has discussed the proposal that Jonson's *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment* of 1620 was written to be performed at the baptism of Cavendish's first son at a house in Blackfriars.¹⁰⁸ He has indicated that the evidence for the child being a son of the Welbeck branch of the family is suggestive, though not conclusive. (An alternative child would be the second son of Cavendish's cousin, the Earl of Devonshire.) In the entertainment a mathematician or astrologer comes to tell the baby's fortune, and soon after the watermen sing, with bawdy punning:

Now luck we beseech thee, that all things may stand
With my lady's good liking that my lord takes in hand,

¹⁰⁸ Knowles, *Cavendish Christening*, pp. 401-3, 415; *ibid.*, p.403 cites Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), II, pp. 71-72 which argues that Cavendish's house may have been the property near Blackfriars Stairs occupied by van Dyck from 1632: his servants may have been from the Welbeck-Cavendish household.

That still there come gossips the best in the land,
To make the Blackfriars compare with the Strand.
(232-35)

If Cavendish did own or use a house at Blackfriars then the allusion in *Melancholic* would have extended the topographical references in the painted scheme beyond the Midlands.¹⁰⁹

If we look carefully at *Melancholic* we can see that the picture was further complicated to make it resonate with standard depictions of the Annunciation (which would fit with Dominican iconography, gesturing again to Albertus Magnus and Blackfriars). The setting was split in half, contrasting the plain church interior on the left with a domestic interior on the right. The woman's mantle was coloured blue, and she was given a white band over her breasts, resembling a girdle of purity. An open book was added to make her appear studious like the Virgin. The vessel held by the man could now represent the lily of the Angel Gabriel, and its altered (phallic) shape might also suggest a pyx to hold communion wafers, appropriate for a clergyman. The straight chain of jewels being offered to the woman was changed to become a circle of regular-sized gems, like a chaplet or rosary. It might be linked to the necklace with a cross that spilled from the coffer in *Visus*.



Figs 94, 95, 96 Details of the vessel and jewels in the painting of *Melancholic*, compared with the print source

¹⁰⁹ Lady Arbella Stuart made an amusing reference to living in Blackfriars like a nun in a letter to the 7th Earl of Shrewsbury, 8 November 1608, Talbot Papers 2, f. 254.



Fig. 97 Detail of *Visus* showing the chest of jewels

There were a number of Catholics and recusants among the Cavendish and Talbot families and their circle in the north, and Elizabeth herself was probably Catholic. She certainly had Catholic associations through her father and paternal grandfather, and her marriage into the Howard family.¹¹⁰ Referencing Popish practices in Derbyshire may well have been daring in the period the paintings were executed: Cavendish's aunt (Gilbert's wife) Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, a notorious Catholic, was in the Tower of London for the second time between 1618 and 1623. (Her coat of arms decorated the chimneypiece in the Star Chamber at Bolsover, alongside that of her husband.) However, we might think that any religious seriousness would have been punctured by the alchemical jest.

Further moments of religious humour occur in the decorative schemes in the Star Chamber and the Heaven Closet, which I will return to below. Religious jokes, religious roles and religious language are a feature of works by Cavendish and his daughters, and I suggest this is one of the defining characteristics of comic pieces written for performance at the castle. An example would be the speech in Cavendish's *The Country Captain* where Sir Francis Courtwell describes his dream:

¹¹⁰ For the Catholicism of the Bassetts see Swinscoe, *Swinscoe*, pp. 132, 167-70. Though his father may have had Catholic leanings, Cavendish was evidently a conventional Anglican. See Hulse, 'Apollo's Whirligig', 223-5; 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, pp. 51-53. For Catholics in the Cavendish circle in the Midlands See Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, pp. 53, 55, 139-40.

me thought

I saw a thousand Cupids slide from heauen,
and landing here, made this their scene of reuells,
Clapping their golden feathers, which kept tyme,
while their owne feet strook musike to their dance,
as they had trod, and touched so many lutes.
(2067-72)¹¹¹

I will argue that, remarkable for an entertainment written for Charles and Henrietta Maria, this convention of mirth tinged with religion is followed in *Love's Welcome*. Two cupids appear from the clouds, quarrelling with slapstick humour, and their dialogue is peppered with religious puns.

Returning to the scheme in the Ante Room, the lady in *Cholerick* may be a counterpart to the lady in *Melancholic*. She is depicted walking in a landscape with an infantryman, and it might be inferred that she is of low birth and suspect virtue, perhaps an itinerant camp follower or sutler. Some of the root vegetables she is carrying have been lengthened, and carrots (a symbol of lust) have been added to her bundle. The cockerel (which had a sexual connotation in the print) has been changed to a young girl, as we have seen. The implication might be that the mother's child was born out of wedlock. The girl is the only figure in the room who looks directly at the viewer, inviting attention. An illegitimate and female baby would be the opposite of Cavendish's desired offspring. As the Watermen in *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment* sing,

As soon as we heard the prince would be here,
We knew by his coming we should have good cheer;
A boy for my lady, then, every year
Cry we, for a girl will afford us but beer.
(228-31)

¹¹¹ *The Country Captain by William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle*, ed. by Anthony Johnson (The Malone Society Reprints, 162, 1999), p. 61.



Figs 98, 99 Detail of the woman and the child in *Choleric* compared to the source print

Contemporaries might have detected an emblematic purpose in the costumes of the mother and child. Maria Hayward has noted that their dress is too fine for their social station. The child's collar and headdress were high fashion in the 1610s. The woman's sleeves in the source print have a simple stripe, but in the painting they are made of an expensive cloth, possibly a voided velvet.¹¹² I suggest the pale colour of the ground of the sleeves and the skirt signal that these are not working clothes.¹¹³ In addition the sleeves display a motif of a fleur-de-lys and a crown that might be associated with both the Virgin Mary and the French royal family. Thus the woman may be a counterfeit alchemical queen; a counterfeit Virgin and virgin, wearing suspect French costume in a sulphurous yellow; and a counterfeit (or in the context of the iconography in the Elysium Closet to come, Earthly) Venus (with her two swans). If she were a loose woman it might have been

¹¹² Hayward, 'Clothing', p. 6.

¹¹³ Gervase Markham, *The Well-kept Kitchen* (1615), p. 3: 'Let therefore the housewife's garments be comely, cleanly and strong, made as well to preserve the health as adorn the person, altogether without toyish garnishes, or the gloss of light colours, and as far from the vanity of new and fantastic fashions, as near to the comely imitations of modest matrons'.

amusing to come across her before turning to the proposed portrait of Elizabeth in *Melancholic*. Cavendish's new wife would be, by contrast, a worthy White Woman, Virgin Mary, chaste wife, and Heavenly Venus. It was a commonplace in alchemy that generation relied on prior corruption.

The fishwife in *Phlegmatic* is also wearing a pale-coloured cloth, possibly a silk satin, and she, too, has expensive sleeves (although the cut of her gown, her old-fashioned cap, and rough, upturned cuff remain close to the print). It seems possible that that if the figures in the paintings were to be associated with the Cavendishes, then the costume could signal the rich dress that noblewomen would doubtless wear in their 'metaphysical sphere', or if they stepped out into tableau-like performances, or acted in masques and plays in the Little Castle. However, if Renaissance plays, including *The Alchemist*, were to guide an interpretation, then the dress of both low-born women would most obviously allude to follies and fraud.



Figs 100, 101 Detail of the woman in *Phlegmatic* compared with the source print

Paul Wilcock has suggested that the sword carried by the soldier in *Choleric* has been changed to a bearing sword (possibly in a pattern of an older date than that depicted in the print – an added archaism).¹¹⁴ By the early seventeenth century bearing swords had a ceremonial purpose and would have been considered inappropriate for a foot soldier carrying a pike. Thus the added sash

¹¹⁴ Verbal communication.

and the altered sword might have flattered Cavendish as a Knight of the Bath and a gentleman of noble lineage. Read another way, however, they, too, might have signalled deceit. The soldier could have brought to mind, for example, the boaster Bobadilla in *Every Man In His Humour*.

Such a guise for Cavendish (in a building trumpeting his wealth and virtue at every turn) was amusing, and it served as a theatrical device. The rope changed to a nowed snake, the added sash, the altered sword, and the references to Hercules, the Red Man, the region and perhaps the house at Blackfriars, all complimented him. However, his fictional roles were not simply eulogistic. He was poking fun at disrepute and vulgarity when valour, nobility and honour were fundamental to his self-image. Assigning himself double-sided personae could have invited teasing – ribbing a confident host would undoubtedly have set up a relaxed atmosphere, and an expectation of mirth in an ensuing sociable entertainment. (I will suggest below that a similar mixture of self-promotion and humorous self-deprecation is found in *Love's Welcome*.) Nonetheless, the use of comic role-play might also have served to bring home serious messages in the iconography. If viewers recognized that the life-size figure of the soldier represented Cavendish, they would have been drawn into an imaginary interaction with him, receiving the messages of the iconography as his ideas and beliefs. This device would have bound the viewers together, as commonly occurs when an actor delivers an aside, or introduces a topical allusion. By experiencing pleasure, and wishing to continue the game, perhaps participate in it, they would have registered approval, and so endorsed the eminence and virtue of the Cavendishes. These mechanisms were fundamental to theatre, not least court masques.



Figs 102, 103 Moses in the Star Chamber with a detail of the three Commandments (English Heritage)

When the guests arrived at the Star Chamber on the first floor they would have discovered another allusion to both alchemy and conning.¹¹⁵ Moses (a key figure in the myths of alchemy) supports a tablet bearing three of the Ten Commandments: ‘thou shalt not steale, thou shalt not commit a doultry, and thou shalt not beare false witness a gainst thy neighbour’. The order of the Commandments concerning stealing and adultery has been reversed, and this would undoubtedly have been noticed. As in the Ante Room and the Pillar Parlour, the alteration drew attention to a witticism. If it was remembered that ‘a doultry’ could mean ‘adulteration’, and that there could also be a pun on ‘dolt’, then the three Commandments could be read as an injunction for good alchemy, and, a related concept, good theatre, as well as a moral life.¹¹⁶ Good plays should avoid these three sins (stealing other people’s material, stupidity or irrelevance, and slander) although, of course, their plots would do well to turn on the time-honoured themes of greed, cuckolding, and gulling dimwits.¹¹⁷ Thus the tablet might be establishing laws by which the Cavendishes should live, and also laws by which they should write.¹¹⁸

I suggest that references to this tablet can be found in the texts of several dramatic works that were written for performance in the Star Chamber or with the Star Chamber in mind. In Cavendish’s comedy *A Debaushte Gallante* (composed shortly after the Restoration) the protagonists, a gentleman and a gallant, discuss ‘howe to make Libells, to newe tunes’ (Fol.45b, l.4)¹¹⁹ and get away with it (stealing other poets’ work), before turning to the subject of adultery:

Gen: I Tom butt thou muste nott Couett thy neyghboros wife,
nor his Oxe, nor his As, nor his mayde,

Gall. Firste for the oxe which Is the husbände I doe now Couett nor

¹¹⁵ No print sources for the polychrome figures in the Star Chamber have been securely established. Some of the grisaille saints may be based on engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi (c. 1480-1534). I am grateful to Matthew Reeves for the image source: *Raphael Invenit; Stampe da Raffaello Nelle Collezioni Dell'Istituto Nazionale Per La Grafica*, (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1985), p. 359.

¹¹⁶ *Dramatic Works by William Cavendish*, ed. by Lynn Hulse (The Malone Society Reprints, 158, 1996), pp. xx-xxi. Hulse writes of Cavendish’s script: ‘Among the features typical of his highly individual orthography is the unetymological word division involving the separation of the first letter of words beginning with *a* from the rest of the word, for example [...] “a gree”’. Though not unique to him, this division could have signalled an identification between Cavendish and Moses.

¹¹⁷ The Latin *adulterare* means to corrupt, and also to add extraneous ingredients.

¹¹⁸ For the central importance of male veracity and female chastity to aristocratic honour see Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 156-57, 166-70.

¹¹⁹ William Cavendish, *A Debaushte Gallante*, MS PwV 24, 45b-46a in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, pp. 92-131 (pp. 113-14).

his shee Ass which Is his wife fitt for burthens, & that I[s] obseruanse
off thee, & for his mayde shee Couetts mee, & nott I her, & therfore
lett her looke to Itt,

Gen: Thy Expotition will neuer serue thy turne heer, nor In the
nexte worlde

Gall: Well Ile putt Itt to the triall, no bodye knowes Tom till theye
haue tried,

Gen: Butt then It will bee to late Dick,

Gall: Better late then neuer,

Gen: I Butt Dick you shoulde doe, as you woulde bee dun vnto,

Gall: Why so I doe, for I drinke to my freinde, & I woulde haue
him drinke to mee a gen, & so with my mistris,

Gen: These are horide vaneties & Sin & therfore leaue them,

Gall: Whye Is Itt so Easeye to leaue them I belieuer tis verye harde,

Gen: howe doeste thou knowe, thou neuer tried,

Gall: Noe fayth thatts trewe, nor neuer meane to doe, (53-71)

[...] Whatt wouldes thou haue mee doe, putt off whatt I am,
which is fleshe and bloude, & leaue the worlde wher I am &
haue my beinge, butt for the Diuell I Confess I defye him & all
his squibbs,

Gen: Itt semes S^r. You neuer hade Grase then,

Gall: Yes fayth halfe a Dousen Grases verye pretye wentches (75-80)¹²⁰

It would have been amusing to deliver the lines referring to the Commandments, adultery and Grace in front of the portrait of Moses and the assembled patriarchs and saints. There could be word-play alluding to other elements in the decoration as well: ‘vanity’, ‘hard’, and ‘leaue the worlde wher I am’. These all echo *Love’s Welcome*, as we will see.

Likewise, truth is a central theme in *The Concealed Fancies*, written c.1645 by Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley, Cavendish’s eldest daughters. Luceny, dressed as a nun, sings:

¹²⁰ *A Debaushte Gallante* in *Dramatic Works*, fol. 48a, ed. by Hulse, pp. 115-29 (pp. 117-18). For the date of *A Debaushte Gallante* see *ibid.*, p. xvi.

Your stealing language further shall not creep
 Into my sacred church, where I will weep;
 Praying that all may truly, honest keep,
 For my ambitious store in votes ascends
 For my loved, dear and absent friends,
 That each upon their temples truly may
 Wear several laurels, of each sweeter bay
 (IV. 1. 48-54)¹²¹

If the scene was played in the Star Chamber Luceny's prayers (for truth and honesty) would have 'ascended' not only because they were directed to heaven, but also because she was singing about, and to, the figures who were painted on the panelling high on the walls. There could be a pun on 'temples' meaning also the Temple of Solomon. 'Stealing' would denote both arriving secretly and theft, referencing 'Thou shalt not steale'. I will suggest below that this continual punning, even in partly serious passages, is typical of pieces written for the Star Chamber, including *Love's Welcome*.

Theft is again the main topic in Cavendish's *The Cutt purses Ceane* (dated by Lynn Hulse to before 1640):

1: Coume my masters a quick & lighte
 Hand with a heauie Purse
 God Mercurye nowe send vse,
 2: I am rare for slighte off hande
 In our Vniuersetye off Cutt purse Hall,
 (*The Cutt purses Ceane*, 2-6)¹²²

There could be play on the phrase 'a pick-purse' meaning a plagiarist. Peterson has noted: 'As *Poetaster* testifies, there was some confusion about the distinction between borrowing and mere

¹²¹ Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley, *The Concealed Fancies*, ed. by S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies in *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 132-154 (p. 146). I am grateful to Daniel Cadman for discussions about the text for his forthcoming edition.

¹²² William Cavendish, *The Cutt purses Ceane*, MS PwV 26, Fol. 151a-b, in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, pp. 6-8 (p. 8).

theft – particularly in a competitive literary milieu where it was conventional to protest one's originality by denying one was a "pick-purse" of another's wit.'¹²³

The lyrics of Cavendish's *The 'Besey Bell' Ballad* (1634) explore how, paradoxically, fiction might be truth: ¹²⁴

Intr A Proper new Ballad, to bee sunge or
 Whistled, to the tune of Bessey Bell.

Some doe not lie, I'le tell you why,
They call them their Romancies
And stories frame to please each Dame,
And sharpen their dull phantsies.

Iff this bee it, their best of witt;
Sure then their witt is Leuis.
To tell a lye, beyond S^r Guy,
Or old South Hampton's Beuis.

The Knight o' th' Sun, is now vndone,
Hath nothing left to Brag-on
Our moderne lyes, though spruce precise
Yett kill the greater Drag-on.

Kinge Arthur's table, is now no fable,
Nor old AmadLys de Gaule,
The Lyes w'aue gott, kill Don Quixott
And doe make those truthes to all.

¹²³ Peterson, *Imitation*, p. 11. For the practice of recycling dance tunes see Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, pp. 72-73.

¹²⁴ William Cavendish, *The 'Besey Bell' Ballad*, in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, MS PwV 25, Fols. 61a - 65b, (pp. 19-26). Limon discusses the work of Ernst Cassirer on Renaissance philosophers with regard to the notion of truth in masques in Limon, 'The Masque', pp. 210-11 (p. 211): 'the truth or falsity of a statement seems to have been linked to the degree of richness in "poetic" elements. Significantly, it was not only the philosopher and scientist studying the nature of the universe but the poet as well who, by universal analogy, was able to discover and express the common pattern in the world created by God'.

Poore Robin Hood, is vnderstood;
For truth to all wee now knowe,
for lyeing dolts, soone shoote their bolts,
That ne'uer shott in his Bowe.
(Fol. 62a, 1-22)¹²⁵

We might think that if the ballad was sung in the Star Chamber then co-opting an existing tune (even though this was common practice) could allude to the first of the Commandments. The words of *The 'Besey Bell' Ballad* are sung to two different tunes in Cavendish's *The Antemasque*, a fragment of a work written at the request of Cavendish's young daughters, probably in 1634, for performance during the Christmas season after the royal visit.¹²⁶ (The second tune is a Morris. I will return to this below.) Using different tunes for lyrics is also a theme in *A Debaushte Gallante*, as we have seen. In Cavendish's ballad the word 'frame' could refer to the framed portraits on the panelling; the 'moderne lyes' could be 'spruce precise' because the pictures were painted on wood and the figures were richly dressed; and the word 'dragon-on' could reference dragging, the method used for painting wood grain. 'Dolts' might link to 'Thou shalt not commit a doultery'.

We can begin to identify shared themes in a number works by Cavendish and his daughters, and we can see that these pieces appear to have worked in conjunction with the decoration in the Little Castle. There was a triangle of referencing between Jonson's past works (*The Alchemist*, *Pleasure Reconciled*, *Oberon*, *Charis*, and others), the painted decoration with its portraits and allusions to the family, and a growing body of pieces written for the space, or with the space in mind. I would include among these new pieces both private productions by the family and works that were presented on the public stage, including *The New Inn*, *The Magnetic Lady* and *The Variety*. I will discuss this proposed web of referencing further below. *Love's Welcome* does not stand alone and this is an area that deserves further research.

I will argue in the following section that the allusions and metaphors in the iconography of the Ante Room were sustained through the decoration in the rest of the building, and that there was a crescendo to the programme at the end of the linear route after the Star Chamber, in the Heaven and Elysium Closets. It is worth examining these two final schemes in detail before looking more closely at how elements of the decoration may have been referenced in the 1634 entertainment.

¹²⁵ *The 'Besey Bell' Ballad*, in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, MS PwV 25, Fol. 62a, p. 22.

¹²⁶ *The Antemasque*, in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, MS PwV 26, Fols. 155a-159a, pp. 10-19.

II

Above the glazed doors to the balcony in the Elysium Closet, a boy holds up a moon. He and another child (peeping out from behind him) are positioned between a metamorphosed tree and a vine, floating on clouds.



Fig. 104 View of the glazed doors to the balcony in the Elysium Closet (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 105 Detail of the Elysium Closet showing the boy with a moon (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

Both the tree and the boy are composite figures, made up from elements of the print of a ceiling painting at Fontainebleau (now lost) by Francesco Primaticcio (1504-1570). This print was used extensively in the Elysium Closet scheme in an elaborate exercise in cut and paste.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ The source was recognized by E. Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837* (London, 1962), 2 vols, I, p. 33, but scholars have not analysed the correspondence in detail.



Fig. 106 Design for a rectangular ceiling in the Ulysses Gallery at Fontainebleau (now lost). Engraving, undated, School of Fontainebleau, *after* Francesco Primaticcio (1504-1570) (© The Trustees of the British Museum, London)¹²⁸

¹²⁸http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1425039&partId=1&people=97713&peopleA=97713-1-7&page=75 <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> (Accessed 16 May 2016).

Figures from the print have been moved and altered to supply elements for the painted ceiling, and many of the figures have changed identity.



Fig. 107 Individual figures in the Primaticcio print source

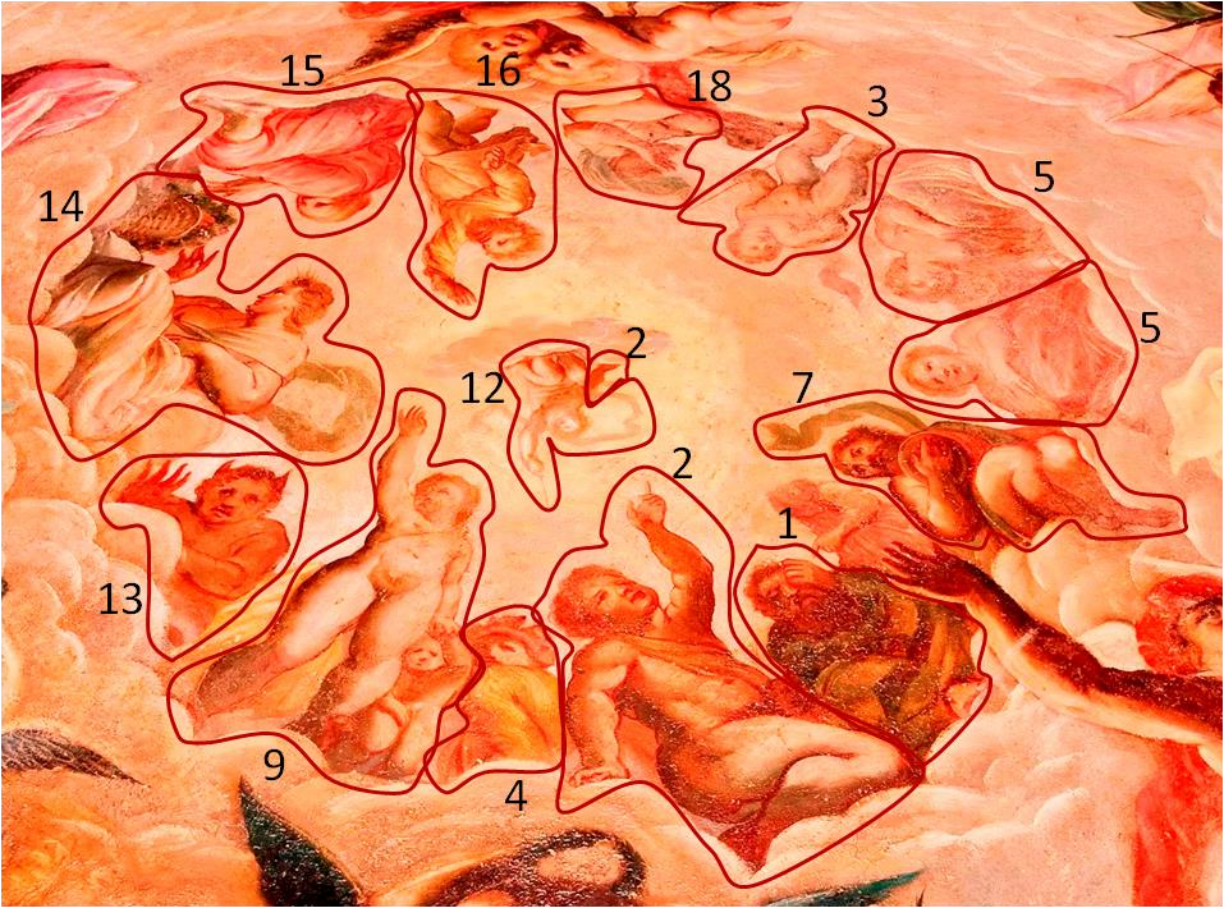


Fig. 108 Individual figures in the inner ring of the Elysium Closet ceiling that are derived from the Primaticcio print source

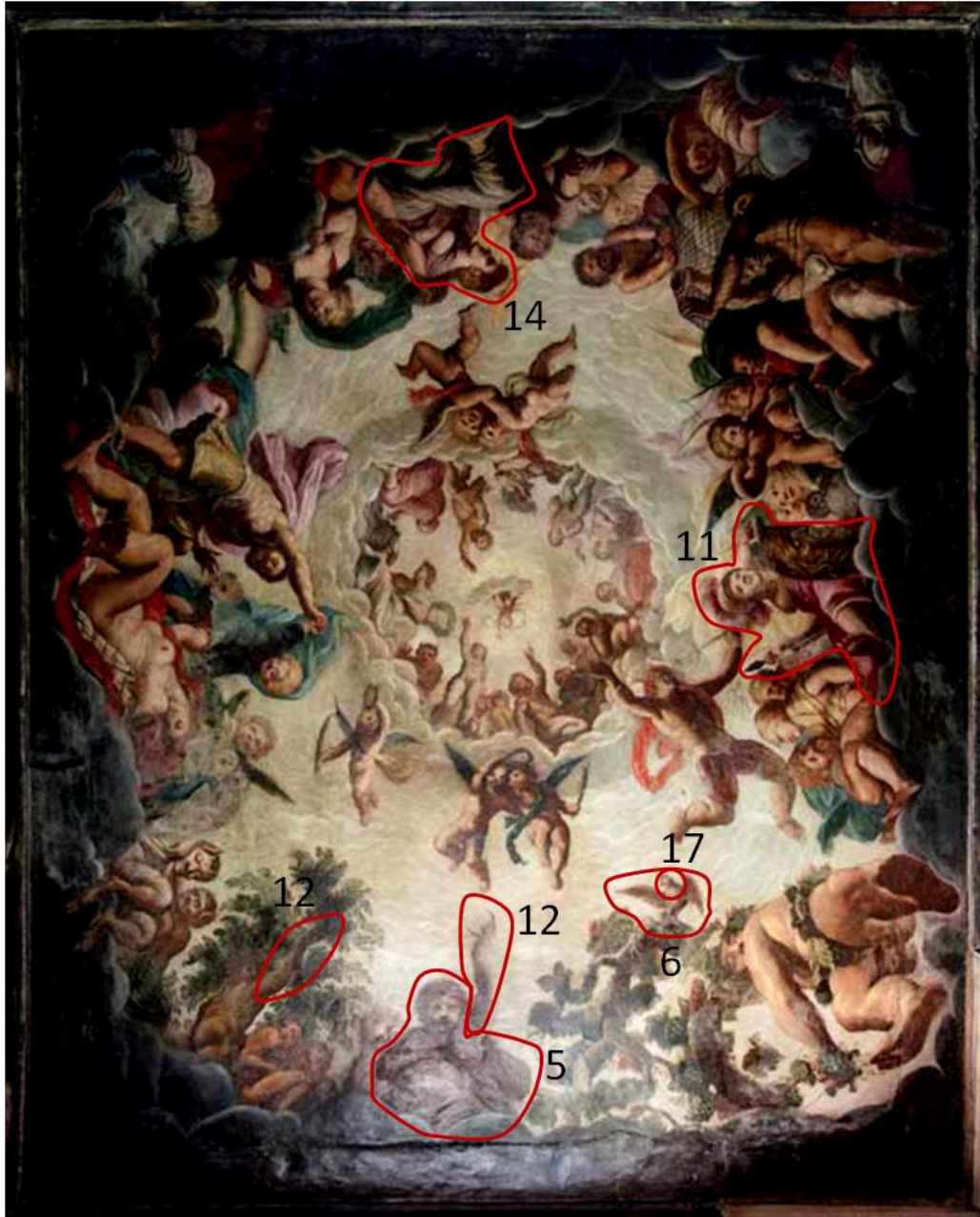


Fig. 109 Individual figures in the outer ring of the Elysium Closet ceiling that are derived from the Primaticcio print source (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

In the section above the glazed doors the body of the boy is derived from Primaticcio's *Diana*, although the moon has been re-positioned – raised above his head. The boy's arm and the tall branch of the tree on the left are both taken from the figure of *Vulcan* in the print.



Figs 110, 111, 112 Detail of figures in the outer ring on the Elysium Closet ceiling. The arms of the metamorphosed tree and the boy with a moon are derived from Vulcan in the print source. The figure of the boy is derived from Diana.

The face of the tree turns towards the boy, signalling a connection between them. The focus is on the crescent moon, to which a cockerel (positioned on the right) is pointing. We might remember that the horizontal position of the moon is common in heraldry, and notice that the coat of arms of Cavendish's mother, Katherine (née Ogle), featured three crescent moons. Cavendish's own arms, and those of his father, also included crescent moons. There could be verbal puns on both 'arms' and 'family tree'.



Figs 113, 114 The arms of William Cavendish on the chimney pieces in the Pillar Parlour (Bob Smith, English Heritage), and those of his mother Katherine (née Ogle) on the Bolsover church tomb (Crosby Stevens)

The surrounding panelling was richly decorated, possibly with a grained, marble, or flame design, painted in shell gold, calculated at four hundred times more expensive than gold leaf, over an indigo blue ground.¹²⁹ We can imagine that either sunlight or glowing and flickering fire would have had a remarkable effect. The room would have appeared to be dipped in liquid gold. If a

¹²⁹ [no author] 'Bolsover Little Castle Paint Research Report' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 1995), Part 3, 3.2.4, shows that the styles and muntins of the panelling were black, and the panel beds were blue with a design in gold streaks and flecks that may have represented woodgrain. The panels were varnished. Worsley, *Bolsover Castle*, p. 24 defines shell gold as 'gold leaf ground in gum and stored in mussel shells'.

flame design was intended there would be an allusion to love when a living person stood against the panelling.¹³⁰



Figs 115,116 View of the double doors to the balcony in the Elysium Closet, and a detail of a surviving but damaged section of the panelling decorated with gold (Crosby Stevens)

This doorway may have been the site of another implied tableau or performance, similar to that of *Sanguine* in the Ante Room. It is not difficult to imagine that the window recess could have served as a small stage. If Cavendish, and perhaps his brother Charles, had stood in front of the glazed doors they would have stood below the painting of the boy with a moon. By day they would have

¹³⁰ There is a similar allusion in *A Man Against a Background of Flames* by Isaac Oliver, c.1600. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16579/an-unknown-man-portrait-miniature-hilliard-nicholas/> (Accessed 21 July 2016).

been silhouetted by the light from the window. At night (or after about three o'clock in winter, when the south-facing room becomes dark), they would have been illuminated by light from the fire and from candles or lamps inside the room. The pale ground of the passage of painting on the ceiling above them would have caught the light and so accentuated the figure of the boy with a moon.



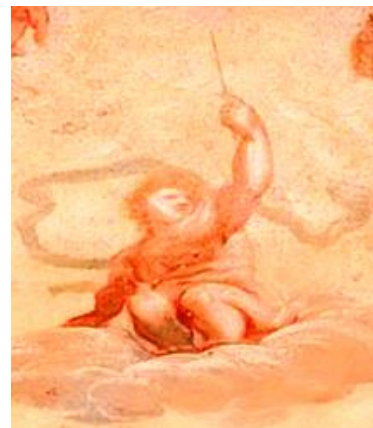
Figs 117, 118 Details of the ceiling painting above the double doors in the Elysium Closet, showing a vertical sequence of pairs of boys

Looking beyond him we can trace a translation of pairs of boys in three steps to the centre of the ceiling. The boy on the right in the inner ring points towards the boy in the centre who is holding a wand, an attribute of royalty or command. This produces a reversal of direction at the centre of the painting that creates a mirror effect (a rotation) which is reminiscent of the concept of the continuous flow upward and downward of love, to and from heaven, that was fundamental to Neoplatonism. The sequence also resonates with typically Jonsonian imagery of standing and lifting.



Figs 119, 120, 121 Details of the Elysium Closet ceiling showing the similar (rotated) poses of the kneeling boy in the inner ring and the boy at the centre

In the source print the central figure is Jupiter, but for the painted ceiling he has been replaced by a figure of a young man. This alteration would have been easy to detect when comparing the ceiling with the print, and I suggest it was important to the meanings in the iconography. We might expect this youth, in the position of the sun at the centre of the sky, to be Apollo. However, the figure on the ceiling was, again, adapted from the Vulcan in the print, not from the Apollo, whom Primaticcio had shown as a standing boy with a lyre in the ring of gods.



Figs 122, 123, 124, 125 A comparison between Vulcan in the print source, the boy with a moon, the metamorphosed tree, and the boy in the centre of the Elysium Closet ceiling.

This use of Vulcan's arm created a recognizable link between the metamorphosed tree, the boy with a moon, and the youth in the centre: a family likeness. The beautiful boy was Apollo-like, but he was not simply Apollo. He had no recognizable attribute, and his drapery described the letter C. He could be understood as a young, athletic, idealised Cavendish heir (sun and son). If Cavendish stood in front of the glazed doors it would have been apparent that he represented the beginning and end of a series of Cavendish boys (descended perhaps from Vulcan the alchemist,

and the several Cavendishes that Vulcan had represented in the Hall).¹³¹ This would seem appropriate for a young man who was newly married and hoped to produce an heir, but who was also decorating the building soon after the death of his own father, who had first designed the Little Castle.

As a young man Cavendish had been chosen as one of the aristocratic youths to attend Prince Henry at his investiture, receiving the Order of the Bath. When the paintings were designed, c.1620, this had been his outstanding moment at court. Knowing this (and perhaps having noted the similarity between the west façade of the Little Castle and Jones' set design of 1610, as well as the sash added to the figure of the knight in *Cholerick*) the scene of the boy with a moon might again have reminded viewers of Jonson's *Oberon the Fairy Prince*.¹³² The masque had featured sliding back shutters (not unlike the double doors to the balcony), a moon whose light reflected the sun (lighting the orgies of the Fairy Prince and his knights, and symbolising Prince Henry inheriting from King James), a group of satyrs, Silenus (companion to Bacchus), and a cockerel. If the larger group of events in 1610 surrounding the investiture was remembered, then the Neptune on the cornice beside the doors might have been connected to the welcome staged for Prince Henry on the Thames, *Tethys Festival* and the celebratory sea battle. Neptune, representing King James, father of Albion, King of Britain, and husband of Tethys, had been a key figure in the festivities.¹³³

¹³¹ Peterson, 'Virtue Reconciled', pp. 251-56 discusses Jonson's identification with Vulcan as a poetic craftsman, and as the virile husband of both Charis and Aphrodite (one more modest than the other). In this context Cavendish as Vulcan would reference his possession of a wife who is both chaste and alluring.

¹³² *Oberon the Fairy Prince*, ed. by Lindley, *CWBJ*, III, pp. 713-43. For the association between Oberon and dynastic succession see Lisa Hopkins, *Drama and the Succession to the Crown* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 37-56.

¹³³ Limon, *The Masque*, pp. 116-22.



Fig. 126 View of the cornice painting beside the double doors showing Neptune (Crosby Stevens)

The creation of multiple versions of an ideal Cavendish by fusing together elements from more than one source, thus creating a new ‘child’, resonates with Jonson’s literary practice: judicious gathering from many sources; unfolding new and personal meanings as the originals were blended and repeatedly ‘turned’; forging a fresh version that was, paradoxically, indistinguishable from the old. Bolsover Castle was a rebuilt ancient fortress, a new original in the Jonsonian sense. The walled garden and ancillary buildings (in a constant state of construction and reconstruction) were visible from the balcony, and these might represent Cavendish’s material and spiritual inheritance. If he took the role of Oberon standing below the group of classical gods on the ceiling he would appear to be the embodiment of modern virtue, ushering in the lost Golden Age of a Roman and chivalric past, just as his wife Elizabeth had in *Visus*. Standing under the tree, the vine and the boy with a moon (or under the temple painting in the Ante Room) he would be ‘understanding’ in a Jonsonian sense. The tableaux would not only spotlight his living body, they would also, as Peterson has said of the subjects in Jonson’s poetry of praise, put on display his ‘moral posture, shape and texture’.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Peterson, *Imitation*, p. xiii.

Further, the setting of the real mock-medieval castle and the painting of the fictional classical temple in the Ante Room might both become metaphors for the body which the soul inhabits. Jonson uses a recurring image of the body as a building, a shrine, or a home for the soul or mind, for example in *An Epigram: To My Muse, the Lady Digby, on Her Husband, Sir Kenelm Digby*, probably written in the early 1630s:¹³⁵

In him all virtue is beheld in state,
And he is built like some imperial room
For that to dwell in, and still be at home.
His breast is a brave palace, a broad street
Where all heroic ample thoughts do meet;
Where nature such a large survey hath ta'en
As other souls to his dwell in a lane:
(78, ll. 6-12)¹³⁶

Perhaps if we view the Bolsover iconography through this lens of Jonson's poetry we might infer that Cavendish had not been missing at all in the Ante Room scheme, but was depicted as the temple on the hill. He was therefore not only a painted and physical presence through the decoration and tableaux, he might also be, metaphorically, the building itself. I will suggest below that this idea could have been remembered when dancing builders were introduced in *Love's Welcome*.

The idea of the soul inhabiting the body like a building might appear in *The New Inn* with special reference to Cavendish and the Little Castle. The speech by Lovel that comes shortly before the line 'Be both kept safe by caution' (referred to above), could spring from a memory of Jonson's first view of the building in 1618:

But put the case: in travel I may meet
Some gorgeous structure, a brave frontispiece,
Shall I stay captive i' the outer court,
Surprised with that, and not advance to know
Who dwells there and inhabiteth the house?
There is my friendship to be made, within,

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

¹³⁶ *The Underwood*, 78, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, VII, (pp. 71-295) (p. 244).

With what can love me again; not with the walls,
 Doors, windows, architraves, the frieze, and coronice.
 My end is lost in loving of a face,
 An eye, lip, nose, hand, foot, or other part,
 Whose all is but a statue, if the mind
 Move not, which only can make the return.
 The end of love is to have two made one
 In will and in affection, that the minds
 Be first inoculated, not the bodies.
 (III. 2. 138-52)

Through Lovel, Jonson may be stating the purpose of the Bolsover decoration: to sculpt and paint the souls of his patrons, to display an essay on love (including the competing claims of physical and spiritual love), to ‘make’ his friendship with Cavendish, and to leave a lasting invitation for others to love their host and learn the lessons of the building. The comparison between the façade and a frontispiece would be suggestive of the exterior as an introduction to the interior, and as an indication that the architecture and decoration were in some sense literary. The thought that he will make a friendship with ‘what can love me again’, with a mind that ‘can make the return’, resonates with the myth of Eros and Anteros.

The question arises: could Jonson have been responsible for the Little Castle iconography? James Loxley, Anna Groundwater and Julie Sanders have noted that while the motivations for Jonson’s foot voyage were undoubtedly complex (the fame of a performance, curiosity to see his ancestral home in Scotland, imitation of William Camden, and the King, and possibly the profit to be made from wagers) the adventure may nonetheless have been precipitated by a commission to write the epitaph for the tomb of Sir Charles Cavendish at Bolsover.¹³⁷ (Jonson’s visit to the Rutland tomb at Bottesford en route to Welbeck could have been planned by way of preparation.) Certainly, the walk was facilitated by Cavendish, Talbot, Manners and Ogle connections over many miles. The poet stayed six nights at Welbeck, and Cavendish gave him a tour which included his father’s library and the memorabilia in the ‘room of evidences’, again suggesting research for the epitaph.

¹³⁷ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson’s Walk*, pp. 112-15, 121-26, 182. Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, p. 34 cites the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series James I*, 1611-1618, 92.472 noting that George Gerrard informed Sir Dudley Carleton that Jonson was planning to walk to Scotland a full year before he set out. Gerrard’s letter is dated June 1617 and it was written while the King was in Scotland and reports of the visit were reaching London. Sir Charles Cavendish had died two months earlier so it is possible the commission was given at this time.

I propose, however, that arranging the memorial could have been a secondary (though I would argue, in Jonson's mind, related) objective for the trip into Cavendish country. If we look at the wording of the account, we can see that the castle is mentioned before the tomb:

The next day Sir William Candish carried my gossip to see Bolsover, alias Bozers, castle, on which Sir Charles had built a delicate little house etc. As also to meet one Smithson, an excellent architect, who was to consult with Mr. Jonson about the erection of a tomb for Sir William's father, for which my gossip was to make an epitaph (192-96).¹³⁸

It seems reasonable to think that if Cavendish was about to embark on the decoration of his father's newly-built 'delicate little house', an enterprise aimed at impressing the local and national nobility, he would seek expert advice. Lucy Worsley has pointed to a letter from Cavendish from 1618: 'A note of all my business att London in Ester terme next 1618 [...] Then for Bolsover furneshinge paytinge & carving will be better thought off at London then heer.'¹³⁹ It would have made sense to consult Jonson as the leading impresario of court entertainments before the details of the interiors were arranged in London.

Cavendish is likely to have been acquainted with Jonson before his visit in 1618. They may have first met during the extended period of celebrations for the investiture in 1610, or, as Geoffrey Trease has suggested, between April and June 1614 when Cavendish sat in Parliament as Member for East Retford alongside Sir Henry Wotton.¹⁴⁰ Even if he did not know Jonson personally, Cavendish's family had been involved in court entertainments over many years and it would have been an easy matter to contact the poet around the time he decided to walk to Scotland.

It seems plausible that Jonson would have needed to see the novel building in order to advise Cavendish. It would not have been necessary for him to travel such a distance, nor to meet Smythson, if he was only required to supply a poem for a conventional tomb. However, the insertion of the west balcony, the choice and positioning of the adjoining Marble Closet interior (which may have been designed initially for the Elysium Closet and then adapted for its final location), the selection and procurement of the external statues, and the style of panelling and its decoration, demanded complex, interlinked decisions.¹⁴¹ They were related to how the building

¹³⁸ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, p. 57.

¹³⁹ Nottingham University, Hallward Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, MS PWI. 553, ff. 1r-2r. Lucy Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, pp. 125-26.

¹⁴⁰ Trease, *Portrait*, p. 40.

¹⁴¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 245.

would be used, and how Cavendish's taste and standing should be projected. No one was better placed than Jonson to give a noble patron inside information on how to impress at an entry, departure, feast or banquet. Choices could have been made by Cavendish in consultation with both Smythson and Jonson over several years, once Jonson was acquainted with the site.

It is therefore possible that much of the foot voyage was planned to inform and inspire Jonson as he invented, or 'wrote the poem' of, the Bolsover decoration. Jonson's research would then have included getting to know Cavendish (noting his interests, personality, sense of humour and habits of entertainment), and gleaning information about his estates, inheritance, and locality. It would have been essential to scout out the territory of rivals by receiving hospitality from Cavendish's local circle, and by visiting the homes of other nobles and gentry along the route from London which future guests might follow. Jonson's research could have included, for example, the ceiling of the Earl of Dunfermline's Neo-Stoic gallery at Pinkie House near Edinburgh, which featured emblematic scenes.¹⁴² I propose that the Bolsover scheme became a quasi-gift to his generous patron and host, a marker of his 'book tour' after the publication of the 1616 Folio, an advertisement to other potential patrons, and a location for future performances.

There is no evidence that Jonson returned to Bolsover while the paintings were being executed, although he must have been in contact with Cavendish or his cousin in 1619-20 to receive the commission for the *Christening Entertainment*. It is not known whether Cavendish attended the performances of *Gypsies Metamorphosed* at Burley-on-the-Hill and Belvoir Castle, less than forty miles from Bolsover, in the summer of 1621, nor whether Jonson was present to stage the masque. It is possible, however, that the poet travelled north, and that a horse Buckingham gave him would have facilitated a further journey to Welbeck and Bolsover.¹⁴³ He may also have visited in the later 1620s when he came to the Peak District: his two epigrams to Cavendish probably date to this period.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, p. 194. Letter 14, ed. by Ian Donaldson, *CWBJ*, V, p. 394: Jonson wrote to Drummond on 10 May 1619 after his return, requesting information on the 'inscriptions at Pinkie', possibly meaning the emblems on the painted ceiling in the gallery. The information he required was wide-ranging, connected to a book he intended to write about his journey, and a pastoral set at Loch Lomond.

¹⁴³ *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, ed. by James Knowles, *CWBJ*, V, pp. 465-580 (pp. 467-68) discusses the gift of a horse to Jonson from Buckingham in 1621 which may have facilitated his presence for last minute changes on site, or may been a post-performance reward.

¹⁴⁴ Epigrams 53 and 59, *The Underwood*, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, VII, pp.71-295, (pp. 201-2, 207). For the journey to the Peak District see Hilton Kelliher, 'Donne, Jonson, Richard Andrews and The Newcastle Manuscript', *English Manuscript Studies*, 4 (1993), pp. 134-73.

Returning to the decoration of the Elysium Closet, a correspondence between Cavendish standing in the window and Prince Henry as Oberon, may have pointed up an underlying intention to shadow Stuart kings and princes throughout the castle's iconography. It might not have escaped the viewer that the **C** for Cavendish could also stand for Charles. Charles was the name of Cavendish's father and brother, and probably his first son, and it was also the first name of the future Charles I, and of his father King James. Jonson had played on recognizing James' full name in *For the Honour of Wales* in 1618 when Evan and Jenkin discussed the 'plunses' or difficult puzzles of the anagrams of King James' and Prince Charles' names, Charles James Stuart and Charles Stuart. (The anagrams were *Claimes Arthur's Seat* and *Cals True Hearts*. [307-12])¹⁴⁵ It may also have been no accident that thistles and lions were chosen to decorate the panelling in the principal bedchamber, beside the Elysium Closet. Symbolically the whole castle (as in the Westwood poem) but particularly this suite of rooms, might belong to the King and his posterity, as well as to Cavendish and his.

James came to Welbeck in 1617, 1619 and 1624, and it is likely that a royal visit to Bolsover would have been anticipated in the period the interiors were designed.¹⁴⁶ Prince Charles was also at Welbeck in summer of 1619, and he travelled from there to Hardwick Hall to be entertained by Cavendish's cousins. The Prince would have seen the exterior of the Little Castle across the Doe Lea Valley, even if he did not stop there. It may well have been hoped that on a future occasion he or James would come inside.

The figures of Kings David and Solomon in the Star Chamber resonated with James' personal iconography (Figures 127 and 129). Nonetheless, in the literature produced by the Cavendish circle the painting of David seems to have been associated with Cavendish's father. Sir Charles standing in for James would be similar to Cavendish standing in for Oberon.

Sir Charles was a brave man, associated with war, and so might be compared to David. He had fought with the army at Zutphen alongside Sir Philip Sidney; and in 1599 he had triumphed in a violent skirmish with his neighbour Sir John Stanhope. On that notorious occasion he had been ambushed and shot in the groin (he carried the scars to the end of his life) although he nonetheless managed to kill two of his assailants and capture their weapons. Amongst the memorabilia Jonson saw in 1618 were mementos of the fight.

¹⁴⁵ *For the Honour of Wales*, ed. by Martin Butler, *CWBJ*, V, pp. 329-42 (pp. 341-42).

¹⁴⁶ Emily Cole, 'The State Apartment in the Jacobean Country House' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2010), pp. 365-415.

If George Aglionby's poem *On Bolsover Castle* was written for performance in the Star Chamber, we can see that it could have alluded to the painting of David, comparing him to Sir Charles. The third verse reads,

Now, if the soul of man so perfect be
Because without the help of quantity
It hath such power and strength – for it were hard
To measure virtue by the yard;
Goliath was six cubits and a span,
Yet David was the greater man
(Nor have there been wounds and scars
Only in the Giants' wars) –
Then though thou little counted be,
Yet, Bolzer, 'tis thy greatest grace,
To have such perfect symmetry,
And so much room in so small space.
Nature's best workmanship we see
In the industrious little bee.
(29-42)¹⁴⁷

The pictures were two-dimensional and so lacked 'quantity', and they were 'hard' because they were on plaster and wood. Being expanses of imagery on the walls they could be 'measured by the yard'. 'Goliath was six cubits and a span / Yet David was the greater man' referred to the painting of David and the roundel on his cope that depicted him fighting Goliath. (Figure 128) 'Nor have there been wounds and scars / Only in the Giants' wars' was an allusion to the scars of Sir Charles and also, perhaps, the paintings of the wars of the giants in the Palazzo del Té at Mantua. This would indicate that Giulio Romano's decoration inspired the schemes Bolsover (which, as I will discuss below, Raylor has thought likely). We might also think 'the industrious little bee' could be the industrious large Ben, author of the iconography.

The connection between Sir Charles and David is also made in Cavendish's *The Antemasque*. This comprises a single comic scene in which the main character, 'your visible vicar of the invisible

¹⁴⁷ *The Country House Poem: Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items*, ed. by Alastair Fowler, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 169-72.

church of Norton' (1-2), consults with a group of tradesmen (a barber, a tinker, a tailor, a cook, a shoemaker, a farrier, a glover and a baker) to decide what type of show they should perform. The Vicar insists on setting out his pedigree and declares:

I doe deriue my selfe frome
Dauid which was a Weltch-man & playde off
a Weltch Harpe,. ffer [Ferarius Anvill] Looke howe he harpes att his
Ientiletie.
[Vic.] Hee was a valiente man & fright the Diuell frome
Saules, & kilde the Creat Golias, which was mutch
Piger then the kinges Greate Porter Gott bless him
the saye he kilte a Lions to, & Cutt off manye thinges
frome the Phelistians, & so Conuerted them to Iewes
& with the Scins made woemen stomachers to keepe
them warme, & Aule this was dun by my Countrie
man & Ansetor litle Dauids, And I Can tell you he
Gott the wiseste mans In the whole worldes to his
Son Caled Salamons, my Coosen, Thatt writ Prouerbes,
Loue Songes to Blacke a moore woemen & was a Pretcher
besides, & was maride to for Aule the Pope In spighte
off his nose, Ande had more wiues then Aule or BB
Deanes, Parsons, or vickars In Englande, & more,
Conqubines then Aule the Pristes beyond seae
(56-75)

In keeping with the iconography of the paintings, the vicar could have been played by Cavendish or an actor impersonating Cavendish, even though the character states that the audience is to include Cavendish and his wife, together with a group of lady masquers. Cavendish as the vicar would be both 'visible' and 'invisible' like the lute-playing lover who enacted *Sanguine*. In calling David his ancestor, he would be alluding to Sir Charles who was dressed (amusingly above his station) as the biblical King David on the panelling. Ferarius would probably have gestured to the decoration on David's cope with the words: 'Looke howe he harpes att his gentilitie'. Solomon, as the son of David, might then have represented Cavendish's exceptionally intelligent brother. Charles Cavendish never married and he had a physical deformity for which he may have been teased. (I will return to this below.)

We can find another reference to David and Solomon in *Love's Welcome* where Philalethes wishes that the people of the region would come:

to an admiration of your sacred persons, descended, one from the most
peaceful, the other the most warlike, both your pious and just progenitors
(*The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, 155-56)

James and Henri IV were famously peace-loving and warlike kings, as were Solomon and David. If David looked like Sir Charles, but was referenced as King James, then the layered allusions to the Cavendishes and Stuarts would finally have come into their own. More research is warranted to explore whether David and Solomon were recognizable portraits of Cavendish's father and brother.



Figs 127, 128 David in the Star Chamber with a detail of the orphrey band on the cope (English Heritage)



Figs 129, 130 Solomon in the Star Chamber with a detail of a scene of the Judgement of Solomon on his throne
(English Heritage)

If this layering of references to the Cavendishes and the royal family in the decoration of the Little Castle was linked to the convention of the royal couple taking possession of the building on their arrival, there would be no breach of decorum in taking Charles and Henrietta Maria into the Elysium Closet. The principal bedchamber and its closets would have been the state bedchamber suite.¹⁴⁸ The rooms could have been used as an exclusive retreat for rest, conversation, banqueting

¹⁴⁸ Cavendish wrote to his son Charles, Viscount Mansfield from Antwerp on 15 November, 1659 regarding the chattels lost from Bolsover: 'The Gold Lace and embroiderye on the purple velvet bed was worth at least 300l.: five chambers furnished att Bolsover with very fine hangings att 4d a stick but let itt goe – the sparver cost a grete deal of money', BL Add MS 70499, fol. 355v. cited in Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage', I, pp. 171-72. It is not clear whether this bed was in the Little Castle or the Terrace Range. Annabel Westman, 'Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire: Textile Furnishings in the Little Castle' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 2013).

and dressing, as well as a place for sleeping (which would make sense when Bolsover could be employed for day trips from Welbeck, as well as longer sojourns), and because the Little Castle is so small the intention might always have been for them to be given over to a royal guest if, as might be hoped, that was required. Cavendish probably slept in the Terrace Range as soon as the first extension was complete – presumed by Drury to be shortly before the visit in 1634 – so the status and function of the master's bedchamber in the Little Castle might have become even more fluid around this time.



Figs 131, 132, 133 View of the principal bedchamber next to the Elysium Closet (Crosby Stevens), with details of the panelling by the windows decorated with thistles, and a lion's head from the chimney piece (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

There may be aspects of the Elysium Closet decoration that would lead the viewer to recognize references to masquing, supporting a tableau alluding to *Oberon the Fairy Prince* and strengthening the impression that this was a fanciful quasi-royal place. The buskins of most of the gods depicted on the cornices are reminiscent of masquing dress, and the manly moustaches of Mars, Hercules and Jupiter might have added an appropriate dash of ancient British virility.¹⁴⁹



Figs 134, 135 Details of the footwear of Mars and Juno on the cornices of the Elysium Closet

In addition, selecting and adapting elements from the painted decoration at Fontainebleau may have signalled a connection to festival designs at court developed by Inigo Jones using French and Italian sources.¹⁵⁰

The banner below the passage of the scene of the boy with a moon could be another clue to the theatrical allusions here and throughout the decoration. A young painter points his brushes and mahl stick at the words ‘All Is But vanite’. This is the only text shown in the paintings. A vanity, of course, was a masque or a performance as well as a moral failing. The implication might be that everything in the Little Castle (both depicted in the paintings and taking place in real life) was a show – the topos of ‘all the world’s a stage’.

The phrase could have carried several layers of meaning. The young artist is twinned with the boy in modern costume beside him. This fits with several pairings in the iconography across the

¹⁴⁹ Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, pp. 171-72. For a discussion of the unclassical moustache on the figure of Mars associated with Henry Cavendish, on his tomb, see Graham Parry, ‘Cavendish Memorials’, *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 275-87 (p. 280).

¹⁵⁰ John Peacock, ‘The French element in Inigo Jones’s masque designs’ in *The Court Masque*, ed. by David Lindley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 149-168 (pp. 158-62).

building. As we have seen with the ladies in *Choleric* and *Melancholic*, the lower or more suspect of the two is placed on the left, and the truer or more virtuous is placed on the right. The boys, with their banner, could be similar reminders of the competing claims of art and poetry.

There are several pointing hands in the Elysium and Heaven Closet paintings, and these are reminiscent of the manicule symbol commonly drawn or printed to highlight passages in a text. We might infer that ‘All Is But vanite’ is a sententia. Taken with the phrase from Ecclesiastes, the group could be an emblem for the idea that art was inferior to poetry. Peterson explains, ‘Jonson’s use of these shapes [of virtue] is complicated by the fact that he sometimes simultaneously turns another classical, mainly Stoic, tradition in which statues and paintings are suspect, as symbols of vanity and surfaces – or, in a Horatian variant formulated [...] as merely less enduring, more ephemeral than poetry’.¹⁵¹

We might note that if Charles and Henrietta Maria had studied the decoration in the Elysium Closet before they saw the dramatic sections of *Love’s Welcome*, then they would already have encountered a reference to this debate before Jonson alluded to his long-standing quarrel with Inigo Jones. Thus the decoration in the Elysium Closet would have prepared the guests for Jonson’s apparent assault, and this would have made it easier to soften the impact, as will be argued below. The inappropriateness of the apparent vitriol in *Love’s Welcome* has long been viewed as peculiar.



Fig.136 Detail of the cornice and ceiling painting over the double doors in the Elysium Closet (Crosby Stevens)

¹⁵¹ Peterson, *Imitation*, p. 52.

The two boys are positioned above paintings of Democritus and Heraclitus, the laughing and weeping philosophers, on the soffit over the glazed doors leading to the balcony. The philosophers would have been a witty choice juxtaposed with the emblem above. The couple were commentators on the human condition which would fit with the most obvious meaning of the text from Ecclesiastes on the banner. They could also represent opposing arguments in a debate (like that contrasting poetry and art). In a further reading, they could be taken as symbols of comic and tragic theatre which would underscore the pun on ‘vanite’ meaning a show.

The dress of the philosophers appears to be significant. Democritus’ robe is not well defined but Hayward has noted that Heraclitus clearly wears contemporary costume. He has a shirt with a high frilled collar, and a long fur-trimmed black robe, suitable for a professional (a doctor, lawyer, or academic – perhaps, again, an alchemist). His brimmed bonnet denotes a person of middling status. It would have been slightly more fashionable than the flat cap of Democritus, which could have been worn by a craftsman or an ordinary citizen (perhaps a player).¹⁵²

I propose that this costume might lead viewers to see that these were modern, playful versions of the two well-known ancient philosophers, and to recognize them as portraits of Jonson in character.¹⁵³ The costume and the globes are sketchily rendered, but the faces and hands are more detailed, and there is some resemblance to the portrait of the poet by Abraham van Blyenberch. This deserves further research. Depicting Jonson as both a classical philosopher and a humble actor might have been analogous to Cavendish taking the guise of the soldier in *Choleric*. It would have been both complimentary and teasing.

¹⁵² Hayward, ‘Clothing’, p. 5. For an example of a later sixteenth-century man’s knitted woollen cap see Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (London: The British Museum Press, 2012), p. 136.

¹⁵³ For portraits of Jonson see Karen Hearn, ‘Images of Ben Jonson’ in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* Online: http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/benjonson/k/essays/jonsons_images_essay/1/ (Accessed 16 May 2016).



Figs 137, 138, 139, 140, 141 The two philosophers in the Elysium Closet and details of their faces, compared with a detail of the portrait of Ben Jonson by Abraham van Blyenberch, c. 1617 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw03528/Benjamin-Jonson>
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> (Accessed 16 May 2016).

Loxley, Groundwater and Sanders have suggested that *Love's Welcome* embeds 'a topographical memory of Bolsover dating back to 1618 [...] [*Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*] may have been the subject of discussion between Cavendish and Jonson when they met that summer. If this were the case, these men might best be thought of as sharing a text space, an articulated locus or topos that was realized in various ways and at different moments during the period of their intellectual and social relationship.'¹⁵⁵ I suggest that if Jonson had authored the iconography in the Little Castle he would not only have carried a memory of Bolsover from his visit in 1618, he would also have known that both he and his patron were incorporated into the fabric of the building. Through his iconographic invention the 'shared text space' was also a shared physical space. Both men were present in the entwined allegorical and real portraits; in the implied tableaux; and, later, in performances of the growing number of plays and masques that referenced the decoration.

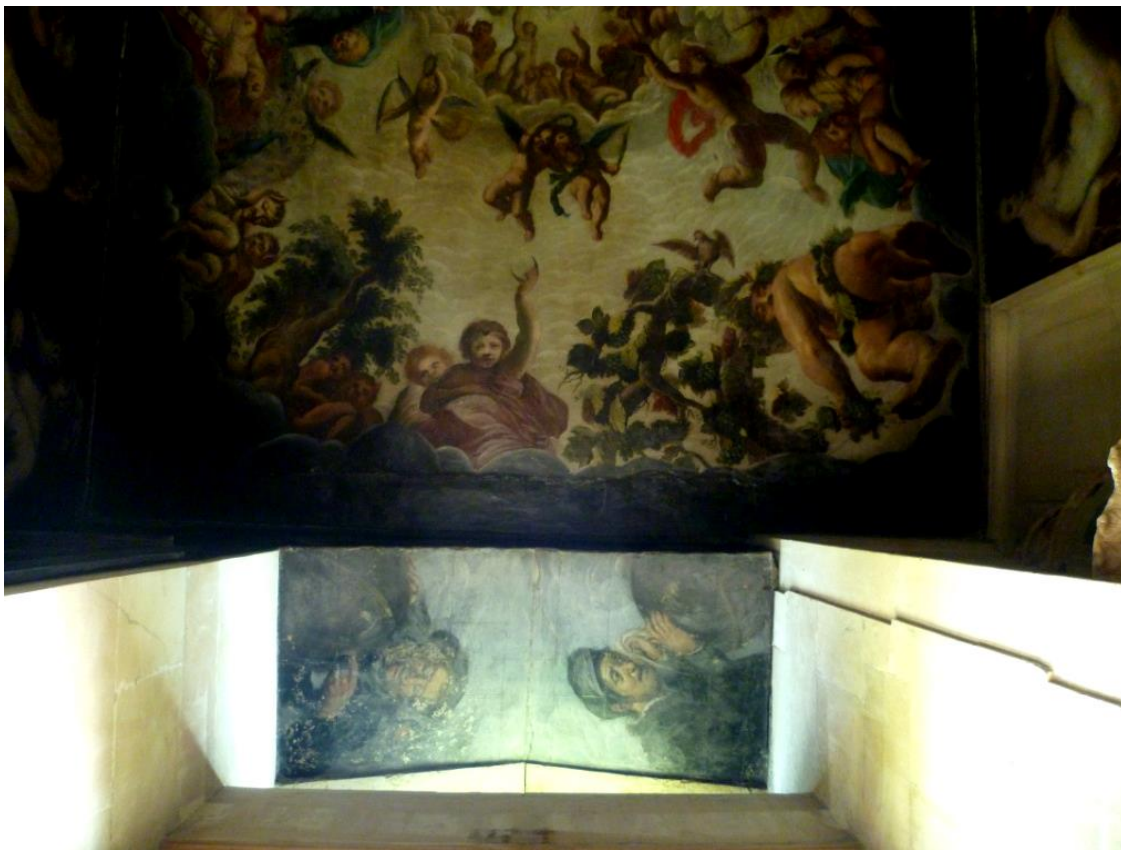


Fig. 142 View of the soffit and ceiling in the Elysium Closet, looking up from the window recess. The painter and the boy in green are on the vertical face of the wall, not visible from this angle. (Crosby Stevens)

¹⁵⁵ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, p. 166.

If we study the images above the philosophers we can see that there could be another connected set of figures, sitting beside that which rises from the boy with the moon. The line of ascent from the weeping philosopher rises towards the central ring. The hands of a flying Mercury and the large kneeling boy, the neck of a stringed instrument, and the scarf of a bearded man on the right, all signal the path upwards.



Fig. 143 The vertical sequence of images above the philosophers in the Elysium Closet (Crosby Stevens)



Figs 144, 145, 146 Details of the weeping man and the viol da gamba on the ceiling in the Elysium Closet compared with the figure of Saturn in the Primaticcio print

The man in the inner circle strikes a pose that is similar to that of Heraclitus on the soffit: the two figures are like bookends to the sequence. The man may be in motion: he raises his left hand but nonetheless appears to clasp his hands together at waist height, as if in prayer. (The gestures resembles those of three sorrowing angels in the Heaven Closet.) The figures to his right are looking at him, perhaps listening to him.



Figs 147, 148, 149 Details of angels in the Heaven Closet praying and lamenting

I wish to explore the idea that this vertical series describes Jonson's role as poet. In the guise of the philosophers he could be a commentator on the human condition. As Mercury he would be another figure of wisdom, and also a messenger to and from the gods. I propose that if the instrument, a viol de gamba, represented a modern lyre, the lamenting bearded man would be an extension of the philosopher, poet and messenger: a latter-day Orpheus, who was by tradition a son of Apollo. We might imagine that if Jonson stood in the window instead of Cavendish, or the two stood side by side, then Jonson, positioned below two portraits of himself, would be recognized as the author of masques, comedies, tragedies (perhaps also satires, referenced by the satyrs), the inventor of this visual and kinetic (painted, dramatic and poetic) 'vanite', an embodiment of good living, truth and wisdom, and a poet to the gods (his Cavendish patrons and the King).¹⁵⁶

There may be a reference to this sequence of images in *The Antemasque*:

Vic: Butt what doe you thinke off a maske
Itt will be Praue, iff wee haue fine Clothes.
All: I butt iff wee haue nott

¹⁵⁶ Tom Bishop has noted that the generational transition from James to Charles in *Oberon* is attached 'to Jonson's assertion of his own emergent poetic powers. Thus while the first Satyr's opening question "See you not who riseth here?" ostensibly refers to the moon, it also takes in Henry's rising star at court and with it Jonson's ambitions as his poet, singing "not without orders"' in Tom Bishop, 'The Gingerbread Host: Tradition and Novelty in the Jacobean Masque' in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 88-120 (pp. 108-9).

Vic: Whye then I will tell you butt saye nothinge off Itt
 Itt will nott be Praue, butt I will make Itt as for
 no clothes. ff [ferarius Anuill] What shall wee doe Itt Naked, Vicker
 Holde you Peaces you are a Beastlye fellowe to
 talke off doinge Itt Naked (35-42),
 [...] B: [snip razor] What doth your worship
 thinke off the Gods; Vic: Gotts me that Is trew; B: I S^r butt
 theye are to Comon & Adulterated, Vic: No: by your Leaue
 Itt Is the Godeses that are so Comon & Adulterated Itt Is a worse
 matter iff theye make the Gotts Comon butt I like nott these
 neyther because theye will saye wee robe the olde Poetes. B: Yes
 fayth Mr Vicker methinkes a Mercurye nowe with winges att
 his Heeles will be moste Exselente, Vic: Gots plutter of her nayles Itt
 will be an Afronte to the Poetts, B Why,: Vic, Cause theye
 will saye His witt lies In his Heels. B Whye? Then lett him
 haue his Capp off winges on, Vic: Gods Lordes and his Ladies
 then theye will saye he hath a flienge Prayne, B Why is nott
 that beste for a Poete, Vic: Oh nott Alwayes butt sum-
 times. Is verie Good. B: What doe you thinke of An APolo
 or an orfius singinge Vic: Whatt doe I thinke marie I thinke ther wants
 Cloudes for him to Coume doune In, Ande besides we wante the
 discretion off Sum Iustice off Peace to make the Seanes therfor I
 vtterlye dislike thatt.
 (98-115)

The possibility of doing the show naked would have been amusing with reference to the decoration in the Elysium Closet. The allusions to adultery/adulteration and stealing material could allude to both the tablet of Moses and the Ovidian painted scheme (as well to Jonson). The vicar fears that presenting a Mercury in the masque will be an affront to the 'olde poets' in the plural before worrying about slights to one unnamed poet in particular. Mercury is depicted twice in the Elysium Closet: on the cornice he has his wings on his hat (Figure 188), and on the ceiling, where he may be connected to the philosophers and so to Jonson, he has his wings on his heels (Figure 119). The vicar ends by saying there are no clouds to allow a singing Orpheus or Apollo to descend, and no 'Iustice off Peace' (doubtless referencing Inigo Jones) to make the scenes, presumably including a cloud machine. His utter dislike of a plan that requires help from Inigo Jones could have referenced both the emblematic images over the double doors in the Elysium Closet and *Love's*

Welcome, probably staged in the same location just a few months before. The characters in the paintings might descend perfectly well of course – in the imagination – without the help of a mechanical device, as they could from the print of *Sanguine*, and as they had in *Love's Welcome*.

Jonson played with the idea of the sons of Apollo in various texts, the earliest perhaps his *Epistle to Lady Rutland* of 1600 (*Forest*, 12) where he speaks as Orpheus. By the early 1620s, when the Bolsover schemes were being executed, he was gathering his 'Tribe of Ben' and elaborating his identity as a disciple of Apollo, not least through the verses over the door of the Apollo Room at the Devil Tavern where he met with friends for food, wine and conversation.

The Elysium Closet could have been Cavendish's own Apollo Room, designed in collaboration with Jonson at around the time the poet was establishing his pseudo-sacred space in London. Thomas Randolph's *A gratulatory to Mr Ben. Jonson for his adopting of him to be his Son*, in which the young man becomes a nephew of the great poets and a grandson of the god, resonates with the Elysium Closet decoration. Randolph might speak for Cavendish:

I am a kinne to *Hero's* being thine,
And part of my alliance is divine,
Orpheus, Musaeus, Homer too; beside
Thy brothers by the *Roman* mothers side;
As *Ovid, Virgil*, and the *Latine* lyre,
That is so like thy *Horace*; the whole quire
Of poets are by thy Adoption, all
My uncles; thou hast given me power to call
Phoebus himself my grandsire.
(*A gratulatory*, 9-17)¹⁵⁷

Thus it may be no accident that Act II Scene 1 of Cavendish's *The Country Captain* is set in the Devil Tavern in London. If the play was intended for performance at Bolsover as well as London, or incorporated material associated with that place, the setting would not only have positioned Cavendish as one of the Sons of Ben, it would also have brought to mind the author's parallel and personal Apollo Room. There may have been another similar connection to the Elysium Closet in

¹⁵⁷ *Ben Jonson*, ed. by C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52), IX, p. 390.

the dialogue in the consecutive scenes in *The Variety* when Newman goes to his ‘new Taverne’ to drink, and Formal tells Lucy:

The Taverne he frequents he has made his Pheater at his own charge to act intemperance; o’re the great Roome he uses to be drunk in, they say, he has built a heaven, a Players heaven, and thence a Throne’s let down, in which, well heated, successively they are draw up to the clouds to drink their Mistris health, while the mad mortals adore their God of Grape, and gaping look like earth that’s chap’d with heat, although before within three minutes they were drench’d. (*The Variety*, III)¹⁵⁸

Jonson’s dual identity as a son of Apollo and leader of the Tribe of Ben elided the roles of poet, priest and patriarch. Although it would undoubtedly have been a breath-taking move to introduce a full-length portrait of himself into the decoration of a nobleman’s presence chamber, he could have appeared in the Star Chamber in the guise of Aaron. Jonson as Aaron would have been a logical adjunct to the sequence in the Elysium Closet, and we can assume his friends would have found his wit – and flamboyant presumption – amusing.

¹⁵⁸ William Cavendish, *The Country Captaine and the Varietie* (London, 1649). I am grateful to Richard Wood for discussions of *The Variety* in preparation for his forthcoming edition.



Figs 150, 151, 152 Aaron in the Star Chamber (English Heritage), and a detail of his face, compared with a detail of the portrait of Benjamin Jonson by Abraham van Blyenberch (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

Aaron would be an apt role for Jonson: the first of the line of High Priests, a prophet, and the elder brother and spokesman of Moses. It might have been amusing to draw a parallel between Aaron leading the people of Israel while Moses was absent on Mount Sinai (Exodus 32.1-6), and the topsy-turvy command of Jonson taking charge of Welbeck in 1618 during Cavendish's absence:

The next day after dinner, Sir William with my Old Lady Candish and his own lady went to Rufford, and resigned the whole house to my gossip etc., commanding his steward and all the rest of the officers to obey my gossip in all things, which authority he did as freely put in execution. For that afternoon he commanded a buck to be killed, [...] That night he commanded the wine cellar to be thrown open, and carried down the Markhams etc.

[...] On Sunday my gossip reigned wholly and gave entertainment to all comers. The officers came to know his pleasure and what he would command. Diverse gentlemen dined with him; Mr Steward and other gentlemen would not be persuaded to sit but wait. Whilst we were at dinner Mr Carnaby comes from Rufford with commendations to my gossip from all the ladies and Sir William Candish, and with a commission to lay all the doors open to Mr Jonson, and that my lady resigned all power and authority to him to do what he pleased. The house was his; and withal to entreat him they might have as good cheer as he could make them when they came home

[...] In the meantime my gossip gave order to the keeper to kill a buck next morning.

[...] Presently upon our return the ladies came, whom Mr Jonson welcomed to his house, and at supper bid them want nothing, for if they did it was not his fault. Chafed at the table for lights, and checked the waiters because there was no more new bread, which freedom of his mingled with a great deal of mirth much delighted the ladies.

The next day Sir William Candish carried my gossip to see Bolsover [...] ¹⁵⁹

Placing Jonson in the Star Chamber would have left a permanent reminder of his celebrated visit. I suggest that his residence in that room marked it as a theatrical space, and it coloured the works that were written for performance there. In the imagination Jonson would have been party to everything that took place at Bolsover. Perhaps he and Cavendish envisioned the production or reading of works like *The May-lord*, which Jonson discussed with William Drummond in 1618.¹⁶⁰ Anne Barton and Eugene Giddens have noted, '*The May-lord*, according to Drummond's report, contained a character called Alken, who represented Jonson himself, the Countess of Bedford as

¹⁵⁹ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, pp. 52-55.

¹⁶⁰ Letter 173 in Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters*, ed. by James Fitzmaurice (Ontario and Plymouth: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 238. Margaret Cavendish was proud of her husband's skill as a reader, and she noted that he admired Jonson's virtuosity: 'but in truth I never heard any man Read Well but my Husband, and have heard him say, he never heard any man Read Well but B.J. and yet he hath heard many in his Time'. She reports that 'Lady C.D. did read some of M.N.'s plays' with a whining voice for the sad parts; and a 'Great Scholar' also read his works aloud (badly). Fitzmaurice suggests Christiana, Countess of Devonshire and Thomas Hobbs were reading pieces by Cavendish (William Newcastle).

Ethra, Sir Thomas Overbury as Mogibell, and the old Countess of Suffolk impersonating an enchantress. Other names (unspecified) were given to Frances Howard, Somerset's ill-starred wife, to Pembroke, the Countess of Rutland, and Lady Wroth. This has very much the look of an in-group private theatrical, half-masque, half-play, with Jonson (characteristically) enjoying the opportunity of mingling on the same fictional level with some of his aristocratic patrons'. The intention may have been to put on a full performance of *The May-lord* with professional actors playing the clowns, or simply to read it aloud.¹⁶¹

Nick Rowe has discussed the relationship between Cavendish and Jonson, noting their striking familiarity, and the unusual degree of licence their relationship offered. This 'allowed the claiming of some liberties in the forms of approach to his patron and characterisation of the relationship in his literary works addressed to Cavendish. The pair seem to have established a strong degree of interpersonal commitment and mutuality [...] For Jonson there appears to have been an element of wish-fulfilment in the Host-Lovel relationship. The Host, who has to cater for the tastes of 'every Jovial Tinker' (*The New Inn*, I.3.113), turns out to be a guise for Lord Frampul. Having established a mutual respect with Lovel he ends the play as his father-in-law.'¹⁶² Perhaps Jonson's wished-for familial relationship with Cavendish had already been established, some ten years earlier, in the Little Castle decoration. He had become his patron's older brother when he cast himself as Aaron to Cavendish's Moses. (I will return to the painting of Moses below.)

There may be references to the portrait of Jonson as Aaron in three of Cavendish's dramatic works that would support this interpretation. Cavendish's *The Antemasque* may jokingly express fear that the poet will disapprove of the proposed masque (Jonson was famously harsh towards actors performing his work).¹⁶³ After worrying about nudity and robbing the old poets, the group of would-be performers continues:

B I Confess S^r. Itt girdes att the times, theye
are whipde & stripde with a Poeticall
furie. Vicker. I Butt Looke you nowe take
heede the Bedle doth nott whipp & stripp the
Poeticall wayne [& make Itt Bleede] by Gods flutter off our nayles

¹⁶¹ *The Sad Shepherd, or a Tale of Robin Hood*, ed. by Anne Barton and Eugene Giddens, CWB, VII, pp. 419-80 (p. 420).

¹⁶² Nick Rowe, "'My best patron'": William Cavendish and Jonson's Caroline Drama', *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 197-212 (pp. 200, 206).

¹⁶³ Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, pp. 84, 106.

he hath a vilde satin In h[is] hande to Lashe
 withall, haueing the Prologe off Authoretie
 & the Lashe Is an Ill Epologg, Espetialye att
 the Epelogg off a Carte which is the hinder
 parte off It Looke you. 3: I S^r. Butt Itt is dun
 so Couertlye. Vic: Gotts me but whatt iff
 Aughtoretye doe vnouer you then you are founde
 naked, besides Itt is Scandelum magnatum agay
 an Honorable Lorde the Lorde misrule, &
 that Is Star-chamber-busines; & thate Is worse
 (*The Antemasque*, 204-19)

A 'poeticall furie' could allude to the myth of Orpheus who freed Entheus or Poetic Fury from the cave of madness. This might be another reference to the depiction of Jonson as Orpheus in the Elysium Closet. Jonson could also, like Chaucer, have the 'Prologe off Authouritie'. The 'poeticall vayne' might have punned on an anatomical vein and 'All is But vanitie' in the Elysium Closet (which I have argued also carried the meaning of a vanity or a masque).

The 'Bedle' might be an alternative identity for Aaron who carried the censer on a silk rope. Jonson would then have been likened to a bedle acting as a lesser lay official (teasingly fitting for Jonson's lower social station) in this holy place, keeping order and offering assistance. When the vicar said 'the hinder part off it Looke you' he could have gestured to the censer which would be a more dangerous weapon than the silk rope on which it hung. A trial at Bolsover for striking a nobleman would be a parody the trial of peers in the king's Star Chamber (again poking fun at Jonson for his low birth). The 'Lord Misrule' might be the vicar and so Cavendish, but it might also be a role for Jonson if he was wearing the costume of Aaron, trimmed with bells. They might both be topsy-turvy characters. (I will return to the offense of *scandalum magnatum* and the pun on Bolsover Star Chamber as the King's Star Chamber below.)



Fig. 153 Detail of the painting of Aaron showing the censer and rope

The role of a Bedle for Jonson may have been a longstanding joke. There could be a related witticism in two of Jonson's letters to Cavendish of 1631 in which he refers to himself as Cavendish's 'beadsman'. In the first he wrote:

My Lord,

The faith of a fast friend, with the duties of an humble servant, and the hearty prayers of a religious beadsman, all kindled upon this altar to Your Honour, my honourable Lady, the hopeful issue, and your right noble brother, be ever my sacrifice.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Letter 15, ll. 3-6, ed. by Ian Donaldson, *CWBJ*, VI, p. 343.

A subsequent letter was signed ‘your truest beadsman’ (Letter 16, 7).¹⁶⁵

There may also be references to the painting of Aaron in two works where bells are mentioned. In Cavendish’s *The Cutt purses Ceane* the second thief says:

2: I am rare for slighte off hande
In our Vniuersetie off Cutt purse Hall,
& Can Cutt the Purse that hanges
So ticle att the Bell & neuer ringe
Itt, butt my Contience makes my hande
so tremble when I Coume to acte Itt In
Companye, as tis wonderfull
(5-11)

If this scene was played in front of the painting of Aaron, the speech might refer to debts to Jonson’s work (especially, here, *Gypsies Metamorphosed*) and, once again, a fear that the poet would disapprove of the performers’ efforts. Managing to steal from him without being detected by the bells ringing might signify that Cavendish was such a good imitator that his newly-crafted scene would be indistinguishable from a Jonson original (a Jonsonian ideal). Of course, the bells on the painting would make no noise if the thieves tickled them because they were fictive.

We may be able to take this a step further and suggest that **Bessie Bell** could have been a cheeky nickname for Jonson. The letter **B** might stand for **Ben**. In the lyrics of the ballad the two girls who die are called Bessie Bell and Mary Gray.

O BESSIE BELL and Mary Gray
They war twa bonnie lasses;
They biggit a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it o’er wi’rashes.¹⁶⁶

Cavendish could have been Mary Gray to Jonson’s Bessie Bell. (I will suggest below that the text of *Love’s Welcome* indicates that Moses, dressed in grey, may be a portrait of Cavendish.) Perhaps,

¹⁶⁵ Letter 16, ed. by Ian Donaldson, *CWBJ*, VI, p. 383.

¹⁶⁶ *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. by Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, 176, online edition: <http://www.bartleby.com/243/176.html> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

amusingly, the two men, in their biblical costume, resembled women in full-length dresses. The making of a bower could be part of the joke, relating to creation of the Little Castle.

I have mentioned above the scenes from *A Debaushte Gallante* in which the gallant and the gentleman discuss libel and adultery. The passage on stealing the work of others mentions both the Star Chamber and bells. After the gallant explains to the gentleman how to pass off the work of other poets as his own they continue:

Gen: I am the moste Infernitlye obligde to you S^r, for this fauor,
For Itt fitts my Genius, so perfectlye, - Butt by your
Leaue S^r, – Whatt iff the parties beate one for Itt,

Gall: Whye then you are payde for your folleye, & haue
your deserte, - I’le assure you S^r, I will nott bee bounde,
to saue you Harmles, Besides the starchamber maye
make you haue a reuerste seate, a Horse-Back, & holde
the Tayle for the Bridle, & loooke oute att the balconeye
off a Pillerye,

Gen: Fayth I dare nott doote, for my Eares,

Gall. Oh wise men will nott trouble thee butt dispise thee,
& that punishes a Libeller, much more, then fortye
papers off his breaste, with his Eares to boote,

Gen: Then Ile libell off none, butt wise men, butt then
one maye lye off them maye hee Nott,

Gall. Whatt Else, a Libell Is nothin[ge] Else
As the Lerner Lo[r]de Bakon Sayde
Thatt a Lye-Bell, was a Lye-with [a] Bell,
to ringe Itt a boutte,

(Fol.45b, 29-47)¹⁶⁷

This would have been amusing if the ‘parties’ who were wronged and might beat him included Jonson with his censor, and if the platform for the pillory was compared to a Bolsover balcony. The gentleman would be asking whether it was permissible to steal the work of wise men who included Jonson (wise in his guises as the Philosophers, Mercury, the poet with a viol, and Aaron)

¹⁶⁷ *A Debaushte Gallante, Dramatic Works*, ed. by Lynn Hulse, p. 114.

and also, perhaps, to steal the work of Ovid, and the artists who had made the source prints for the paintings. ‘Lye-bell’ would, of course, be a witty gesture to Aaron dressed with bells.

If we continue to examine the images in the Elysium Closet we can see that the sequences of images rising from the window are matched by other vertical sets around the room. If in the Ante Room the allusion to the Annunciation had offered a promise that Elizabeth would conceive and bear a special son, through a miracle akin to alchemy, then here in the Elysium Closet, the promise appears to be fulfilled. A passage on the cornice to the left of the window shows a semi-recumbent Juno (who breasts may be engorged with milk) looking up at another version of herself, lying on her back with legs parted and a distended lower belly. Beside her Jupiter congratulates a boy receiving a green garland.



Fig.154 View of the cornice painting and ceiling over the door in the Elysium Closet (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Figs 155, 156 Details of the two depictions of Juno in the Elysium Closet



Fig. 157 Detail of the ceiling in the Elysium Closet showing Juno with Jupiter and a boy receiving a garland

Juno is in a sexual pose, but I propose that the primary meaning of this scene is that she has been impregnated by Jupiter like Danaë in a shower of gold.¹⁶⁸ There may be a reference to the Elysium Closet ceiling in Cavendish's *The Variety* (1641) where Newman calls for a song, and the First Wench replies, 'Take heed of the old ballads, ecclipped, like Hermit poore, eyes hide my love, or Panæ [Danaë] in the Brazen Tower'.¹⁶⁹ The goddess could be in a birthing position. Danaë's mythological son by Jupiter was Perseus (great grandfather of Hercules, also a son of Jupiter), who commonly represented masculine and heroic virtue.¹⁷⁰ Viewers might have been primed to recognize Perseus by the carvings of Pegasus on the bosses in the Pillar Parlour, and the passage would resonate with Jonson's compliment to Cavendish, 'You showed like Perseus upon Pegasus' (Epigram 53, 7). The boy might then represent Cavendish or any one of his forbears or descendants.



Fig. 158 Carvings of Pegasus on one of the bosses in the Pillar Parlour (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

If we draw the sight lines on the ceiling painting we can see that the primary focus is on the son of Jupiter and Juno/Danaë, and there is a connection to the boy with a moon on the right. The cupid with a palm and a garland crowns the child, but he is not looking forward as might be expected. Instead he is looking at the boy with a moon to the right. Likewise, the flying cupid who crowns his fellow cupid is positioned above the boy with a moon (part of his iconographic sequence from the window to the centre of the ceiling, described above), yet he and his companion are turning their faces to look at the son of Jupiter on the left. Similarly, the satyr nearest to the tree on the left faces the son of Jupiter, but his eyes turn to the boy with a moon. The implication would be that the boy with a moon and the son of Jupiter are, in a sense, the same person.

¹⁶⁸ I am grateful to Matthew Reeves for suggesting the pose resembles depictions of Danaë.

¹⁶⁹ *The Variety*, IV.

¹⁷⁰ A character 'in the furniture of Perseus' (325-6) expresses heroic and masculine virtue in *The Masque of Queens*, ed. by David Lindley, *CWBJ*, III, p. 317.

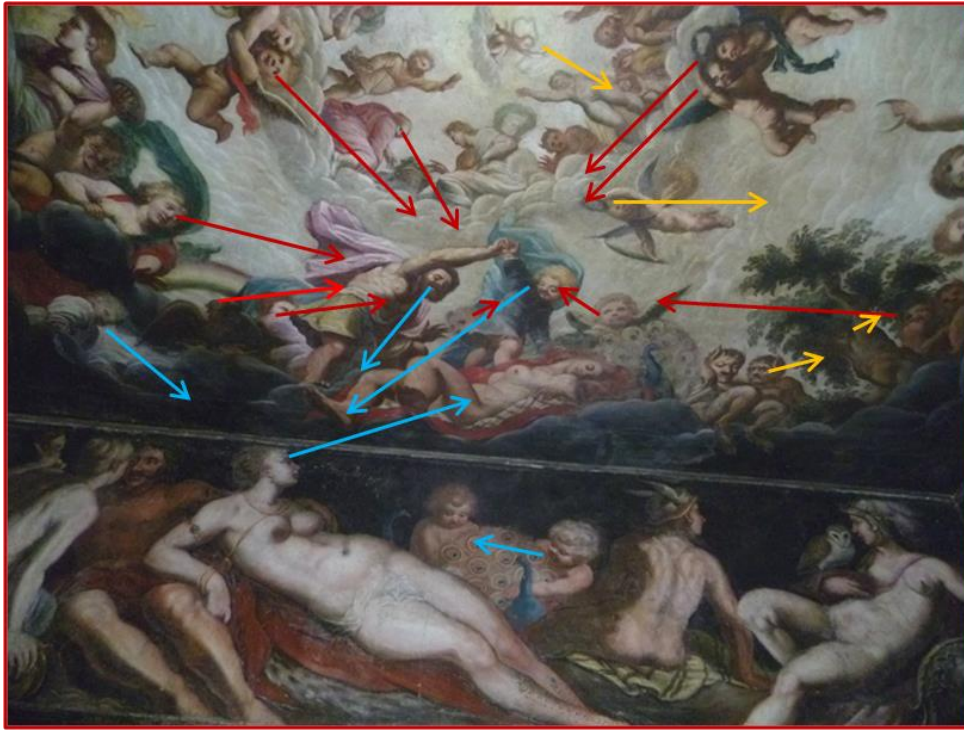


Fig. 159 Detail of the Elysium Closet ceiling showing the sight lines and a focus on the boy receiving a garland
(Crosby Stevens)

Jupiter, the sun king, was an alchemical synonym for gold. Remembering the paintings of Melancholic and *Visus*, this passage on the ceiling may have brought to mind Mammon's speech in *The Alchemist*:

Now, Epicure,
Heighten thyself. Talk to her all in gold;
Rain her as many showers as Jove did drops
Unto his Danaë: show the god a miser
Compared with Mammon. What? The stone will do't.
She shall feel gold, taste gold, hear gold, sleep gold;
Nay, we will *concumbere* gold. I will be puissant
And mighty in my talk to her! Here she comes.
(IV.1.24-31)

It is probable that when the castle was furnished, the bed in the principal bedchamber stood directly behind the wall decorated with this picture. It may have occurred to visitors that Jupiter had impregnated Juno/Danaë in the painted heavens only a few feet from the place where Cavendish might hope to impregnate his wife, or a few feet from the state bed that symbolized that dynastic event.

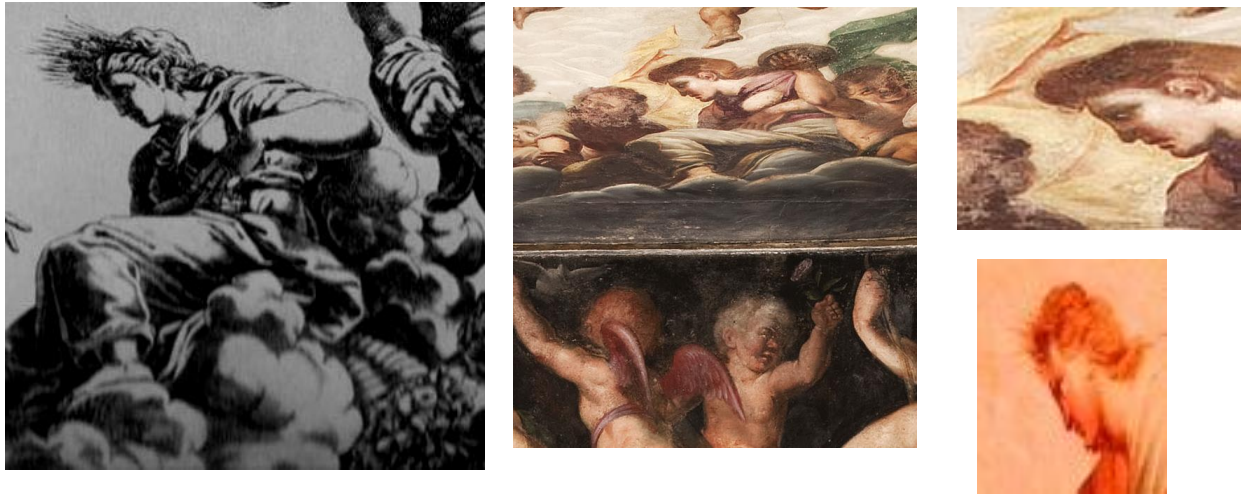
The theme of procreation is pointed up by the linked passage above Juno and Jupiter, in the central ring of the ceiling. The composition here consists of a basket or up-ended cornucopia containing flowers and possibly fruit, flanked by two immortals, a man, a satyr and a boy. (The figure of the standing boy with a raised arm is shared with the sequence rising from the boy with a moon.)



Figs 160, 161 Detail of the inner ring on the ceiling showing the cornucopia and surrounding figures, with a detail of the figure of Vesta

The goddess on the right has a flame-like diadem that may mark her as Vesta, goddess of the home and family. Her figure is derived from Ceres in the Primaticcio print. The same source was used again, with extended hair and no diadem, for a seemingly anonymous female figure with one bare breast, situated above Eros and a second Eros on the cornice opposite the window. The allusion

may be to hope for a flourishing future: Cavendish and his wife, as Jupiter and Juno/Danaë, are crested by an image of fortunate and fruitful domesticity.¹⁷¹



Figs 162, 163, 164, 165 Ceres in the print after Primaticcio compared with details of the female figure on the ceiling above the erotes, and Vesta

Despite this essentially virtuous central message, the Elysium Closet scheme is nonetheless suffused with Ovidian lust. Satyrs, bacchantes and Neptunes are dotted throughout, and pairs of divine lovers are posed in attitudes of unmistakeably physical attraction.

¹⁷¹ Jonson noted that Eudaimonia or Felicity had ‘a cornucopia filled only with flowers, as a sign of flourishing blessedness’ (427-8) in *The King’s Entertainment*, ed. by Martin Butler, *CWBJ*, II, pp. 421-69 (p. 450).



Fig. 166 View of the Elysium Closet ceiling from the balcony (Crosby Stevens)



Figs 167, 168 Details of the cornice paintings showing Hercules and Jupiter attracted to female figures

On the cornice opposite the window a flirtatious Mars and Venus are translated on the ceiling above to the mythical episode of them making love under the net. The discarded helmet and sword in the corner mark their transfer from cornice to ceiling.



Fig. 169 Detail of the cornice and ceiling paintings in the Elysium Closet showing the sequence from Mars and Venus flirting to Mars and Venus under the net, and then the couple in the inner ring (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 170 Detail of the Elysium Closet ceiling showing Mars and Venus under the net (English Heritage)

If we read the decoration in a vertical sequence here, as we did for the boy with a moon, the philosophers, and Juno and Jupiter, the underlying message is familiar. We see that Mars and Venus flirt, then in the outer ring of the ceiling they are discovered making love. They are watched by both their son Eros and a figure wearing a crimson costume with a modern collar, anachronistically reminiscent of clerical dress. In the inner ring, a couple are seated side by side, nearly naked. A standing boy looks towards them, and we may infer that he is, again, their son. Neptune the god of fertility faces them, and he is accompanied by Jupiter in the guise of an eagle. These figures are lightly painted, marking them as an associated group.



Fig. 171 The central ring of the Elysium Closet ceiling (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

The standing boy, derived from Primaticcio's Apollo, is painted with a sash and a wand, making a connection to the large kneeling boy and the standing boy with a lifted arm, all situated in the inner ring. There is also a connection to the Apollo-like boy in the centre whose sash is fluttering in the breeze.



Figs 172,173,174, 175 Details of the inner ring and centre of the Elysium Closet ceiling showing the four boys

Thus if we read the whole scheme in a pyramid configuration, moving upward, we can see that the Apollo-like boy at the centre could be the son of Mars and Venus, and the son of Juno and Jupiter, and also the son of the missing person in the window, who we can presume was a living Cavendish or Stuart. When the direction of flow is reversed at the centre all the boys and their descendants become sons of Apollo.

It may be no accident that that clouds which form the ring at the centre of the ceiling are heaped into a narrow, dark ridge. If the Apollo-like boy at the centre and his cushion of darker cloud provided the dot, we would have the alchemical symbol for gold. The boys would constitute both the symbol and the product.

The doves and the figures of Eros and his partner (perhaps Anteros) on the cornice with Mars and Hercules give further rising and spiraling impetus to the composition. The two cupids are translated into a pair of cupids above them (depicted without the bow and arrows of Eros). I suggest that, with the Neptunes, bacchantes and satyrs, the ten cupids add codicils to the scenes, alluding to classical notions of the fundamental forces and problematic qualities of love. (We might include among the cupids the three boys on the cornices who are shown without wings.)



Figs 176, 177 The Elysium Closet ceiling (Bob Smith English Heritage) and the cornice below, showing the ascent of the cupids (English Heritage)

We can find a related discourse on sex and desire if we read the iconography on the cornices from left to right. Here the theme of earthly and heavenly love is elaborated by varied depictions of dual Venuses, and the theme of motherhood is further developed. This would have resonated with Neoplatonic ideas of love and beauty, and the view of Ficino in particular, that men and women should have an intellectual appreciation of each other's minds, souls and bodies, reserving touch for creating children, although, given the Ovidian elements in the design, the suggestive poses, the phallus of Mars, and the conceit that Cavendish might take on the guises of the lusty Hercules, Jupiter, Neptune, and Oberon as he moved between heaven and earth, the Neoplatonism is decidedly ambivalent.¹⁷² Raylor has argued for a connection between the contrasted decoration of the Elysium and Heaven Closets and Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*. I suggest the duality is within the Elysium Closet scheme, and even within individual Venuses.

The contrast between earthly and heavenly love is a recurring theme in works associated with Cavendish. *The Concealed Fancies* explored the ideal of a wife who is physically desirable and spirited but also virtuous, uniting the two versions of love. If the play was performed in the Little Castle, its discussion of marriage would have been received in the context of the paintings and within the tradition of other works written for the building. I propose that the playful confidence of the fictive sisters, and their wit (which included sexual double-entendres) reflected the real sisters' familiarity with the iconography in the Elysium Closet. Indeed, the paintings would have justified their boldness. The play was aimed at an audience which understood the messages about love and found the paintings amusing, sharing the authors' frame of reference.

COURTLEY:	Her petulance I'd only have with me With others stately for to be, I would not have her think of wife Nor me as husband to make strife, But justly have her fraught with wit, So by me, pretty man, may sit.
PRESUMPTION:	You have declared your mistress, life of day, But I'd have mine, me more, for to obey. (I.1.66-73)
LUCENY:	How write you to him?

¹⁷² Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, ed. and trans. by Sears Jayne, 2nd rev. edn (Woodstock, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 1985). I am grateful to Angela Hobbs for discussions on Neoplatonism.

TATTINEY: In as several humours as I will dress myself. His mistress, this you may see is an equal marriage, and I hate those people that will not understand matrimony is to join lovers.

LUCENY: But think husbands are the rod of authority!

TATTINEY: Or a marriage clog! (Epilogue, 83-89)

In the role of Calsindow's daughters ('Calsindow' may be an imperfect anagram of 'Wl Candish') Luceny and Tattiney might be imagining themselves as the various 'mistresses' wearing different costumes in the Little Castle paintings, including those illustrating the humours. 'So by me, pretty man, may sit' might then allude to the enticing Venus/Omphale, 'fraught with wit', seated beside the effeminate Hercules (Figure 182). Likewise, 'the rod of authority' would be a joke picking up on the phallic sword and erect penis of Mars, and the rods held by Apollo and the boy in the inner ring. A 'clog', meaning a short thick piece of wood (that might 'clog' up a pipe), would also be suggestive.¹⁷³

I wish to argue that the cornice paintings present the ideal wife. Walking into the Elysium Closet from the bedchamber, the first cornice encountered displays two life-size goddesses, one being offered fruit like Eve, the other holding a rose like the Virgin Mary.



Fig. 178 The cornice painting of Bacchus with two goddesses, a baccante and a female child (English Heritage)

¹⁷³ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies note the sexual puns here, and suggest Luceny questions the authority and sexual potency of husbands. Cavendish and Brackley, *The Concealed Fancies*, ed. by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 214.

The scene is of relaxed pleasure in Elysium, although a visitor attuned to the iconography in previous rooms in the Little Castle might suspect that the female figures, despite their nudity, could reference members of the Cavendish family. It might have been remembered that an apple was an attribute of Hercules; that the Ogle crest of William's mother Katherine was composed of three crescent moons; and that Elizabeth had been connected with the Virgin Mary and Venus in *Melancholic*.

The goddess on the left begins a sequence of female figures around the cornices. She is looking at the viewer, drawing him or her into the scene. She is offered fruit but does not respond. Her expression is neutral. Above her a clothed goddess is being seduced by a bearded god: perhaps a related scene of temptation. Her forward-facing torso and crossed leg are directed into the picture space, moving the viewer's attention to the right.

Her companion wears diaphanous white drapery. She holds a flower that reappears on the brow of the goddess flirting with Mars, and again in the hand of the cupid who may be Anteros in the neighbouring cornice.¹⁷⁴ Thus she appears to be a Venus despite the moon on her brow that labels her as Diana. I suggest she is both Venus and Diana, as well as the Virgin Mary, counterpart to Eve. She is alluring and chaste, like the ladies in *Melancholic* and *Visus*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ No print source has been found for the cornice paintings.

¹⁷⁵ Peterson notes that Lyric Five suggests chaste Diana stirs up her lover's passion. Peterson, 'Virtue Reconciled', p. 254.



Fig. 179 View of the cornice and ceiling in the Elysium Closet on entering the room (Crosby Stevens)

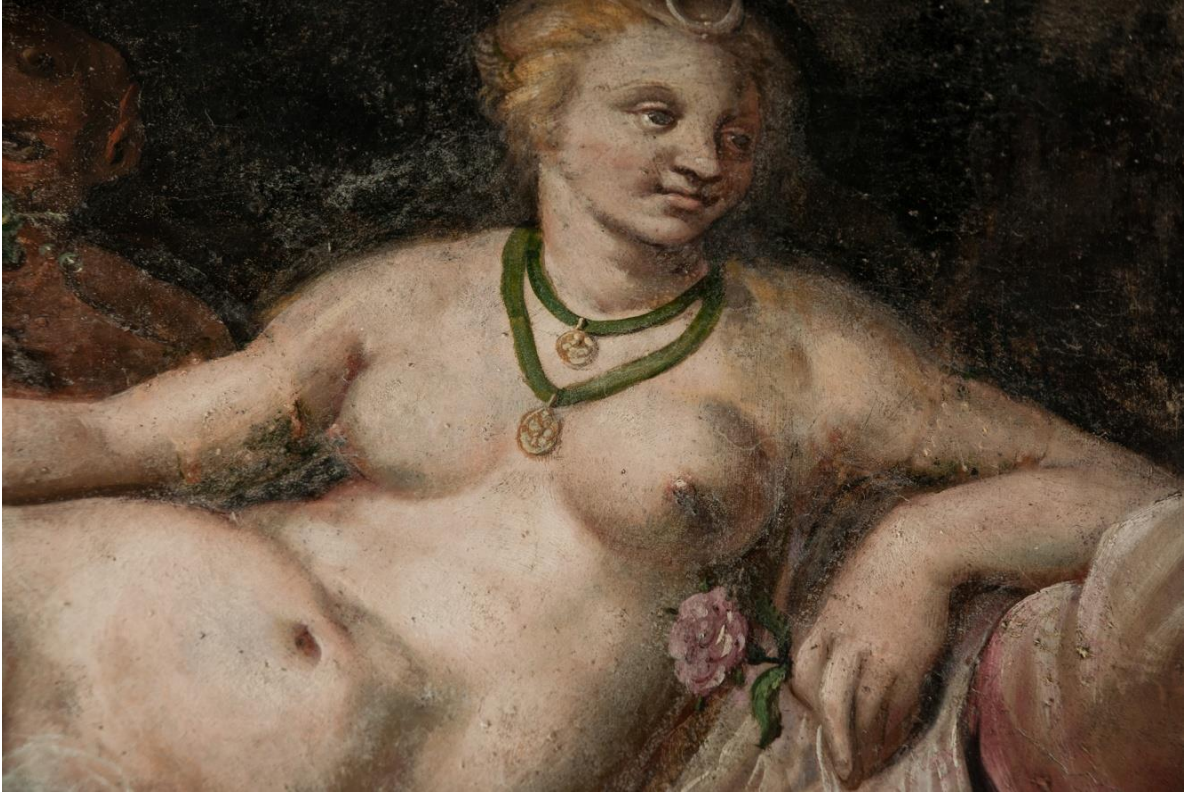


Fig. 180 Detail of the heavenly Venus or Diana (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Fig. 181 The cornice painting of Mars and Venus, Eros and Anteros, and Hercules and Omphale



Fig. 182 Detail of Omphale and Hercules



Figs 183, 184, 185 Details of the flowers in the hands of Venus/Diana, and the cupid who may be Anteros, and in the hair of the Venus who flirts with Mars

There are similarities between the torsos of Venus/Diana and Venus/Omphale, but Venus/Omphale looks younger with smaller breasts, a slender waist and a flat stomach. The pentimento above her right breast is evidence of the figure being reduced. If Mars and Hercules represent Cavendish men, then the Venuses could allude to Cavendish women. Positioned directly below the Venus who has been caught under the net, the Venus/Diana would most obviously allude to Elizabeth, Cavendish's wife, currently producing children c.1620. A theme of motherhood (perhaps with Diana presented as the goddess of childbirth) would echo the passage opposite, of Juno producing a child. However, with the heraldic moon on her brow and her full figure she could

also be Katherine, Cavendish's mother. Katherine, a widow since 1617, would be looking towards two gods, including Hercules, who we might assume represent Cavendish men.

The rose of Venus/Diana also references the Virgin Mary. In the context of childbirth it might make another link to the Annunciation. It may be worth remembering that in the biblical account of the life of Samson (who was commonly connected to Hercules), his mother was visited like Mary: 'And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son' (Judges 13.3). Thus the goddess looking towards Hercules, with long hair, could also be Samson's mother.

It is logical to speculate that Katherine might have had a place in the painted schemes. If the intention was to reference multiple Cavendish brothers in this room as elsewhere, then there might also have been matching multiple Ogle sisters. Katherine might have been paired with her elder sister Jane, in a lattice of family connections. Jane had married Edward, 8th Earl of Shrewsbury, Gilbert Talbot's brother, compounding the alliance between the Ogle, Talbot and Cavendish dynasties in that generation. Edward had died in 1617, five weeks before Katherine's husband Charles. Jane is likely to have attended entertainments at Welbeck when her sister Katherine was mistress of the house, before the deaths of their husbands, and she could have been aware of, even been a party to, the new decorative invention in the Little Castle. (She died in 1625.) Jonson received 'extraordinary grace and entertainment' from her at Rufford Abbey during his walk to Scotland, and he wrote her epitaph.¹⁷⁶

The account of Jonson's foot voyage notes that Katherine accompanied Elizabeth on a visit to Rufford, as we have seen, and she joined in the jocular banqueting at Welbeck. We might infer that she was an active participant in entertainments hosted by her son and daughter-in-law in their various houses. The largest bedchamber on the second floor of the Little Castle, presumed to be the bedroom of the mistress of the house, seems to have been kept for Katherine to the end of her life. She bequeathed the room to her daughter-in-law in her will.¹⁷⁷ The panelling here was particularly rich, decorated with flowers (these may be stylised roses) painted in gold, and her coat of arms was carved on the chimneypiece.

¹⁷⁶ Loxley et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁷⁷ Nottinghamshire Archives, NA DD. 6P. 1. 19. 18, will of 'Lady Cathrin Cavendish, widdow of Sir Charles Cavendish of Welbeck' (22 July 1624) cited in Worsley, 'Building a family', p. 7. The inventory of c. 1676 calls this 'the roome that giues light to Hardwik'.



Figs 186, 187 The chimney piece in the room that was bequeathed by Katherine Ogle to Elizabeth Bassett, with a detail of the floral motif in gold that decorates the panelling by the windows (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

I suggest the figure of Venus/Diana on the cornice alludes to both Elizabeth and Katherine. They are Cavendish female loadstones to the iron of Mars. As we have seen in *Phlegmatic* ironstone was associated with the Cavendish estates. This would anticipate Jonson's description of Katherine as 'magnetic in the force' in his epitaph of 1629 (19), and his probable reference to her as Lady Loadstone in *The Magnetic Lady* of 1632.¹⁷⁸

Cavendish copied the word 'magnetic' in the dialogue between Manly and Sir William in Act I of *The Variety* when he described a vivacious widow:

¹⁷⁸ *The Magnetic Lady*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, *CWBJ*, VI, pp. 393-540 (p. 400-10).

Man. But who is your Mistris Knight?

Sr Will. I dare tell thee, Madam *Beaufield*, the Lady of spirit, and entertainment, the only Magnetick widdow i'th Town.

Man. They talk her a wit, and a most superstitious observer of persons, and their garbes; I never had the happiness to kiss her hand, or be known to her, but I converse with some who are very high and loud in her character;

(*The Variety*, I)

Cavendish may have borrowed the epithet from *The Magnetic Lady*, but I suggest there could also be a shared primary source in the painted decoration at Bolsover. The phrase ‘superstitious observer of persons and their garbs’ would be amusing if it alluded to an allegorical portrait of Katherine as the naked Venus/Diana looking at Mars and Hercules from on high in the Elysium Closet. She would be a ‘Lady of spirit’ not only because she was spirited but also because she was a goddess. The others who were ‘very high’ might include her noble sons and her daughter-in-law, who were depicted in the paintings ‘on high’ and were still living.

Continuing clockwise to the third cornice, Venus/Juno in the centre wears a sheer white cloth like the Venus/Diana on the cornice opposite. Her necklace falls across her chest and this might allude to the girdles of Venus and the Virgin, seen in *Melancholic*. The figure of Juno/Danaë on the ceiling above her retains this multiple identity. She wears a white band, perhaps decorated with pearls, below her breasts. Juno appears to be a heavenly Venus in contrast to the voluptuous Venus who sits on the other side of Jupiter, identified by her full and empty goblets.

The composition of the cornice painting also pairs Juno, in the centre, with Minerva, on the right. Noting Mercury’s presence, there could be a further allusion – to the Judgement of Paris. Perhaps the Ogle and Cavendish women are again perfect patterns of both female virtue and feminine attraction, having the attributes of all three goddesses. Jupiter, like Paris, gives his attention to a sexually attractive Venus.



Fig. 188 Cornice painting with Venus, Jupiter, Juno, Mercury and Minerva (English Heritage)

There appear to be references to these cornice paintings in *The Concealed Fancies*, where Lady Tranquillity talks with her servant Toy about preparing to visit the sisters Luceny and Tattiney, as part of her campaign to marry their father:

- LADY TRANQUILLITY: Toy, come hither. I will tell you, though I am up, yet my design is for all, I am well to keep my bed; therefore resolve, Toy, to dress me neatly.
- TOY: I will madam, so well as my education will give me leave.
- LADY TRANQUILLITY: Toy, tomorrow I intend to go to my wits.
- TOY: Who are they?
- LADY TRANQUILLITY: Monsieur Calsindow's daughters. Therefore my keeping of my bed is to plump up my face, Toy.
- TOY: But truly, madam, in my opinion those ladies look as if they would not mind much, they're too young.
- LADY TRANQUILLITY: O, Toy, but they can give such characters as to make a lady appear, or not appear; besides, I am in love with their father, so I would have them like me.
- TOY: But your ladyship will not let them know so much. (I.2.1-20)
- LADY TRANQUILLITY: [...] But what say'st thou to that quiff and pinner that hath the gillyflower, and my best smock-band; will they not agree well together? Speak! What, art thou in a study of my marriage to their father? (I.2. 29-32)

TOY: I was thinking of the laces, and truly your Ladyship has matched them very well. If your Ladyship please I will fetch them. (I.2.33-35)

LADY TRANQUILLITY: [...] Now, what say you Toy to the best dress for the face? Do you not think pomatum will do well, and rub it over with scarlet after [...] (I.2.39-42)

What, thou would'st have me use an oiled mask? A pox on it! (I.2.50-51)

TOY: [...] Madam, you have left out your white satin waistcoat.

LADY TRANQUILLITY: O impertinent dull brain! Dost thou think I would have forgot that! Come Toy, away, I'm resolved to take to my bed. (I.2.55-59)

The Venuses on the cornice were, of course, 'up', and their design was for all to see. They were lying down as if still in bed, and they were two dimensional and so might need to plump up their faces. They would appear or not appear in a play, descending from their paintings, according to the whim of the authors. Toy might lose concentration in a study of her marriage because the pictures are rude. The implication would be that Lady Tranquillity was one of the semi-recumbent goddesses. The garments she chose could allude to their only coverings: flowers, breast bands and necklaces, which Toy would give them if she had the education to dress immortals. The need for a waistcoat (meaning a short long-sleeved jacket) would be amusing: the lady would have to wear more substantial garments, and warmer ones, than these if she wished to pay a call on the young ladies. When she applied her make-up (including pomatum, which could add a punning reference to the apples on the cornice and so the stories of Hercules, Eve and the Judgement of Paris), she would be imitating the painting of the pictures. An oiled mask would allude to the oilpaint. (In *The Cutt purses Ceane* the first thief says: 'My masters I heer them Couminge / oyle your fingers, & Harden your Hartes, / & defie the Gallowes'. [40-42])¹⁷⁹ More than this, Lady Tranquillity would be making herself look like the allegorical representations of the real Cavendish sisters' mother and grandmother in the room.

If Lady Tranquillity was a satirical portrait of Margaret Lucas, their father's fiancée, as has been suggested by S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, this scene would have been carefully targeted and remarkably savage.¹⁸⁰ In the context of the Little Castle iconography, when Lady

¹⁷⁹ For the oils in the paints used at Bolsover see Hughes, '...with the feather edge', pp. 130-31.

¹⁸⁰ Cavendish and Brackley, *The Concealed Fancies*, ed. by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 129.

Tranquillity enhanced her beauty, and disguised her intentions to hunt for a husband, she would have engaged in a false transformation, making herself into a fraudulent Venus. Her later marriage to Corpolant, solely for his money ('Mais de van que Je vous marriez, / Je vous die que Je nemiey' [V.6.49-50]), would have resonated with *Melancholic*, in which the sisters' mother Elizabeth displayed more virtue than Lady Tranquillity by rejecting the fat, rich old man in favour of their father, whose name is written in her book. Using faulty French to send up the inadequate education of their future stepmother would have resonated with *Choleric* where the sleeves of the saucy camp follower (a false Venus, White Woman and Virgin) are decorated with fleurs de lys, and a poor command of French might also have labelled Lady Tranquillity/Margaret an inferior derivative of the Fontainebleau print source.

I have argued above that there are a number of thematic threads running through the iconographic programme across the building. In the architectural plan the Elysium Closet is paired with the Heaven Closet, on the other side of the principal bedchamber, and there is a particularly close dialogue between these two painted schemes. The paintings in the Heaven Closet are also crucial to our understanding of *Love's Welcome* and the dramatic works of Cavendish and his daughters, and I will therefore examine them in detail next.

The viol de gamba provides a link between the Elysium and Heaven Closets. The instrument slides into the scene of Elysium as if from another location beyond the clouds. Although its sexual connotations might have been fitting, it is a curiously anachronistic intrusion. Another viol appears in the Heaven Closet, floating in the midst of an exuberant heavenly orchestra.¹⁸¹ The neck of this second viol points towards the date of 1619 above the narrow window. There is a focus on the recess below the date: the figure of Christ in the centre of the ceiling looks in that direction, and an angel positioned beside the viol appears to descend towards the empty space, carrying a garland of red and white roses.

This may be the site of another implied tableau where fathers and sons are contrasted. If Cavendish stood in the window he would be silhouetted against the light, as would have occurred in the Elysium Closet, and he would appear to be receiving the garland from heaven, just as the son of Juno/Danae in the Elysium Closet received a garland from the putto above him.

¹⁸¹ Lynn Hulse has shown that William was actively involved in the English tradition of playing divisions upon the bass viol. He also collected English ballads. Lynn Hulse, 'Apollo's Whirligig', pp. 213-46; Lynn Hulse, 'The Duke of Newcastle and the English Viol', *Chelys*, 29 (2001), 28-43; Lynn Hulse, "'Amorous in music'", in *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648-1660*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (Antwerp: Rubenshuis and Rubenianum, 2006), pp. 83-89.



Fig. 189 View from the door of the Heaven Closet ceiling (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Fig. 190 Detail of the Heaven Closet ceiling showing the viol and the angel descending with a garland



Fig. 191 Detail of Christ in the Heaven Closet (Crosby Stevens)

Wells-Cole has noted that Jesus is posed as if dancing. He has proposed that this figure might represent Christ at his Transfiguration, not his Ascension as has usually been assumed, although I suggest that in the context of the references to the crucifixion on the cornices, the Transfiguration and Ascension could have been elided.¹⁸² Jesus had climbed a high mountain when he was transfigured, wearing a robe ‘shining, exceeding white as snow’ (Mark 9.3). The voice of God was heard to say, ‘This is my beloved Son, hear him’ (Mark 9.7).¹⁸³ Perhaps at this stage in the ascent of the Little Castle visitors were invited to listen to God, to Cavendish (shadowing the King, who was divine), and to Cavendish’s living or hoped-for son, who would one day, in his turn, stand in the window. The date 1619 could be the date of the completion of the decoration in this room, as has usually been argued (I will return to this below), but it might also commemorate the birth of Cavendish’s first son. We could speculate that after the child’s death the following year this painted date, the multitude of young angels, and the relevant biblical texts would have given the Heaven Closet the appearance of a memorial.

¹⁸² Verbal communication. Comparable images would include Raphael’s *The Transfiguration* (c. 1519) in the Pinacoteca Apostolica Vaticano in Rome, and Titian’s altarpiece (c. 1563) in S. Salvatore in Venice.

¹⁸³ Also Matthew 17.5: ‘This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him’.

The Transfiguration would have been an unusual choice for a ceiling, especially one in a secular space, and it would doubtless have invited reflection. If the intention was for all the imagery in the room to be read as an ensemble, and in the light of the other decorated rooms in the castle, it would be understood in the context of the main topics in the Little Castle's iconography, including metamorphosis. I wish to argue that we can find connections to the themes of transformation and procreation, the multiple roles assigned to Jonson and the Cavendishes, the conceit of stepping down from the paintings, humorous surprises and masquing.

The Heaven Closet scheme has a number of distinct elements which, typically for Bolsover, appear at first to be curiously unconnected. The composition is reminiscent of the Elysium Closet ceiling. Christ is at the centre like the beautiful boy/Apollo. He is posed with raised and lowered arms and he is bathed in light. Eleven angels, probably representing the eleven loyal apostles, link arms and dance around him. They are surrounded by a host of winsome young angels comprising a full and expensive orchestra, with a religious figure conducting. Four angels descend from the corners, displaying musical scores. More young angels with a selection of the instruments of the passion are depicted on the cornices, while the panelling shows plants and diverse architectural scenes executed in a contrasting naive style. The walls are decorated in a rich green, embellished with gold. The overall effect is emphatically buoyant – joy clearly triumphs over sorrow – although the concoction is decidedly odd.

The first picture seen on entering the Heaven Closet, straight ahead, depicts six angels carrying the cross after the Crucifixion. They are flanked by an angel holding the crown of thorns on the left, and two angels worshipping by a veronica on the right.



Fig. 192 The cornice painting of the bearing of the cross (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

I propose that just as the dress of the woman in *Choleric* alluded to false transformations, and the banner of 'All Is But vanite' referenced the suspect nature of visual art, so this painting depicts a false transformation – the creation of a suspect image, and it is contrasted with the 'true' Transfiguration/Ascension on the ceiling above, and the 'true' miracles of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The angel on the left of the cornice is embroidering a white cloth using the crown of thorns as a hoop, and this is a pendant to the Veronica (from the Latin and Greek meaning 'true icon') on the right. The reference would have been topical. In 1616 Pope Paul V had prohibited the manufacture of unlicensed copies of the veil following scandal and confusion after a veil which was believed to be the true veronica had been removed from the Vatican. A few sanctioned copies were made in 1616 and 1617, including for the Queen of Poland, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Bishop of Montepulciano. The Pope had decreed that other versions were to be turned in or destroyed.¹⁸⁴

Continuing the allusion to dubious relics, the angels holding the vertical shaft of the cross appear to examine the base, where the number of holes might verify the number of nails that had been used to secure the feet of Christ at the crucifixion. An angel on the right of the cornice looks beyond the picture space, and leans to the viewer's right, creating a clockwise and upward momentum. He directs attention to the angel descending with the garland of roses, but also to the figures on the neighbouring cornice. One of these holds a bag of gold. The other holds the nails from the cross.

¹⁸⁴ The veil was supposedly imprinted with the face of Christ (eyes open) as he carried the cross. See Roberto Falcinelli, 'The Face of Manoppello and the Veil of Veronica: New Studies', *Proceedings of the International Workshop on the Scientific Approach to the Archeiopoeitos Images*, ENEA, Frascati (2010): <http://www.acheiopoeitos.info/proceedings/FalcinelliManoppelloWeb.pdf> (Accessed 19 May 2016). Cavendish may have been aware of relics owned by Catholics in his family and social circle. A letter from William Ballenden to the Countess of Shrewsbury [n.d.] concerns sending her a piece of the Holy Cross, and the measurements of the length and breadth of the body of Mary Magdalene, preserved in France. Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3205, Fol.127.



Fig. 193 Detail of the cornice over the window in the Heaven Closet, showing the angels carrying the bag of gold and the nails from the cross (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

Two angels on the cornice above the door are similarly looking at the artefact they are carrying. They peer at the sides of the ladder, where a rung is missing. Perhaps this too has been taken as a relic. The ladder was a medieval innovation in the story of the crucifixion. Thus a relic of it would be questionable.



Fig. 194 Detail of the cornice painting above the door in the Heaven Closet, showing the ladder (English Heritage)

A ladder was commonly juxtaposed with the cross in Medieval and Renaissance art as a symbol of the dual ascents of Christ and sinful man to heaven. The number of rungs varied. They often corresponded to virtues, or vices and virtues, and sometimes the twelve degrees of humility of St

Benedict.¹⁸⁵ The cornice painting in the Heaven Closet shows a ladder with five rungs, which was unusual. Five virtues might have been associated most readily with the five Christian virtues of chivalry, and particularly the five times five virtues elaborated in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: the five senses, the five fingers, the five wounds of Christ, the five Joys of Mary, and the five virtues of chivalry. There may be clues to this allusion in the five fingers of the angel at the back holding the ladder, the lance, and the lamp. In some versions of the legend of Sir Gawain his powers increased as the sun rose but decreased as the sun set. (In Cavendish's *The 'Besey Bell' Ballad* he is called 'The Knight o'the Sun', as we have seen.) Sir Gawain was imprisoned in a pit, and he and Lancelot were rescued with a ladder after Lancelot slew Caradoc.¹⁸⁶ Perhaps the foolishness of a muddle between the stories of the crucifixion and the Knights of the Round Table was amusing. The missing rung would certainly be a false relic.

The music depicted on the ceiling is inscribed 'canon' and, as Lynn Hulse has shown, three sheets are scored for cantus, medius and tenor, while the fourth is a bassus part book. A lute or similar instrument would be required to play the melody and improvise over the canon.¹⁸⁷ There was therefore an absent layer of music as well as an absent person. Cavendish was a skilled musician, as noted for the tableau of *Sanguine* in the Ante Room. If he played an instrument standing in the window, it would become apparent that he had completed the scene several times over: Christ and various angels would be looking at him as God spoke; he would be receiving the garland from heaven; and he might also be supplying the missing layer of music for the dancing and the song. In addition, if we note that the raised and lowered arms of the dancing Jesus recall the pose of Christ in scenes of the Day of Judgement, in which His raised arm invites the virtuous into heaven and His lowered arm condemns the sinful to hell, then Cavendish might be about to rise into the sky to join the angels.¹⁸⁸

The notation for cantus, tenor and base parts is copied from *A Round of Three Country Dances in One* published in Thomas Ravenscroft's *Pammelia*. The medius part, which sings of a lack of money, is replaced with the medius part from a drinking song in the 1609 edition called *Follow Me Quickly*. The lyrics refer to Robin Hood,

¹⁸⁵ For an account of the symbolism of the ladder at the Crucifixion see Anna Eörsi, 'Haec scala significat ascensum virtutum: Remarks on the Iconography of Christ Mounting the Cross on a Ladder', *Arte Cristiana*, 85 (1997), 151-66.

¹⁸⁶ Samuel N. Rosenberg and Roberta L. Krueger, *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010), pp. 161-62.

¹⁸⁷ Hulse, 'Whirligig', pp. 231-32.

¹⁸⁸ See for example, Michelangelo, *The Last Judgement* (1536-41) on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, and Peter Paul Rubens, *The Last Judgement* (1614-17), now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

Robin Hood, Robin Hood, said Little John,
come dance before the Queene a
In a redde Petticote and a greene jacket
a white hose and a greene a ¹⁸⁹

A reference to Robin Hood may have been significant in several ways. It undoubtedly added a light-hearted touch to the religious imagery, and might have reminded Cavendish and his guests of the Midlands region, and country sports, including Robin Hood Games.¹⁹⁰ Robin Hood was sometimes associated with Robin Goodfellow or Puck, and this would have supplied another bridge to the Elysium Closet and to the themes in the wider decoration. Robin Goodfellow was the only son and the emissary of Oberon the fairy king (who had magically inseminated his maiden mother), a satyr-like shape-shifter whose transformations allowed him to play tricks, and right the wrongs of mortals. Rings of dancing fairies were a feature of his tales. He had appeared as a character in Jonson's *Love Restored* (1612) where he sponsored love and exposed the falsehood of Plutus, god of wealth, who had disguised himself as cupid.¹⁹¹ Oberon and Robin Goodfellow might be versions of Jupiter and Mercury, and Jonson as Goodfellow might again be a messenger and a link between mortals and immortals.¹⁹² Perhaps 'Little John' could be large Jonson.

The social dancing that commonly ended a masque sometimes included country dances, and we might think the scores could relate to revels (as in Sir Francis Courtwell's dream, already mentioned: 'me thought / I saw a thousand Cupids slide from heauen,/ and landing here, made this their scene of reuells').¹⁹³ This could connect to other references to masquing in the Heaven Closet paintings, in parallel with the allusions in the Elysium Closet noted above. Hayward has commented that the garlands of roses worn by the angels carrying the music are reminiscent of headbands of silk flowers commonly worn in masques, and the unusual number of striped textiles here and elsewhere in the Little Castle decoration, could likewise be associated with masquing costume.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. cites Thomas Ravenscroft, *Pammelia* (London: 1609) 2nd edn (1618).

¹⁹⁰ Nicola Andrew, 'Cavendish at Play: Bolsover Castle, Ben Jonson and the Robin Hood Connection' (unpublished report for English Heritage, 2013).

¹⁹¹ *Love Restored*, ed. by David Lindley, *CWBJ*, IV, pp. 199-212. Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque*, pp. 58-59, 205-7.

¹⁹² For the association between Robin Hood, Goodfellow and dynastic succession see Hopkins, *Drama and the Succession*, pp. 57-74.

¹⁹³ Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, pp. 41-45.

¹⁹⁴ Hayward, 'Clothing', pp. 22.

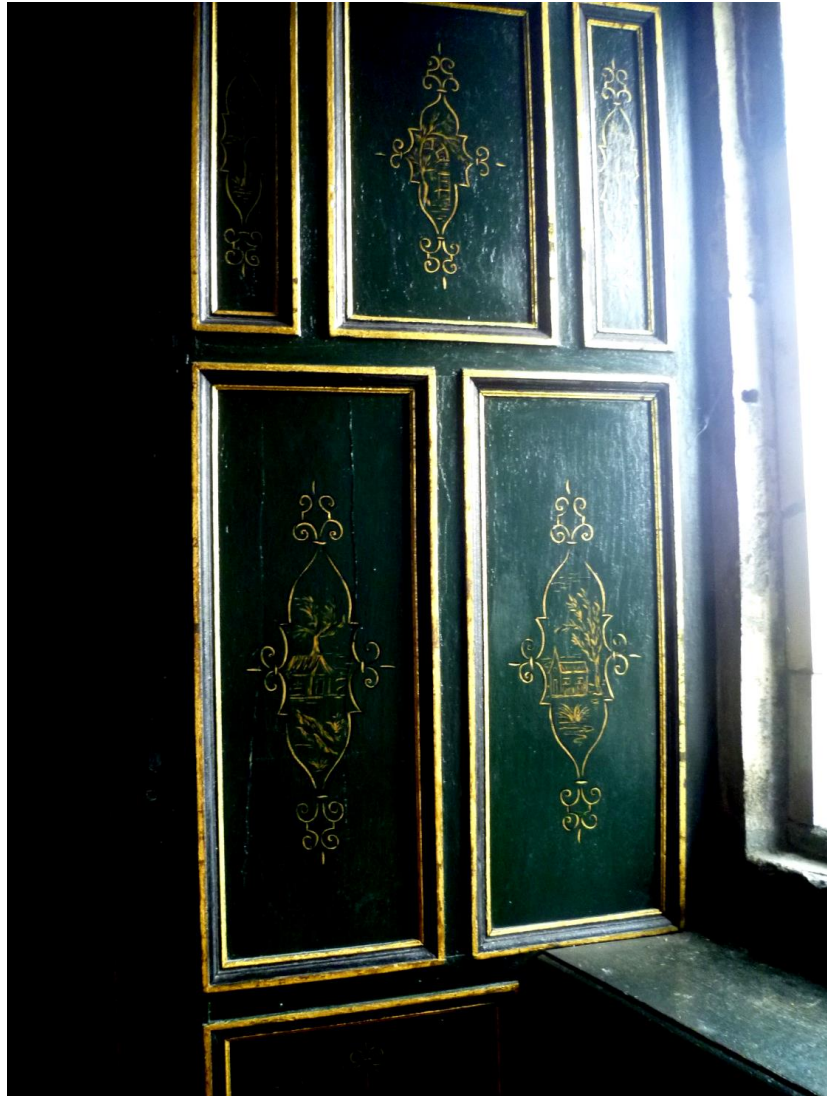


Fig. 195 The cornice opposite the window in the Heaven Closet (English Heritage)

The images on the panelling of the room, which are a curious mixture of ruins, buildings and vegetation, devoid of staffage, appear unassociated with the cornice and ceiling. However, there might have been a relationship with the rest of the iconography if they evoked imagined landscapes. They could have brought to mind a variety of locations where myths, ballads, madrigals, fairy stories, romances, pastorals or masquing fables might be set. Like the painting of the temple in the Ante Room, these images could have reminded viewers of remembered wing designs and theatrical sets, or they may simply have hinted at imagined places that were familiar from emblem books, tapestries, paintings and prints: fanciful worlds that encompassed the classical, medieval, rural, Netherlandish and vaguely oriental.¹⁹⁵ No print sources for them have been found.

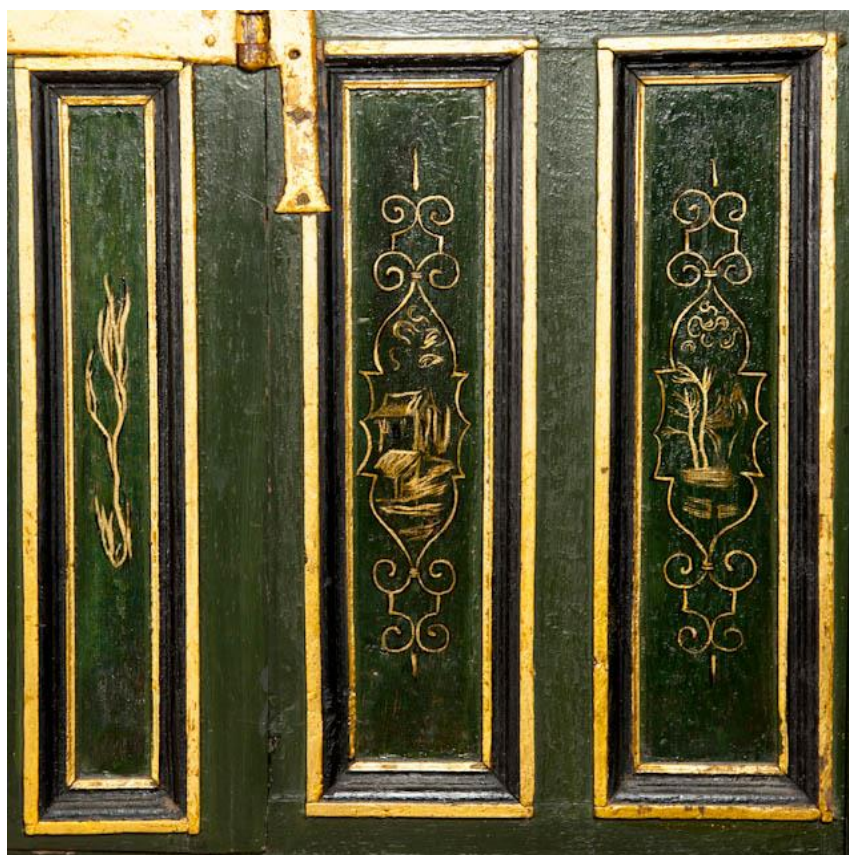
The panelling covers three large cupboards. If the room was used as a conventional closet by Cavendish these could have housed books, exotic curiosities, letters or miniatures. In *The Concealed Fancies* the character 'SH' decides to pick the locks of her friend's cabinet and imagines the sisters will find his 'magazine of love' including 'all manner of coloured hairs, and favouring ribbons' (III.4.70-76).

¹⁹⁵ I am grateful to Helen Hackett for suggesting a comparison with the emblematic paintings in the closet of Lady Anne Bacon Drury at Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich, Suffolk (c.1610). This was a personal compilation of adapted images and texts, possibly created with a meditative or imaginative purpose. See H.L. Meakin, *The Painted Closet of Lady Anne Bacon Drury* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).











Figs 196- 211 Selection of images on the panelling in the Heaven Closet (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Fig. 212 One of the three cupboards behind the panelling in the Heaven Closet (Bob Smith, English Heritage)

In this section I have looked in detail at the paintings in the Elysium and Heaven Closets, and I have argued that several interlinked themes including transformation, procreation, parenthood, gold, and earthly and heavenly love, introduced on the ground floor, are developed on the first floor. I have also identified two further implied tableaux in the Elysium and Heaven Closet schemes, similar to that of *Sanguine* in the Ante Room. There appear to be numerous references to the paintings in dramatic works associated with Cavendish, including allusions to the possible portraits that I have proposed of Cavendish, Jonson, and Cavendish's wife, father and brother. This understanding of the iconography fits with, and builds on, aspects of past research, in particular Raylor's identification of the role of Hercules for Cavendish, and the allusion to the banquet of sense; his notion of a missing person in the scheme in the Ante Room; Hulse's identification of the ballads in the Heaven Closet; and Worsley's suggestion of the portraits of the Cavendish brothers in the Star Chamber. However, through close examination of the paintings, I have suggested more connections to theatre and the works of Jonson, more playful elements, and more allegorical portraits. This has called for a reassessment of the nature of the building and its use. In the next section I will reflect further on the character and purpose of the paintings and offer some comparator before turning to the text of *Love's Welcome*.

III

It may seem extraordinary to think that a mixture of sexually suggestive and light-hearted biblical images could have referenced the Cavendish family (as well as the Stuart royal family) in a prestigious building intended for noble and court-level entertainments. However, the underlying statements were inoffensive: sensual pleasure should be encouraged because it resulted in heirs, and the Cavendishes were a virtuous and blessed dynasty. It was commonplace to portray aristocratic and royal patrons as ancient heroes. It was also unremarkable to use a comparison with the gods, particularly Jove, to declare loyalty to the monarchy (as in the Westwood poem). It was the consequence of drawing out the standard tropes *ad absurdum* that was arresting: finding Albertus Magnus, Lord of Bolsover, seducing the Virgin Mary; realizing that Danaë might land, legs akimbo, on Cavendish's bed; and discovering Jesus and a ring of angels dancing to a ballad about Robin Hood at the Transfiguration.

We might look for comparators, and consider where Cavendish could have found inspiration. I wish to argue we can assume that the Cavendish family had an intimate knowledge of changing decorative styles in English great houses across three generations, and we must infer that the playful complexity of the Bolsover iconography was deliberately divergent. Defying expectations was the essence of a *coup de l'oeil*. At Bolsover the novelty arose from complicating the standard method of cut and paste: mixing together diverse pictorial sources and original elements with dramatic intent and unexpected humour.

There is ample evidence to show that Sir Charles and his immediate family knew many mansions in and beyond the Midlands region: they would have been fully aware of their competition. They were exceptionally well-connected, not least through the family enterprise of grooming Arbella Stuart for her place in the royal family, the links by marriage to the Earls of Rutland, Arundel, Pembroke and Kent, and Gilbert Talbot's position as a Privy Councillor. They had estates in several counties, and the extended family kept multiple houses in London. Cavendish sat as a Member of Parliament (like his father before him), and he attended court. It is not surprising that he would have kept up with current fashions in interiors as well as architecture, and that Bolsover therefore reflected shifts in decorative painting of the later 1610s, such as the presentation of wall and panel paintings in compartments, and the modification of grotesque ornament and strapwork, as Town has noted.¹⁹⁶ However I would nonetheless argue that there were fundamental differences

¹⁹⁶ Town, 'The Painted Scheme', pp. 6-8.

between the Little Castle paintings and the rare surviving examples like the interiors of Hatfield House and Knole House, which Wells-Cole, Hearn and Town have presented as contextual analogues. The programme in the Little Castle had a startling metaphoric ambition and dramatic purpose that appear to have been unique; and there were also important stylistic characteristics that are different and deserve attention.

Some of the print sources that were used for the Bolsover paintings were not unusual: Wells-Cole has pointed to a number of examples in English decorative art of the period of debts to works by Maarten de Vos, Frans Floris and Antonio Tempesta.¹⁹⁷ It was probably more remarkable, however, to echo Giulio Romano's murals at the Palazzo del Té, and to borrow from Primaticcio's ceiling at Fontainebleau. The schemes in the Hall and the Elysium Closet are likely to have signalled European travel.¹⁹⁸ Sir Charles and William visited France and Italy, and it is possible some or all of them visited the Palazzo del Té. Sir Charles accompanied his brother Henry and his step-brother Gilbert to Padua where they studied from 1570 to 1571, travelling to Mantua, Venice, Genoa, Verona, Vincenza and Parma.¹⁹⁹ Sir Charles spoke fluent Italian.²⁰⁰ He joined Gilbert on a second trip to Venice, possibly visiting Bordeaux and Rome.²⁰¹ Likewise, Cavendish and his brother, aged seventeen and nineteen, travelled to Turin in 1612 with Sir Henry Wotton, who had recently completed his service as Ambassador to Venice. Wotton's entourage visited Lyons, Milan, and Venice. They witnessed a tilt and masques at the court of Savoy, and took part in formal entries, hunting, dancing, feasting and banqueting.²⁰² This is an area for further research, but the debts to Fontainebleau and Mantua may suggest a confidence, a breadth of experience, and a network of personal connections, that were moving Cavendish away from the most obvious sources for domestic decoration.

¹⁹⁷ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 12, 22, 42, 101-2, 103-15, 219. See also Jamie Mulherron and Helen Wyld, 'Mortlake's Banquet of the Senses', *Apollo* (March 2012) pp. 122-28.

¹⁹⁸ Raylor recognized the debt to the Palazzo del Té in Raylor, "'Pleasure Reconciled'", pp. 412, 425, 432.

¹⁹⁹ Letters 171 and 226, in *Bess of Hardwick's Letters: The Complete Correspondence c. 1550-1608* <https://www.bessofhardwick.org/> (Accessed 19 May 2016). See also Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy 1485-1603* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1998), p. 218.

²⁰⁰ For the Italian connections of Sir Charles and Gilbert Talbot, particularly their musical patronage and collections, see Hulse, 'Apollo's Whirligig', pp. 215-19.

²⁰¹ Cavendish, *The Lives*, p. 3: 'Sir Charles Cavendish, My Lord's Father, and Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury, being brought up and bred together in one Family, and grown up as parts of one body, after they came to be beyond Children, and travelled together into foreign Countries, to observe the Fashions, Laws, and Customs of other Nations, contracted such an intire Friendship which lasted to their death'. Worsley, 'The Architectural Patronage' (2001), I, pp. 118, 122-23.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 119-24.

I propose that we can detect exceptionally up-to-date stylistic influences in the Little Castle paintings. We have seen parallels with Inigo Jones' festival designs, but we might also think that the allegorical portraiture in *Visus* and in the Elysium Closet paintings is reminiscent of works by Rubens and van Dyck, whose impact in Britain in the following decade is well attested.²⁰³

If the Bolsover pictures were executed between 1619 and 1621, they would have been approximately coeval with van Dyck's first English allegorical work, *The Continnence of Scipio*, painted in 1620 for the Duke of Buckingham, and his *Sir George Villiers and Lady Catherine Manners as Adonis and Venus* (an early example of fantasy portraiture featuring revealing classical dress), which was painted in late 1620 or early 1621.²⁰⁴ These were produced around the time Rubens was taking on his innovative commissions to paint the ceiling for St Carlo Borromeo in Antwerp (1620), and the cycle for Marie de Medici (1621). In this context the Bolsover decoration might be considered singularly advanced, especially for Britain. It could be viewed as a forerunner of Rubens' *Apotheosis of the Duke of Buckingham*, created for the ceiling at York House (commissioned after 1625, when Rubens had met Buckingham in Paris), and as a forerunner of Rubens' ceiling in the Banqueting House at Whitehall. Although Inigo Jones' new building was erected soon after the fire of 1619, it is probable that the ceiling designs were developed only after Rubens came to England in 1629.

It is worth giving further consideration to the dates 1619 and 1621, painted in the Heavens Closet and Star Chamber. While the date of 1619 in the Heaven Closet could have been the start date for a series of interventions and unplanned revisions, it is unlikely to relate to the cornice and ceiling painting in this room. It is most convincing to accept that 1619 is either a commemorative date, as noted above, or that it relates to the completion of the green and gold panelling alone. Instead, the date 1621, painted in the Star Chamber, is likely to mark the completion of the interlinked figurative painting through the building.

There are several reasons to take this view. An investigation by Hugh Routh has shown that the panelling in both the Heaven and Elysium Closets was reduced in height to make room for the cornice paintings. Routh infers that it originally extended to simple shallow cornices with plain

²⁰³ Fiona Donovan, *Rubens and England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

²⁰⁴ *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings*, ed. by Susan J. Barnes, Nora de Poorter, Oliver Millar and Horst Vey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 135, 137; Hayward, 'Clothing', p. 3.

ceilings, en suite with the scheme of thistles in the principal bedchamber.²⁰⁵ The panelling was reduced, after it was painted, to accommodate the figurative paintings on the cornices and ceilings. We might presume that the cornice and ceiling paintings resulted from of a change of mind about the decoration, although most of the panelling (with its expensive gold paint) was retained.

If the ceiling and cornice paintings were executed in 1619, it would have been necessary to plaster the cornices in advance, after the panelling was reduced. The setting of lime plaster depends on moderate temperatures and humidity. Philip Turton has commented that the plastering could only have taken place in the summer months, and, depending on the weather, it may have taken up to a year for the surface to dry out, ready for painting. There may not have been sufficient time for both the plaster and the paintings to have been applied in one season.²⁰⁶ We would have to accept that the panelling had been installed, painted and then cut down, and the plaster had been applied, before the end of the summer of 1618, if the cornices and ceiling in the Heaven Closet were completed by the end of 1619.

It seems more plausible to think that designs for the decoration germinated in the second half of 1618, developing while Cavendish and Smithson were in London (noted in Cavendish's letter of 1618), and that they evolved slowly through 1619 while the configuration of the panelling was finalized and the plaster was applied. It is worth remembering that the designs for the interiors appear to have become increasingly elaborate as time passed. As we have seen the plaster lunettes above the panelling on the ground floor were incised and in some areas beaded, indicating that the later figurative paintings were not anticipated when the panelling was first installed.²⁰⁷ Similarly, the final stone interior of the Marble Closet (which does not fit perfectly, and had evidently been intended for the Elysium Closet) replaced flat plaster cornices, now concealed.²⁰⁸ The west balcony was another modification of about the same date.

If we allow two summer seasons (1619 and 1620), after the visit to London, for preparation and alterations to the building, then Cavendish might have been ready to finalize the design of the

²⁰⁵ Hugh Routh, 'Bolsover Castle Derbyshire: An Investigation into the Condition of the Panelling of the Little Castle' (unpublished report, English Heritage, 1995), Section 16.

²⁰⁶ Oral communication.

²⁰⁷ Paine argues in Paine, 'The Little Castle', pp. 12-13, that the render layer in the lunettes in the Ante Room and Hall was probably coeval with the panelling. He argues for a short-lived, monochrome scheme of fictive dressed ashlar in the lunettes before the decorative paintings were applied. Philip Turton (oral communication) has suggested that the first paint layer could have been a lime wash including clay-rich ochre, applied to aid the drying of the plaster.

²⁰⁸ Paul Faulkner, *Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire* (London: Ministry of Works Guidebook, 1972), p. 56.

paintings in the winter of 1620, ready for the work to begin in the late spring of 1621. This chronology would suggest that the date 1621 on the tablet of Moses is the date of the commencement of the allegorical painting. It could also be the date of its completion if the figurative work throughout the building was done by one team in one season. This would have been a considerable achievement.

In the summer of 1621 Cavendish was at home on his Midlands estates. He had been in London to settle the Talbot will in late September 1620, and he was present for the opening of Parliament in January 1621, sitting in the House of Lords for the first time.²⁰⁹ He remained in the capital until 10 March when he was given leave to return to Welbeck instead of performing at the Accession Day tilt. His wife was ill, possibly miscarrying or suffering a difficult pregnancy. He wrote to her with optimistic innuendo:

Sweet Heart,
The reason I in verse will tell
Of my long stay, and therefore hearken well.
I was importun'd much to try my force,
This year at tilt, and there to run my course....
But, oh, now listen to the joyful news.
Your cruel sickness, this year, did excuse
Me from the tilting: therefore (do you hear?)
Fail not I pray of sickness every year,
And as I am a knight, with spurs all gilt,
When I come home I'll run with you at tilt.²¹⁰

Van Dyck was also in London between late October 1620 and early March 1621. It seems likely that Cavendish was aware of his presence and his innovative style, and that their paths crossed. We might note that in the House of Lords Cavendish was supporting the Duke of Buckingham who had brought the artist from Antwerp to England, and that Cavendish had been meeting with Earl of Arundel to settle the Talbot will.²¹¹ It may be useful to explore whether Cavendish could have been influenced by van Dyck, or could have discussed the Bolsover schemes with him while he was finalizing his plans for the Bolsover decoration. Certainly there would have been plenty of

²⁰⁹ Geoffrey Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 48-50.

²¹⁰ University of Nottingham Pw V/25, fol.17.

²¹¹ Trease, *Portrait*, p. 49 notes that Cavendish was addressing Buckingham in correspondence as 'my most Honourable Patron'.

other candidates, as Hearn and Town have shown.²¹² Nonetheless Cavendish and van Dyck are known to have had an unusually warm relationship after van Dyck's return to England in 1632, and the connection could have been longstanding.

Hearn has pointed to evidence for their friendship in a draft of a letter sent from Welbeck in February 1637, probably composed soon after van Dyck had completed his full-length portrait of Cavendish:

Noble Sir,

The favours of my friends you have so transmitted unto me as the longer I look on them, the more I think them nature and not art. It is not my error alone; if it be a disease it is epidemical, for such power hath your hand on the eyes of mankind. Next the blessing of your company and sweetness of conversation, the greatest happiness were to be an Argus, or all over but one eye so it, or they, were ever fixed upon that which we must call yours. What wants in judgement I can supply with admiration and scape the title of ignorant since I have the luck to be astonished in the right place and the happiness to be passionately your most humble servant.

W Newcastle ²¹³

We might consider whether this could refer to a contribution to the Little Castle decoration by van Dyck. The statement that he transmitted favours from other people might simply confirm that Cavendish owned several portable paintings of his friends by the artist, either originals or copies.²¹⁴ However 'All over but one eye so it, or they, were ever fixed upon that which we must call yours' suggests that Cavendish is referring to a large number of images. He could be alluding to several portraits on canvas, but I suggest it is possible that he could instead be referring to a decorated

²¹² For the Cavendish's artistic taste and portraits see Karen Hearn, 'William Cavendish and the Fine Arts: Patronage before Exile', in *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648-1660*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (Antwerp: Rubenshuis and Rubenianum, 2006), pp. 90-94, and catalogue entries 15-27, pp. 130-45. Town, 'The Painted Scheme', pp. 8-12.

²¹³ Hearn, *Royalist Refugees*, pp. 91, 160.

²¹⁴ Cavendish, *Lives* p. 70: 'His two houses Welbeck and Bolsover he found much out of repair, and this later half pulled down, no furniture or any necessary goods were left in them, but some few hangings and pictures, which had been saved by the care and industry of his eldest daughter the Lady Cheiny, and were brought over again after the death of his eldest Son Charles, Lord Mansfield. For they being given to him, and he leaving some debts to be paid after his death, My Lord sent to his other Son Henry, now Earl of Ogle, to endeavour so much credit, that the said Hangings and Pictures (which my Lord esteemed very much, the pictures being drawn by van Dyck) might be saved; which he also did, and my Lord hath paid the debt since his return'.

room or rooms that are viewed through 360°. This would fit with, ‘I have the luck to be astonished in the right place’ which is otherwise difficult to interpret. ‘That which we must call yours’ suggests the pictures he refers to are not by van Dyck’s own hand, which is curious in the context of such warm praise. It could show that he had several paintings from van Dyck’s studio, but it would also make sense if it meant that the artist or artists for Bolsover were van Dyck’s associates, perhaps working to his initial designs, or they had borrowed from his work (perhaps the cornice with the veronica in the Heaven Closet was based on van Dyck’s *Christ Carrying the Cross* in St Paul’s, Antwerp – a Dominican church founded by Albertus Magnus).²¹⁵ Slipping in the word ‘judgement’ would be witty if it referred to the paintings of Solomon, David and Moses.

Taking a step back, we can see it is clear that the Bolsover schemes borrowed from a range of Renaissance prints. We are also on safe ground to think that the Elysium Closet in particular was in the vanguard of vibrant developments in allegorical painting of the 1620s (whether or not van Dyck had a role in their creation). However, I would argue that the Bolsover paintings are still distinct in fundamental ways: they are interactive and multisensory (the tableaux), they juxtapose unusually diverse sources (including popular theatre and ballads: *The Alchemist* and Robin Hood), they use verbal wit (‘safety through caution’, ‘vanitie’, heraldic and human arms, sun and son, perhaps Little John), and they comment on social morality (the dress in *Choleric*). They impart universal, life-affirming, messages about desire, the transformative power of love, and the miracles of Christ, and they are also shockingly funny (Count Albertus Bolstadius as the alchemist Subtle and the Angel Gabriel, Cavendish as the soldier in *Choleric*, Jonson as Aaron).

I propose that these features suggest that Jonson was closely involved in their design. While Cavendish, Smythson, members of the Cavendish extended family and household, English connoisseurs of their acquaintance, and continental painters could all have contributed ideas and visual material to the invention, it would have been most characteristic of Jonson to lead the way in making the leap from festival decoration and painted interiors familiar to the elite (including, audaciously, those being currently developed by Jones, Rubens and van Dyck) to a new poetic version.²¹⁶ The Bolsover decoration appears to have been an extension of Jonson’s core poetic project. There were parallels with his progression from the epistles and epigrams of Horace and Martial to his own adaptations; and it was typical of him to comment on the behaviour of his noble friends by comparing them to Roman models.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Van Dyck, ed. by Susan J. Barnes et al., p. 41.

²¹⁶ For Inigo Jones as copyist within the context of traditional and contemporary practice see John Peacock, ‘Inigo Jones and Renaissance Art’, *Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1990), 245-72.

²¹⁷ Parry, *The Golden Age*, p. 165.

Thus I propose we should allow the possibility that Jonson was ‘turning’ works of art (specific Netherlandish and Italian prints, but also, more broadly, a wide sweep of history painting and allegorical portraiture), just as he had ‘turned’ classical poetry, and that he employed the most up-to-date visual language available. He was blending poetry with other media to create three-dimensional kinetic settings that would comment on the standing and virtue of his patron while providing an inspirational environment for entertainments. He realized his concept in collaboration with painters who could work in the most forward-looking styles in Europe, just as he realized his masquing inventions with Inigo Jones.

We might imagine that Jonson’s mental agility would have been appreciated by John Smythson, who we can presume would have been his partner, making the complementary alterations to the building. Girouard has pointed to the architect’s remarkable ‘talent for adaptation’: ‘The truth seems to be that he had a very surprising mind. Something could be pushed in at one end and heaven only knew what was likely to come out at the other. Cornices, rustications, the Serlian chimney-piece, the broken pediment all underwent a strange sea-change, not because he was trying to copy and failing, but because he was pursuing his own individual and eccentric way’.²¹⁸

Although the concept of the Bolsover decoration was singular, I suggest it would have been readily recognized by the cultural elite. Like the linear architectural design of the Little Castle, discussed above, it had roots in choreographed celebrations and in private and court theatrical entertainments, stretching back many decades. We might find useful a comparator in Jonson and Thomas Dekker’s entertainment for King James’ processional entry into London of 1604, which prefigured Jonson’s masque inventions.²¹⁹ Seven massive arches were constructed with separate but interlinked themes, and the event included music, speeches and short scenes which were acted out with dialogue and tableaux. Jonson had made innovative use of Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia*. (Bolsover would not have been the first project for which he employed new visual material.) His emblematic programme for the Fenchurch and Temple Bar arches was complex, and, like the Little Castle schemes, it required a lengthy explanation.²²⁰ Further, his description of how the Londinium arch (187-211) was revealed to the king resonates with the ways in which living people might discover and complete the paintings at Bolsover, and there is a parallel with the implied speech.²²¹

²¹⁸ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 242, 269.

²¹⁹ As a Privy Councillor Gilbert Talbot had been required to take part in the procession of peers. Talbot papers, MS 3201, Folio 179.

²²⁰ Parry, *The Golden Age*, pp. 1-24.

²²¹ *The King’s Entertainment*, ed. by Martin Butler, pp. 439-41.

We might also look to panegyrics. The extremes of praise (referring to Cavendish as Apollo, Jupiter, Mars, Neptune, Hercules, Perseus, Eros, and Oberon, all in one small room) are redolent of poems like Jonson's epigram *To Mary Lady Wroth*, as we have seen for *Visus*, in which she is compared to Ceres, Venus, Diana and Juno, containing all the treasure of the lost Golden Age. The iconography at Bolsover worked with a few simple propositions about Cavendish and embellished them with classical and religious allusions to the point of impropriety and foolishness. We can find this technique, and this delight in near-ridiculous hyperbole, in Jonson's *An Epigram To William, Earl of Newcastle* from the later 1620s:

When first, my lord, I saw you back your horse,
Provoke his mettle and command his force
To all the uses of the field and race,
Methought I read the ancient art of Thrace,
And saw a centaur past those tales of Greece;
So seemed your horse and you, both of a piece!
You showed like Perseus on Pegasus,
Or Castor mounted on his Cyllarus,
Or what we hear our home-born legend tell
Of bold Sir Bevis and his Arundel;
Nay, so your seat his beauties did endorse
As I began to wish myself a horse.
And surely had I but your stable seen
Before, I think my wish absolved had been.
For never saw I yet the muses dwell,
Nor any of their household half so well.
So well, as when I saw the floor and room
I looked for Hercules to be the groom,
And cried 'Away with the Caesarean bread;
At these immortal mangers Virgil fed.
(*The Underwood*, 53)²²²

There is a not dissimilar expansiveness in the opening of Jonson's *Epitaph on Katherine, Lady Ogle*:

²²² *The Underwood*, 53, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, VII, pp. 201-2.

'Tis a record in heaven: you that were
 Her children and grandchildren, read it here;
 Transmit it to your nephews, friends, allies,
 Tenants, servants, have they hearts and eyes
 To view the truth and own it. Do but look
 With pause upon it; make this page your book;
 Your book? Your volume! Nay, the state and story!
 Code, digests, pandects of all female glory!
 (*Epitaph on Katherine, Lady Ogle*, 1-8)²²³

Cavendish's appreciation of this style is revealed in the plates by Abraham van Diepenbeeck that illustrate his *Methode et Invention Nouvelle de Dresser les Chevaux* (1658).²²⁴ In one image Cavendish is depicted in contemporary costume riding Pegasus like Perseus. He is also, I suggest, Jupiter, and probably, bearing in mind the Bolsover iconography, Hercules and Vulcan as well. His friends and those who knew the dramatic work associated with him would recognize the signature allusions.

²²³ *Epitaph on Katherine, Lady Ogle*, ed. by Colin Burrow, *CWBJ*, VI, p. 315.

²²⁴ For Cavendish's riding manuals see Lucy Worsley, Ursula Härting and Marika Keblusek, 'Horsemanship' in *Royalist Refugees: William and Margaret Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648-1660*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (Antwerp: Rubenshuis and Rubenianum, 2006), pp. 37-54 (pp. 43-54); Elspeth Graham, 'The Duke of Newcastle's "Love...for Good Horses": an exploration of meanings' in *The Horse as Cultural Icon: the Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early-Modern World*, ed. by Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Elspeth Graham (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 37-69.



Fig. 213 *Cavendish Riding Pegasus* by Abraham van Diepenbeke (1596-1675), engraving by Peter van Liesebetten (1630- c. 1678). Illustration in William Cavendish, *Méthode et Invention Nouvelle de Dresser les Chevaux* (1657-58) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris)²²⁵



Fig. 214 Detail of Jove in *Cavendish Riding Pegasus*

²²⁵ <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10432190/f23.image> <http://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/conditions-use-gallicas-contents> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

In another plate Cavendish is depicted as a heroic figure in a chariot, wearing a crown. He could also be a centaur, following Jonson's poem.



Fig. 215 *Cavendish in a Chariot Drawn by Centaurs* by Abraham van Diepenbeke (1596-1675), engraving by Peter van Liesebetten (1630- c. 1678). Illustration in William Cavendish, *Méthode et Invention Nouvelle de Dresser les Chevaux* (1657-58) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris)²²⁶

If we accept that the wall paintings at Bolsover were a celebration of Cavendish's recent marriage to Elizabeth, and a declaration of their hope for heirs, we might also see an analogy with classical and Renaissance epithalamia. This would fit with the design of the castle for linear movement, and it would explain why the iconography culminates in the bedchamber suite. It would make sense of the mixture of sexual and dynastic content in many of the schemes, and their teasing charm. There are parallels, for example, with the epithalamion that concludes *The Haddington Masque* of 1608 (in which the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke danced):

²²⁶ <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10432190/f20.image> <http://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/conditions-use-gallicas-contents> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

Why stays the bridegroom to invade
Her that would be a matron made?
Goodnight whilst yet we may
Goodnight to you, a virgin, say:
Tomorrow, rise the same
Your mother is, and use a nobler name (349-54)

[...] That ere the rosy-fingered morn
Behold nine moons, there may be born
A babe, t'uphold the Radcliffe's blood and Ramsey's name;
That may, in his great seed,
Wear the long honours of his father's deed.
(371-76)²²⁷

We might likewise find a resonance between the painted passage on the ceiling over the glazed doors displaying the boy with the moon, the vine and the tree, and the *Epithalamion for Jerome Weston and Frances Stuart* of 1632:

Th'ignoble never lived; they were awhile,
Like swine, or other cattle, here on earth:
Their names are not recorded on the file
Of life, that fall so; Christians know their birth
Alone, and such a race,
We pray may grace,
Your fruitful spreading vine,
But dare not ask our wish in language fescennine:

Yet, as we may, we will, with chaste desires
(The holy perfumes of the marriage bed)
Be kept alive those sweet and sacred fires
Of love between you and your lovelihead:
That when you both are old
You find no cold

²²⁷ *The Haddington Masque*, ed. by David Lindley, *CWBJ*, III, pp. 253-76 (pp. 272-73).

There; but, renewèd, say,
After the last child born, 'This is our wedding day.'

Till you behold a race to fill your hall,
A Richard, and a Jerome, by their names
Upon a Thomas, or a Frances call;
A Kate, a Frank, to honour their grand-dames,
And 'tween their grandsires' thighs,
Like pretty spies,
Peep forth a gem; to see
How each one plays his part of the large pedigree.

And never may there want one of the stem
To be a watchful servant for this state,
But like an arm of eminence 'mongst them
Extend a reaching virtue, early and late:
Whilst the main tree still found
Upright and sound,
By this sun's noonstead's made
So great, his body now alone projects the shade.

They both are slipped to bed; shut fast the door,
And let him freely gather love's first fruits;
He's master of the office, yet no more
Exacts than she is pleased to pay: no suits,
Strifes, Murmurs, or delay,
Will last till day;
Night, and the sheets, will show
The longing couple all the elder lovers know.
(*The Underwood*, 75, 153-92)²²⁸

Recognizing this poetic form may have been part of the game of unravelling the meanings in the decoration. The correspondence would have finally become clear in the bedchamber suite, an amusing climax to a tour of the building. Epithalamia could be unblushingly direct (as in the very

²²⁸ *The Underwood*, 75, ed. by Colin Burrow, pp. 238-40.

rude fescennini that Jonson shied away from in the poem for Weston but nonetheless wanted to call to mind).²²⁹ The eroticism at Bolsover, and the recurring references to the older generation of Cavendishes, were both in a long tradition of wedding poetry.

Bawdy humour was also fitting for celebrating the fruitful union of a married couple, as in *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment*. The text for this event was less than decorous, and Prince Charles was repeatedly addressed, presumably in the light of his current wedding plans. The earthy tone was undoubtedly expected to amuse, not offend, the royal guest, and Jonson and his patron must have assumed that everyone (including the host's wife) would find the dialogue funny:

In the passage

[Enter] DUGS, KECKS [and] HOLDBACK.

DUGS Are they coming? Where? Which, which are the gossips?

KECKS Peace, here they come all.

DUGS I'll up and get me a standing behind the arras.

HOLDBACK You'll be thrust there i'faith, nurse.

KECKS [...]

HOLDBACK No, he with the blue ribbon. Peace!

KECKS Oh, sweet gentlemen. He, a gossip? He were fitter to be a father i'faith.

HOLDBACK So they were both, an 'twere Fortune's good pleasure to send it.

At the banquet

HOLDBACK Now God multiply Your Highness and my noble lord, too, and my good lady, how like you my boy? Is't not a goodly boy? I said his name would be Charles when I looked upon Charles' Wain t'other night, he's born under that star. I ha'given measure, i'faith. He'll prove a pricker, an God will, by one privy mark that I found about him. Would you had such another, my lord gossips, every one of you, as like as the father! Oh, what a glad woman, and a proud, should I be to be seen at home with you upon the same occasion! (8-28)

[...] Such a comfortable day as this will e'en make the father ready to make adventure f'another, in my conscience. Sing sweetly, I pray you. An you have a good breast, out with't for my lord's credit (42-44).

I propose that the wall paintings at Bolsover, created at about the same time as *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment*, were composed in a similar vein. The decoration was meant to be read

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 239.

with both poetry of praise and the contemporary masquing and theatrical stages in mind. This would have allowed the bare breasts of the ladies in *Melancholic* and *Visus*, and the nudity of the immortals, especially the goddesses in the Elysium Closet, to be seen as indicators of Cavendish nobility, virtue and beauty, without excluding the possibility of outrageous bawdiness in relation to their fecundity. The pictures would have been amusing and inspiriting for an educated, perhaps intoxicated, party of mixed sex and age, banqueting and promenading through the building.²³⁰

Charles and Henrietta-Maria might have been expected to take the sexually suggestive elements in their stride in 1634, even in a period when they were promoting a more straight-laced morality at court, if the images were presented to them as a celebratory domestic skit: a clever visual and kinetic poem which had been composed soon after Cavendish's wedding, while he was mourning his father and then his first son, who may have been the King's godson. The decoration was a boisterous concoction but it was novel, and as a species of panegyric and epithalamion it was a tour de force.²³¹

Furthermore, the Bolsover iconography would still have been relevant to the child-bearing ambitions of both the hosts and the royal family. Knowles has shown that following a dangerous pregnancy, Henrietta Maria probably brought the nine-months-old Prince James with her to Welbeck in 1634. Like the Cavendishes, the King and Queen had lost their first son, and they now had two living boys (Charles aged four and the infant James) to match Cavendish's two (Charles aged about eight and Henry aged four). Jonson and Cavendish might have hoped, doubtless with an eye on advancement, that the multiplication of Jameses, Charleses and Henries since the schemes were painted would have made the pictures even more entertaining, and might have helped to foster a personal bond between the two families.

Happily for Cavendish, the decoration also had resonance with current court iconography as it developed after the birth of Prince Charles, and this may well have encouraged him to show the Little Castle to the royal couple at this time. King Charles' virile erotic heroism had been foregrounded in Jonson's *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* of 1631, linked to the King's identification with St George.²³² Thus we can see that Jonson had stimulated developments in

²³⁰ For the aphrodisiac qualities of banqueting food, and erotic decorative dishes, see Stead, 'Bowers of Bliss' pp. 115-57; Alison Sim, *Food and Feast in Tudor England* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), pp. 144-47.

²³¹ For Henrietta Maria's sense of humour, and examples of tolerating a degree of irreverence towards Neoplatonism, see Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 130.

²³² Ibid, pp. 66-8.

Caroline iconography that bore a relation to the messages he had imparted to Cavendish through the Bolsover decoration some fifteen years before: the reconciliation of earthly and heavenly love through heroic potency, and the production of heirs in a sexually-charged marriage. Likewise, Henrietta-Maria had become associated with Marian imagery and this would have resonated with *Melancholic* in the Ante Room and the Venuses in the Elysium Closet. Britland has discussed van Dyck's 1633 portrait of the Queen in which her blue hunting costume evokes both the goddess Diana and the Virgin Mary.²³³

We can assume that when he came to write *Love's Welcome* Jonson knew the royal couple would be given a tour of the Little Castle, and would be shown the sculptures and paintings. They would be guided to understand the conceit of living and fictional characters stepping out of the pictures, and to appreciate the blend of humour and serious instruction in the iconography. Cavendish would have the opportunity to highlight the themes which chimed with *Love's Triumph*, in which the King had performed, and its paired masque for the Queen, *Chloridia* (themes that also fitted with Aurelian Townshend's *Albion's Triumph* of 1632 and Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* of 1634, which Jonson's two earlier masques had influenced). These included heroic potency, dynastic parenthood, Marian imagery, mystical transformation, the balancing of male and female principles, stellification, an ascent to and descent from heaven, and heavenly and earthly love. Host and poet could therefore be confident that the royal couple would find the decoration pleasing, and that a show centring on the building could be made both amusing and impressively fashionable.

Thus in 1634 Jonson was given the opportunity to demonstrate the full potential of the interiors he may have helped to design after his visit in 1618. The decoration provided settings that called for interactions with the paintings, flexibly incorporated into banquets. A central aim of *Love's Welcome* was to realize the planned surprises, and to produce a fresh creative response to the building, in order to delight the royal guests. I suggest that, with the court audience in mind, Jonson chose to focus on a few elements in the paintings that had counterparts in *Love's Triumph*, *Chloridia* and other recent court masques: the palm, the garland of red and white roses, and the cupids. I will argue below that he added two new components: a theatrical set of a garden in the Star Chamber, and, possibly, the paintings of *The Allied Virtues* in the Marble Closet, so that the parallels would be unmissable. Echoing *Love's Triumph* and *Chloridia* would tailor the entertainment to the king and queen, reflect well on Cavendish's taste, and, not least, remind the

²³³ Ibid, p. 154.

court of Jonson's recent successes in masque writing, the consistency of his vision, the breadth of his talents, and his continuing influence on rivals.

IV

In this penultimate section I will explore in detail how seeing the decorated rooms of the Little Castle as a performance space could shed light on the text and staging of *Love's Welcome*. The entertainment is normally viewed as decidedly sour, introducing the character of Colonel Vitruvius to continue Jonson's quarrel with Inigo Jones, and launching an attack on the court for its rejection of poetry and of the poet himself.²³⁴ I wish to argue that if we pay more attention to the setting we can see that, on the contrary, *Love's Welcome* was a comic piece that struck a balance between convivial informality and respectful ceremony. The intention was to ingratiate the host and the author, to show off the building, to amuse the royal couple, and to display them to the crowds outside. This was more fitting for the occasion, and it makes more sense of the wording.

If the royal entourage feasted in the Terrace Range it is likely that they moved across to the Little Castle to enjoy more relaxed amusements later in the day. This format is logical in view of the linear design of the complex, and the intimate banqueting spaces on offer, as we have seen. The ground floor of the Little Castle was probably, as Knowles has suggested, too small to accommodate a large entourage. However, the majority of visitors could have remained in the courtyard and in the garden (perhaps disposed in the several lodges and banqueting rooms), while a privileged group followed the royal couple in staggered sets or a slow-moving procession into the interior. Cavendish is likely to have wanted all of his eminent visitors to experience the Smythsons' curious building and to see the magnificent views. The paintings and sculptures only fully made sense, and fully promoted the host and his family, as an ensemble. It seems plausible that he and Jonson choreographed the tour so that the royal couple and the leading courtiers were shown the whole series, in the correct order.

The visit could have taken several hours, with the guests puzzling out the iconography, witnessing (perhaps themselves enacting) the tableaux, and encountering the increasingly ravishing views of

²³⁴ Cedric Brown, 'Courtesies of Place and Arts of Diplomacy in Ben Jonson's Last Two Entertainments for Royalty', *The Seventeenth Century, Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9 (1994), 147-71, (pp. 157-58); Hugh Craig, 'Jonson, the Antimasque and the "Rules of Flattery"', in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by Bevington and Holbrook, pp. 176-96 (p. 192).

the countryside. The company could have stopped periodically to ‘observe a while’ before arriving at preordained locations where luxurious refreshments were served. If the royal couple stopped in the Pillar Parlour to enjoy their first banquet, this pause would have occurred after they had seen the tableau of *Sanguine*, and the complex imagery of the first three rooms. They would already have encountered many of the themes in the iconography, and they would have engaged from the start with light-hearted conundrums.

The *Song at the Banquet* which opens *Love’s Welcome* extended the game. The lyrics referred to the paintings on the ground floor, and introduced topics related to them and to the rest of the schemes, that would be picked up later in the entertainment. The Neoplatonic allusions in the first three lines were elegant but also playful:

CHORUS If Love be called a lifting of the sense
To knowledge of that pure intelligence,
Wherein the soul hath rest and residence,
(*The King and Queen’s Entertainment at Bolsover*, 2-4)

Jonson was indicating that the souls of the hosts had ‘rest and residence’ in the paintings which were displayed above the banqueters in all the decorated rooms. Those enjoying the entertainment should now lift their eyes to look at the allegorical depictions of the five senses arranged on the Pillar Parlour panelling. Amusingly, they would see sight, and realise that *Visus* included a portrait of Elizabeth (with her gown falling in the shape of a book). Using their knowledge of Neoplatonic philosophy and the works of Jonson, they would be able to unravel the ‘intelligent’ iconography, and so understand the entertainment, and love.

The punctuation is important. Knowles has preferred to use a comma after Line 3 in the Cambridge Edition. However, in the manuscript there is a question mark at the end of the third line (anticipating the questions posed by the tenors which follow). If delivered in a questioning tone the three lines could suggest a puzzle. In F2 the question mark is changed to a colon. I suggest the puzzle in the question was unclear, and the colon made the following lines into a related clause or a list. Either way Jonson was implying that the entertainment which ensued would be studded with similar puns and double meanings to tease out, and it relied on the conceit that one of the family’s ‘residences’ was the metaphysical sphere of the paintings at Bolsover. I will argue below that Jonson was providing a conventional compliment of place to the royal couple, but, humorously, he was defining Cavendish’s home as the painted heavens, making small mention of Derbyshire.

The first question, delivered after the opening lines, is: ‘When were the senses in such order placed?’ (4). A literal answer would spotlight Jonson as well as Cavendish: when this room was decorated, and when this iconographic scheme was conceived – that is when Ben Jonson came to Bolsover and invented the schemes, and when Cavendish married Elizabeth and fathered their children. These answers could be inferred from *Visus*.

On the surface the song was a delicate and fashionable piece that flattered the royal couple and expressed Cavendish’s loyalty to them.²³⁵ It flirted with the theme of the senses (which had been introduced in a descending order in the Ante Room) and their unconventional arrangement in the painted lunettes of the Pillar Parlour. Viewed clockwise from the door they were touch, hearing, taste, smell and then sight. It also pointed to the expensive food that was being consumed. Love (Cavendish) was hosting the feast for love (the royal couple). Love was a food they were all feeding on, as well as the real food – love was a primary topic in the decoration around them. As we have seen, Elizabeth was praised as an alluring and virtuous wife in *Visus*, and she had been depicted as a melancholic lover, Venus, the Virgin and the White Woman in *Melancholic*. Her motto was carved beside that of Cavendish on the chimneypiece. Thus love infused the welcome for which they were all hungry. They fed on love, making them more loved and loving. This was close to the theme of reciprocal love and mutually feeding flames that would emerge, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, in the dramatic scenes that followed. It was a circular, or perpetually ascending and descending, image that fitted with the references to Neoplatonic philosophy that were present in the decoration, particularly in the Elysium Closet, which would be seen later in the tour, and that fitted with the circular, vertical and spiralling configuration of the paintings around the rooms, and their entwined conceits.

The lyrics struck a chord with recent court masques. There were echoes of the speeches delivered by Amphytrite, the chorus, Euphemus and Euclia in Jonson’s *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*:

EUCLIA	Love’s appetite Did beauty first excite, And left imprinted in the air, Those signatures of good and fair,
CHORUS	Which since have flowed, flowed forth upon the sense, To wonder first, and then to excellence, By virtue of divine intelligence!

²³⁵ Brown, ‘Courtesies of Place’, pp. 158-60.

The *Song* introduced the words ‘complement’ (23, 30), ‘real’ (29), and ‘true’ (15, 30), from which much humour would subsequently flow. ‘Welcome’ (also spelt ‘wel-come’ in both written versions of the text at various points) (20, 22, 28), was the central sentiment of the occasion, but it, too, was loaded when the main conceit of the play was revealed: the painted figures were ‘well come’, stepping out of their two-dimensional pictures as the couple had for the tableau of *Sanguine*. We might see a similar pun in the title of *The Concealed Fancies* when ‘seeling’ was a term for panelling: the characters, like their desires, and their friend’s favouring ribbons, might be con-seeled.²³⁷ The text of the following two sections was to be heavily embellished with interlocking layers of puns, and these were suited to the absurd overloading of the paintings with multiple portraits, missing and altered characters, allusions and metaphors.

The sophisticated tone of the song, and the straight-faced use of the imagery of rising, doubling and coupling, uniting, reflecting, and circles, was creating a contrast with the farce that was about to lampoon the paintings and send up both Neoplatonism and brotherly love.²³⁸ Jonson was gradually revealing that the piece would echo court masques but would nonetheless maintain a light-hearted tone. It would be a ‘Playe-Like-maskecall Shoe’, similar to the piece proposed by the vicar in *The Antemasque* (15). Comedy was Cavendish’s preferred genre, and mirth fitted with the decorative schemes, joy at the birth of Prince James, and the pleasure-seeking expedition to Bolsover.

The stage direction after the song in the manuscript version read, ‘After the Banquet, the King and Queene retir’d into a Garden, are entertained with Coronell Vitruvius his Oration to the Mechanicks’ (31-2). The F2 version changed this to ‘After the Banquet, the King and Queene, retir’d, were entertain’d with Coronell Vitruvius his Oration to his Dance of Mechanickes’.

It has usually been thought that the two scenes following the song were performed in the walled garden on the south side of the Little Castle.²³⁹ However, it makes more sense if the phrase ‘a garden’ denoted the *scene* of a garden. There was only one garden at Bolsover and so it would

²³⁶ *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*, ed. by James Knowles, *CWBJ*, VI, pp. 321-41 (p. 338).

²³⁷ Worsley, *Bolsover Castle*, p. 18.

²³⁸ James Fitzmaurice, ‘William Cavendish and Two Entertainments by Ben Jonson’, *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 5 (1998), 63-80 (pp. 73-74).

²³⁹ Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 199-200; Brown, ‘Courtesies of Place’, pp. 161-64, 171.

have been more natural to have said ‘the garden’ if that had been the intended meaning.²⁴⁰ The reference may have been taken out in F2 because it was misleading, and because there were enough references in the text to make it sufficiently clear that the fictional location was a heavenly garden. In performance the many puns on words associated with gardens would have referred to the set.

We can assume that both acts were performed in the Star Chamber, in the fictional garden, for the following reasons:

First, a setting in the Star Chamber clarifies the stage directions in the manuscript and F2 versions which describe the location for the performance of the second act, featuring Eros, Anteros and Philaethes. The phrase used in the manuscript version is ‘in a fitt place, selected for the purpose’ (67-8). This could refer to the Star Chamber because, as I will argue below, the room was designed (fitted out) to accommodate dramatic performances, and it was particularly well suited to a setting of a heavenly garden.

This direction was changed in F2 to: ‘And the King, and Queene, having a second banquet set downe before them from the Cloudes by two Loves’ (67-8). It has been assumed that this indicates the use of a cloud machine outdoors, with the cupids descending from the Elysium Closet balcony, or from the walls of the garden.²⁴¹ However, if the conceit was that the Cupids stepped out of their paintings indoors, then the primary meaning of the stage direction would be that they had come down from their cloudy ‘metaphysical sphere’: the classical and Christian heavens of the Star Chamber and the Elysium, Heaven and Marble Closets where they lived. Instead of exiting from the Elysium Closet through the double doors and descending from the balcony (the height of which would have been challenging for theatrical machinery), or appearing out of context from the top of the garden wall, they could simply have walked down the steps into the Star Chamber. Alternatively, they could have appeared to descend from the starry sky of the Star Chamber using a rudimentary mechanical device. Charmingly, the Cupids would have appeared to bring the banquet from the heavens of the first floor where Venus their mother lived. There is a staircase

²⁴⁰ There is no evidence the walled enclosure was planted as an ornamental garden in this period. The few images that survive from the seventeenth century, including the drawings of c.1634, now at Renishaw Hall, show the fountain set in a plain courtyard with paths. Mark Girouard, ‘Early Drawings of Bolsover Castle’, *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), pp. 510-18; Drury, ‘Bolsover Castle’, II, pp. 254-59. David Jacques, ‘Bolsover Castle: The Little Castle Garden’(unpublished report for English Heritage, 2013), p. 7 discusses these images: ‘If there had been a garden in situ, there is every reason to suppose it would have been recorded as faithfully as the buildings. There is no known reason to suppose the garden was omitted for reasons of convention’.

²⁴¹ Worsley, *Bolsover Castle*, p. 35; Brown, ‘Courtesies of Place’, p. 164.

leading from the hallway of the bedchamber suite to the Hall and the kitchens below, so it would have been practical for food to be delivered from that direction.

Characters stepping out of the present location would be reminiscent of other royal entertainments such as the entry of James I to Worksop Manor in 1603 when ‘a number of huntsmen all in greene’ appeared, and a Woodman made a speech of welcome.²⁴² It would also have been similar to the appearance of the characters Accidence and Fitzale (whose costume was ‘pasted over with records of the two shires and certain fragments of the forest’ [46-7]), again alluding to the current location, when the king was departing from Welbeck in 1633.²⁴³

There was certainly insufficient room for a complex set on the scale of those constructed at the Banqueting House in Whitehall: the Star Chamber measures approximately L10m x W6.5m x H4.25m. Because *Love’s Triumph* and *Chloridia* had used complicated mechanical devices, with spectacular scene changes, and masques were becoming increasingly dependent on them, the lack of anything so dazzling might have been amusing. Simple staging underscored the informality of a country entertainment as well as aligning the space with conventional theatres (where scenery might be equally uncomplicated), and it fitted with a strain of self-deprecating humour in the text. In the light of his recent quarrel with Inigo Jones, Jonson was also proving a point. This reading may be supported by the passage in Cavendish’s *The Antemasque* discussed above, probably written soon after *Love’s Welcome*, in which the vicar protests, ‘Whatt doe I thinke marie I think ther wants Cloudes for him to Coume doune In, Ande besides we wante the discretion off Sum Iustice off Peace to make the Seanes therefore I utterlye dislike that.’ Margaret Cavendish noted that Jonson was employed by Cavendish in 1634 ‘in fitting such scenes and speeches as he could best devise’ suggesting the poet was responsible for the staging.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Nichols, *The Progresses*, I, pp. 85-87, discussed in Worsley, ‘Architectural Patronage’, I, pp. 149-50.

²⁴³ Knowles, *The King’s Entertainment at Welbeck*, pp. 667-77.

²⁴⁴ Cavendish, *Life*, p. 103.



Fig. 216 View on entering the Star Chamber (English Heritage)

Second, the decorative paintwork was suitable for a garden. The panelling surrounding the figures was painted green, brown and gold, and there was an extensive use of green paint in the Marble and Heaven Closets.²⁴⁵ The audience would therefore have been surrounded by colours that might be associated with nature (and with the imagination).²⁴⁶ The paintwork could have been supplemented with a green wool cloth on the lime-ash floor to accommodate dancing, and perhaps also real plants and flowers, a backcloth, verdure tapestries, or standing scenery depicting a garden landscape. The current activity of exploring the building and enjoying the views might have been akin to a walk in a garden, as I have suggested above.

²⁴⁵ For the blue-green colour of the original ceiling in the Star Chamber, and the green paint on the panelling (a copper resinate glaze) see Hughes, '...with the feather edge', pp. 125-31; for the copper resinate glaze in the Marble Closet see Hughes, 'Interdisciplinary Collaboration', pp. 5-10.

²⁴⁶ For the use of green in Renaissance interiors see Smith, *The Key of Green*, pp. 44-84.

Presenting a set of a garden with a starry sky would have positioned the entertainment among the most fashionable masques and pastorals of recent years. The piece would have been loaded with desirable iconographic associations. A garden below a starry sky, with rural Derbyshire beyond, would have been reminiscent not only of Jonson's *Love's Triumph* and *Chloridia*, but also Aurelian Townsend's *Tempe Restored*, Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum*, and Walter Montagu's *The Shepherd's Paradise*.²⁴⁷ Thus making a theatrical set of a heavenly garden for a masque or play to be presented to the King and Queen in the summer of 1634 would have been an obvious gambit.

Third, the room is light and airy. There are five large windows along two walls with views to the sky and to broad landscapes below. The ingenious distribution of volumes in the Little Castle is one of the triumphs of its design, and the large presence chamber on the first floor is a startling surprise after the smaller, vaulted rooms of the ground floor.

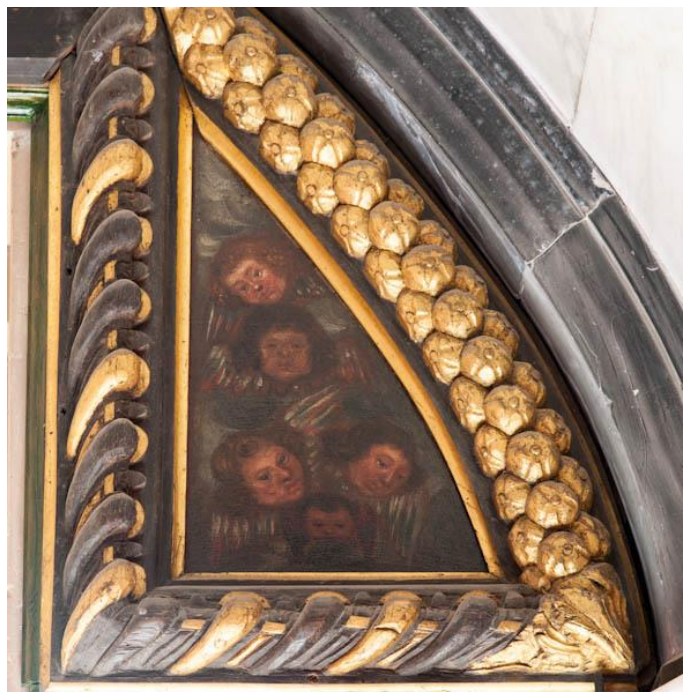
It is likely that the royal guests were invited to imagine they had risen to paradise when they were given their tour. There was an implied chronological ascent from the classical and medieval architectural past of the ground floor to a Renaissance present on the first and second floors, and a related ascent in the painted decoration from Greek and Roman religion to Old and then New Testament revelation. The myth of Hercules culminated in his stellification and acceptance into Elysium, and the theme of the banquet of sense sometimes translated the classical Hercules into the Christian Samson, as Raylor has noted. The notion of graduated refinement and enlightenment was reflected in the choice of pillars in the Hall, Pillar Parlour and Star Chamber: the Tuscan, Doric and finally Corinthian orders. The decoration in all the rooms on the first floor took a broadly celestial theme.²⁴⁸ Thus a celestial setting would have been appropriate for the appearance of Eros and Anteros in the play.

²⁴⁷ Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden*, pp. 200-203. Britland, *Drama at the Courts*, pp. 74-130. Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, pp. 179-80.

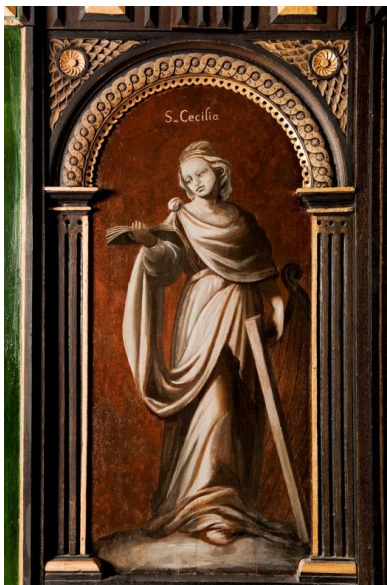
²⁴⁸ The grisaille paintings differ in style from the panel paintings, although they have been considered coeval. The choice of the six saints was certainly felicitous with regard to iconography associated with Henrietta-Maria: Mary Magdalene, St Catherine, St Cecilia and St Ursula, and there must be a suspicion that they were added for the royal visit. For Mary Magdalene see Britland, *Drama at the Courts*, pp. 108-9; for the probable portrait of Henrietta Maria as St Catherine see *Van Dyck*, ed. by Barnes, de Poorter, Millar and Vey, p. 636. The twelve male saints comprise nine apostles (minus Thomas, James the son of Zebedee, and James the Less) with the addition of St Bonaventura, St Paul and St Joseph.



Fig. 217 View of the Marble Closet showing the doors to the balcony on the west façade (Crosby Stevens)



Figs 218, 219, 220 Details of the panel paintings over the double doors in the Marble Closet (Bob Smith, English Heritage)



Figs 221, 222, 223, 224 The female saints in the Star Chamber. (St Ursula and St Catherine are modern reproductions of lost panels) (English Heritage)

Fourth, there was an obvious pun on the name of the Star Chamber, which could be used to reference the high court in London to which the king referred cases that were politically important,

and where noblemen might be tried.²⁴⁹ There are several allusions to the Star Chamber in works associated with Cavendish. In *The New Inn* when Beaufort believes he has been tricked into his marriage with Laetitia he threatens to take his case to the Star Chamber. Likewise, in *The Antemasque*, as we have seen, when the crime of defamation against a Lord, *scandalum magnatum*, is feared, the vicar says that the issue could be referred to the Star Chamber: ‘Itt is Scandelum magnatum agay an Honorable Lorde the Lorde misrule, & that Is Star-chamber-busines’.²⁵⁰

It is possible that the room was also being compared with the Painted Chamber in Westminster Palace where the High Court of Chivalry (revived in 1634) sometimes assembled, and where cases of *scandalum magnatum* might be tried. Thus Cavendish could have been referencing the Bolsover setting in Act V of *The Variety* when Justice says: ‘How, did he pretend himself to be a Lord? ’tis *Scandalum Magnatum* in the highest degree: and by a statute *quingagesimo* of the Queene, if she prosecute, he is to be whip’d, and lose his eares three severall market dayes.’ Another example would be the passage in Cavendish’s *The Country Captain* (1641), where Engine says, ‘you may guesse I talke at randome, Gentlemen, but you must not interpret all foolish discourse a distemper of the braine; Lords would take it for a *scandalum magnatum*, and your Ladyes would bee Angry too....’²⁵¹ Thus we can see that it would have been amusing to see an aristocratic Eros and Anteros make up their quarrel in front of the King and Queen, in the painted ‘Star Chamber’ at Bolsover.

Fifth, the ceiling was coloured blue to resemble a sky, and it had applied, gilded lead stars. The stars could have signalled not only that the room was heavenly but also, referencing the traditional ceiling decoration of theatres, that it was a performance space.²⁵²

Sixth, the Star Chamber was well designed for shows. There were three doors through which protagonists could enter and exit, and a small room behind the central door where actors and properties could have been hidden – a tiring room. This room has high-quality panelling, an internal window that borrows light from the passage beyond. At one time there was a connecting

²⁴⁹ The name was used in the inventory of c.1676: ‘In the Stare Chambar, 4 peces of hangings, I duzon of Gilt Lethor chares, 3 pictturs; 2 ouell tables; one liron grate’, British Library, Add MS 70500, ff. 110r-111v.

²⁵⁰ The High Court of Chivalry was overseen by the Earl of Arundel as Earl Marshal. See <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/history/research/projects/court-of-chivalry/index.aspx/> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

²⁵¹ William Cavendish, *The country captaine and the Varietie*, p. 82; *The Country Captain*, ed. by Anthony Johnson, p. 42 (1432-36).

²⁵² For the decoration of the canopy of the heavens at the Globe see Andrew Gurr and M. Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare’s Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 36-37.

doorway to the Marble Closet that was probably covered by a wall hanging (Figure 235). (This was an alteration to the original design whose date has not been established.) This opening would have increased the possibilities for movement in performances. Given sufficient time actors could have exited and entered from any of the three main doors of the Star Chamber, in any sequence. Two staircases link the ground, first and second floors. It would have been possible for performers to move between the left and central doors of the Star Chamber either by crossing the lantern area on the second floor (a polite space) or by crossing the Hall on the ground floor (a less polite space). In addition, low-born players and musicians could have come into the building, like servants, from either the entrance in the courtyard that leads down to the kitchens, or the garden. Using the back stairs they could have ascended from the basement to the Star Chamber without being seen by guests who had entered through the front door.

Furthermore, it is unusual to find a high status Jacobean presence chamber with ornate panelling on one side and completely plain panelling on the other, which may again suggest an occasional theatrical use. Normally, expanses of wall without decoration were used to display textile hangings, and they were usually left bare, often devoid even of plaster.²⁵³ However the undecorated walls in the Star Chamber are covered with plain panelling that is well-made. Hughes has concluded that the wood has always been painted and the original colour was grey.²⁵⁴ It is generally agreed that the intention must have been for the panelling to be seen, at least on occasion. These plainer walls would have been ideal as an unobtrusive backdrop for standing scenery, and the same fittings used sometimes for hangings could have been dressed with a theatrical backcloth, covering some or all of the wood, as required.²⁵⁵

The lighting would also have been suitable for theatrical staging: the windows of the Star Chamber, which face south-west and north-west, illuminate the two blank walls. The room is most strongly lit in the afternoon and evening. The royal visit of July 1634 was a day-trip and we might suppose the entourage would have wanted to begin the return journey to Welbeck before dusk. We can therefore assume that the entertainment was performed in the afternoon. Originally there were ornate wooden shutters on all the windows, and the room could have been candle-lit when these were closed – at night, or on cold winter afternoons. The glossy paint and the gold detailing on the woodwork and ceiling would have reflected light.

²⁵³ I am grateful to David Bostwick and Annabel Westwood for advice on textile furnishings.

²⁵⁴ Oral communication.

²⁵⁵ The panelling has been patched and repaired and no evidence of fittings remains.



Fig. 225 Window shutters in the Star Chamber (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 226 Views of the Star Chamber, from the painting of Moses towards the three main doors, with the door to the small panelled chamber (the proposed tiring room) visible through the opening in the centre, and the Marble Closet visible through the door on the right. The painting of Aaron is on the far right. (Crosby Stevens)

The text of Cavendish's *The Antemasque* indicates that while the Star Chamber was too small for complex scenery it could nonetheless accommodate an eight-man dance in a domestic performance. The vicar calls on the tradesmen one by one (136-48), 'Hamer kettle-man you stop a hole In our danse to; I know you will hamer at Itt well enough [...] Robin Puff paste the Cooke you shall be stewed in the danse, with fiddles for sipittes [...] Cellidide Laste the Shoe-maker though Laste nott Leaste In our Danse, for the laste will be first I will vampe you before' and so on.

In *Love's Welcome* three quaternios enter (Vulcan with three Cyclops, followed by two groups of four builders). It is possible that all twelve characters danced. However, it is also possible that the first four entrants (who were greeted with 'you are our music!') drummed with their sledges and/or played instruments, while the eight builders alone performed the steps. This would have been similar to *The Haddington Masque* in which twelve gentlemen dressed as signs of the Zodiac danced while musicians played and two Cyclops (the choreographers and dancing masters) beat the rhythm with their hammers.²⁵⁶ There could have been additional on- or off-stage musicians (perhaps positioned in either of the two lobbies beside the Star Chamber) to leave space for the dancing.

It may be useful to make a comparison with the posited dimensions of the stages in the Blackfriars Theatre, (6m by 6m), and the Salisbury Court Theatre (6m x 4.8m).²⁵⁷ The Star Chamber, as we have seen, measures 10m x 6.5m. A performance area 6.5m wide and 4.5m deep, opposite the fireplace, would have extended beyond the door that leads to the bed chamber suite, filling just under half the room. It would have been comparable in size to those of the London indoor theatres. An audience of at least thirty people could have been seated comfortably on chairs and forms, assuming there was a gap of about a metre between the performance area and the audience. It is not known how many courtiers came to Bolsover in 1634, nor how many people enjoyed the feast. Perhaps the Star Chamber would have been large enough for the A-list to see the performance, even if they did not all join the royal couple as they banqueted and toured the smaller rooms.

Seventh, *Love's Welcome* is short. The two sections after the song together last less than seven minutes when read aloud. They feature one character plus the three quaternios of musicians and dancers in the first act, and then three speaking characters and two non-speaking characters in the second act, apparently without dancing or music. The piece seems too insubstantial to entertain

²⁵⁶ *The Haddington Masque*, ed. by David Lindley, p. 270.

²⁵⁷ See Gurr and Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres*, pp. 29-32.

the travelling court and a large crowd of gentry, as a main event after the feast. The presentation was undoubtedly lavish and remarkable. Margaret Cavendish compared the 1633 entertainment to that of 1634:

This entertainment cost my Lord between four and five thousand pounds; which his Majesty liked so well, that a year after his return out of Scotland, he was pleased to send my Lord word, that her Majesty the Queen was resolved to make a progress into the northern parts, desiring him to prepare the like entertainment for her, as he had formerly done for him. Which my Lord did, and endeavoured for it with all possible care and industry, sparing nothing that might add spleandour to that feast, which both their Majesties were pleased to honour with their presence [...] and, in short, did all that he ever could imagine, to render it great, and worthy of their royal acceptance. [...] it cost him in all between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds'.²⁵⁸

The brevity and the restricted cast would have been disappointing for a grand public performance, even if the texts were supplemented with music and dance.²⁵⁹ However, the piece would have been perfectly suited to a staggered domestic entertainment, embellishing extravagant banquets after the feast, in an intimate indoor space. The royal couple may have been entertained with an opening song at their first banquet in the Pillar Parlour, then a speech and a dance at their second banquet in the Star Chamber, and finally a ceremonious farewell in the Star Chamber and Marble Closet. (I will return to this below.) The format would have been similar to that of *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment* where sections were performed 'At the entrance to the banquet', 'In the passage', 'At the banquet', and finally 'In the Hall' (ll. 1, 8, 18, 222).

It is not known how Margaret Cavendish calculated the cost of the entertainments. She may have included all six days of the visit. However, there need not have been expenditure on an outdoor set at Bolsover. There was scope for very extravagant spending on tableware and food for the feast and the banquets, and, as I will suggest below, expenses for the masque may have included alterations to the Marble Closet scheme and presents for the royal couple.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Cavendish, *Life*, p. 103.

²⁵⁹ This difficulty was pointed up by the staging of the entertainment by Thomas Betteridge and James Knowles in the garden at Bolsover in July 2014, which featured extensive additions.

²⁶⁰ Cavendish, *Life*, p. 80: a set of table linen bought for the 1634 entertainment cost £160. Cavendish may have presented a painting, *St Francis in a Landscape* by Alexander Keirncx, to the royal couple during their visit, introducing the Antwerp artist to the King. Hearn, 'William Cavendish and the Arts', in *Royalist Refugees* ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter, p. 93, and catalogue entry 14, p. 154.

Finally, once the audience was in position, it would have become clear that the guests were completing another implied scene: that of a masquing hall or theatre. We might remember that when they had entered the Little Castle they had passed under a statue of Hercules holding up the globe, reminiscent, perhaps, of the statue at the entrance to the Globe Theatre, and then in the Ante Room they had seen the painting of the temple, which I suggested represented a hybrid masquing and apron stage. They may also have noted the changes to the source prints in this first room that could have alluded to a number of London theatres, notably Blackfriars. Here, as they entered the Star Chamber (a presence chamber where dramatic entertainments might normally be expected to take place), they would have seen the portrait of Jonson as Aaron directly ahead of the door. It would have been unremarkable to find tapestries featuring Old Testament figures, or full-length family portraits. However, it would undoubtedly have been a unique experience to encounter a life-size figure of a low-born, living poet, dressed in biblical costume. Spotting Jonson straight away was essential to understanding that the religious decoration on this floor was not to be taken at face value. Bolsover was a place of mirthful entertainment (where serious messages could nonetheless be transmitted).

Moving further into the Star Chamber the company would have walked towards the painted figures. If they turned to face the blank panelled walls (presumably covered by the temporary stage set and/or backcloth), and then settled down for a performance, it would have become apparent that they were waiting in a fictive auditorium. Three figures in contemporary costume in the corner behind them would have made the illusion clear. Two knights would have appeared to be sitting in a gallery, and a boy of middling status holding a cat, would have appeared to be standing or sitting below them at the back.²⁶¹ We might wonder whether the vicar imitated the painted boy when he spoke ‘Iuste like a Boye sayenge Grace holding vpphis heade’ (16) at the end of *The Antemasque*, There might be a pun on ‘cate’ and ‘cat’:

Our Cates off witt weare off our Beste.
 If by your favours theye are Bleste.
 Wee then Giue thanks, iff nott why Then,
 This Is our Grace, Saye you A-Men.
 (168-71)

²⁶¹ Hayward ‘Clothing’, p. 18. I am grateful to Amy Saunders for locating the photograph of the lost panel.



Fig. 227 The two knights in the Star Chamber. The bare wall beside the door to the guarderobe shows the position of the missing painting of the boy with a cat (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 228 The damaged panel painting of the boy with a cat from the Star Chamber (now lost) (English Heritage)



Fig. 229 The two knights in the Star Chamber. (English Heritage)

Lucy Worsley has suggested that the two knights may be actual portraits of William and his brother Charles.²⁶² This would have had considerable comic potential. If the real Cavendish brothers were watching *Love's Welcome*, they would have been in the audience both as their real selves and as the knights above them. If they had acted or danced in the show they would have been performing to their painted selves. In addition, they would have been absent from the room when the audience first assembled to watch, getting ready to perform, although they were nonetheless present with their guests. The absence of the brothers despite their painted presence would have been remarkable and funny. If actors had impersonated them they would have played to the brothers twice over, and there would have been similar comic confusion. The actors might address the real people, or the paintings, or both. This layering and accumulation of fictitious roles, 'scene selves', and the almost impenetrable sleight-of-hand in swapping present and absent, dead and alive, real

²⁶² Worsley, *Bolsover Castle*, p. 22; Durant, *The Smythson Circle*, p. 189. For portraits of Cavendish see Hearn, 'William Cavendish and the Arts', in *Royalist Refugees*, ed. by Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter, catalogue entries 15-18, pp. 130-35.

and painted people, in multiple guises, was central to the plays and masques written with the building in mind.²⁶³

Definitions of family identities, and the true and the false, are bizarrely unstable in *The Concealed Fancies* which features two sets of sisters, probably to be played by two and then three of the real Cavendish sisters.²⁶⁴ Delight in a tangle of meta-dramatic self-referencing appears in the dialogue between Luceny and Tattiney:

Tattiney: Do you not wonder that Courtley and Presumption are held wits? For methinks there are no such miracles in their language.

Luceny: Why, that's because we have been brought up in the creation of good languages, which will make us ever our selves.

(II.3.139-44)

The word 'language' might denote verbal or dramatic invention. The phrase 'make us ever ourselves' would be humorous in the context of the ambiguous portraits within the Little Castle decoration and the several dramatic parts taken by the sisters.

The Antemasque also features complex role play, as we have seen. I have suggested the character of the vicar was played by Cavendish or an actor impersonating him. This makes sense of much of the text. He called himself the 'Generall vicar' (10), which would allude to his portrait as the knight as well as the religious decoration, and it would position him as the real son of Sir Charles painted as the valiant King David. We might note that the vicar was called 'Vpp Thomas vpp Ritcharde'. The two protagonists in *A Debaushte Gallante* were similarly named Thomas (the gentleman) and Dick (the gallant). While it may not be possible to recover the allusion (perhaps a play on Tom, Dick and Harry), we can see this as an example of the complex web of cross-referencing between the Cavendish-related plays and the paintings. We might think that Tom and Dick in the *A Debaushte Gallante* were supposed to remind the audience of Lovel and Beaufort in *The New Inn*, also proponents of base and honourable love. Both pairs of characters resonated with the dual Venuses in the Elysium Closet, representing earthly and heavenly love.

²⁶³ COURTLEY: [...] tell me in what humour is thy mistress?

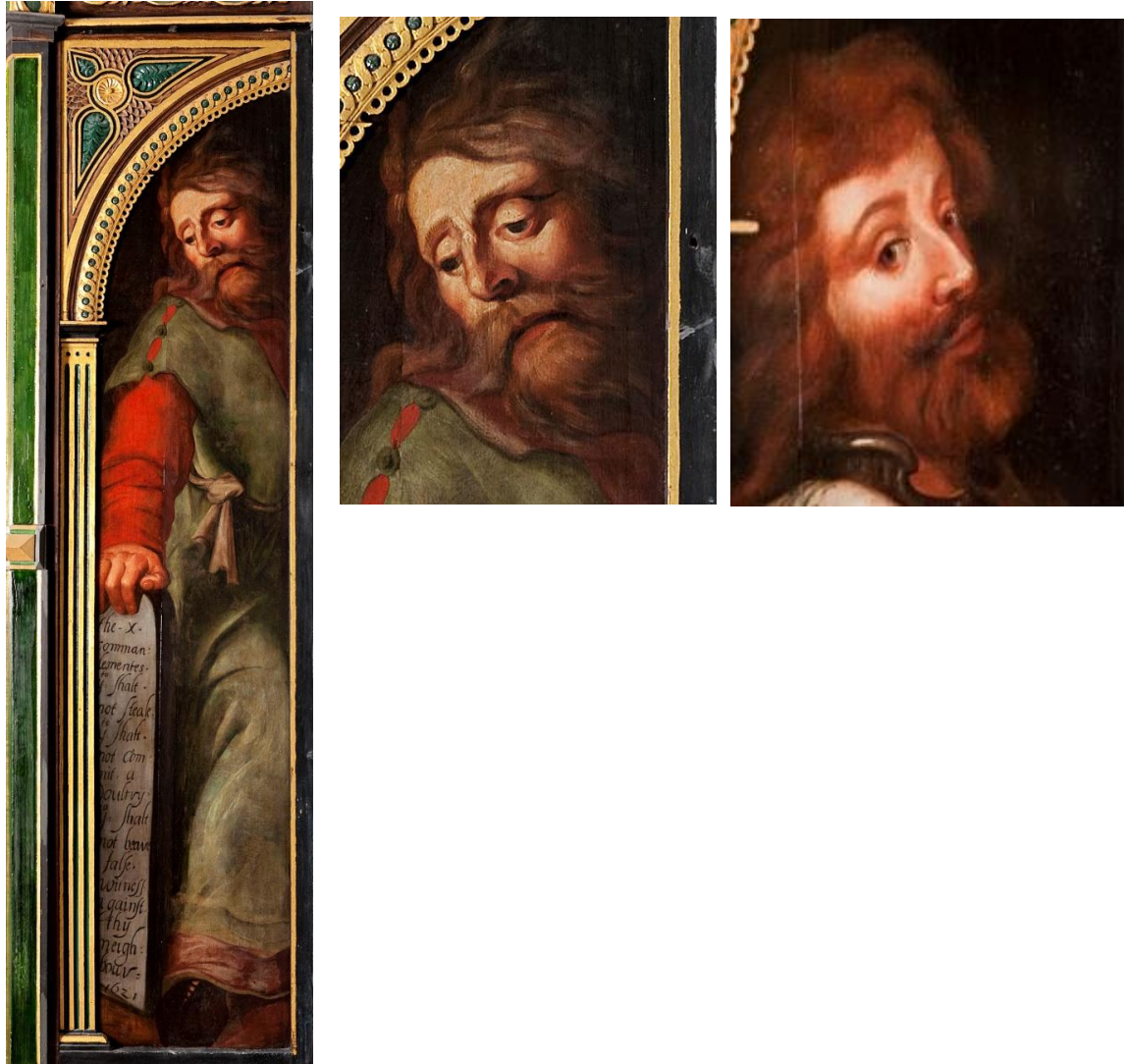
PRESUMPTION: Faith, my misfortune is, she knows her scene-self too well. (*The Concealed Fancies*, I.1.3-4).

²⁶⁴ Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces*, pp.8-13 and 44-53; Lisa Hopkins and Barbara MacMahon, "'Come, what, a siege?': Metarepresentation in Lady Jane Cavendish and Lady Elizabeth Brackley's *The Concealed Fancies*", *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 16. 3 (2013).

There is a similar example in *The Variety*. Manly (who, Anne Barton has argued, is ‘really to be understood as an extension and re-interpretation of Lady Frampull’s suitor Lovel in *The New Inn*’) is tricked into dressing up as an Elizabethan knight, ‘the ghost of Leicester’. Despite general mockery he impresses Lady Beaufield and wins her respect.²⁶⁵ If this scene was played in the Star Chamber, inside the mock-medieval Bolsover Castle, in front of the portraits of David and the knight, and close to all the allegorical representation of heroic virtue and masculine attraction through the decoration, the allusion to Cavendish would be rich.

I will suggest below that the text of *Love’s Welcome* indicates that Cavendish was also painted as Moses in the Star Chamber. If this was a second portrait he would have been present yet again, standing beside the stage.

²⁶⁵ *The Variety*, III. Barton, ‘Harking Back’, pp. 707-9.



Figs 230, 231, 232 Panel painting of Moses in the Star Chamber with details of the faces of Moses and the knight
(English Heritage)

Moses and Aaron occupied complementary halves of an arch, with the expanse of plain panelling between them. If the panelling was covered with a scenic backcloth they would have appeared to be framing an extended stage, finishing off the fictive scene, like a proscenium arch. The laws of good alchemy, good theatre, and good living, carried by Moses, would be part of the setting.

Moses and Aaron were brothers. This added another pair to the set of the two knights. Indeed, the room was brimful with brothers, and with fathers and sons – both literal and spiritual. (We can find St Peter and St Andrew, St Joseph father of Christ, holy fathers, and monastic brothers, as

well as, perhaps, Sir Charles and Cavendish's brother Charles, painted as David and Solomon. The arms of Gilbert Talbot and his wife Mary – sister to Sir Charles – were carved on the chimneypiece.) There was therefore considerable scope for allusions to siblings and paternity that referenced the decoration. The addition of yet another pair with Eros and Anteros in *Love's Welcome* would have been amusing, as well as reminding the guests of the recent births of the Princes Charles and James.

I wish to argue that the characters Colonel Vitruvius, Captain Smith/Vulcan, Eros and Anteros were all played either by Cavendish and his brother, or by actors impersonating them, and this was funny.²⁶⁶ For example, it made a nonsense of Philaethes' plea at the end of the play, 'Return to yourselves, little deities' (140). Likewise, 'So wisheth the glad and grateful client seated here, the overjoyed master of this house, and prayeth that the whole region about him could speak but his language' (151-3) would have referred, ridiculously, to the real Cavendish (the client and master, who was either absent from, or in, the audience), the painted knight seated above him (who was over-joyed), the painted Moses (who prayed), and, as I will discuss below, the cupids from the poetic fiction (who were the real brothers, or actors pretending to be the real brothers).

The name Colonel Vitruvius made a witty allusion to William Cavendish, with the letters **CV** standing for **Cavendish**, and **V** as a Latin equivalent of **W** for **William**. Making him into Vitruvius alluded to his reputation as a prolific builder (referenced, as we have seen, by the addition of the wall to *Phlegmatic* in the Ante Room).²⁶⁷ The comparison was flattering, and it gestured to his grandmother and father, who were both known for their expertise in architecture. The squares and circles of the Star Chamber ceiling could be associated with Vitruvius, as could the chronology and compendium of architectural styles through the building. The second verse of Aglionby's *On Bolsover Castle* begins:

Architecture itself, if it could be
Exposed to outward view, we sure should see
Clothed in the shape of Bolzer; hence we may
Those precepts with examples pay,
And find, if we survey each several part,

²⁶⁶ Fitzmaurice, 'William Cavendish', pp. 73-74 suggests Anteros was played by Cavendish and Eros by his brother.

²⁶⁷ The choice of the title Earl of Newcastle lay behind the quip by Richard Andrews, probably writing in the 1630s, 'When Bolser Castle I doe name,| Mee thinks Newcastle is the same:| Bolser a castle is, and newe;| which shows Newcastle is your dewe.' BL Harleian MS 4955, f.62, cited Worsley, 'Architectural Patronage', II, p. 90. The same idea may be behind the altered castles in the paintings in the Marble Closet.

The inventory of that art:
(15-20)

There may have been an element of teasing in the name, however, because Cavendish habitually pursued multiple simultaneous building projects on his estates. He was continually altering Bolsover Castle. Sections of the Terrace Range and Riding School Range were still unfinished more than thirty years after the work had begun: it is likely that King Charles would remember his visit to Welbeck and Hardwick Hall of 1619 when the decoration at Bolsover was probably at an early stage. This jibe would have been amplified by the intrusion of the builders into the elegant presence chamber, as if from the building site outside. By gently joking at his own expense here and elsewhere Cavendish was making a calculated gesture of modesty.

The name Vitruvius would also have alluded to Cavendish's military identity. Vitruvius served as a military engineer under Julius Caesar, and Cavendish served under King Charles as his Lord-Lieutenant in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, with control of the county militia. In the civil war he was able to muster infantry and cavalry across swathes of the north.²⁶⁸ The king would have been aware of Cavendish's formidable presence in the locality (especially the troubled Peak District), and in Northumberland near the Scottish border, where he owned estates that included ancient castles inherited from his mother.²⁶⁹ The visitors would already have seen that his role as a soldier was important in the iconography in the Little Castle. His main persona was Hercules, representing physical strength and courage, and he could be understood as the infantryman in *Choleric*, the knight in the double portrait in the Star Chamber, and Mars, Oberon, Perseus and Jupiter in the Elysium Closet. The first dramatic section of *Love's Welcome* therefore reminded the audience that Cavendish was rich and influential in the region, and that his prowess in swordsmanship and horsemanship were significant political and military assets.

There are similar military references throughout Cavendish's dramatic pieces, entwined with the many religious and legal allusions. For example, the thieves in *The Cutt purses Ceane* have a quasi-military ethos:

²⁶⁸ Trease, *Portrait*, pp. 93-96, 99.

²⁶⁹ Knowles has argued for the significance to the text of endemic disturbances among the lead miners of the Peak District, and the alarming gathering of miners at Baslow on 30 July, 1634 (the day of the masque) with the intention of marching to present a petition to the king. Trained bands of militia were ordered to suppress the march. Knowles "The Royal Visit", pp. 27-30. See Andy Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country 1520-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 236-37; Trease, *Portrait*, p. 70.

[...] thy
 Contience I belieue troubles thee
 nott, butt the Lawe for thourte a
 Barester In Hanginge. 4: Oh Pardon
 him pardon him, I was Iuste so att
 firste, & so are all the 7 Deadlye virtues
 Till nature bee fortified with the
 Grace off Impudenceye, & Conuerte
 Contemplation In to Action, for
 virtewe Consistes In action, -
 3: Courage my braue Boyes, & bee Confide
 nte with a bolde & Brasen face
 which Is a Courte virtewe
 (*The Cutt purses Ceane*, 14-26).

The first stage instruction in *Love's Welcome* (32) noted that Colonel Vitruvius was making an oration. This would make sense if he was addressing his militia soldiers, who were builders by trade, as the colonel of their regiment, before they danced their drill under the instruction of their Captain. (The reference to the dancers as 'our music' [43] could have gestured to the three sledges, and also, perhaps, other instruments, making an implied pun on 'band' of militia.) In Jonson's 1633 entertainment at Welbeck the Hoods came 'in at the country charge' which alluded to mustering of local militia.²⁷⁰ The builders may have been another version of the Hoods.

There was a contemporary debate about the practice, copied from antiquity, of high ranking officers delivering orations to their troops before battle, in order to steel their courage and exhort them to greater effort. It was the role of the colonel to raise the troops, and to pay, provision, clothe and equip them. Lower-ranking captains were generally responsible for giving direct commands, and for drill.²⁷¹ Vitruvius and Smith fulfilled these roles in the scene. 'Boldly' (33) might denote the courage to come in front of the King and Queen, and to go into battle.

²⁷⁰ Brown, 'Courtesies of Place', p. 153.

²⁷¹ Roger B. Manning, 'Styles of Command in Seventeenth-Century English Armies', *The Journal of Military History*, 71 (2007), 671-99.

Captain Smith may have alluded to Cavendish's brother (as well as Cavendish himself – in the decoration they were partially elided as we have seen). The name Captain Smith gave the letters CS that were short for both CharleS and CavendiSh.

The pairing and elision of brothers, and the multiplication of Cavendish fathers and sons, through the paintings sheds light on the additional name of Vulcan, given to Captain Smith. The note in the manuscript margin reads, 'The first Quaternio. Captaine Smyth or Vulcan with three Cyclops' (41). The F2 version gave the same direction with commas before and after 'or Vulcan'. In the manuscript he was greeted with, 'O Captain Smith! Or neighbour Vulcan!' and in the F2 text with, 'O Captain Smith! or Hammer-armed Vulcan'. I suggest 'neighbour' and 'hammer-armed' refer to the painted decoration. Vulcan, as we have seen, was a key figure in the iconography. He was present in the Hall, carving the date 1616 onto the chimneypiece, possibly referencing an alchemist, linked to the Cyclops, and representing a generic Cavendish brother. He was also the source of the 'strong arm' in the 'cut and paste' figures of the metamorphosed tree and the boy heirs in the Elysium Closet, representing succeeding generations of Cavendish men. The three Cyclops could have been replications of Cavendish/Captain Smith/Vulcan if they were in a broad sense the family of Vulcan. This idea of the replication of one figure would be picked up in the explanation of the creation of Anteros in the second Act (86-108).

The entrance of each of the three groups of four dancers is noted separately. The colonel spoke four and a half lines of prose before the second group entered. Thus Captain Smith/Vulcan and the soldiers/Cyclopes were on stage without the other eight characters for about fifteen or twenty seconds, a significant length of time. It would have made sense for Vitruvius to have greeted them as they arrived, introducing them and arranging them into ranks, as if they were soldiers on parade: (44) 'plant yourselves there', (50) 'stand you four there in the second rank', (55) 'put all you on i' the rear'. This makes sense of the direction in the margin in F2 for the dance to begin at the point where Colonel Vitruvius says, 'Well done my musical, arithmetical, geometrical gamesters!' (59-60). The dancers began to dance after the oration, on the words 'sprightly motion', and their Colonel then praised their drill.

'You come a little too tardy' (43) could have meant that the soldiers were late but also that they had come out of the decorated (tarred) surfaces of the walls. This would have been particularly amusing if their costumes had been painted and weird, like costumes for an anti-masque. Presumably the dress of Colonel Vitruvius, Captain Smith and the dancers reflected their multiple identities, and they would have entertained an audience that had just been dazzled (probably bewildered) by the layered identities of the figures in the iconography. The pun on tar was repeated

when Philalethes said, ‘all amiableness in the richest dress of delight and colours, courting the season to tarry by them’ (149).

The dancers were Colonel Vitruvius’ ‘Mechanicks’ (32) in three senses: soldiers and dancers who move mechanically, low-born craftsmen, and experts in the sciences of mechanics, surveying and mathematics. (Huntingdon Smythson, son of John Smythson, who undertook part of the William Senior survey of the Cavendish estates, signed himself ‘Practitioner of Mathematics’.)²⁷² Cavendish, his father and brother shared a keen interest in architecture, science and music, which were all mathematical pursuits. Mathematics was also related to alchemy and so to the figure of the alchemist and astronomer in the Ante Room, and to Vulcan in the Hall.

Mathematics, astrology and alchemy were recurring themes in plays and masques associated with Cavendish. We have noted that the figure who came tell the baby’s fortune in *The Cavendish Christening Entertainment* was a mathematician and astrologer. We can find another example in *The preparation for A feast*, a short outline for a work by Cavendish, possibly dated to the later 1630s or early 1640s, perhaps never completed.²⁷³ The final section suggests that Cavendish intended to write about Johannes Kepler, the eminent alchemist, astrologer and mathematician, which would have allowed him to reference the paintings of the humours in the Ante Room, the allusions to alchemy in the painted schemes, and the family’s broad interest in mathematics.

Then Mr. Keplors Humor
For Alcumye. & his other Phanseyes.
Then the mathematicks. to bee made merry
withall. The newe opinions of D: Predgion
& rare Secretts In Phisick. The Ingenier nott
to scape. Nor pictures and statues.
(21-6)

‘D: Predgion’ may have been William Pridgeon, a contemporary physician – perhaps a second modern man of science who could be lampooned to continue banter about truth, science and experiments.²⁷⁴ ‘The ingenior nott / to scape. Nor pictures & statues’ appears to be a reminder to

²⁷² Durant, *The Smythson Circle*, pp. 197-98. Worsley, ‘The Architectural Patronage’ (2001), I, p.72.

²⁷³ *The preparation for A feast*, in *Dramatic Works*, ed. by Hulse, MS PwV 26, Fols. 162a, pp. 29-30 (p. 30). For the date of the fragment see *ibid.*, ix-xi.

²⁷⁴ *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen*, ed. by Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox (London: Routledge, 1989) pp. 201, 205.

bring in an engineer (from the word ‘scape’, this was someone to be cast in a negative light – presumably Inigo Jones, echoing the references to him in *Love’s Welcome*), and to allude to the paintings and statues.

Colonel Vitruvius began with, ‘Come forth, boldly put forth i’ your holiday clothes, every mother’s son of you’ (33). I suggest he was calling to the rooms beyond the Star Chamber, conjuring up his soldiers from the fabric of the building. He was primarily addressing Captain Smith, the Cyclops and militiamen (who were estate workers and so ‘family’ or household in the broadest sense – Smith could also be a nod to the name Smythson). They had made the building by magic and labour. (The building could be a metaphor for Cavendish himself, as we have seen.) All the Cavendishes and their affinity had mothers in various guises in the paintings (the Virgin Mary, Venus, Juno, Danaë, Katherine, Elizabeth). Eros and Anteros might be included in the summons as sons of Venus, though they would not appear until the second act. We might compare this to the comic ‘conjunction’ in Act IV of *The Variety*. Newman sends one of his two wenches to stand behind a hanging, telling her to ‘play the part of my Mistris, you must be witty then, and extreame coy and scurvy, in your answers’. She is to come out when the boy conjures her up with a song, so that Newman can touch her.

Returning to the text of *Love’s Welcome*, the word ‘or’ was crucial in showing that Captain Smith was both a soldier *and* Vulcan. ‘Or’ was so often needed in an explanation of the paintings (as in, ‘This is Hercules, or Sir Charles Cavendish, or Gilbert Talbot, or Henry Cavendish, or rather a generic loving brother who could also be a Stuart’) that the joke was repeated in the line in the manuscript version with, ‘Or rather! Or rather, my mathematical boyes!’ and in the F2 version, ‘or rather my true Mathematicall Boyeses’ (60). The men were true, that is brave, but also not true because they were a weird, invented amalgam of craftsmen, militia and Cyclops derived from the fiction of the paintings, and the creation of the building, as well as being people in disguise, pretending in a show. Maths, of course, dealt in truths.

Colonel Vitruvius was calling his men into the Star Chamber where the painted figures were saints and patriarchs wearing their holy clothes. The caps of the philosophers in the Elysium Closet might also be ‘holiday clothes’: a statute of 1571 had made it a legal requirement to wear a hat on Sundays and holidays. The repeated pun on ‘holiday’ and ‘holy day’ (spelt ‘Holiday’, ‘Holi-day’ and ‘Holy-dayes’ in the manuscript, and ‘Holy-day’ and ‘Holy-dayes’ in the F2 version) alluded to the religious scheme in the Star Chamber, but also to the current day trip to Bolsover, and the Book

of Sports: gestures to the rustic pleasures of the region and a compliment to the King.²⁷⁵ This was the first of a series of Christian references that continued the light-hearted tone of the religious allusions throughout the painted decoration.

We can find a number of similar examples in works by Cavendish and his daughters, as I have suggested above. There is religious language, for example, in *The Cutt purses Ceane* : one of the band of robbers reveals ‘the cut purse catechism’. Likewise, *The ‘Besey Bell’ Ballad* ends with the verse:

Then thus I’l end, God these amend
And makes his truth to shine-a
And send vs grace, in euery place,
To make us more diuine-a.
(49-52)

The elision of Colonel Vitruvius with the bearded knight and Moses was established early in his speech. Vitruvius said, ‘My Lord has it granted from them’ (34), meaning that Cavendish was instructed by the King and Queen to make this their holiday. ‘I had it granted from my Lord’ (35) meant that, as Moses (with his Commandments which, in full, included the injunction to keep the Sabbath), he had it granted from God. Colonel Vitruvius also granted his men permission to dance. With ‘gratis’ and ‘bona fide’ (36) this passage set up another series of quips related to Moses, David, Solomon, and the Star Chamber, that used legal language. The legal allusions would have reminded the audience of the social standing of the Cavendish brothers, and their corresponding responsibilities. They had sat at various times in parliament, and Cavendish held the offices of Justice of the Peace and Lord Warden of Sherwood Forest with control of the forest court.

As soon as Vitruvius called himself a surveyor and a supervisor it would have been apparent that Jonson had daringly introduced a reference to Inigo Jones.²⁷⁶ The salvo doubtless risked the displeasure of the King. However, I suggest that by blending Jones with his patron, Jonson would

²⁷⁵ Fitzmaurice, ‘William Cavendish and Two Entertainments’, argues that this section of the entertainment is less than successful and can be attributed to Cavendish: ‘While the “mechanic” scene works well enough, the as yet unsubtle hand of William is probably at work in the repeated references in the entertainment to “holy days”. William, rather than his mentor, probably wanted the monarch to be absolutely clear that Bolsover Castle contained nobody sympathetic to puritanical attacks on holiday and festival’ (p. 71).

²⁷⁶ *Tale of a Tub* V.2.72-3: *Tale of a Tub*, ed. by Peter Happé, CWBJ, VI, pp. 545-54 (pp. 546, 640); *An Expostulation*, 7-8: *An Expostulation*, ed. by Colin Burrow, CWBJ, VI, pp. 375-81 (p. 376); *The Magnetic Lady*, Induction, 61.

have indicated that this could not be another assault. With the phrase ‘the faith of a surveyor’ (36) he elegantly elided Cavendish’s personae of Moses, Vitruvius and the knight. The knight was supervising, overseeing, or looking down on, the audience. The same idea is found in Aglionby’s *On Bolsover Castle* (which I have suggested was written to be read in the Star Chamber):

’Tis like the master’s mind, compact and high,
Uniform, fit for nobility.
How aptly the Lieutenant here
Superintends the subject sheer!
And long he may (47-51)
[...] So that his high and sure retreat
Is his virtue, not his seat. (69-70)

The allusion to Jones provided a counterpoint to the comedy – a satiric edge (which would have been expected and desired from Jonson), but it was also a thinly veiled peace offering. The figures were ‘softened, and brought in’ after the ‘hard word’ (with a pun on ‘wood’) (37-8) when they came alive, and the attacks of the past were ‘softened’ through the humour. It was carefully judged and witty. The audience might remember the use of the word ‘soft’ in the song:

FIRST TENOR Exhale the sweets of earth, and all her features,
SECOND TENOR And tell you, softer than in silk, these tales,
(*The King and Queen’s Entertainment at Bolsover*, 26-7)

Knowles has noted the reference to the Man of Law in Chaucer’s ‘Prologue’ to *The Canterbury Tales* in l.39: ‘A busy man! And yet I must seem busier than I am, as the poet sings’ (39).²⁷⁷ He suggests that this was probably a further attack on Inigo Jones (as a Justice of the Peace and the Dominus-Do-All of Jonson’s ‘An Expostulation’ of 1631).²⁷⁸ Perhaps, however, if we remember the setting this reference would not have sounded entirely negative. First, the Man of Law could also have referred to Moses, and so to Cavendish (who in the role of Colonel Vitruvius, a blend of all the depicted Cavendishes, was speaking about another version of himself).²⁷⁹ He was ‘busy’

²⁷⁷ ‘Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas, / And yet he seemed bisier than he was’, discussed in *The King and Queen’s Entertainment at Bolsover*, ed. by James Knowles, p. 689.

²⁷⁸ *An Expostulation*, 64-65: *An Expostulation*, ed. by Colin Burrow, p. 378.

²⁷⁹ Sir Charles had owned a volume of Chaucer and this could have been shown to the royal couple. Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs list for Welbeck Abbey, 186/ ID 10808: ‘Chaucer, Geoffrey: Printed Book, The Workes of our ancient and learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly printed... inscribed on the title page Charles Cavendysshe

because he was the host, and because he was so many characters at once. As with the elision of Jones with Cavendish in the 'supervisor', this would temper the insult. Second, it might have occurred to those who knew 'An Expostulation' that with *Love's Welcome* Jonson was answering his own challenge to Jones: 'Oh, to make boards speak! There is a task: / Painting and carpentry are the soul of a masque'; and 'What poesy e'er was painted on a wall / That might compare with thee?' (ll. 49-50, 97-98). The decoration was, as I have argued, a type of poem, and on this occasion Jonson was busy making the boarded panels and plastered walls 'speak' through the dramatic appearance of its characters.

Finally, Jonson would be presenting himself as Chaucer. Perhaps he was a modern successor to the great poet (a flattering identity) although, as an infirm older man who had been responsible some years earlier for the bawdy images at Bolsover, he would, like Chaucer, be decidedly out of fashion.²⁸⁰ The reference to the Man of Law would then have carried a sardonic sting, referencing past attacks on Jones and conveying Jonson's defiant pride, but it was nonetheless ambiguous enough to allow Cavendish or the actor to modify the assault in performance. The phrase 'but which of them I will not now trouble myself to tell you' (40) would have been amusing because the life-size portrait of Jonson was the first painting seen on entering the Star Chamber, and the poet would hardly have needed to be mentioned.²⁸¹ It would have been wry that Jonson was pretending to be so coy when he was so clearly present in the decoration in this room and throughout the building.

The phrase 'as the poet sings' (39) could have referred to the figure of the weeping man sitting beside the viol on the Elysium Closet ceiling. If the proposed reading of the images above the window in the Elysium Closet is correct (with Jonson painted as Heraclitus and Democritus), then the intention could have been for this phrase to remind the audience of the series of roles he was assigned in the paintings. The character of Philaethes, who was soon to appear, might then be understood to represent Jonson, an amalgam of all his painted characters, stepping down from the

and inside front cover Henry Duke of Newcastle his Book 1676, contemporary calf with gilt centre ornament (rebacked), folio, 1602'. Cavendish showed his father's impressive library to Jonson in 1618: Loxey et al., *Ben Jonson's Walk*, p. 51.

²⁸⁰ For Jonson associating Chaucer with the poet laureateship see *The Golden Age Restored*, ed. by Martin Butler, *CWBJ*, IV, p. 457. For Chaucer and literary fashion see Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style In English Literature, 1590-1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 86.

²⁸¹ See Brown, 'Courtesies of Place', p. 147 for the unusual degree to which Jonson was referenced in the Cavendish's entertainments of 1633 and 1634: 'Jonson attended neither occasion, but he is undoubtedly present in both, for the host-patron has generously allowed him to be. One could almost say that at Bolsover especially there are three parties to the negotiation rather than two'.

sky in his turn. In the guises of the poet and the philosophers in the Elysium Closet he was a lover of truth in the castle's iconography. He might also be a lover of truth as Mercury the god of wisdom, as Bacchus, and as a son of Apollo. We might remember the words over the door of The Apollo Room at the Devil and St Dunstan Tavern (1619):

Welcome all, who lead or follow,

To the oracle of Apollo.

Here he speaks out of his pottle,

Or the tripes, his tower bottle.

All his answers are divine,

Truth itself doth flow in wine.

*(Verses Over the Door at the Entrance into the Apollo, 1-6)*²⁸²

Jonson would also represent a lover of truth as the priest Aaron. Aaron was not only the spokesman of Moses who gave the law, it was also part of Jewish tradition that the words of God in Malachi 2.6 spoken about Levi, from whom Aaron was descended, were said by angels who carried Aaron's bier after his death: 'The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity'. The words 'law', 'truth', 'peace', 'equity' and 'iniquity' would all resonate with *Love's Welcome*.

Knowles has noted that Eros' lines, 'The pure school which we live in, / And is of purer love the discipline (123-24)' referred to the place where classical philosophers taught – an academy, especially the garden where Plato taught.²⁸³ The 'pure school' would, I suggest, have alluded to the whole of the Little Castle, but especially the garden set in the Star Chamber, and the Elysium Closet where Eros was painted (lived) with multiple cupids, and where Democritus and Heraclitus could also be found in the setting of clouds. If the two philosophers were portraits of Jonson, and the philosophers were translated into Mercury on the ceiling above them, this would have implied that Philaethes (Jonson) was the teacher of Eros (Cavendish) in this school of pure love – that is in the play which was set in a garden, in the iconography of the Little Castle, and in real life. A connection might have been made to the statue of Mercury on the temple (perhaps a temple of love or wisdom) in the Ante Room.

²⁸² *Leges Convivales*, ed. by Colin Burrow, CWBJ, V, pp. 417-22 (p. 422). Peterson, *Imitation*, p. 104.

²⁸³ *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, ed. by James Knowles, pp. 694-95.

The theme was elaborated when Philaethes explained that the cupids were in ‘the divine school of love, an academy or court where all and the true lessons of love are thoroughly read and taught’, and that they were ‘made demonstrable to the senses’ (128-31). The audience would be reminded that the iconography of the paintings elaborated the theme of love in a sensory (visual and kinetic) manner, and there were sets of the senses in the Ante Room and the Pillar Parlour. Indeed the senses could be found in other rooms as well. The Heaven Closet offered the lamp, the orchestra, the angel blowing his nose, the vinegar, and the scourge and perhaps also the five senses of Sir Gawain. It was a standard meditation, associated with Jesuit prayer, to imagine the sensations experienced by Christ at his crucifixion.²⁸⁴ In the Elysium Closet the senses might be referenced by the lovers’ gazes, the viol, the flowers, the grape juice and the caresses of the gods. In the Star Chamber Aaron’s censer could allude to smell, the knights to sight, the ear of the cat to touch, both David and Solomon to sound, and Moses (with manna prefiguring the Eucharist) to taste.

When Eros and Anteros brought banqueting food from the heavens, as if by magic, it might have been remembered that the Christian and alchemical miracle of transubstantiation was one of the higher mysteries of transformation, and so could be linked to the Miraculous Conception, the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, and also kingship, which were explored in the Ante Room and the Elysium and Heaven Closets. The theme of the Eucharist resonated with one of Jonson’s favorite poetic metaphors, echoed in the ewer and plate in *Visus*: the ingestion, digestion and transformation of tangible and intangible food into flesh and blood.²⁸⁵ In Exodus 16: 32-34 Moses instructed Aaron to put the surplus of manna into the temple. Perhaps the Little Castle was like the Temple of Solomon. This would pick up the pervasive themes of gold, and fathers and sons. The work of completing the holy temple was passed by David to his son Solomon, just as the decoration of the Little Castle had been passed by Sir Charles to his sons William and Charles.

Vitruvius exhorted the dancers to physical effort, and I suggest that he offered prizes of shoes, ribbons and holidays in his role as their Colonel. ‘Quarter’ (63) might mean a ‘measure’ of drink (56), and ‘laced’ (63) could refer to the addition of a stronger drink than ale. ‘Trestles’ (64) could be the tables on which drink would be set out after the drill (and before and after battle). ‘Quarter’ (63) and ‘trestles’ (64) might also allude to the painted panelling in the room: a trestle table was a flat wooden surface, like a panel, set on legs, and a quarter was a piece of wood four inches wide. This would explain why the quarter was ‘cut out’ for them. There might also be an allusion to

²⁸⁴ For the sensual veneration of relics and Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* see Alice E. Sanger, ‘Sensuality, Sacred Remains and Devotion in Baroque Rome’ in *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice*, ed. by Alice E. Sanger and Siv Tove Kulbrandstad Walker (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 199-215.

²⁸⁵ Peterson, *Imitation*, pp. 106-12.

Lammas or the loaf mass, on 1 August, which was one of the four seasonal quarter days, when congregations celebrated the cutting of the first corn. This would have fallen just two days after the performance in 1634, while the royal couple were still staying at Welbeck. Eating the new harvest bread was linked to the Last Supper and the sacrament of communion.

There was a slash before and after the phrase ‘/Hey for the Lillie, for and the blended Rose/’ in the manuscript version (65-6). The F2 manuscript had no slash or paragraph break, but it added a comma: ‘Hay for the lilly, for, and the blended Rose.’ The second ‘for’ could have marked the beat of the music. It would have created a rhythmic phrase, suitable for marching: _ — _ — _ with accents on ‘Hay’, ‘for’ and ‘Rose’.

The F2 version read, ‘in the name of your *Iniquo Vitruvius*’ (65) where the manuscript had ‘in the name of your Colonell Vitruvius’. This may have been altered to add another reference to Inigo Jones so that it could be softened once again. The most obvious meaning of *Iniquo* was ‘by, with or from malevolence’, from the Latin word ‘*iniquus*’. The expectation would be that an attack was to follow. However, the Latin could carry multiple meanings. ‘*Iniquus*’ could also be translated as ‘unequal’, ‘unjust’ or ‘rising’. Thus ‘*Iniquo Vitruvius*’ might have implied that Cavendish was a less fine architect than the Roman Vitruvius or Jones, which would have been a compliment to the King and Queen, and also perhaps that Jonson was a less fine set maker, which would have been funny if the set was comparatively simple. The good-natured banter of the dialogue would have provided a safe platform for Jonson to mention his quarrel with Inigo Jones so that he could make peace, just as Eros and Anteros had made peace, without retreating from his stand on the primacy of poetry. The move would undoubtedly have been supported by Cavendish who greatly admired Jonson and who is likely to have wished to see him reconciled to the King. I suggest *Love’s Welcome* may have drawn a line under Jonson’s public attacks.

The meaning ‘unjust’ would introduce the theme of the Cupids’ quarrel, and continue the legal allusions. The meaning ‘rising’ or ‘sloping upwards’ might have alluded to William rising at court, and his position on high in the various applied paintings. It would also have set up the jokes about growing which were to come. William was not tall but his brother Charles was exceptionally small, having a physical deformity.²⁸⁶ There might already have been a related tease in casting Charles as Vulcan who was deformed and lame, but who was nonetheless mighty, and whose Cyclopes were giants.

²⁸⁶ Clarendon’s description of Charles is cited in Cavendish, *The Life*, pp. 58-59.

‘drawn’ forth might then have been the Bolsover paintings which analysed love. There could be an additional allusion to the ‘tablet’ of Moses, another painted ‘table’. ‘Thou shalte not steale, Thou shalt not commit a doultery, and Thou shalt not beare false witness against thy neighbour’ would have been an amusing list analysing love, given the snatching of the palm, the theme of royal love and marriage, and the multiple jokes about brothers, so often depicted side by side like neighbours.

‘Break my wings / I fear you will’ (81-2) suggests stage business. Perhaps Eros’ wings were damaged by Anteros when he greeted Eros with a bow. Anteros might have been clumsy because he was so big, perhaps because of his costume. That would have set up the quip, ‘What bough is this?’ (83), and there would then be another, sarcastic, reference to the damaged wings in, ‘I ha’ not one sick feather sin’ you came’ (111). The joke continued in Philaethes speech with, ‘Fortune and Time... their wings deplumed for starting from them’ (146-8). It is possible that Anteros and Eros mimed the parts of Fortune and Time: Time was often depicted as an old man with wings.

The cupids’ dialogue is thick with puns throughout:

ANTEROS:	So. This was right-brother-like! The world will know By this one act both natures. You are Love, I, Love-Again. In these two spheres we move, Eros, and Anteros.
EROS:	We have cleft the bough, And struck a tally of our loves, too, now. (85-90)
ANTEROS:	[...] Love may be Brought forth thus a little, live awhile alone, But ne’er will prosper if he have not one Sent after him to play with.’ (98-101)

The cupids were the brothers (knights) on the right and left of each other in the Star Chamber. Their scene was one act. They ‘cleft the bough’ in splitting the palm and in breaking the wings as they bowed. They had ‘struck a tally’ of their loves in setting out the number of personae. They had also, perhaps, struck each other. Cavendish was brought forth before his brother when he

and government’. Ibid cites Hatfield House, Cecil Papers, Bills 28: ‘The painter Rowland Buckett was paid over £14 for ‘gilding, paynting and varnishing’ the room with frames which contained ‘tables of arts’, ‘one picture of America’ and ‘twelve tables with the names of countries’.

played Colonel Vitruvius and then Eros. (He was also born before Charles). They were both brought forth from the walls to live a while. Captain Smith and Anteros were sent to play with Cavendish as Colonel Vitruvius and Eros in the play.

The garland of red and white roses worn by Eros, the king's cupid (69-70) could have been connected to the garland delivered by the angel painted on the ceiling over the window in the Heaven Closet.²⁸⁹ (As mentioned above, Hayward has noted that the garlands on the Heaven Closet ceiling are reminiscent of the silk garlands that often featured in masques.) In *Love's Welcome* it would have appeared to be another miraculous manifestation, arriving out of the painted heavens for the divine Charles.

The text indicates that the garland 'of lilies interweaved, gold, silver, purple etc' was a particularly expensive prop. Perhaps the palm was also valuable. This would have motivated Anteros to snatch at it, with the shocking possibility that the two rough boys might break it, as Anteros had broken Eros' wings. The word 'Break' could have been a pun on bracken or fern. There could have been a similar pun when Philaethes said, 'the Fates spinning them round and even threads [...] without brack or purl'. [146].) There would then be an additional pun on 'pearl'. If the palm and one or both of the garlands were exquisite pieces they could have been presented to the royal couple by Eros and Anteros as presents.

Philaethes spoke in prose and told the cupids to desist from poetry. He was the lover of the literal truth and so did not endorse poetic fictions and metaphors, although if Philaethes referenced Jonson he was, in reality, the primary exponent of poetry, which would have been amusing.

There was a central pun on 'rhyme' and 'rime', near the beginning of his speech. If rime was a frost or coating it could allude to a painted surface:

Which if you, bretheren, should report and swear to, would hardly get credit above a fable here in Derbyshire, the region of ale, because you relate it in rhyme. Oh, that rhyme is a shrewd disease and makes all things suspected it would persuade. Leave it, pretty cupids, leave it. Rhyme will undo you and hinder your growth and reputation more than anything beside you have either mentioned or feared.
(131-7)

²⁸⁹ There has been disagreement among scholars over which cupid was the King's and which held the palm. See *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*, ed. by James Knowles, pp. 691-92.

The word was repeated three times in four sentences. In the manuscript version it is spelt 'Rhyme', 'Rhyme' and 'Rhime'. In the F2 it is 'Rime' in all three instances. Rhyme or rime was 'a shrewd disease' (139) where shrewd could mean clever, but also icy cold like frost. The pun implied that the decoration at Bolsover, which they had come out of, was a place where the poetic lessons of love were told in a surface coating of paint. Being a two dimensional painting would hinder their growth (although the Bolsover painted characters could swell and 'grow' when they became real and stepped from the pictures). Philalethes was therefore telling the cupids to stop their witty poetic dialogue, and also to stop their impersonation of all these clever, fictional, painted characters – marking the end of the play.

Philalethes was stating that, paradoxically, the poetry and so the visual art in the Little Castle was suspect (even if the cupids 'reported' its meanings – a military word – or swore to them – a legal and religious word). In any case the meanings in the schemes were difficult to unravel. Ludicrously, Philalethes told them to return to their paintings ('return to yourselves') but at the same time he was exhorting them to 'Leave it, pretty Cupids, leave it'.

The word 'suspected' (134) might carry its Latin meanings 'sub: from below' and 'specere: to look', reminding the audience that the paintings created scenes that must be looked at from below. 'Understood' would carry the same meaning. (The iconography was also difficult to understand.)

There might have been a similar knot of puns in 'one love by the other's aspect increasing, and both in the right lines of aspiring' (144-5). 'Aspiring' evoked upward movement; Cavendish and his brother were depicted as many figures, and the Cavendishes were increasing with their flourishing dynasty; they were aspiring to be all these gods; and they were depicted in drawn lines; the King and Queen might be descended from the lines of David and Solomon.

There was also complex word-play in, 'If you dabble in poetry once, it is done of your being believed or understood here. No man will trust you in this verge, but conclude you for a mere case of canters or a pair of wandering gypsies' (137-9).

'Dabble' alluded to paint splashed on the walls and on the cupids (creating their disguises). There was a triple meaning in 'verge', signifying the garden, the verge of the court and the palm branch. (The Latin 'virga' means branch.) There could also have been a fourth meaning: 'virga' means a

sprout or scion: perhaps Cavendish would not be trusted with Prince Charles, that is would not be appointed as his governor.²⁹⁰

‘Cant’ was a tricky secret language, associated with gypsies. Calling Eros a gypsy was amusingly shocking. The pair of cupids were ‘wandering’ not only because they were gypsy-like, but also because they had wandered out of their paintings. Knowles has suggested that Jonson here recalled *Gypsies Metamorphosed* in which Buckingham and his noble friends, in a Midlands setting, had daringly picked the pockets of the members of the audience, and had spoken the dialogue themselves. I suggest that in the context of the decoration the meaning of this passage would have been that the host and the cupids were the same person, and so they all spoke the same language which was the language of the iconography. If the people of the realm understood the messages encrypted in the paintings (if they could ‘read’ the truths in their poetic fiction) they would see that they were happy, and it would confirm their duty to admire the King and Queen as the pinnacle and pattern of love.

There may have been a pun on ‘canters’ where cant meant a sloped surface or the corner of a building. (Cantus is Latin for a corner.) Eros and Anteros were a ‘case of canters’ because they were a pair depicted on wood like a wooden case, at right angles to each other like the knights in the corner of the room.

Philaethes neatly shifted the humorous, layered banter to a serious compliment to the royal couple by telling Eros and Anteros that the real and best lessons of love were to be learned from the King and the Queen. She, by comparison with them, was ‘unparalleled’. The lessons were ‘true’ because the royal couple were the best exemplars, but also, crucially, because they were truly alive. ‘Contemplate and study them’ (142) as opposed to the paintings which the audience had just toured. Nonetheless, the allusions to the paintings continued unabated:

to an admiration of your sacred persons, descended, one from the most peaceful, the other
the most warlike, both your pious and just progenitors; from whom, as out of peace came
strength, and out of the strong came sweetness, alluding to the holy riddle
(155-58).

²⁹⁰ Cavendish obtained the office in 1638, but he may have hoped for the post as early as 1634: Trease, *Portrait*, pp. 71, 75-76.

Here, at the climax of the play, as I have suggested above, Philalethes made a connection to the two life-size paintings of Solomon and David, both key figures in royal iconography, particularly associated with King James. King Charles was strong though his father James loved peace (like Solomon), and Queen Henrietta Maria was sweet, though her father Henri was strong in war (like David). Out of the royal couple, like the lion's carcass (and like Jupiter and the Juno/Danaë on the Elysium Closet ceiling, who gave birth to Perseus), the next ruler would emerge.

Alluding to Samson would have referenced Hercules, Cavendish's main persona in the Little Castle decoration. In the bible story Samson discovered honey in a lion's carcass, and he posed his riddle after making a feast (Judges 14.14).²⁹¹ This would have been appropriate for the current event. If David was a portrait of the valiant Sir Charles which the King and many of the courtiers who were present might recognize, or the figure was frequently taken to reference him, then the peace-loving Cavendish might have descended from him like the honey that came from the lion, shadowing the royal succession.

Philalethes wished that the promise of a numerous succession would live in the royal couple. This was carefully worded. The production of heirs in marriage was a central theme in the decoration – in the Ante Room and the Elysium Closet in particular. Philalethes moved 'the promise' (like the promise of the Annunciation) from that painted metaphysical world to the mortal world where the royal couple were expected to produce real and true, though divine, babies. The location therefore shifted from the paintings to the couple, and the focus was placed on Princes Charles and James.

This was a witty variant on the ending of the Welbeck entertainment of 1633. Cedric Brown has shown how the King was reminded that Charles was 'on his way to Scotland, *his* native place. So rudeness was set against regality, the present locality against the court and Scotland, the loving offices of Newcastle against the loving offices of the monarch. Welcomed and welcomer were united in love'.²⁹² I suggest Jonson used the same formula at Bolsover but he avoided repetition from the entertainment the year before by including only a passing reference to the locality: 'in Derbyshire, the region of ale' (133). Instead, the homeland taken for the required compliment was, amusingly, the 'metaphysical sphere' of the painted walls. This was an alternative place where the Cavendishes had 'rest and residence'.

²⁹¹ Herford and Simpson relegated the phrase 'alluding to the Holy Riddle' to a marginal note: 'it is not part of the text which it completely dislocates'. This is discussed in Knowles, 'Textual Essay', *CWBJ Online*, pp. 7-8.

²⁹² Brown, 'Courtesies of Place', pp. 154-55.

The palm and the expensive wreath of lilies could have been given to the royal couple with the final words, ‘a zealous “Amen”, and ever rounded with a crown of “Welcome”’ (162-3). The gifts might then have been carried into the adjacent Marble Closet as part of a ceremonial exit. It is plausible to think that there would have been an elaborate staged farewell for the royal couple – a closing of the banqueting phase of the visit which drew in the waiting crowd of gentry outside. This would make sense of the phrase ‘at their departure’ in the stage direction between the two acts of the play in the manuscript version.

I propose (in line with Raylor) that the royal couple may have created another tableau in the Marble Closet, which was viewed from both outside and inside the building.²⁹³ If they stood on the balcony they would appear, from the courtyard, to be supported by Hercules bearing the arms of Sir Charles Cavendish.

²⁹³ Raylor, “Pleasure Reconciled”, pp. 421-23.



Fig. 233 The balcony of the Marble Closet from the courtyard (Crosby Stevens)

If they faced into the room they would appear, from the interior, to complete the set of United or Allied Virtues in the series of paintings from prints by Hendrik Goltzius that decorated the walls above them. They would personify the missing *Peace and Concord*, an allusion assisted by the palm that had featured in the play.

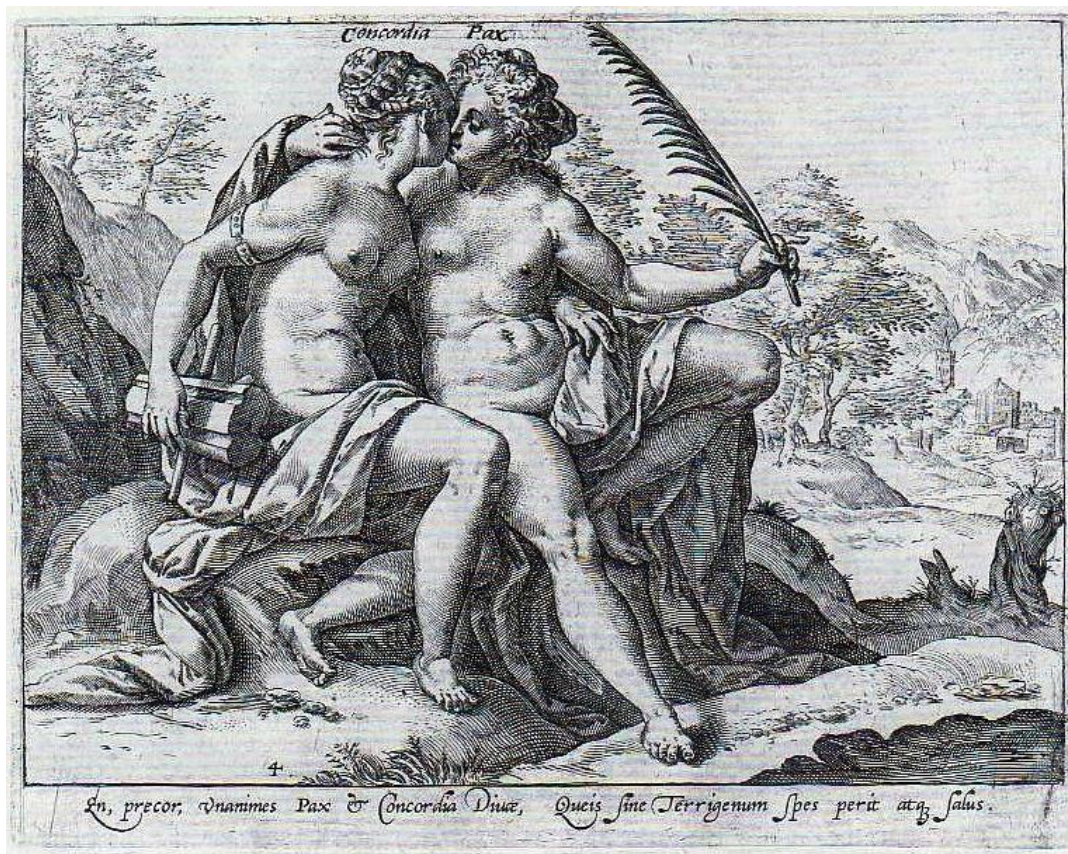


Fig. 234 *Peace and Concord*, engraving from the series of *The United Virtues* by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)²⁹⁴

The three canvas paintings of the United Virtues in the Marble Closet are probably later than the other paintings in the building.²⁹⁵ It is possible they date to the mid-1630s, though they could date to the 1640s or even 1650s. Cavendish made few alterations to the Little Castle after the royal visit, and it is logical to think the three paintings were installed to fit with Jonson's entertainment when enormous sums were spent to make the occasion a success. The frames may be coeval with the canvases, although they, too, are of a style that could be later. Durant suggests they may have been added after the Restoration to replace frames that were lost or damaged when the pictures were temporarily removed. Further research is required.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?q=RP-P-OB-10.097>

<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016)

²⁹⁵ The Allied Virtues series may have replaced paintings installed with the marble interiors c.1619. The angels over the glazed doors are on panel and resemble the angels in the Heaven Closet, suggesting there could originally have been a linked celestial scheme on panel.

²⁹⁶ Durant, *The Smythson Circle*, p. 193.

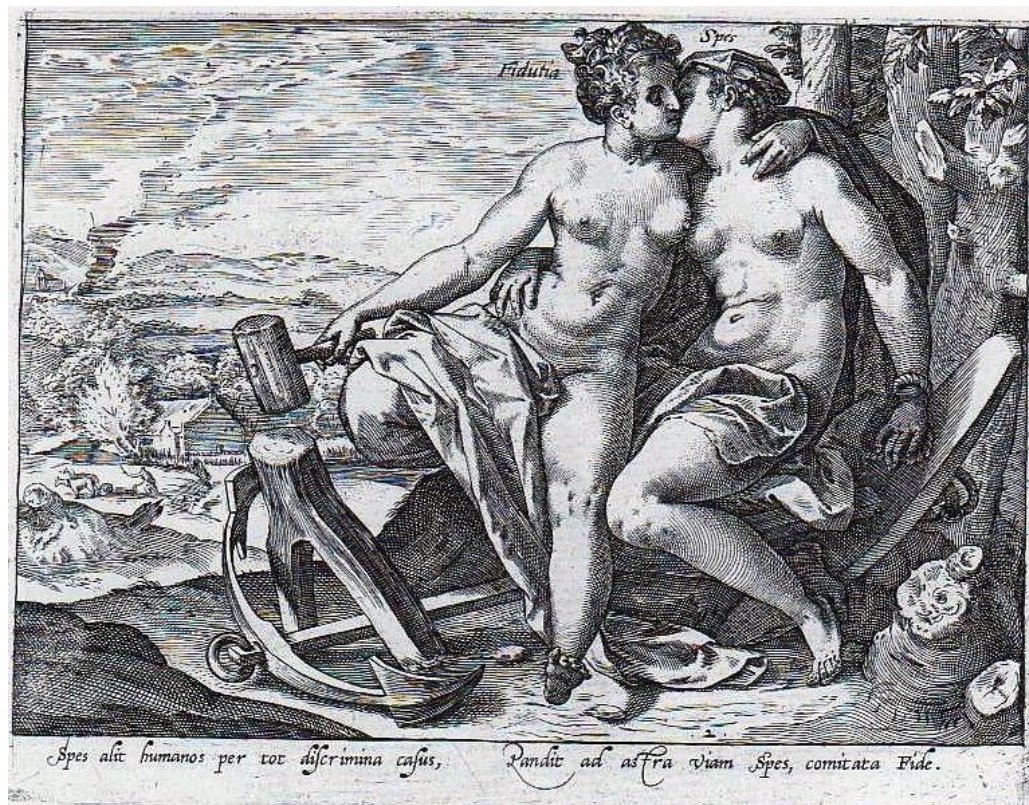
We can assume Cavendish would have wanted his 1634 presentation to be in step with current fashion. In *The Antemasque* the vicar worries about using the theme of the virtues for his show: 'I like not the vertewse theye are oute off fation, & what is oute off fation will neuer please Itt was In our Greate Grande fathers time verie Good, butt that is nott so nowe the Case Is Alter'de, & reformde' (119-21). The 'case', of course, might refer to the panelling and paintings. It would be 'altered' and 'reformed' both because it was changed and because the theme of the images was religious.



Fig. 235 View of the Marble Closet from the balcony towards the Star Chamber. A connecting door to the small chamber in the lobby beyond was inserted (date unknown) under the hanging to the right of the door. (Crosby Stevens)



Fig. 236 View of the Marble Closet from the balcony to the chimney piece (Crosby Stevens)



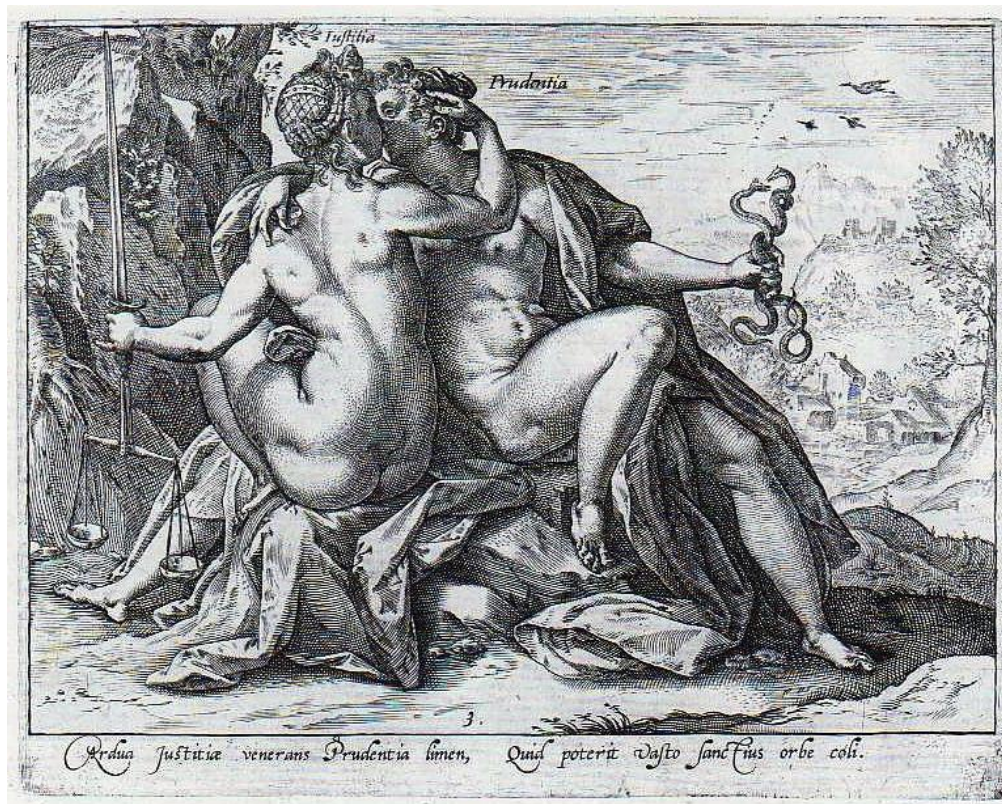
Figs 237, 238 *Hope and Confidence* (English Heritage) compared with the print source: engraving from the series of *The United Virtues* by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-10.095>
<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016).



Figs 239, 240 *Fortitude and Patience* (English Heritage) compared with the print source: engraving from the series of *The United Virtues* by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-10.094>
<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016).



Figs 241, 242 *Justice and Prudence* (English Heritage) compared with the print source: engraving from the series of *The United Virtues* by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search?v=&s=&q=RP-P-OB-10.096>
<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

If we imagine the royal couple standing in the window, facing into the room, we can see that they would have completed the iconographic scheme in three further ways. First, the host of angels painted on the panels above them would have given the impression of divine blessing. The Marian associations would have fitted with symbolism favoured by Henrietta Maria. The window faces south-west, and by the early evening figures in the window would be strongly back-lit.

Second, the hermaphrodite virtues would chime with the notion of the combined Charles and Mary that was current in royal iconography (initiated by Jonson in the closing lines of *Love's Triumph*).³⁰⁰

Finally, the couple would have appeared to be enacting van Dyck's painting of 1632 that depicts Charles and Henrietta Maria exchanging a laurel or myrtle wreath and an olive branch. This celebrated work hung over the chimneypiece in the queen's cabinet at Somerset House.³⁰¹ The reference would have been up to the minute (with Robert van Voerst's engraving appearing in 1634), and it would have been guaranteed to delight the royal couple. The link to Somerset House may indicate that the Marble Closet was allocated for the Queen's use, and the bedchamber suite for the King's use, which would fit with Anteros' reference to the Queen's side and the King's side in *Love's Welcome* (80). It would have been enchanting to recreate a picture from the Queen's cabinet in the closet that had been set aside for her at Bolsover. The allusion would have come as a surprise, revealed after the play, when she and Charles were led to the balcony to display their gifts before their departure.

The symbolism in the van Dyck painting – of the King and Queen's fruitful union, their warlike and peaceful parents, and giving peace to the realm – would fit neatly with the second act of the entertainment (in which the royal couple would now be participating). The tableau would also have opened the display of royal harmony and beneficence to the crowds outside. Van Dyck's reworking of Daniel Mytens' painting of the same subject (1631) had added a landscape behind the couple, as Karen Britland has noted, spreading 'their combined virtues both into the background countryside, and out to the picture's observers, caught in Henrietta Maria's gaze'.³⁰² Thus the conceit that the couple faced inward and outward would have been copied from the van Dyck picture. Perhaps if the rest of the applied paintings in the Little Castle had been executed by Netherlandish painters in the Rubens and van Dyck circle, then this tableau would have extended

³⁰⁰ For the Carlomaria motif see Parry, *The Golden Age*, pp. 184-85, 191, 195.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 220; Britland, *Drama at the Courts*, p. 69-70.

³⁰² Ibid., p. 69.

van Dyck's propriety. He was the premier artist at court in 1634, and Cavendish would doubtless have been keen to advertise a close connection.



Fig. 243 Engraving by Robert van Voerst of Charles I and Queen Henrietta-Maria, after Anthony van Dyck (1634) (©The Trustees of the British Museum, London)³⁰³

If the royal couple had turned and stepped onto the balcony, they would have faced south-west, lit by the late afternoon sun. They could then have turned back into the Marble Closet and retraced their steps through the building to exit through the main door. They would have appeared to emerge twice from the privileged, masquing world of the interior into the real world of the crowd in the courtyard. They might also, in addition, at various times in the day, have greeted onlookers by walking onto the Elysium and Marble Closet balconies, or by promenading above the garden. It is

³⁰³ http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1503055&partId=1 <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> (Accessed 19 May 2016).

possible one privileged set of viewers waited on a platform at the western end of the wall walk. This has a view of both the Marble Closet and Elysium Closet balconies. The date 1633 is carved over the doorway to the skew block there, suggesting an alteration shortly before the royal visit.

The courtyard by the front door lends itself to choreographed scenes.³⁰⁴ The area beyond the outer gate would have offered another suitable stopping place for a procession, a symbolic threshold on entering or exiting, with enough room for a tableau, a speech or a presentation. Thus there was ample opportunity to create dramatic surprises and an illusion of magic, as well as drawing the invited gentry into the journeying performance.

V

This reading of the paintings rests on a study of changes from the print sources, and an appreciation of how the pictures are located within the Little Castle and the wider site. Maintaining a focus on the use of the building for festivities allows us to reassess what the pictures signified, and how the decoration may have been integrated into a variety of entertainments. The building and the applied decoration worked together to support a flexible style of light-hearted entertainment related to masquing and banqueting that might on occasion include more or less developed dramatic interludes in various locations, and sociable performances and dancing in the Star Chamber. The pictures were intended to foster wit and imagination – spontaneous fun within a ritualized framework. Over time they sparked an accumulation of jokes that were embedded in linked dramatic works.

I wish to put forward the possibility that that the linear design of the building is related to a gradual unfolding of meanings in the imagery, like the stanzas of a poem. A careful examination of the paintings in the Ante Room establishes that the iconography was personal to Cavendish and it was meant to be read with masquing and theatre in mind. The allusions to *The Alchemist* in the painting of *Melancholic* in this first room, and to Jonson's poetic metaphors in *Visus* in the Pillar Parlour, signalled parallels with Jonson's dramatic works and his poetry of praise and celebration. In the Star Chamber and in the Elysium and Heaven Closets complex imagery developed the themes of

³⁰⁴ Betteridge and Knowles set the *Song at the Banquet* outdoors rather than in the Pillar Parlour for their 2014 production. This revealed there are much better acoustics for music and speech in the courtyard than in the walled garden; and the steps to the front door, together with the balcony above, work well as a stage for a static performance.

love and transformation, and continued to praise Cavendish, positioning him in a glorious dynastic line.

The name ‘William’ written in the book in *Melancholic* in the Ante Room, and the griffin carved on the chair in *Visus* in the Pillar Parlour, indicate that the ladies in these paintings may be portraits of Cavendish’s wife. Portraits of Cavendish, Jonson, and possibly Cavendish’s father and brother, may similarly be embedded in the schemes in the Star Chamber and the Elysium Closet. In addition, there appear to be numerous allegorical portraits of the family through several generations, and the Cavendishes are eulogized as reflections of the royal family.

The infusion of the schemes with references to Jonson’s works, the method of juxtaposing and blending sources, the metaphoric pattern, the theatricality of the tableaux, and the verbal allusions, all point to Jonson’s role as the primary author. It is possible that he worked with a group of painters to realize his invention after his visit to the castle in 1618, perhaps in tandem with Cavendish and Smythson over several years. There may be a connection to van Dyck.

This view of the paintings sheds new light on *Love’s Welcome*. It reveals that the entertainment was probably performed in stages as the royal couple promenaded through the building, with the song presented in the Pillar Parlour, and the dramatic sections performed in the Star Chamber. Jonson developed the conceit set up in the Ante Room that characters might step down from the paintings, and his text was enriched throughout with comic punning references to the decoration. Complex allusions to the host tempered the jibes at Inigo Jones.

We can see that Jonson’s painted presence not only prompted frequent borrowings from his masques and plays, it also inspired teasing banter with the poet as if he were presiding. Aaron may have been humorously transformed into both a disapproving beadle and Bessie Bell. We can see that Cavendish’s role as Moses and Jonson’s role as Aaron might encapsulate their relationship, and their shared amusement at the portraits could have coloured their written correspondence. We may be able to point to a sizeable body of site-specific dramatic work: material referencing the building may be found in both Jonson’s later plays, and works for the private and public stage written by Cavendish and his daughters.

This research has been made possible by the cleaning and conservation programme undertaken by English Heritage over the past twenty years which has revealed details in the paintings that were

previously unavailable to scholars.³⁰⁵ Promising areas for future investigation include further technical analysis and art historical research to address the dates of the paintings, the identities of the artists, and the possibility of portraits; practical research into performance and movement in the building; comparative analysis of poetry and drama with links to the Cavendish family; and research into hospitality in the Cavendish social circle. A multi-disciplinary approach to the paintings is needed to advance our understanding of this important survival: a magnificent regional banqueting house that retains its original decoration and associated literature.

³⁰⁵ Cutts, “When were the Senses”, p.61 ends with: ‘It remains of course, for the Ministry of Works to clear away the layers of dirt from the paintings and restore them to something of their pristine glory and colour and help literary scholars and art historians understand more fully why Ben Jonson’s *Masque at Bolsover* chose to begin with the question “*When were the Senses in such order plac’d?*”’.