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## NOTES TO THE KEY

Appendix A, *Thumbprints of Ephelia* (2001) <ephelia.com>

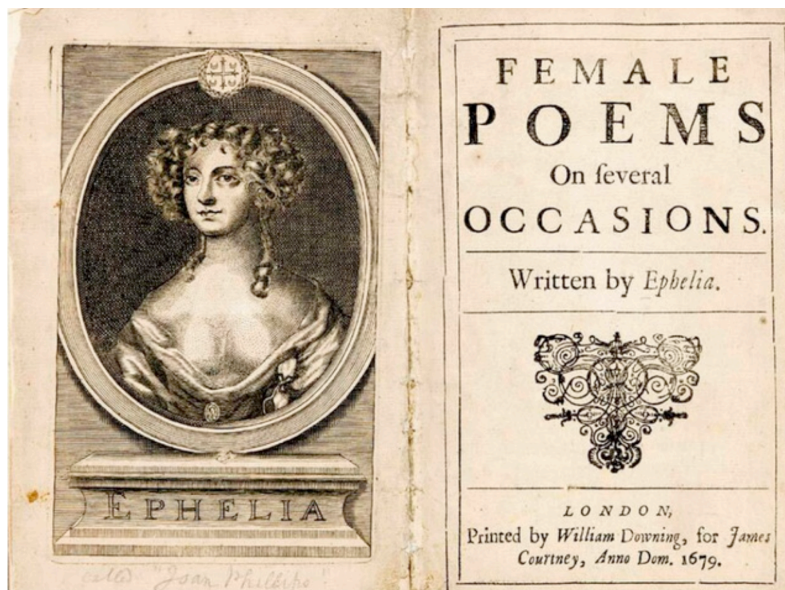
Updated, 2008–2020

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Suggested Identities & Occasions, *Female Poems . . . by Ephelia* (1679, 1682)

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Often a coy and conflicted personality, the pseudonymous writer operates at the intersection of concealment and exposure. The frontispiece portrait (above) – unsigned, fictitious -- conceals and protects the author's identity, while the facing title-page, with its prominent (butterfly) vignette leads us to the writer behind the pseudonym: hiding in plain sight. (Image: Gosse--Brett-Smith--Chawton House copy. For photo of Mulvihill copy, see [recent interview](#), *Fine Books & Collections*, 2016.)

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***Bajazet (FPOSO, 104-106): John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave (1648-1721), courtier and writer.*** Ephelia's verse-epistle to Bajazet is not a satire on Mulgrave, as commonly held, nor is it a lamentation of Ephelia's, as familiarly titled since its manuscript début in 1670s. It is rather the wail and female complaint of a completely different woman; and the poem's artistic center is not Mulgrave, but rather the unstable emotional state of his abandoned mistress. This powerful lyric, which circulated in manuscript c1675, and then published in 1679 in Ephelia's book of "female poems", would have contributed to the literary vogue of the lamentation, popularized in Dryden's *Ovid* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1680) and Henry Purcell's famous *Dido's Lamentation* (opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, 1689).

This masterfully crafted portrait of female distress is a double bluff in ventriloquial masquerade: the poem gives us Mary Villiers masked as Ephelia, and Ephelia masked as the woman delivering the lament. The poem was occasioned by a documented court scandal which involved features of sexual predation, relationship abuse, and physical violence. When the haughty and insolent Mulgrave abandoned his pregnant mistress, Lady Mary ('Mall') Kirke, beloved of the preternaturally beautiful Francis Villiers, youngest brother of Lady Mary Villiers (the present 'Ephelia' candidate), Mulgrave soon found himself publicly challenged by 'Mall' Kirke's brother, the ferocious Captain Percy Kirke. This honor duel (summer, 1675) was one of many such spectacles in the colorful annals of Restoration lore. Wounded in this public event, Mulgrave was easily outmatched by 'Mall' Kirke's avenging brother. When the poem began circulating shortly thereafter, as incorrectly "*Ephelia's Lamentation*" (*it was, indeed, Mall Kirke's lamentation*), Lord Rochester, a close member of the Villiers circle, seized the exquisite opportunity to embarrass his longstanding enemy, Mulgrave, with a satirical response to Ephelia's clever poem; Rochester's hand in the game was titled: "A Very Heroical Epistle from My Lord All-Pride [Mulgrave], to *Dol-Common* [Mall Kirke]" (brs., 1679; rptd., *Female Poems On Several Occasions* ["FPOSO"], 1682). Rochester's poem, as Ephelia's "Bajazet", is a rhetorical *tour de force*: he voices Lord Mulgrave, just as the Ephelia poetess voices Mulgrave's mistress. In her title, Ephelia takes special pains to cue the reader to her ventriloquial persona: "*In the Person of a Lady to Bajazet*, her unconstant Gallant" (my emphasis).

For a detailed discussion of the longstanding misattribution of this Ovidian lyric to Etherege (a most unlikely candidate, who wrote nothing like Ephelia), see Chapter IV of this multimedia archive on the Ephelia subject.

***Madam Bhen (FPOSO, 72-73): Aphra Behn (c1640-1689), writer.*** Aphra Behn is the subject of an affectionate homage in *FPOSO* from one woman writer to another. A fast friend of the Villiers circle, Behn was the unofficial, and only, female member of the Court Wits. Ephelia's encomium, "To Madam Bhen," expresses respect and admiration for a female literary contemporary. Ephelia praises Behn's "Inchanting Quill," whose words -- as Behn herself -- display "A rare Connection of Strong and Sweet." (For a convenient online viewing of the poem, see [post 309](#), *Poem Of The Week* website.) Behn's close ties to the Villiers family are manifest in her heartfelt elegy on the death of George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham (see Coffin, *Buckingham* [1931], 342-

3). For my speculative remarks on Behn's urban peripatetics with the Ephelia poetess, see the Textual Links section of this archive for Joan Philips, H.B. Wheatley, Behn, Ebsworth, and Newcomb.

A remarkable feature of Ephelia's poem to Behn is the poet's disclosure on the poem's transmission; it was not a hand-to-hand presentation, but rather mailed (by post) or couriered to Behn: "as sent by one" (l. 27, p.73). Apparently, at this point in their relationship, the two women writers had not met: Ephelia has been admiring Behn at a decorous distance, as the poem discloses. If Ephelia were in fact a duchess of the royal Stuart circle (the present argument), that distance, owing to deep class division between the two writers, is entirely understandable.

Janet Todd, in her *Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (1996), whose collegial acknowledgments kindly include the present writer, refers to Ephelia as a "friend" of Behn and a member of her literary circle, not as a poetic construction by a playful cabal of Restoration writers, as often suggested (Todd, 207; see also Index for several 'Ephelia' listings). Furthermore, the spelling "*Bhen*" in the title of Ephelia's encomium is not a typesetting or spelling error of Ephelia's respected London printer, William Downing, but rather a contemporary variant spelling of "Behn." (For Robert Gould's pairing of Behn and Ephelia as a louche sororal team, working the literary fringe, see this archive's Textual Link on Gould; likewise, William Downing for his Villiers connection.)

***Celadon (FPOSO, 30-31, 71-72, 74): George Porter (1622-1683), courtier.*** A credible candidate for "Celadon" in Ephelia's poetry-book of 1679 is George Porter ("Nobbs" in Restoration court satire). Though an unsuccessful suitor of Mary Villiers, George Porter loved Mary Villiers all of his life. According to D'Aulnoy's *Mémoires*, Porter assisted in the arrangements of Lady Mary's clandestine marriage in 1664 to the dashing young courtier and rehabilitated libertine, Colonel Thomas ("Northern Tom") Howard, former lover of Lady Shrewsbury (see "Flora", below). Porter was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Henrietta Maria; and after the Restoration, Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles II and Surveyor of the Customs of the Port of London. A hot-tempered courtier, Porter was a jolly companion to the Court Wits, and his mistress was the actress, Jane Long. His poem in Ephelia's collection, "The Reply, by a Friend," is another instance of the poet's polyvocal persona and her participation in the brisk exchange of manuscript verse at the Stuart court. In this piece, Ephelia is voicing Celadon and also versifying the romantic advice he evidently tendered in a personal note or letter. Apropos the artistic license of this verse-epistle, Ephelia signs it "*Celadon*," as printed at the foot of page 31, a name she (if, in truth Mary Villiers) would have known from the "Celadon" in Leonard Willan's *Astraea* (1651), a pastoral play in five acts, of which she is the very dedicatee (see Flashpoint, Section II of this archive).

***Clovis (FPOSO, [1] Sig. B-3; 38-40, 51-53, 64-65, 89-92, 100-103): Charles II (1630-1685).*** Second only to Ephelia's "J.G.", "Clovis" is a prominent player in the many intrigues and plots behind most of the "occasions" in Ephelia's book. The collection's love triangle of *Clovis-Marina-Ephelia* is remarkable for the utter candor with which this painful situation is represented by Ephelia and for the deep moral conflict it causes her.

When Charles II ('Clovis') asks Ephelia (very probably, Mary Villiers) to persuade her beautiful young niece, Frances ('La Belle') Stuart ('Marina'), to become his mistress, as recounted in Ephelia's verse-letter, "To *Clovis*, asking Me to bring *Marina* into His Company" (pp. 100-103), Ephelia is hurled into a dilemma, whose resolution involves issues of duty, morality, and love. This plot by the King to 'get' 'La Belle' Stuart into the royal bed is broadly documented in Pepys's diary (now available online in a searchable digital version) and in Cyril Hughes Hartmann's biography of Frances Stuart (London, 1924): Mary Villiers was a quiet player in the King's bold plan of sexual predation.

Ephelia's poem, "A Vindication to Angry *Clovis*," which reconstructs the King's heated reaction to an anonymous libel which he intercepted, is also remarkable in this connection, as it records the King's familiarity with Mary Villiers's script. He accuses her of the authorship of the libel, which she denies. The true author was doubtless her brother, whose script resembled her own (they had the same writing-master, for a time). The King had confused their scripts in yet an earlier caper got up by Lady Mary, involving the casting of the King's horoscope (a treasonable offense). The key to this prank, as Pepys's account valuably relates, was Mary's script, which Charles II would have known from her poems to him, as "Clovis," and from other incidental writings dating from childhood days (see Section II of this archive). As Madame D'Aulnoy mentions in her *Mémoires* of the English court (2 vols., Paris, 1695), Charles II and Mary Villiers were bred up together as siblings (English edition, London, 1913, p. 232).

Ephelia's eulogy to Charles II, an important political broadsheet poem on the national crisis of the Popish Plot – and a poem important enough to see three different states of publication in the Ephelia texts (brs., 1678; octavo, 1679; brs., 1679) – expresses the poet's loyalty to the Stuart monarchy and to the childhood playmate who became her king in 1660. The extent to which the poet's affections overrode her moral standards, in allowing her to assist Charles in the Frances Stuart sex intrigue, must remain conjectural; but we do know from contemporary accounts that this little cabal failed woefully, to the King's fury. He had lost quite a prize in 'La Belle' Stuart (see "Marina", below).

***Damon (FPOSO, 83-84): 'Slandering Jack Howe' (1657-1722).*** Who would Ephelia's 'Damon' be if not the man known as slandering Jack Howe, libeling Jack Howe? This individual was famed for rocketing about the town with forged love letters from courtwomen and fictional suitors. But Jack Howe tempted Fate when he boasted of sexual favors from the King's beloved Frances Stuart ("Marina"). When news of Howe's lies reached her ears, 'La Belle' Stuart was distressed by such effrontery and took proper action. She complained to the King, who then assembled an official Court trial (a *cour d'honneur*). This famous slander case found in her favor, and Howe was banished from Court in disgrace. With a hot pen for 'Damon', Ephelia records her response to this situation in her book of 'female poems' (83-84). And as many of her poems to badly behaving contemporaries, "To *Damon*" opens with a slap: "Gay Fop! that know'st no higher Flights than Sense". The poem is of value to modern readers as an early instance in women's writing of the power of sexual innuendo and its effects on a woman's most prized asset: *reputation*. (Sources: C.H. Hartmann, *La Belle Stuart* [1924]; J.H. Wilson, *Court Satires of the Restoration* [1975].)



*Ephelia* (pseudonymous author, *FPOSO*, 1679, 1682): Very probably Mary (Villiers) Stuart, Duchess of Richmond & Lennox (1622-1684/5), the most *rejouissante* [amusing] woman in the world (Freda Hast, *ODNB*; PRO 31/3/108, folios 124–5). The most attractive candidate for the Ephelia poetess is a stunning beauty on the canvases of Van Dyck and John Michael Wright: Lady Mary (‘Mall’) Villiers, the “brisk and jolly” red-haired daughter of Stuart pivot, George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, and heiress Lady Katherine (‘Kate’) Manners. While other candidates have been suggested over the centuries, including Harold Love’s unpersuasive speculative suggestion in a brief article (*RES*, 2007), the case ‘evidence’ presented in this multimedia archive points to Mary Villiers: with her in place, the intriguing cast of veiled personages and occasions in *Female Poems...by Ephelia* (1679, 1682) is at last accessible. Familiarly, ‘the Lady Mary’, Mall Villiers was also known as “the Butterfly”, dating from a childhood trick in the royal fruit gardens; this was also, perhaps, her code name during the English Civil War when she served the Stuarts as a secret intelligencer (see List of Images, <[www.ephelia.com](http://www.ephelia.com)>). The large vignette on the title-page of *FPOSO* (1679) is not the mark of the book’s respected printer, William Downing, but rather a finely selected graphic signifier and stamp of the book’s authorship (for its Dutch source, see the present writer’s enjoyable exercise in detection, *ANQ*, Summer 1999). A less dramatic clue, in the book’s presswork, is the curious uppercase bold type for “W” (pp. 29, 41, 77, 85, 101, 107), possibly suggesting a double “V” (VV) for Villiers. Though not unique in 17<sup>th</sup>-century printed texts, this typographical detail summons interest.

Freda Hast’s profile of Duchess Mary (*Oxford DNB*, 2004) mentions her skill in high intrigue, tricks, and espionage; and, by reputation, she was ‘the most amusing woman in the world’, according to a French visitor to the Stuart court (thank you, Freda Hast). When, for example, the Duchess dedicated her pseudonymous poetry-book to herself, she displayed a masterstroke of pseudonymous craft and the perfect cover. By 1679, the publication date of *Female Poems...by Ephelia*, the Duchess was nearing her sixth decade, and she discloses her advancing age in the pages of her elegantly produced book: “my faint Lights”, “my twilight Eyes” (90, 91). As Germaine Greer valuably mentions in *Kissing The Rod* (London: Virago, 1988), the name ‘Ephelia’ had become associated with a red-haired woman in, e.g., the work of John Dunton, in 1697, and of Delarivier[e] Manley, in 1709 (p. 273); portraits of the present candidate by Van Dyck and John Michael Wright depict a red-haired woman (variously, ginger or auburn). Greer mentions that many of Ephelia’s verse-letters in *FPOSO* were probably written before 1660, and this observation ‘works’ in some cases, especially in the ‘Eugenia’ poems to very probably Queen Henrietta Maria. But what Greer also might have emphasized is that the poems’ rhetoric and the author’s decorum (see, e.g., “Maidenhead”), as well as the poet’s choice in genres (e.g., acrostics), date the author to an earlier, more refined court culture, prior to the English Civil Wars and the Restoration -- say, the court of Charles I, Queen Henrietta Maria, and Mary Villiers. (For a detailed biographical and character profile of Mary Villiers, see Section II of this archive.)

As early as 1921, one anthologist of women’s poetry, Sir John Collings Squire (1884-1958), did not read the Ephelia texts as a case in corporate authorship, as often thought, but rather the work of one woman writing under her own power. Squire’s anthology, *A*

*Book of Women's Verse* (Oxford UP, 1921; 192 pp.) includes seven verses by Ephelia (pp 23-31). The poet's hidden identity clearly intrigued Squire who himself adopted a pseudonym: *Solomon Eagle*. Thanks to Google Book Search, the full text of Squire's handsome collection is now accessible online. (Thank you, Bruce Johnson, Veery Books, NY, for alerting me to Squire and for your [illustrated notice](#) on the Ephelia subject.) For the present writer's discussion of Squire and his Bloomsbury associates, with images of Squire's feminist anthology (Mulvihill copy), see "[Dancing On Hot Bricks: The Last Weeks of Virginia Woolf](#)", digital version hosted by the Carl Kohler Estate, Kohler Literary Portraits, Library of Congress.

A rather grounding new piece of additional contemporary support for the Villiers-Ephelia connection was discovered by the present writer in an unremarkable, cynical play of the 1680s: John Tutchin's *Unfortunate Shepherd* (Tutchin, *Poems*, 1685). The cast of players includes an Ephelia, described by Tutchin as a sharp-tongued noblewoman of the city, *associated with the Royal line*, who enters the play's pastoral world *in disguise*. While Tutchin was roundly dismissed as a base scribbler and republican rabble-rouser, his Ephelia broadly aligns with the sharp voice of the Ephelia poetess and also with some of the distinguishing attributes and circumstances of her (possible) creator: Mary Villiers. By 1685, we may reasonably infer that the name Ephelia had achieved currency and a niche in cultural memory, and that local city 'buzz' about this pseudonymous poetess had reached Tutchin's circle. His Ephelia, then, was very probably constructed from what he had heard and read pertaining to this intriguing writer: we can't imagine a rough sort like Tutchin sitting down to tea with Mary Villiers. (The present specialist on Tutchin is Joseph Hone; [articles in ELH](#) and [HJ](#). Thank you, Professor Hone, for this information.)

Reception of the Villiers argument for Ephelia (1995-) has withstood scrutiny in most quarters and also welcomed by respected specialists, such as Isobel Grundy (see "Ephelia", online *Orlando Project*) and Philip Mould (Historical Portraits gallery, Pall Mall, London, "Lady Mary Villiers" webpage). *Seventeenth-Century News* (online) ran a detailed [review essay](#) on the argument by bibliophile and poet, Philip Mילו, Berg Collection, NYPL (1988-2008). Academic colleagues (Laura Runge, Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler, *et al.*) have used this multimedia archive in their classroom teaching as an early instance of the Digital Humanities. Liam Semler, whose skills in attributional scholarship are impressively displayed in his recent editions of the "Eliza" poet, vetted three articles on 'Ephelia' for the editors of *Reading Early Modern Women* (Routledge, 2004), finding the Villiers argument credible (p. 362). By 2020, most bibliographical records for 'Ephelia' (e.g., ESTC) include references to the Villiers argument.

Detractors (predictably) have had their own agendas, and conspicuously have failed to introduce a substantial counter-attribution. Harold Love, a vocal contrarian, found the present writer's Villiers argument "a bright idea" (Love, "Ephelia and the Duchess," *RES*, 2007) and also "ingenious" (his note to George Villiers's "Julian" poem, in *Buckingham*, 2 vols, eds Love and Robert D. Hume), but unpersuasive. Love had hoped that his own (quiet) work on the complex Ephelia case would be the attributional plum of his career: *but he failed to locate a persuasive candidate*. Instead, he published an irreverent set of jottings against a woman scholar who did. His brief essay is a hastily

prepared piece, marked by egregious missteps (the misspelling of the present writer's name), as well as selective documentation, misrepresentations, and content redacted from this writer's publications. His speculative candidate, a gentry woman from the Powney line, Berkshire, fails to line up with the many clues and textual references throughout the Ephelia corpus, not least the poet's extraordinary access to kings, queens, dukes, duchesses, baronets, and highly-placed courtiers. Yet, Love has given us an instructive instance of linear *vs.* circular thinking in attribution methodology: he accuses the present writer of circular thinking, yet his own limited linear thinking cannot accept that a writer in the second half of the 17thC (Ephelia, Dryden, Behn) can have Roman Catholic sympathies while also advocating for the Stuart monarchy. Attributional methodology must include a broad variety of tactics, including (sometimes) instinct: the informed, subjective hunch. A long familiarity with any material creates a valuable rapport, a feel and a touch for the subject. Love's approach is of a whole different grain.

In the event that the Villiers argument is superseded (a possible eventuality entertained by any attribution researcher), the important findings presented in the foundational work on this complex case (Mulvihill, 1992-) have netted serious results: the textual canon, to date, of the Ephelia writer has been established; new light has been shed on the Villiers set and the many veiled personages and 'occasions' in one of the most intriguing poetry-books of the Restoration; and a first-ever Key to *FPOSO* (1679, 1682) has been assembled, thus moving the entire subject forward to more accessible ground, including, by 2020, three historical novels inspired by the Ephelia / Mary Villiers subject, by Cheryl Sawyer (*The Winter Prince*) and a two-novel series by Leslie J. Nickell (*Butterfly: Painted Lady*). "Thank you, for doing this for history," Steve Max Miller wrote the present writer during the launch (2001) of the *ReSoundings* website which sponsored the *Thumbprints of Ephelia* digital archive. Arthur H. Scouten added, "You have shaken up a lot of complacency on a very old, cold case." And John Shawcross, who valuably vetted two important first essays by the present writer on the Villiers argument ([ANQ, 1996, 1999](#)), wrote, "It appears you're on the right track, it's defensible." Yet, as in all important attributional arguments (the authorship of the Shakespeare texts, e.g.), the case file is never completely and finally closed – *a good and desirable thing!*

***Eugenia, the woman supreme (FPOSO, 87-88, 98-100, 109-110): Queen Henrietta Maria (1606-1669).*** The stylish French, Catholic wife of Charles I is a persuasive candidate for the "commanding", "honoured," and "excellent" Eugenia in Ephelia's poetry-book. As the name Eugenia implies, Henrietta was indeed "high-born," as the daughter of Henry IV and Catherine de Medici. Based on historical accounts of the Villiers family by Winifred (Gardner) Baroness Burghclere, Roger Lockyer, *et al.*, the queen effectively became the surrogate or foster mother of the young Lady Mary Villiers and her two younger brothers after the murder of their father (1628) and the remarriage (1635) of their widowed mother, Lady Katherine Manners, to Randal McDonnell, Earl of Antrim, an Irish Catholic and member of Henrietta Maria's inner circle of Catholic royalists, including Henry Jermyn (Germyn), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of St Albans (see "J.G.," below). 'Kate' Manners was a Roman Catholic before and after her association with the Villiers set. Because Charles I feared that Kate's new husband was a fanatical Papist, he promptly took the Villiers children from their newly-rewed mother and 'bred them up' at Whitehall

with the future kings and queens of Europe, lest such important children be exposed to a Catholic household and upbringing (see Jane Ohlmeyer, Works Cited at the close of this archive).

Eugenia in Ephelia's book of 'female poems' is the woman supreme, the woman majestic: she is the only individual whose status and authority allow her to "command" the writer of Ephelia's "female poems". Companion portraits of Henrietta Maria and of Mary Villiers show that Duchess Mary emulated her royal foster mother in matters of costume, hair-style, jewelry, and also portraiture; see [Images 11A and 11B](#) in this multimedia archive. See also the portrait of Lady Mary, with ducal coronet, Huntington Art Collection ([see frontmatter in this document](#)), and a similar portrait of Henrietta Maria, with royal crown, Wilton House (Catalogue No. 165; image 54; also, National Portrait Gallery, No. 227): both portraits may allude to the related themes of dynasty and maternity (note subjects' hand placement). Students of the 17thC visual arts have understandably confused images of these two women, as Sir Oliver Millar records in *Van Dyck* (Yale UP, 2004, 641); the portrait of Mary Villiers at Gripsholm, e.g., is incorrectly identified as a rendering of Henrietta Maria. (Also the image of the crowned lady in the historiated woodcut factotum of the 1679 broadsheet poem to Charles II on the Popish Plot, "By a Lady of Quality", and now attributed to the Ephelia poetess by the present writer [*Ephelia*, Ashgate, 2003], is arguably Mary Villiers, in ducal coronet, not Queen Henrietta Maria: queens in the 17thC visual arts are not depicted with their mouths open, nor in simple court dresses; see Appendix D of this archive, to be updated in 2021.)

Finally, if lore can speak truth, as it often can, Ephelia and Eugenia both participated in clandestine marriages. Mary Villiers's quiet union (her third) to Colonel 'Tom' Howard, a younger man of lower pedigree, rank, and social status, is broadly documented in contemporary sources. And contemporary allusions to Henrietta Maria's quiet (morganatic) union, c1650, with her court favorite, Henry Jermyn (Germyn), first Earl of St Albans, a Francophile and a Catholic, was (also) an open secret at the Stuart court. Most modern historians are inclined to reject this rumor, though clandestine unions at this level were not uncommon on the Continent at this time; e.g., the morganatic marriage (1683) of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon. (Sources: Pepys, *Diary*, 3:263 and note 3; 3:303; 5:57-58 and n.8; Burghclere, *Villiers* [1903], p. 59; Anthony Adolph, *Full of Soup and Gold*, a revisionist biography of Jermyn, reviewed by the present writer, *Seventeenth-Century News*, online, with full-page Garter portrait of Jermyn.)

Ephelia's pastoral cover for Henrietta Maria in *FPOSO* as "Eugenia" takes us back to an icon of heroic English widowhood, an earlier Eugenia: Elizabeth, Lady Russell, the heroine of George Chapman's elegiac allegory, *Eugenia, or True Nobilities Trance; for the most memorable death of the Thrice Noble...William, Lord Russell* (1614). As Henrietta Maria, Lady Russell fell into a temporary (paralytic) trance upon receiving news of her husband's death. (It was Henry Jermyn, Henrietta's companion and financial steward, who delivered this tragic news to his queen.)

Ephelia's verse-epistles to, or concerning, Eugenia record a longstanding, loving relationship between a younger and an older woman, a close bond tested by separation,



conflict, misunderstandings, and anger (anger, indeed, as Ephelia may have 'lost' *J.G.* to Eugenia -- *if* this writer's identification of "J.G." as Jermyn, Jermyn the Great, is even remotely correct). Eugenia's superior rank to Ephelia is valuably disclosed in Ephelia's verse-epistle, "To the Honoured *Eugenia*, commanding me to write to her." Against my case for Ephelia's authorship in Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond & Lennox, *this poem carries special weight, as only a queen can 'command' a duchess.*

Grounding my "Eugenia"-Henrietta Maria formulation is 'evidence' in the visual arts of the period, in the work of master engraver William Marshall. Consider his iconographic titlepage for *Eugenia's Tears* (1642; Image 16 in this archive), which presents a distressed Eugenia sitting atop a globe of "England"; my detailed caption to this image provides further details. The importance of this recent find to the present argument cannot be overstated. (This image was found while scouring *Early English Books Online* for "Eugenia" matches.)

**Madam F. (FPOSO, 107): Cary Frazier (d. 1709), courtier.** An inscription in the Verney copy of *Female Poems...by Ephelia* (1679), preserved at the Folger Library, offers the acceptable identification of Madam F. as Cary Frazier. Cary and her family were ardent royalists and close friends of the Villiers-Stuart set. Her father, Dr Alexander Frazier, was personal physician to Charles II and to Mary Villiers's husband, Colonel 'Tom' Howard (D'Aulnoy, *Mémoires*). Germaine Greer suggested in 1989 that Cary might have been Ephelia, based on an allusion in "To Capt. *Warcup*": "Never for Women was so bad a time, / Falseness in Man is grown a common Crime, / Which *Frazier* doth lament in tender Rhyme" (c1686; Folger MS m.b. 12, f.98). Though Lenthal Warcup erred in his identification of Cary as the author of "*Ephelia's Lamentation*" (the vain and ostentatious Cary was but a court bauble and dazzling fashionista, of questionable literacy), he correctly grasped that the Ephelia poet was highly placed at the court of Charles II. See Wilson, *Court Satires* (Ohio State UP, 1976, p. 239ff.).

**Flora (FPOSO, 75-77): Anna-Maria Brudenell (1642-1702), the "fatal Lady Shrewsbury."** The Countess of Shrewsbury, over whom men duelled and died, is a gaudy, voluptuous blossom in this book published in springtime, 1679 (*Term Catalogues*, I:350). Shrewsbury was the principal mistress of George Villiers, the younger Buckingham; and when she took up with Villiers, both parties were married and prominent public figures. It is recorded in Pepys and in Burghclere that Lady Shrewsbury, disguised as Villiers's page, famously witnessed her lover's duel with her own husband. Her notorious affair with Villiers contributed to his general disgrace and eventual banishment from Court. Ephelia refers to her as "wanton *Flora*" and "a miss" (mistress, a kept woman). See "A Gentleman," below, for Ephelia's scolding, if scolding, poem on (plausibly) her own brother. The name Flora enjoyed some currency at the time, owing to Titian's *Flora*; John Payne's allegorical engraving of the goddess Flora; Van Dyck's portrait of his mistress Margaret Lemon as Flora; etc.

**A Friend (FPOSO, 40-41): John ('Jack') Wilmot (1647-1680), second Earl of Rochester, courtier, writer, libertine.** The friend who asks Ephelia to compose a poem on the subject of maidenhead may be the bawdy Lord Rochester, who also penned a short

lyric on the subject. The most remarkable feature of Ephelia's maidenhead poem is its sexual humor, unusual in women's writing at this time, and also its incomplete state: it is the only unfinished poem in Ephelia's (published) corpus because, as she admits, the poet cannot sustain the appropriate persona for such material. The poem begins as an amusing poetic exercise on a subject which stirred the pens of the Court Wits and also the metaphysical imagination of Abraham Cowley, but Ephelia's poem soon collapses, it breaks down: the poem simply stops ("I...have my Subject lost"). This failed exercise in libertine wit is interesting to modern readers, as it illustrates a woman writer's unwillingness to align herself with the libertine vogue of the time, a style of writing which degraded women.

**Madam G. (FPOSO, 111-112): Eleanor ('Nell') Gwyn (1650-1687), actress and mistress of Charles II.** 'Pretty, witty Nell' is the plausible candidate for Ephelia's "Madam G." Though Lady Mary initially sneered at this popular actress, Mary saw how useful Nell could be to Villiers family interest, as when 'Mrs Nelly' interceded with Charles II in 1677 on behalf of Mary's younger brother, George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, when he (yet again!) was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Buckingham then called Nell "the best woman in the world" (Burghclere 325); and so does his sister, according to the present argument, in this lovely homage, which concludes *Female Poems...by Ephelia*. An inscription in the Verney copy of the 1679 edition (Folger Library) supports this identification. On artistic grounds, the Ephelia poetess would have admired Nell Gwyn for her talent as a comedic actress, especially as Ephelia herself was not above penning some Restoration shtick in her "damned" play, *The Pair-Royal of Coxcombs*.

**J.G., sometimes Strephon (FPOSO, 12-15, 22, 29-30, 32-35, 58-62, 66-69, 81-82, 95-97): Henry Jermyn (Germyn) (1605-1684), first Earl of St Albans, principal Stuart operative (a possible candidate).** Ephelia's initials, "J.G.", for possibly Henry Jermyn (Germyn), first Earl of St Albans, may refer to him as Jermyn the Great, in contradistinction to his young nephew, "*la petit* Jermyn." The elder Jermyn evidently made a devastating impression on two women who loved him (and also each other): Ephelia (arguably, Mary Villiers) and Eugenia (Queen Henrietta Maria, widow of Charles I and mother-surrogate of Mary Villiers). For the appropriateness of "Eugenia" as Ephelia's cover for the Queen, see the "Eugenia" note, above.

Ephelia's detailed description of Jermyn in "To one that ask'd me why I lov'd *J.G.*," aligns quite closely with descriptions of Jermyn after the Civil War; this poem serves as a gloss on the very image of the aged, pompous, and bloated Jermyn in Lely's full-length Garter portrait at Kedleston Hall (see [images of Jermyn](#); also the present writer's review, with Lely's portrait, of Anthony Adolph's biography of Jermyn, *Full of Soup and Gold*, in *Seventeenth-Century News*, online). In his youth, however, Jermyn was a charismatic, handsome courtier, who managed the household and finances of Queen Henrietta Maria (for an image of a youthful Jermyn, see Appendix C in this archive). As Strickland says, he was almost thirty years older than the Queen (*Lives* V: 272; also, D'Aulnoy, *Mémoires...1675*; English edition, London, 1913, p. 81, n. 1). As Ephelia valuably discloses in *FPOSO*, her "J.G." is "twice my Age and more" (p. 59).

During the English Troubles, Jermyn was the principal adviser (steward) of Queen Henrietta Maria's 'Louvre Group,' which Ephelia refers to, quite possibly, as J.G.'s "club," called "The Society" (*FPOSO* 14). He was also, for a time, an elected Grand Master of the London lodge of the Society of Freemasons, a second attractive identification of J.G.'s "Society." In any case, Jermyn was an official statesman for the Stuarts; and after the Restoration, in 1668, Jermyn was Charles II's Chamberlain and principal agent during the Secret Treaty of Dover, at which time Jermyn would have been in his eighth decade.

In his glory days, Jermyn appears to have resembled Ephelia's / Mary Villiers's handsome father, George (Villiers), first Duke of Buckingham (Appendix C), possibly suggesting Ephelia's / Mary Villiers's perception of Jermyn as a father-surrogate (Lady Mary's father was murdered, 1628). Both Buckingham and Jermyn, at their best, were powerful Stuart agents and charismatic personalities. Many verses in *FPOSO* reconstruct the poet's tormented obsession with *J.G.* After a four-year affair, she hears second-hand from "Friends" that he has married a well-born woman overseas ("the best born of the *Afric* maids," Africa and Tangier possibly being code in *FPOSO* for France and Paris). Ephelia accepts the "killing News" with dignity, and bravely writes him out of her life ("Know *Strephon*, once I lov'd you more / Than Misers do their Wealth," p. 108). This important moment in the linked group of J.G. verses may refer to Mary Villiers's knowledge of the clandestine (morganatic) union of the widowed Henrietta Maria and her faithful steward and financial adviser: Henry Jermyn. Ephelia's tumultuous relationship with *J.G.* is further complicated by a second love triangle: *Ephelia-J.G.-Mopsa*. For Mopsa, see below. (Commentary and published research on the Tangier project, from Pepys's *Tangier Papers* to more recent work by Enid Routh, Karim Bejjit, and Rickie Lette, do not mention anyone with initials "J.G." going rogue, marrying an African woman.)

The J.G. poems in *FPOSO* disclose a sensitive entanglement among several prominent members of the Stuart inner circle; they also reveal the poet's helplessness before this certain man ("some hidden Fate / Compels me to love Him that I strive to Hate," 53). She finds a way, nonetheless, to exit the relationship with some female pride intact. The extent to which the J.G.-Ephelia affair was something a great deal more than a wrong-headed, unrequited flirtation must remain speculative, notwithstanding some attractive identifications offered here. The linked "J.G." poems in *FPOSO* invite comparison with Lady Mary Wroth's and Aphra Behn's linked poems to their inconstant lovers, whose identities are also concealed by their lamenting mistresses.

***A Gentleman, who left his Virtuous Lady for a Miss (FPOSO, 75-77): George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham (1628-1687), courtier and writer.*** One of the great public sins of the Restoration was the double-adultery scandal involving George Villiers and Lady Shrewsbury (see "Flora," above). When Villiers boldly set up rooms for his mistress in one of his own residences, his long-suffering wife, Mary Fairfax, reportedly objected, to which Villiers was said to have responded, "Why, Madam, I thought this not right, too, and so have sent a carriage for you, to take you back to your father's." His duel with his mistress's husband in 1668 was one of the most violent and closely reported of any duel of the century. That duel, in which Villiers killed his mistress's husband, along

with Villiers's public adultery with Lady Shrewsbury, and then their baptism of a (short-lived) bastard son at Westminster Abbey, shook even the debauched court of Charles II and led to Villiers's general disgrace and banishment in 1674. In her poetry-book of 1679, an angry, class-conscious Ephelia speaks to this "Gentleman" in the superior voice of a scolding older sister. She reminds him of his moral duty to class, family, and reputation, arguments not unlike those in Ephelia's cautionary broadside, c1681, to another corrupt aristocrat: James, Duke of Monmouth. (*Re Monmouth*, see a recent blog post by Sajed Chowdhury on Monmouth's creative "adaptation" of Ephelia's "Twin Flame", included in Monmouth's personal journal, B.L. MS Egerton 1527, fol. 45r; RECIRC website, NUI-Galway, 29 June 2016, with appreciative Comment by the present writer.)

***Marina (FPOSO, 89-92, 100-103): Frances Stuart, the younger Duchess of Richmond (1647-1702), courtier.*** 'La Belle' Stuart appears as "Marina" in Ephelia's book of 'female poems', as Frances is a younger version of the senior Duchess of Richmond: Mary Villiers (Ephelia), Marina being a variant of Mary. Ephelia's homage to this Stuart courtesan, "To the Beauteous *Marina*," is a pearl of a poem from an older woman to a younger kinswoman. Charles Montagu, first Earl of Halifax (1661-1714), wrote the following toast to Frances Stuart in 1702. Montagu's lines were inscribed on her toasting glass at London's famous Kit-Cat Club (founder, publisher Jacob Tonson). The toast is remarkable for its contrast between Frances and her aunt, Mary Villiers, both being duchesses of Richmond at two very different times in English history:

Of Two fair *Richmonds* different ages boast,  
 Theirs was the first, and ours the brightest toast;  
 Th' adorers' offerings prove who's most divine,  
 They sacrificed in water, we in wine.  
 (*Poets of Great Britain*, ed. Robert Anderson [1795], 6:341)

For information on the linked Marina-Clovis-Ephelia poems, see "Clovis," above. A current specialist on Frances Stuart is Catharine MacLeod, Senior Curator, Seventeenth-Century Collections, National Portrait Gallery, London.

***Mopsa, Ephelia's Rival (FPOSO, 36-37, 43, 49, 80): Catherine Crofts (1637-1686), Stuart governess (possible candidate).*** This "wrinkled old Hag" and "servile Shepherdess" was a wage-earning employee and governess at the court of Charles II; for a time, she was guardian to the young Duke of Monmouth. Her apartments in Whitehall were reportedly frequented by Whig partisans. According to D'Aulnoy's court *Mémoires*, she was thin, old-appearing, and unattractive; yet, she was witty and interesting enough to hold the romantic attention of Jermyn for several years. Ephelia (Mary Villiers) is righteously roiled that any "Rival" of hers would be a low-bred, bold creature such as Catherine Crofts. Was Catherine the woman at the end of Mary Villiers's sword in the love-duel Burghclere mentions (*Villiers*, 1903, p.140)? Crofts's contemporaries say that she never married and that she was a prime target for lampooners; see Wilson, *Court Satires*. Her unattractive name (Mopsa) in Ephelia's book, originates in the ugly, deformed rustic in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590, 1598).



Of special relevance is a satiric character of Crofts, as “Mopsa”, penned by Charles Montagu, first Earl of Halifax (1661-1715), addressed evidently, to Mary ("Mall"/"Moll") Villiers (his pairing of these two court personalities accords with the present argument):

Courage, dear *Moll*, and drive away despair,  
*Mopsa*, who in her youth was scarce thought fair,  
 In spite of age, experience, and decays,  
 Sets up for charming in her fading days;

.....  
 In all her air, in every glance was seen  
 A mixture strange, 'twixt fifty and fifteen.

.....  
 Fair Queen of Fopland is her royal style;  
 Fopland! The greatest part of this great isle!  
 (*Poets of Great Britain*, ed. Robert Anderson [1795], 6:341)

Halifax's association with women writers is recorded in Sarah Egerton's dedication to Halifax in her *Poems* of 1703 (reissued, 1706). (One of the earliest specialists on Egerton is Jeslyn Medoff.) Halifax was also the dedicatee of Catherine Trotter's *Fair Penitent* (1701).

**One that Affronted the Excellent *Eugenia* (FPOSO, 98-100): Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Lord Protector; principal signatory of Charles I's death warrant, 1649.** The verse-letter titled, "To One that Affronted the Excellent *Eugenia*" (*Female Poems...by Ephelia*, 98-100) opens splendidly, with a slap: "Thing, call'd a Man! Ambition cheats thy Sense." The poem is a spirited counter-affront on behalf of a beloved friend.

Working from the reasonable identification of *Eugenia* (the most "honoured", "commanding", and "excellent" woman in *Ephelia*'s verse-collection and the poet's only social superior) as Queen Henrietta Maria (*Ephelia*'s /Lady Mary Villiers's surrogate mother), and in view of *Ephelia*'s poetic practice of addressing high-profile figures (Charles II, Lord Jermyn, Lord Mulgrave, Prince Rupert, the second Duke of Buckingham [her younger brother], and the Duke of Monmouth), the most attractive candidate for this scathing rebuke is Oliver Cromwell.

As 'Mall' Villiers, a *de facto* Stuart, was imprisoned briefly in Whitehall Palace by Cromwell's administration (Burghclere, *Villiers* [1903], p 29), it would not have been impossible for her to get a brief manuscript poem (38 lines) into Cromwell's hands, or into the hands of his inner circle.

Internal allusions in the text of the poem point to Cromwell as *Ephelia*'s target: (i) *Eugenia*'s affronter is a boorish, intimidating assailant, of "ill Manners" and a mighty "Arm" ("your barb'rous Blows"); (ii) he is 'pursuing' *Eugenia* for cash reparations ("Obligements," "Obligations"); (iii) he is pressing her to "expose" the identity of certain "God-like Men" who oppose him; finally, (iv) he is a man flawed by a "Deformity."

These clues align with contemporary royalist views of Cromwell. Especially disclosing is the poet's reference to the clandestine royalist network, the Sealed Knot ("those God-like Men") and to her addressee's 'Deformity,' reasonably Cromwell's large, red nose ("Noll's nose" or what Mercurius Pragmaticus called his "fiery Snout").

Biographies of Henrietta Maria commonly mention the queen's enmity to Cromwell and her dehumanizing descriptions of him as an unnatural wretch and human abomination; note that Ephelia (Mary Villiers) also begins her attack by denying the subject a human identity: "Thing, call'd a Man!" Later, he is "a despicable *Thing*" (line 25, my emphasis).

Sources: Quentin Bone, *Queen of the Cavaliers* (London: Peter Owen, 1972), 244; Elizabeth Hamilton, *Henrietta Maria* (NY: Coward, McCann, Geoghegan, 1976), 242; Laura Lunger Knoppers, "'Noll's Nose' or Body Politics in Cromwellian England," lead essay in *Form & Reform in Renaissance England*, eds Amy Boesky & M T Crane (U of DE Press, 2000); Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, Print* (Cambridge UP, 2000).

It is my special pleasure to acknowledge prompt and valuable direction from Dr Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler in assembling this annotation (27 July 2004).

***Orinda (FPOSO, 87): Katherine ("the matchless Orinda") Philips (1632-1664), writer.*** Philips was the most celebrated English woman writer of the seventeenth century. Her influence is manifest in Ephelia's poetry-book of 1679 which offers several instances of Orinda's signature theme: affection between women. In one of her verse-letters to *Eugenia*, Ephelia writes, "Had I the sweet *Orinda's* happy Strain..." (87). Interestingly, Ephelia also applies Philips's phrase for tender attachments between women ("sacred Friendship") to men friends (53, 65). As I suggest in Section III of this archive, the (fictitious) author frontispiece in Ephelia's book of 'female poems' may parody the overt commercialism and sexualization of the woman writer in the author frontis of Katherine Philips's *Poems* -- third printing 1678, but a year before the release of Ephelia's collection in 1679. Perhaps the author frontis in Ephelia's book was the author's response to this exulted image of "the Matchless *Orinda*." Regardless of such crass marketing, Ephelia was obviously in thrall to the 'magick of Orinda's name' (a familiar phrase of the day). Principal specialists on Philips are Patrick Thomas and Elizabeth Hageman. For a first-ever investigation into the career tactics of 'Orinda' Philips, see Mulvihill, "A Feminist Link in the Old Boys' Network," *Curtain Calls*, eds Schofield and Macheski (Ohio, 1991).

***Pair-Royal of Coxcombs (FPOSO, 16-21): Charles II (1630-1685) and his brother James, Duke of York (1633-1701).*** Bearing one of the best titles in Restoration drama, Ephelia's "lost" play, the *Pair Royal of Coxcombs*, which according to its Prologue was "Acted at a Dancing-School," was most probably a farce-burlesque and sex comedy dating to the early years of the Restoration. It has come down to us in a fragmentary state: only its prologue, epilogue, and two songs are excerpted in Ephelia's book of 'female poems.' The play may have been performed at Hickford's Dancing-School, which was sometimes used as a theatrical venue at this time (*London Stage*, I, i: xv). The play is listed in the work of Van Lennep, Milhous and Hume, and Pierre Danchin.

When one of the play's female principals discloses that her lover (one of the pair-royal of coxcombs) has broken "Sacred Vows," the play comes into focus as a bold exposé of the immoral private lives of Charles II and his brother, James, Duke of York, whose marital infidelities had become public knowledge. As a *de facto* Stuart, Ephelia (arguably, Mary

Villiers) was highly critical of public immorality in the nation's leadership. According to its Epilogue, this exercise in Restoration 'shtick' was (understandably) "damn'd."

Let us begin to appreciate this fugitive text as we do an earlier locus of the suppression of Englishwomen's writing in the seventeenth-century: the published writings of Lady Mary Wroth in the 1620s. Even the highly placed "Mall" Villiers could be publicly humiliated and sanctioned when her work crossed sensitive class lines. (For a close reading of the play's Epilogue, with facsimile page from Ephelia's *FPOSO*, see Mulvihill, *Reading Early Modern Women*, eds. H. Ostovich and E. Sauer [Routledge, 2004], 446-448.)

**Phillida (*FPOSO*, 45-46): 'Betty' Felton (1656-1681), courtier and sometime writer.** The "jealous" and "raging mad" *Phillida* of "To A Lady who (though Married), could not endure Love should be made to any but her Self," is the beautiful but neurotic courtesan, Lady Elizabeth ('Betty') Felton, who died prematurely in a jealous apoplectic fit. The pornographic libel on Lady Betty published in John Harold Wilson's *Court Satires of the Restoration* (Ohio, 1975, 1976; pp 47-48) is by all accounts an accurate sketch of her promiscuous character and activities. Lady Betty was a mistress of Monmouth, who happens to be Ephelia's target in one of her best political poems, *Advice To His Grace* (single-column, slip format brs., c1681).

As many women at the Restoration court, Lady Felton dabbled in ovidian love poetry, and she was a literary figure at court in a rather incidental way as a reader of various prologues. When she shared her jottings with Lord Rochester, she was gently rebuffed. Rochester reminded Betty that her true talents lay elsewhere ("Rochester's Answer to a Paper of Verses sent him by L.[ady] B.[etty]," *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands* [1693]). Felton surely has a presence in Ephelia's book, but as subject, not author.

Other Phillidas and Phillida variants prior to 1679 include, among others, John Lyly's *Phillida* in his play, *Galathea* (1592); and Fillide Melandroni, a famous courtesan of seventeenth-century Rome and a favorite model of the painter, Caravaggio (Peter Robb, *M* [NY: Holt, 1998]). See Georgina Colwell on "Phillida" (*Restoration* [Fall, 1997], 114) and Edward Burns on Betty Felton (*Reading Rochester*, 1996). For locations on the vogue in ovidian love-poetry among women at court -- including Frances Jennings and Betty Felton -- see Gramont's *Mémoires* and the *Beauties* (1833) of Anna Jameson.

Prior to Dryden's English edition of Ovid's *Heroides* in 1680, literary women could read Ovid in Latin editions, certainly, but they probably favored French editions, French being the language of choice among cultivated women at this time resulting from the *précieuse* vogue ushered in by Queen Henrietta Maria. (We know that Dryden consulted French editions of Ovid in assembling his collection of 1680; see James Winn, *Dryden* [1987], 374.)

Harold Love, in *Restoration Verse* (Penguin, 1997), exposed but a passing acquaintance with court women writers when he misidentified Barbara Villiers as the Restoration "Messalina" in Rochester's "Let Antients Boast No More." Rochester's target was Ephelia's "insatiate Nymph", Betty Felton; and Rochester cues the reader to the identity

of his subject be referencing Betty's sporting husband: "she will set her Jocky on his toes". In the present writer's review of Love's collection (*Scriblerian*, Autumn 2001 and Spring 2002, 79-81), she spared him this embarrassment, though alerting him to this gaffe in private correspondence.

***Phylena (FPOSO, 74-77): Mary Fairfax, Duchess of Buckingham (1638-1704), wife of George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.*** This "virtuous Lady," whose husband left her for "a Miss" (Lady Shrewsbury, Ephelia's 'Flora'), is Mary Fairfax, later Villiers, the distinctly unglamorous spouse of the younger Buckingham, and one of many prodigiously forgiving wives of libertine husbands at the court of Charles II. She was a confidante of Mary Villiers and also Mary's sister-in-law. The unsuccessful marriage between George Villiers and Mary Fairfax had been a business arrangement, which assured Villiers the return of his family's confiscated estates from Mary Fairfax's father, General Thomas Fairfax, of Cromwell's administration. Though Phylena is an old English name and the feminine of "Phylum", it also may allude to "*Phalena*," a major order of night butterfly in Sir Thomas Muffet's *Theatrum Insectorum* (1634; tr., 1658). My candidate for the authorship of *Female Poems...by Ephelia* was called "the Butterfly," and had also lived (briefly) at Wilton House, where Muffet, the English butterfly specialist of the seventeenth century, had been a guest resident. We may safely assume that lepidoptera and the interesting, if exotic, language of 'butterfly-speak,' if you will, were among Lady Mary's special interests. For more on Muffet, see [Image F.1](#) in this archive.

***Phylocles (FPOSO, 85-86): Prince Rupert of the Rhine (1619-1682).*** This glamorous Civil War hero hoped for the heart of Mary Villiers, but received only her hand in loving friendship. In this tender lyric to a sadly discouraged courtier, "To *Phylocles*, Inviting him to Friendship," Ephelia has penned a witty alchemical poem of fused genders and co-mingled souls. This witty exercise resonates with allusions to the verse of Donne, Cowley, and Katherine Philips. Rupert's pastoral cover, "Phylocles" (lover of fame) may originate in Sidney's pastoral romance of 1598, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Mary Villiers's familiarity with Sidney's poem may date to her years at Wilton House, in the mid-1630s. Sidney wrote the *Arcadia* at Wilton, circa 1578-1580, and selected scenes from his poem are illustrated in the ceiling decoration of the Single Cube Room. Sidney's influence in Ephelia's amorous verse was first mentioned by the present writer in *Poems by Ephelia* (NY, 1992), 37-38.

Grounding the identities of Phylocles and Ephelia as Rupert and Lady Mary is an affectionate letter of Mary's to Rupert, initially brought to critical notice by Patrick Morrah in his historical investigation of Rupert's career during the English Civil War. The letter is also mentioned in Cheryl Sawyer's historical novel, [\*The Winter Prince\* \(2007\)](#), a responsible and engaging reconstruction of the Villiers-Rupert romantic interlude <<https://www.cherylsawyer.com/index.php/the-winter-prince>>. See the present writer's illustrated review, *Seventeenth-Century News*, online.

***A Proud Beauty (FPOSO, 54-55): Barbara (Villiers), Lady Castlemaine, later Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709), principal mistress of Charles II.*** Surely this "Imperious fool"



is Mary Villiers's cousin, Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine, later Duchess of Cleveland, the King's chief mistress, *circa* 1660-1670. As documented elsewhere in this archive (see the Textual link, "Duels [Mary's Duel]"), "imperious fool" was almost Restoration 'code' for Barbara Villiers, dating from Bishop Burnet's measure of the woman (Burnet, *History* I.132; S M Wynne, "Barbara Palmer *née* Villiers," *Oxford DNB*). Lady Mary's enmity towards this ravishing painted lady was common knowledge at Court, as Philip Walsingham Sergeant documents (*My Lady Castlemaine* [London, 1912]). Lady Mary was outraged at Castlemaine's pretensions to high status, her insulting behavior to other women (especially Queen Catherine), and her tyrannical control over the King. In open court, Mary Villiers famously rebuked her imperious cousin as the Restoration Jane Shore, disgraced mistress of Edward IV. In "To A Proud Beauty," Ephelia's anger overwhelms artistic control and certain biographical details are revealed. Lowering her mask, Ephelia / Mary Villiers reminds the 'Proud Beauty' / Barbara Villiers that she, too, is beautiful, famous ("my Fame's as great as Yours"), and also the object of "loud Applause". Surely, such boasts do not align with Robert Gould's violent satire on women writers in which Ephelia is a "ragged Jilt". And it was very probably Mary Villiers who wrote (again) against Barbara Villiers, when Duchess of Cleveland, in the anonymous court libel: "A Dialogue, between the D.[uchess] of C.[leveland] and the D.[uchess] of P.[ortsmouth] at their Meeting in Paris with the Ghost of Jane Shore" (Philip Sergeant, *Castlemaine*, 244). Though a great beauty, Castlemaine was a fierce virago and female bully; she justly receives a hot taste of Ephelia's pen for her competitive attitudes to other women at Court and for her gross misuse of female beauty and sexual power. (See other information in Section II of this archive.) The current specialist on portraits of Barbara Villiers is Julia Marciari Alexander (dissertation, Yale Center for British Art). See Marciari Alexander and Catharine MacLeod, *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (London: National Portrait Gallery and New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2001).

As most pseudonymous writers, Ephelia conceals and reveals her identity. When she reveals, the poet tells us who she is with small details. Regarding her age, for example, Ephelia mentions "my faint Lights" (p. 90) and "my twilight Eyes" (p. 91). And she tells us that Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) is one of her literary models. She also writes acrostics, an old form for a poetry book of 1679. Small information of this nature places and dates the writer behind the pseudonym. And in this angry poem, "To A Proud Beauty," remarkable as an exchange between duchesses, Ephelia asserts her Fame ("my Fame's as great as yours is", p. 55). If in fact Lady Mary (Villiers) Duchess of Richmond (1622-1685), Ephelia was still valued as a beauty and high social capital after the Restoration. Duchess Mary's younger husband, former libertine and fatal duelist, 'Tom' Howard, would agree.

