

demonic pact and witches sabbat, which had previously been an entirely continental European phenomenon and one that the King was deeply interested in and influenced by.

In contrast, Marion Gibson's study of Potts in "Thomas Potts 'Dusty Memory': Reconstructing Justice in *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches*" highlights the dangers of relying on what may be faulty evidence. For example, she states: "Likewise, Thomas Potts reports . . . that John and Jane Bulcock were acquitted when they were in fact condemned. . . . This reminds us that serious and uncheckable mistakes may be made at any level of the representation . . . Potts's own attempts at accuracy, such as they are, are subject to more erosion further down the line" (52). In all, Gibson ably highlights her belief that Potts manipulated the evidence in an effort to "display the shining efficiency and justice of the legal system" (53).

*The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories* is a well-researched and detailed study of the most infamous trials in seventeenth-century English history. The text is very well organized, and the short prefaces to each of the three sections of the text (Part I The Trials of 1612; Part II Contexts: Society, Economy, Religion and Magic; Part III Rewriting the Lancashire Witches) will make the text user-friendly to non-specialists as well as to researchers of seventeenth-century England.

Maureen E. Mulvihill, ed. *Ephelia*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003. xix + 158 pp. £40. \$69.95. Review by PHILIP MILITO, BERG COLLECTION, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.

With the location of a "smoking gun" and an attractive new body of research, it appears that the case is closed at last on the tantalizing enigma, "Ephelia." This pseudonymous poet, songwriter, and playwright of late-seventeenth-century London has been the subject of a longstanding and hotly contested debate in the academic community: Was this writer of political broadsheets, court

critiques, feminist verse, and a “damn’d” (pre-empted) play a corporeal woman writer? Was the “Ephelia” poet a man? Was “Ephelia” an ingenious hoax, devised by a clever clique of men and women writers? Where and what is the truth in the matter?

In 2003, with new findings on the case, Maureen E. Mulvihill assembled an updated, second edition of “Ephelia,” published by Ashgate. Her first edition of 1992 (second printing, 1993), whose first achievement was a responsible scholarly assemblage of the poet’s published and manuscript writings, was nominated by Rostenberg & Stern Rare Books of New York for a Modern Language Association “First Book Award.” The new Ashgate *Ephelia* is an artistically assembled book, spaciouly formatted (7½” x 10”), with beautiful facsimiles and textual notes; the extended introductory essay discusses the woman who “most probably” was the writer behind the Ephelia mask: Mary (Villiers) Stuart, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox (1622-1685), known as “the Butterfly” of the Stuart court. Mulvihill’s Villiers case began to take shape in the mid-1990s, as she explains, with the location of a quantity of circumstantial and internal textual evidence for Villiers in the primary writings of “Ephelia.” As the case evolved, it began to receive attention from scholarly publishers. Two densely documented and illustrated essays ran in *American Notes & Queries* (Fall, 1996; Summer, 1999); a detailed profile of “Ephelia,” foregrounding Villiers, was published in *An Encyclopedia of British Women Writers* edited by Paul and June Schlueter (Rutgers UP, 1998); and a rather extraordinary e-monograph on the entire subject (a “multimedia archive”), *Thumbprints of Ephelia: Text, Image, Sound* (2001; updated, 2004), was posted by the new interactive e-journal, *ReSoundings* at <http://www.millersville.edu/~resound/epheia/> (history shall judge the extent to which this huge effort is a literary fantasia or something very special).

It was not until Mulvihill found a smoking gun for the Villiers case in an unattributed and privately printed broadsheet of 1679 that the new attribution was (reasonably) secured. Her linchpin, published in this new edition for the first time, is a highly rare,

dual-column political poem to Charles II on the Popish Plot, *A Poem to His Sacred Majesty, On the Discovery of the Plott. Written by a Lady of Quality*, printed in the year 1679 (Wing P2668; ESTC R40072), whose decorative incipit initial (“H”) displays recognizable full-length miniatures of the King and the poem’s author, its “Lady of Quality,” Lady Mary Villiers in her ducal coronet and, as Mulvihill puts it, her “signature jewelry and old-fashioned hairstyle.” (Anyone familiar with the portraiture of the period knows that this female figure could not be the dour and dowdy queen-consort, Catherine of Braganza.) This important political poem on the convulsive “popish Plot” against the Stuart monarchy was originally a licensed imprint of Harry Brome (1678); and it appeared again in 1679 in the rare octavo, *Female Poems by Ephelia*, an imprint of James Courtney (Courtenay). Comparing this vignette of Villiers in the 1679 broadsheet version of the poem against other images of Villiers by, for example, Van Dyck, featured in the ambitious Thumbprints archive and in this new edition, Mulvihill’s reading of the crowned woman in the decorative initial “H” is not the least preposterous.

As Mulvihill wrote in the TLS (January 2, 2004:15), “the importance of the Villiers case for “Ephelia” cannot be exaggerated, as it suggests that Mary Villiers was the most highly placed, publishing woman writer of her age. It also places Lady Mary on a long continuum of other English women writers in her own extended family, from the lines of Manners, Knyvet, Wroth, Felton, and Stuart.” To date, critical reception has been supportive. The Chawton House Library for the Study of Early Women Writers (Hampshire, UK) ran an illustrated cover feature on the Villiers case in its *Female Spectator* (Summer, 2002). The Historical Portraits gallery (Mayfair, London) has posted an extended piece on Mary Villiers, mentioning the new edition and also identifying Villiers as “very probably” the “Ephelia” poet <[www.historicalportraits.com/discoveries.asp](http://www.historicalportraits.com/discoveries.asp)> (“A Royal Van Dyck”). And Mulvihill’s apparatus in the new Ashgate *Ephelia* mentions that the Villiers case is now canonical record in the *ESTC* and in the upcoming third edition of the new *CBEL*.

From the vantagepoint of this professional bookman, however, there are a few lost opportunities in Mulvihill's new edition. This new product would have been an even more impressive (and heftier) treatment had it included all of the extant writings of "Ephelia"; while it does extend the collected writings with the important find of 1679 (the so-called smoking gun), it does not reprint the second edition of *Female Poems by Ephelia* (1682), which includes a few remarkable verses added to the first edition after Mary Villiers's death, supposedly, such as Lord Rochester's famous (ventriloquised) satire of Lord Mulgrave. And it is a pity that this new edition is blemished by a few errors in the transcription of the elaborate forty-line "Isham" autograph elegy at Nottingham (Portland MS PwV 336); in view of the obvious care and close documentation in this new edition, this may well have been the case of the publisher simply printing an earlier (uncorrected) version, as often happens in such matters. Finally, though Mulvihill has now found the signature of Mary Villiers, added to her online "Ephelia" archive, what is still required is a specimen of Villiers' handwriting in full context from, perhaps, an existing letter. Such a writing sample would then secure the "Isham" autograph as the work of Villiers and, thus, more fully ground the entire attribution. It also should be added that two critical pieces of information are overlooked in the new edition's introduction, though discussed in the editor's online archive; namely, contemporary references to "Ephelia" as being a red-haired woman (and was Villiers) and the stubborn bibliographical record of "Ephelia" as one Joan Philips, which Mulvihill explains in her archive with a little help from Aphra Behn and Robert Gould.

Notwithstanding, the case for "Ephelia" as Mary Villiers is forceful and strongly supported. And Mulvihill's proposed "Key," in her online archive, to the veiled characters and sensitive situations in her poet's clef octavo of "female poems" (1679), would seem to suggest that the attribution works: it solves a good many mysteries, large and small, in this famous little book of court secrets. In the judgment of some bibliophiles and area specialists, the Villiers case for "Ephelia" is an exciting new

attribution in the canon of early-modern English poetry, and Mulvihill is to be commended for enviably cracking such a complex case, owing to her broad multimedia methodology. But of course scholars who have published far differently on the matter (no small and quiet club!) must decide to depose the Villiers attribution or let it stand.

Job and the Crocodile in George Wither's *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne*

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In his *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne* (1635), George Wither uses the example of a crocodile to illustrate the maxim, "*True Vertue is a Coat of Maile, / 'Gainst which, no Weapons can prevaile*" (112). Wither stresses the superiority of virtue over conventional weapons as a defense of character:

If, therefore, thou thy *Spoilers*, wilt beguile,  
 Thou must be armed, like this *Crocodile*;  
 Ev'n with such nat'rall *Armour* (ev'ry day)  
 As no man can bestowe, or take away:  
 For, spitefull *Malice*, at one time or other,  
 Will pierce all borrowed *Armours*, put together.  
*Without*, let *Patience* durifie thy Skin;  
 Let *Innocencie*, line thy heart *within*;  
 Let constant *Fortitude*, unite them so,  
 That, they may breake the force of ev'ry blow:  
 And, when thou thus art *arm'd*, if ill thou speed;  
 Let me sustaine the *Mischiefe*, in thy steed. (112, ll. 19-30)