John Berkenhead, writing on the Royalist divine and playwright William Cartwright, makes Cartwright’s wit the “blood of verse” which “like a German Prince’s title, runs / Both to thy eldest and to all thy Sons.” Berkenhead’s fantasy of the dissolution of primogeniture into a leveled fraternity of Royalist poets would seem to exclude women, yet the collection of prefatorial poems in which his elegy appears did include one woman writer: Katherine Philips. Philips is perhaps best known for her poetry of love addressed to women, published along with her other poetry in 1664 and 1667. However, her poem to Cartwright, her first published poem, was printed not in the Restoration but in 1651. Given that the prefatory poems to Cartwright’s Comedies, Tragicomedies with other Poems were written by Royalist sympathizers, and that it was published just one month before the exiled Charles II’s invasion from Scotland, the Cartwright volume was as much a political as a poetic performance.

Thus, contrary to modern critical characterizations of the importance of

1. John Berkenhead, “In Memory of Mr. William Cartwright,” Comedies, Tragi-Comedies, with other Poems by William Cartwright (1651) sig. 9. I have modernized spelling where this does not interfere with the sense of the text. All the poems addressed to Cartwright, including the one by Philips, are taken from the prefatory material to his Comedies. The rest of Philips’ poetry is taken from Patrick Thomas’ modern edition of her poetry, The Collected Works of Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda by Katherine Philips, 3 vols. (Essex, 1990). Peter Beal, in Vol. II of Index of English Literary Manuscripts (New York, 1993), and Elizabeth H. Hageman and Andrea Sununu, “New Manuscript Texts of Katherine Philips, the ‘Matchless Orinda,’” English Manuscript Studies, 4 (1993), 174–219, provide invaluable information regarding Philips’ manuscripts and publications.

her work, Philips emerged into the busy public sphere of the seventeenth century not as a Restoration writer or poet of private homoerotic verse, but as an Interregnum writer of public-political commendation, linked to a heterosocial coterie of Royalist men. Philips’ published and manuscript poetry of this period helped to forge this coterie: in her writing of the Revolutionary period, Philips figures herself as a proxy poet, at the center of complex, post-courtly community, born of the decentering of royal power and Royalist panegyric. Paradoxically, given Philips’ Royalist commitments, this decentering sanctions the emergence of the non-aristocratic woman writer as a privileged member of the group.

Cartwright’s *Comedies* is crucial for rethinking Philips’ poetry, both historically and poetically. Historically, it forces our attention to her considerable poetic production before the Restoration. She seems to have started writing in earnest around the time of this publication to Cartwright—we can date only two or three of her poems (her juvenilia) before 1651—and well over half her poetry was written in the early to mid-fifties. Like Andrew Marvell, whose *Miscellanious Poems* was not published until 1681, but who is most often associated with the turbulence of the Commonwealth period that produced much of his most famous poetry, Philips can be productively situated in the Revolutionary context that impelled her to write. Poetically, the fact that Philips was the only woman to be included in the unprecedented number of commendatory poems prefaced to the Cartwright volume—54 in all—coupled with her increased poetic output at this time, shows the importance of this group of mostly male writers to her poetry at the start of her career, and her commitment to a loyalist politics that has been largely overlooked by modern critics. For while scholars of Katherine Philips chart the groups of men and women evoked by her poems, they rarely discuss the public-political aspects of this verse. Some writers have simply chosen to ignore the politics of Philips’ poetry, focusing on questions of gender and sexuality to the exclusion of contemporary debates over state power and public representation. Maureen Mulvihill and Claudia Limbert, for example, provide invaluable biographical details about Philips’ connections to male literary elites, while Harriette Andreadis and Arlene

3. Of the 101 poems given tentative dates by Patrick Thomas, 59 date from before 1660. See *Collected Works*, Volume I. The only two of Philips’ poems for which we have dates that were clearly written before 1651 are her juvenilia, “No blooming youth” and “A married state.” Patrick Thomas speculates that “To Rosania and Lucasia” may also have been written before 1651 and the title added at a later date, after Philips met Anne Owen or “Lucasia.” See Patrick Thomas I, 398.
Stiebel gives sophisticated readings of the eroticism of her love poetry to women, but none of them attempts to link either Philips’ heterosocial or homoerotic verses to her Royalism, or to her complicated socio-political position as a woman with many Royalist friends married to a moderate Cromwellian. Some scholars even present Philips’ poetry as entirely divorced from political concerns, defining it as “apolitical” or focused on “private themes.”

This treatment of Philips’ verse as disengaged from public-political issues is in danger of reproducing post-Renaissance notions of gendered separate spheres in a very different socio-political context, and it ignores the instability and flexibility of the categories of public and private during the seventeenth century. In this period, categories of public and private

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are in dispute, as the ideal of a public power invested in the patriarchal icon of the King (embodied in the courtly genres like the masque) gives way to the concept of a sphere of public discourse, in which men and women of all classes may jostle to participate. While this arena of public discourse is by no means gender-neutral, the upheavals of the Revolutionary period enable even Royalist women to participate in the creation of what Nancy Fraser has called counterpublics: discursive communities for the public formation of alternative politics and identities.

The exceptions to the above critical rule of separating Philips’ poetry from its Revolutionary context are Patrick Thomas, Philips’ editor, and Carol Barash. Barash in particular mounts a complex exploration of the connections between representations of gender and political power in Philips’ texts, arguing that the elegiac female community imagined in Philips’ poetry emblematizes the body of the Restoration monarch, Charles II. Like Barash’s essay, this study focuses on gender and politics, arguing that, especially given the changing nature of public and private during this period, we need to explore the connections between the public political and the gender-political in early modern women’s writing. Barash, however, underestimates the importance of Philips’ many addresses to her male colleagues during the Revolutionary period, and her debt to the collective politics and aesthetics of the seventeenth-century coterie. During this period Philips exchanged poems and complimentary dedications with moderate Royalists such as Sir John Berkenhead, Sir Edward


8. See Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in Calhoun. Fraser notes that these counterpublics, while oppositional, need not be “virtuous,” but rather can be both “antidemocratic and antiegalitarian” (p. 124).

Dering, Henry Vaughan, Henry Lawes and Francis Finch. Some of Philips’ love poetry to women was imitated and circulated among these men: Sir John Berkenhead and Sir Edward Dering both wrote love plaints to Philips’ beloveds “Lucasia” (Anne Owen) and “Rosania” (Mary Aubrey), and Dering even explicitly masqueraded as Philips’ poetic persona “Orinda” in his verse. One of Philips’ poems to Lucasia, “Friendship’s Mysteries,” was set to music and published by Henry Lawes in 1655, while Lawes also wrote music for two of her other homoerotic poems, “A Dialogue Between Lucasia and Orinda” and “To Mrs. M. A.” All three of these songs may have been performed at the Royalist gatherings at Lawes’s London house that occurred during the Interregnum. These publications and performances indicate that the poems of love to women on which modern critics have focused are not only private expressions of lesbian desire, but formed part of a public, poetic performance, one that circulated in a complex system of compliment, cross-gender identification and political affiliation.

II

Cartwright’s Comedies displays its political colors in part by foregrounding Royalist Oxford as a lost ideal. Of the 53 men who wrote commendatory poems for the volume, 38 had attended Oxford University, and of the 19 still at Oxford after Charles’s defeat there in 1646, 15 were either expelled or refused to submit to the parliamentary visitors sent up to purge and reform the colleges. Comedies mourns the loss of Oxford as both a


14. In 1647 the House of Commons appointed a commission to restore the University that expelled 350–400 members of the colleges. See John Marriott, Oxford: Its Place in National History (Oxford, 1933), p. 135; and The Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, from AD 1658, ed. Montagu Burrows (Westminster, 1881), p. 571. Records of the visitation and college attendance are incomplete and, of the men writing poems for Comedies that signed their poems using only

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geopolitical space—it had housed the King and his army until the siege of Oxford—and as a school of Royalist culture. Oxford had been the seat of royal panegyric during the Personal Rule, issuing ten volumes of commendatory verses to Charles I and Henrietta Maria between 1633–1643 alone, written for the most part in Latin. All but one of the contributors to the Cartwright volume later associated with Philips wrote for these ornate celebrations of the public power of the royal family, and Cartwright himself, a staunch Royalist who had been appointed to the King’s Council of War but who died an unheroic death of camp fever in 1643, contributed to nine out of the ten volumes. The sheer number of commendatory poems to Cartwright recalls the collective acts of panegyric offered by Oxford before the Civil War, but Cartwright’s book is aimed at a broader and thus partly female London audience, familiar with English rather than Latin. The connection between the Cartwright initials, three have not been identified. It is impossible to ascertain exactly which of these writers went to Oxford. However, 19 of the names in Cartwright match those called before the visitors during the 1640s. 5 contributors identify themselves as Oxford men in Comedies, and 12 more can be found in Vol. III of Joseph Foster’s Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714, 3 vols. (Nendeln, 1968). Vaughan’s biographer, F. E. Hutchinson, in Henry Vaughan: A Life and Interpretation (Oxford, 1962), notes that Vaughan attended Oxford (pp. 32–33). Patrick Thomas states that Francis Finch went to Balliol. See Thomas, I, 330.


16. John Berkenhead and Francis Finch both wrote for an Oxford collection on Henrietta Maria, Musarum Oxoniensium Epibathpia Serenissimae (Oxford, 1643), and Berkenhead also contributed to a similar collection on the Royalist hero, Bevill Grenville, Verses on the Death of . . . Sir Bevill Grenville (Oxford, 1643). Lawes’ biographer notes that Lawes set some of the poems to Henrietta Maria to music: see Willa McClung Evans, Henry Lawes: Musician and Friend of Poets (New York, 1941), p. 160. Lawes may also be the “H.L.” in the Grenville volume. Henry Vaughan contributed to an Oxford collection celebrating Charles’s return from Scotland in 1641. See Hutchinson, p. 34. The other writer strongly connected to Philips, Sir Edward Dering, does not seem to have written for any of these three volumes, but he did contribute to a Cambridge equivalent, Irenodia Cantabrigiensis (1641). Other contributors to the Cartwright volume also wrote for earlier collections of panegyric: Joseph Howe, Martin Lluellin, Richard Hill, and Christopher Ware contributed to Eucharistica Oxoniensis (Oxford, 1641), and Ralph Bathurst, Thomas Severne, John Fell, John Finch, and Cartwright himself contributed to Musarum Oxoniensium. The authors of the Grenville volume sign their poems with their initials, but James Loxley identifies Jasper Mayne and Martin Lluellin as two of them, and both of these wrote for Cartwright. See Loxley, p. 80. In addition, two sets of the initials match the names of contributors to Cartwright’s Comedies: “WB” may be William Bell, while “R.G.” may be Robert Gardiner.

17. On Cartwright’s poetic contributions, see Anselment, p. 184. For more on Cartwright’s life, works, and death, see G. Blakemore Evans, introduction, The Plays and Poems of William Cartwright (Madison, 1951), pp. i–xxxi.

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volume and Royalist Oxford is made more explicit by the publisher, Humphrey Moseley, who presents Cartwright as “a late student of Christ Church,” mocks the “Oxford Visitors,” and in the absence of systems of court patronage that traditionally supported courtly writers, even dedicates the volume not to a great patron but to the University itself, nostalgically evoked in all its past glory: “To the most renowned and happy mother of all learning and ingenuity, the (late most flourishing) University of Oxford, these poems, as most due, are humbly dedicated” (frontispiece).  

Moseley presents the Comedies as the performance of a coded and ideologically inflected community, or coterie. According to Arthur Marotti, during the 1640s and 1650s Royalists used manuscript collections “as a form of social and political bonding,” and the Cartwright volume suggests that this bonding can extend to the public sphere of print. The opening reference to Henry Lawes as setting “The Ayres and Songs” to music two years before Lawes’s first publication of his airs points to a collective poetic and musical production that happens off-stage, an elitist sphere of nonprofessional activity epitomized by Cartwright’s own texts: “You will do him wrong to call them his works; they were his recreation.” The preface then presents a text forced into publication by a series of accidents—Cartwright’s death, plagiarism of his works, and the fall of Oxford—all shaped into a narrative of loss that licenses the move to print. Moseley even defends the number of commendatory poems in terms that cast the 54 prefatory poets as Cartwright’s friends and force the readers either to identify with them or see themselves as alienated outsiders: “if you think He hath too many Commenders, it is a sign you knew him not.” In his very appeals to a broad public, therefore, Moseley constructs this text in terms of exclusivity, inscribing an elitist circle of the knowing few—or a knowing many—within the wider public sphere.

22. In addition, Moseley claims that the book was not published in the lavish folio version it deserves for the sake of the readers: “tis for your own sakes; we see it is such weather that the most ingenious have least money,” an allusion to parliamentary sequestration or perhaps to the expelled sons of that very “mother of all . . . ingenuity,” Oxford itself. Moseley, sig. A2; my italics.
The text then works to foreground a collection of displaced Oxford wits gathered to mourn the loss of the University as a royalist power-base, and Cartwright comes to stand as a synecdoche not only of this geopolitical space, but of its symbolic center: Charles I. For although the King rarely appears in the poems to Cartwright, he haunts the edges of the verse as the central mourned absence of the text. Berkenhead, figuring the shame of being a survivor of the Royalist defeat, says of Cartwright, “Thou liv’st after Death, We die before,” turning Cartwright’s inglorious death into a heroic martyrdom that outshines those unlucky enough to be left alive under parliamentary rule.23 These lines, however, echo an anonymous elegy in Monumentum Regale, one of the books of poetry published after Charles’s execution in 1649: “We only died, he only lived that day.”24 Francis Finch presents Cartwright himself as the central spectacle of Royalist ideology, which in the absence of court and masque becomes a powerful oxymoron of dark glory drawing the gazes and creative talents of the Royalist poetic community, even those (like Mildmay Fane) ordered by Parliament to stay within five miles of London:25

Thy Friends who five-mile Prisons do confine,
And those that breathe within the larger Line,
Will joy to see thy glorious Shadow move,
The Object of their Wonder and their Love.26

Finch’s poem, however, again echoes an elegy for Charles I from Monumentum Regale, one that presents the volume itself as a substitute for the public power of the King: it is “The living Emblem of glorious shade.”27 In the Cartwright volume, therefore, the poetic martyr, like Royalist elegy itself, becomes a dark reflection of the lost royal ideal, the unspoken object of the texts and their doubled mourning for Cartwright and the former Oxford: the King.

23 Berkenhead, sig. 2.
24 Monumentum Regale or a Tomb Erected for that Incomparable and Glorious Monarch, Charles the First (1649), p. 45.
27 Monumentum Regale, p. 1.
It is into this series of mourned absences that Katherine Philips steps. Philips herself has a complicated ideological background: she was brought up as a Puritan in London and educated at an all-female school in Hackney run by a Mrs. Salmon, who was a Presbyterian, but most of her connections were with Royalists. At Mrs. Salmon’s she befriended Mary Aubrey, the daughter of a Welsh Cavalier, and Mary Harvey (later married to Sir Edward Dering, also a moderate Royalist) and in 1646 she moved with her mother to Wales, a center of support for the King. However, once there, she married James Philips, a considerable landowner and colonel, a member of the Army committee, who increased his estates as a commissioner of sequestration—a role which he performed with such gusto that he apparently gained quite a reputation. In 1650, when the Propagation Act was passed, Colonel Philips was appointed by the Rump Parliament as a member of Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, which was, according to A. H. Dodd, “the real government of Wales,” not only ejecting Anglican ministers, but filling local administrative posts: “treasurers, militia commissioners, receivers of taxes and the like.” Thus at 16 Katherine Philips married a powerful member of the military middle class that ran Wales during the revolutionary period. Despite the fact that James Philips was a moderate, in conflict with local radicals and on friendly terms with local Royalists, Philips’ contribution to Cartwright’s Comedies publicly declares a political affiliation at odds with her husband’s Parliamentarianism, particularly given the fact that during the very week that Cartwright’s Comedies was published, Colonel Philips helped to suppress a Royalist revolt in Cardiganshire, Wales, in which twenty-eight Royalists were killed and sixty taken prisoner.

Although she was too young to have known Cartwright as an adult (she was not born until 1632), Philips’ poem is the first of the 54 that preface his volume, and as such occupies a position of some prominence.

28. Souers, p. 27.
29. A. H. Dodd, Studies in Stuart Wales (Cardiff, 1952), p. 148. He was also High Sheriff for Cardiganshire, and was later elected MP for Cardiganshire and sat on the High Court of Justice. See Souers, p. 28.
30. He was apparently acquainted with Thomas Vaughan, Henry Vaughan’s brother, and he knew Colonel John Jeffreys, who fought for the King. See Patrick Thomas, III, 158–60. Both men were connected to his wife through her poetry.
31. Copies of The Faithful Scout (June 20 and June 27, 1651) and A Perfect Diurnal . . . in Relation to the Armies (June 23 and June 30, 1651) carry news of the uprising and its defeat.
In the collections of verse panegyrics dedicated to members of the royal family published in Oxford before 1646, the order of writers reflects social status: as Raymond Anselment has noted, university officials and nobles “claim the privileged place at the beginning, while the lesser academic and social ranks vie to succeed them.”32 In a volume dedicated to Oxford and dominated by the contributions of Oxford men, Philips’ prominence must not be ignored, and may reflect an attempt by the other writers to gain the favor of a Royalist woman married to an influential member of the parliamentary forces who had himself matriculated from Oxford in 1610.33 However, we should also note that her inclusion in the volume relies on the absence of the very university structure that organized the earlier collections. Universities were all-male provinces in the seventeenth century, sites of homosocial competition in rhetoric and the arts, and of the preparation for careers unavailable to women, in public service and in the Church. Thus if the Cartwright volume contains many poems by the Oxford men who published in these earlier volumes, Philips herself can only emerge as the sole female member of the group after Parliamentary divines began regulating the Oxford press in 1646, and many of the Royalist men and their panegyric moved to London. From the start, her place in the publication was conditioned both by a displacement of the powerful Royalist center of Oxford to the relative margins of defeated Royalism in Wales and London and by her own contradictory position as a Royalist connected by marriage to a sympathetic parliamentary leader.

Given her precarious relation to the other writers, as a woman and the wife of a Cromwellian, it is perhaps not surprising that Philips’ poem presents itself as a rude interruption, the opening lines simultaneously casting Cartwright as a substitute royal and holding him at bay:

Stay, Prince of Fancy, stay, we are not fit
To welcome or admire thy Raptures yet;
Such horrid ignorance benights our Times,
That Wit and Honour are become our Crimes.34

33. For more on James Philips, see The Dictionary of Welsh Biography, Down to 1940 (Oxford, 1959), p. 754. Oxford forms a geographic link between Cardigan, Wales, where the Philipses lived, and London, where James Philips conducted much of his business, and we know that he stayed there at least once in 1654 on the way back from the city. See Patrick Thomas, III, 159. He may still have had contacts with Oxford graduates and scholars.
34. Katherine Philips, “To the Memory of the most Ingenious and Virtuous Gentleman Mr. Will: Cartwright, my much valued Friend,” Cartwright, Comedies (sig. A4v).
The abrupt command to “Stay,” and the following caesura and enjambment emphasize the verse’s function as a break with, rather than a continuation of, poetic history, particularly as Philips herself usually writes in fairly regular heroic couplets. The metrical disarray mimics the startling banishment of Cartwright, a banishment that is even more indecorous due to Cartwright’s role as “Prince”—it is as if Philips had suddenly stopped the inexorable descent of a powerful masque figure with the warning that the audience is not ready to receive him.

Other contributors nostalgically cast Cartwright as the end of the Caroline aesthetic line: Dering writes, “I’ll only tell / The World when Wit and pleasing Fancy fell; / They died with thee.”35 In contrast, Philips makes Cartwright a symbol of future Royalist possibilities that might include the loyalist wife of a moderate Cromwellian within their scope:

But when those happy Powers that guard thy Dust,  
To us and to thy Memory shall be just,  
And by a Flame from thy blessed Genius lent,  
Shall rescue us from this dull Imprisonment,  
Unsequester our Fancies, and create  
A Worth that may upon thy Glories wait;  
Then shall we understand thee, and descry  
The Splendor of Restored Poetry.36

Philips’ poem then becomes an exercise in prolonged deferral, a gesture toward a futurity not elaborated in a logical procession of historical events but condensed into a mythic reversal of present political relations, one as sudden and unconflicted as the court masque’s banishment of the anti-masque. The shift from politics to poetry, however, not only elevates Cartwright to the status of prince, but also enables Philips to identify herself with the Royalist “us” who have suffered under the present regime. Many of the contributors—such as John Berkenhead, who had been the editor of the official Royalist newsbook, _Mercurius Aulicus_, until 1646, or Henry Lawes, who had been a prominent court musician until the King’s move to Oxford in 1642—had lost their livings as well as their King with the Royalist defeat.37 Other contributors to the Cartwright volume,

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37. The Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales of which James Philips was a member was the body that deprived Henry Vaughan’s brother of his living as minister to St. Bridgets. See Hutchinson, p. 94.
however, such as Francis Finch, who came from a “moneyed family of
prosperous lawyers,” and Edward Dering, whose composition fee was
removed in 1644, had not suffered financially under the wars. 38 Philips
herself benefited, if only vicariously, from her husband’s sequestrations
of at least eleven estates. 39 Given the proximity of Charles II just across
the border in Scotland, readying his invasion, and her husband’s activities
for Parliament throughout the year, Philips’ presentation of herself as
an ardent Royalist may be politic as well as political. By claiming that
Cartwright will “Unsequester” fancies, she situates herself as culturally, if
not materially, impoverished by Commonwealth policies, and flattens
out the differing economic hardship suffered by the group to represent a
community that suffers ideologically even when its estates remain intact.

Furthermore, the prolonged deferral of Cartwright’s presence enables
Philips’ own performance. By implication, Philips only comes into being
as a poet because the real Royalist poet is not only literally dead but polit-
ically and aesthetically beyond the understanding of “our Times.” If “we,”
the reading public are not yet ready for Cartwright, “we” are obviously
ready for Philips, who acts as a stand-in, a poet whose public appearance
depends on the vicissitudes of the very political context she disparages.
The closing couplet of her poem continues both her identification of
Cartwright with standard royal images and her deferral of his presence:
“Til then, let no bold hand profane thy Shrines / Tis high Wit-treason to
debase thy coin.” 40 Philips presents her poetic product as built around the
shrine of Cartwright’s poetry, a fairly standard conceit taken up by the
other poets who describe his book as an “Epitaph,” a “Legacy,” and “thy
Monument.” 41 While Philips’ deferral stands in contrast to the nostalgia
of the other writers, the repetition of the conventional trope of the text
as shrine or monument presents a Royalist community bound together

38. For Finch, see P. W. Thomas, p. 196. The fee on Sir Edward Dering’s estate was removed
in August 1644, after Dering’s father died. It may have been dropped because, while his father
fought for the King, there are no records of any overtly Royalist activity on Dering’s part. See
Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, 1643–1660, ed. Mary Anne Everitt Green

39. Philips sequestered at least eleven estates from Welsh “Papists and Recusants” in 1655 and
bought David Jenkin’s sequestered lands from the Treason Trustees in 1650, presumably at a reduced
rate. See Green, 2180, 3239. James Turner notes that James Philips also stripped the roof of
St. David’s cathedral of lead for use on his own house in The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and


41. Cartwright, Comedies (sig. b2v, 4, 11).
through mourning, structured around a series of central absences—Oxford, Cartwright, the King—which rob the male poets of place and preferment but enable them all to present poetry as ideological commitment to the Royalist cause, and allow Philips in particular to become a leading proponent of that cause, a proxy poet who heads the collection despite her status and her gender.

Philips’ manuscript poetry continues the work of transforming a loose group of affiliated poets into a politicized coterie of which she is a centering force, its circulation and poetic repetitions binding together a group of Royalist writers as an elitist counterpublic. As Margaret Ezell has warned, we should not read manuscript poetry as private but as an alternative forum for the formation of public identities: Philips, Sidney, Donne, and Anne Wharton “all had public reputations long before their verses were printed.”  

Philips reached a wide audience: in addition to the men already mentioned, her poems were read by Anne Owen, Mary Harvey, Mary Aubrey, another ex-Oxford man named Nicholas Crouch, the third Earl of Bridgewater, Jenkin Jones (a radical approver under the Propagation Act), the Royalist divine Jeremy Taylor (who had also attended Oxford), John Davies, the republican Robert Overton, and Andrew Marvell.

43. The two manuscript collections of her poems dating from the 1650s are the Tutin manuscript, an autograph of 55 poems (National Library of Wales, MS 773B), and a miscellany (Cardiff City Library, MS 1073) that includes fourteen of Philips’ poems from 1650–1651 (Beal, pp. 128–29). Other manuscript miscellanies including Philips’ poetry from the 1650s through 1662 are Worcester College, MSS 6. 13 (which features a collection of 73 of Philips’ poems), the Texas manuscript, and University of London MS Ogden 42 (formerly Phillips MS 4001). For these manuscripts see, Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, pp. 130–36 and *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) p. 148. For the poems held by Crouch—expelled by the parliamentary visitors from Oxford—and Bridgewater, see Hageman and Sununu, pp. 180–81. Jenkin Jones threatened to publish Philips’ poem defending the King from a poetic attack by Vavasor Powell. See below and Philips’ poems, “To (the truly competent Judge of Honour) Lucasia” and “To Antenor, on a paper of mine which J. Jones threatens to publish.” Jeremy Taylor addressed his *A Discourse of the Nature and Office of Friendship* (1657) to Philips, while Davies dedicated his translation of the romance *Cleopatra* (1650) to her. For arguments that Philips influenced Overton and Marvell, see respectively David Norbrook, “‘This blushing tribute of a borrowed muse’: Robert Overton and his Overturning of the Poetic Canon,” *Early Modern Studies*, 4 (1993), 220–67, and Allan Pritchard, “Marvell’s ‘The Garden’: A Restoration Poem,” *Studies in English Literature*, 23 (1983), 371–88. After the Restoration, manuscript collections of Philips’ work include one in Dering’s hand and another made by a professional scribe to be given to Philips’ friend, Mary Aubrey. See Beal, pp. 129–30.
The surviving autograph manuscript from the 1650s forges links with a number of Royalist writers already mentioned in connection with the Cartwright volume, most notably Berkenhead, Vaughan, Dering, and Finch. The poems to these men were all written around the time of the publication of Cartwright’s Comedies and of a later collective publication, featuring many of the same writers alongside Philips, by Henry Lawes—his Second Book of Ayres and Dialogues. The proximity of these poems to the two printed volumes suggests that Philips wrote them not as bids for individual economic patronage, but in order to smooth her entry into these projects of collective publication. The poems to the four male writers differ in mode of address and, to some extent, imagery, but all are praised in terms of the Royalist virtues so prevalent in her poem to Cartwright. Finch, for example, from a powerful family in Kent connected to the Derings through marriage, wrote a discourse on friendship that seems to have become the inspiration for Philips’ many poems on the subject. Philips’ manuscript verse to Finch, “To the noble Palaemon on his incomparable discourse of Friendship,” commends him for a loving restoration of the “Crown” of friendship, central to the mutual ties of the coterie, which in turn allows the Royalist community to unmask itself:

We had been still undone, wrapt in disguise,
Secure not happy; cunning, but not wise;
War had been our design, interest our trade,
We had not dwelt in safety, but in shade. (ll. 1–4)

44 In 1651 (the year of the Cartwright collection), Philips wrote verse epistles and panegyrics to Dering, who adopted the coterie name “Silvander”; Sir John Berkenhead or “Cratander”; and Henry Vaughan. In 1653–1654, just before the 1655 publication of Lawes’s volume, she wrote two verses on Francis Finch, whom she addressed as “the noble Palaemon,” and who had himself dedicated a book to her and another friend, Anne Owen, in 1653. Finch dedicated his 1653 manuscript Friendship to the “noble Lucasia-Orinda,” a combination of names that perhaps recalls Aurelian Townsend’s “Hymen’s twin,” “Mary-Charles” of the 1631 masque, Albion’s Triumph, while recasting it as a homoerotic relation. For Finch’s dedication, see Souers, p. 28; Townsend’s masque is reproduced in Inigo Jones: The Theater of the Stuart Court, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, 2 vols. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1973) II, 458.

45 Finch’s nephew married the sister of Mary Harvey, Philips’ school friend and Dering’s wife, in 1646. Alan Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640–1660 (Leicester, 1966), p. 35, notes Finch’s connections. According to Patrick Thomas, Finch knew Dr. William Harvey well enough to witness Harvey’s will. See I, 267.

46 Patrick Thomas, I, 18. The remainder of Philips’ poetry is taken from Thomas and will henceforth be cited parenthetically in the text.
In another poem, “On Mr. Francis Finch,” she praises him as the ideal friend and positions him at the head of the Royalist community: “He’s our original, by whom we see / How much we fail, and what we ought to be” (ll. 61–62).

However, as comparison between these poems and the one addressed to Cartwright suggests, there is no stable original in Philips’ poetry. Instead each writer in turn comes to occupy center stage, filling in for the absent court and King. Thus, in her poem to Henry Vaughan, “To Mr. Henry Vaughan, Silurist, on his poems,” his poetry takes on the role of royal martyr. Like the death of Charles I, Vaughan’s verse expiates for the present sins of the nation, but does so in the infinitely repeatable form of the poetic text, reborn at each reading: “For each birth of thy muse to after-times / Shall expiate for all this ages crimes” (ll. 7–8). In Philips’ poem to Berkenhead, where she praises one of his anonymous publications, the style that betrays Berkenhead’s authorship to Philips is likened to the overpowering visibility of royalty that breaks through any disguise: “As when some Injured Prince assumes disguise . . . Yet hath a great betraying mien and air” (“To Mr. J. B., the noble Cratander” ll. 1–3). Berkenhead’s publication is thus situated within a narrative that echoes Charles I’s infamous escape from Oxford disguised as a servant in 1646, publication itself rewritten as a romantic and heroic act. Dering is praised in terms of a heroics of patronage, his virtue symbolized by his discursive charity which “can enough reward” brave actions and gives honor that is “than kings more permanent / Above the reach of Acts of Parliament” (“To the truly noble Sir Edward Dering,” ll. 15–16). In this way Philips constructs a series of almost interchangeable literary heroes, Royalists who show their commitment to the cause not through the military exploits from which she would be barred as a woman, but through the kind of poetic production she engages in to create them. “To the noble Palaemon” even suggests that the fall of the monarchy itself has elevated writing to new heights of loyalist heroism that paradoxically transcend even the monarch’s nobility; Finch’s discourse on friendship proves, she says, “Tis greater to support then be a Prince” (l. 20).

47. Patrick Thomas thinks that the poem probably refers to Amoris Effigies, published in 1651, a book actually written by Robert Waring, but edited by Berkenhead. See I, 341. However, Berkenhead’s anonymous 1649 elegy on Charles I’s execution, Loyalties Tears, was republished with the initials “J.B.” in London, 1650. Philips may refer to this poem.
To read Philips’ manuscript poems of commendation is to watch a shuffling of identities, one poet after another coming to stand at the center of the group of worshipful friends. Philips is rarely alone in her veneration: as in the poem to Cartwright, the manuscript poems emanate from the first person plural, as Philips invokes a collective audience in part created out of their emulation of each poet. This audience revolves around a constantly changing center, each poet elevated to prominence in a dizzying series of quick-changes that makes the men she is addressing seem infinitely interchangeable. While she is careful to distinguish each writer in terms of his individual work, the poems themselves also frequently echo each other’s imagery and form. Philips’ panegyric to Vaughan, for example, draws on the neoplatonic concept of harmony as the organizing principle of man and the universe: “All truths of use, or strength, or ornament, / Are with such harmony by thee displayed, / As the whole world was first by number made” (ll. 34–36). Her poem to Lawes, “To the truly noble Mr. Henry Lawes,” is couched in similar terms, with Lawes’ music occupying the place of Vaughan’s poetry as the Platonic law stabilizing the universe:

Nature which is the vast Creation’s Soul,  
That steady curious Agent in the whole,  
The Art of Heaven, the Order of this Frame,  
Is only music in another name. (ll. 1–4)

These repetitions do not indicate Philips’ lack of poetic talent but rather signal her attempt to rework conventional terms of royal panegyric within a new, narrowed context for Royalist writers. The reiteration of conventional terms of address, like the interchangeability of each poet she addresses, marks the participation of each individual and each individual poem in a collective project. The pastoral names adopted by some members of the group are another marker of participation in the project, the inscription of a shared cultural investment and the transformation of individual writers into ideal characters from Royalist plays and romances. The repetitions of tropes and romantic/heroic personae constructs a community through identification, condensing each verse and each addressee into a single space of homogeneous politico-aesthetic value.

Even Philips herself takes part in the interchange of identities. Her poem to Dering, in particular, implicates her poetry and her poetic persona
“Orinda” in the system of substitution that so pervades her commendatory verse. It responds to the aforementioned poem written by Dering in which he masquerades as “Orinda” to address one of her female beloveds, “Rosania.” Philips’ poem to Dering is self-consciously engaged in a game of poetic compliment and exchange: her verse follows a copied-out fragment of his poem and her title recalls its content. This exchange of poetic compliment demonstrates the antiphonal nature of coterie poetry, the call and response envisioned as an act of literary cross-dressing in Philips’ poem. Dering can only descend to join the poetic community once he has been disguised as Orinda: “You must descend within our reach and sight, / (For so divinity must take disguise, / Least mortals perish with the bright surprise)” (ll. 10–12). Six lines later, however, Philips reverses this dichotomy of divine masculine interior and sartorial feminine exterior, turning her earlier trope inside out: “My thoughts with such advantage you express / I hardly know them in this charming dress” (ll. 19–20).

Both versions put Philips in a position of some power as the vehicle for Dering’s divine presence or as the intellectual inspiration he refashions. But the poem’s confusion of inside and outside ultimately confounds poetic origin: is Dering the originator of poetic creativity or is Philips? The poem resolves the potentially infinite reversibility of poetic identity in a closing couplet that makes Dering his own original: “For you (god-like) are so much your own fate, / That what you will accept, you must create” (ll. 35–36). Philips’ poem works to transform Dering into master of his own destiny, a gesture of compensation that puts a defeated Royalist on top, even if it is only on top of his own fate. The couplet echoes Marvell’s description of the Fairfaxs, written around the same time, who “make their destiny their choice.” However, unlike Fairfax, ex-leader of the parliamentary forces, Dering does not demonstrate active virtue through voluntarily fulfilling his divinely appointed role in prophetic history, but instead must bend history to his own “will.” This sense of the Royalist coterie subject as involved in a powerfully egotistical self-fashioning appears in other poems, such as “On Mr. Francis Finch,” written at least two years later:

48. The title is “To the noble Silvander on his dream and navy, personating Orinda preferring Rosania before Salomon’s traffic to Ophir in these verses,” quoted in Patrick Thomas, I, 332–33. According to Souers, the fragment that accompanies Philips’ poem is all that survives of Dering’s poem. See Souers, p. 70.

He’s his own happiness and his own Law, 
Whereby he keeps Passion and fate in awe; 
Nor was this wrought in him by time or growth, 
His Genius had anticipated both. (ll. 33–36)

Cartwright’s Caroline poem on Bishop Duppa praises his patron in similar terms: “Whose round and solid Mind knows to Create / And fashion your own fate,” but here Philips pushes stoic self-sustenance to the limit. Finch’s proleptical guiding spirit preempts his own personal history; he is both a beginning and an end in himself, a natural-born alpha and omega who, like the Royalist’s king, exists beyond the law.

Philips’ poetry is busy filling up the empty space left by Royalist defeat not with present debate and political experiment, but with the cultural and political artifacts and idealized identities of her Royalist friends. The multiple Royalist revolts of 1651, 1654, and 1655; parliamentary experiments with republicanism and a Parliament of Saints; even the centralized and authoritarian government of the Protectorate and Parliament’s offer of the crown to Cromwell are all largely absent from her poetry, which replaces historical events with narratives of purely poetic heroism. Unlike Andrew Marvell in his panegyrics to Cromwell, Philips does not attempt to fashion a form of panegyric that can assimilate the violence of recent events into its aesthetic. Instead, she constructs heroes who give birth to themselves in a void, current events appearing only intermittently in these commendatory poems, in vague references to “this sullen age,” “this ages crimes,” and “rude malice.” Each figured as what Catherine Gallagher might call a “moi absolu,” the objects of

51. Marvell’s poems to Cromwell are full of figures of forceful violence, constructing Cromwell in terms of a classical militarism. This violence occurs most obviously in Marvell’s image of the Republic as founded upon “A bleeding head” that “Did fright the architects to run.” See “An Horatian Ode,” The Complete Poems, ll. 69–70.
52. “To the truly noble Mr. Henry Lawes,” l. 32; “To Mr. Henry Vaughan,” l. 8; “To the noble Palaeemon,” l. 17.
53. Gallagher coins this phrase for Margaret Cavendish, another Royalist poet of the Interregnum, to describe the way Cavendish models her own authorial presence on the figure of the absolute monarch. Gallagher genders this move, claiming that only women use the exiled King as a figure for authority, and adding that it renders Cavendish “eccentric because outside of anyone else’s circle.” See Gallagher, “Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England,” Genders, 1 (1998), 26. However, Philips indicates not only that this model of royal autonomy can operate for men, but that its repetition creates the very circle of which Philips is a member.
her panegyric have only themselves and each other as referents in a poetic world that mimics the enclosed court not so much as a space of private retreat but of public and privileged subjectivity that attempts to change history from afar. She thus recasts literary production as an act of loyal chivalry both more stable and more noble than the monarchical heroes it replaces.

The interchangeability of each member of the group blurs differences of degree between them. The Finch family, for example, seem to have become Berkenhead’s patrons after a political favor he did them in 1656. Interchangeability also blurs differences of gender, Philips using only her initials in the volume to Cartwright, her identity and gender remaining a secret that only a select few would know. Finally, interchangeability smooths over sticky questions about political affiliations: Dering’s absence on the Continent during the crucial war years of 1643–1644, and the removal of the composition fee on his estate; Berkenhead’s role as a Royalist agent and spy, and his simultaneous family connection to the notorious Royalist traitor Isaac Berkenhead, his brother; and Philips’ own problematic political relations. These complex and varied socio-political positions are suspended by the circulation of an ideal Royalist identity. In Philips’ panegyric the lost King is internalized as a series of cultural and political values that turn each poet into a “glorious shadow,” an eikon basilike, in a dissemination of the spectacular public power of the royal father to the group who act as public performers for—and reformers of—the age.

54. Berkenhead helped Anne Finch when her husband was arrested by the Dutch, and her half-brother, another Francis Finch, later left seven acres of land in trust for him. See P. W. Thomas 194–96.

55. Even in her poem to Lawes, in which Philips’ full name is disclosed, she does not articulate the anxiety that her poetry transgresses gender roles. In contrast, Mary Knight (the only other female contributor) fears that in writing verse, “I by this forget my sex.” See Knight’s “To Her Most honored Master, Mr. Henry Lawes, On his Second Book of Ayres,” Lawes, (sig. b1v).

56. Souers, p. 67.

57. For Berkenhead’s role as a possible spy, see P. W. Thomas, p. 165. In Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649–1660 (New Haven, 1960), David Underdown describes Isaac Berkenhead’s capture (along with another Royalist conspirator, Thomas Coke) by parliamentary forces, his confessions, and his consequent role in scuppering the English Royalists’ preparations for Worcester (pp. 44–47).

58. On the day of Charles I’s execution, Royalists issued a commemorative text, ostensibly written by Charles himself, vindicating the King and his policies. Philip A. Knachel has edited a modern edition of this work: Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings (Ithaca, 1966).
This image of an idealized community suspended in a void reaches its apex in Philips’ poems to her female friends, in particular those to Anne Owen and Mary Aubrey. Embedded within the coterie, Philips constructs an even more exclusive intimate sphere, inhabited by Orinda and the objects of her poetry, Lucasia and Rosania. Critical assumptions about Philips’ political neutrality stem from a misreading of her homoerotic verse as unproblematic withdrawal from the upheavals and debates of the Commonwealth period. However, this poetry has a more complex relation to the political: it functions, in much the same way as the other poetry, to formalize a corporate identity for the displaced Royalists, but one centered on the romantic–platonic discourse of mutual love. Much of Philips’ poetry to female friends draws on John Donne’s images of an intimate sphere that repudiates at the same time that it reinscribes the public world beyond the bounds of the lovers’ embrace. Arlene Stiebel and Harriette Andreadis have focused on Philips’ erotic debt to Donne, but he was also useful to Philips as a model of religio-political alienation. The two poems she most clearly revises, “The Sun Rising” and “A Valediction: forbidding mourning,” were both written after Donne’s ambitions for public office were thwarted by his secret marriage to Anne More, the niece of his patron’s wife, an act that caused him to be dismissed from his post of secretary.59 Donne’s subsequent “implosion of epic aspirations” into the little rooms of his songs and sonnets,60 is useful to a writer like Philips, busy inscribing politics within the narrowed sphere of the coterie.

Like him, she transforms public–political narratives of religious dispute and state power into gender–political images of love and domestic bliss. If Donne remolds his rejected Catholic faith as an iconography of secular love, Philips appropriates the godly’s renewed faith in narratives of providence and millenarian wonders for her religion of friendship in her “Friendship’s Mysteries”.61

59. Although “A Valediction: forbidding mourning” is often traced to Donne’s departure to the Continent in 1611, Arthur Marotti dates it as written in 1605. He situates both poems in the early years of Donne’s marriage of 1601. For the poems and their context, see Marotti, John Donne, Coterie Poet (Madison, 1980), pp. 137, 156–57, 169, and 178.


61. Henry Jessey’s 1647 account of the Independent Sarah Wight’s prophecies includes Katherine Philips’ mother as one of the visitors. Henry Jessey and Sarah Wight, The Exceeding Riches of God’s
Come, my Lucasia, since we see
That miracles men’s faith do move
By wonder and by Prodigy,
To the dull, angry world let’s prove
There’s a religion to our Love. (ll. 1–5)

In this way Philips turns religious controversy into post-courtly conceit, recasting theological debate over predestination and election, for example, as witty, erotic paradox: “But our election is as free / As Angels, who with greedy choice / Are yet determined to their joys” (ll. 8–10).

This reinscription of religious belief or controversy as a lexicon of love between women suggests that Philips’ relationship to Lucasia operates as an alternative or corrective to the emphasis placed on theological reform by the godly Commonwealth. The fact that she transforms Donne’s stridently heterosexual language of love into a homoerotic discourse of friendship between women is perhaps then no accident: it allows her to reject the Puritan emphasis on chaste and fruitful marriage as godly vocation that is so central to Anglo-Calvinist ideology. 

Philips’ focus on the homoerotic also stands in contrast to the Cavalier creation of a libertine anti-Puritan sexuality, one that takes Donne’s incipient Ovidianism to an extreme. 

Philips’ homoeroticism allows her simultaneously to reject the role of sex-object assigned women in the homosocial world of the interregnum *carpe diem* lyric, as she emphasizes the chaste sexuality of a love that can never bear fruit: “The hearts (like Moses bush presumed) / Warmed and enlightened, not consumed” (“Friendship in Emblem” ll. 19–20), and to replace godly images of productive and reproductive marriage as female vocation with an alternative erotic economy of friendship. If Spenser’s militant Protestant sonnets turn the golden “fetters” of petrarchan “bondage” into the sweet “bands” of the “sacred bower” of marriage, Philips transforms them into courtly ornament: “Twere

**Grace** (1647), p. 9. Thus Katherine Philips may have had a close experience of the very kind of radical, providential rhetoric she displaces here.


63. Abraham Cowley’s poetry, for example, fantasizes on the enjoyment, as well as the titillating withholding, of sex in terms that oppose Philips’ later platonisms: “Ye talk of fires which shine, but never burn: / In this cold world they’ll hardly serve our turn” (ll. 19–20). See “Answer to the Platonicks,” *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, 2 vols., ed. Thomas A. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth, and J. Robert King (Newark, 1989).

64. Spenser, ll. 4, 5, 14.
banishment to be set free, / Since we wear fetters whose intent / Not bondage is, but Ornament” (“Friendship’s Mysteries” ll. 18–20). Philips’ concept of female friendship does not threaten marriage but transcends or transforms it, rescuing marriage from the Puritan discourse of spiritual duty, and relocating it within a homoerotic and heterosocial network of voluntary but elitist affiliation:

Nobler then kindred or marriage band,
Because more free; wedlock felicity
It self doth only by this Union stand
And turns to friendship or to misery. (“A Friend” ll. 13–16)

Like the poetry to her male friends, Philips’ homoerotic poetry works toward homogeneity and interchangeability, as she rewrites the patriarchal hierarchies of Donne’s secular poems to emphasize the similarity between the women. As Kathleen Swaim has argued, Philips replaces the masculine persuasive force of Donne’s heterosexual lyric with equality.65 His famous conceit of lovers as the legs of a compass, in which the static center of the female half anchors her male partner’s public wanderings, becomes a more equal relation of mutual support in Philips’ “Friendship in Emblem,” where “Each follows where the other leans, / And what each does, the other means” (ll. 27–28). The parity envisioned here contrasts not only with the gendered asymmetry of Donne’s poem, but also with the absolutist rhetoric on which it is founded.66 Donne’s mimicry of political hierarchy within the intimate sphere and Philips’ rejection of it can be seen most clearly in his “She’s all States, and all Princes I,”67 which Philips rewrites as “And all our titles shuffled so, / Both Princes, and both subjects too” (“Friendship’s Mysteries ll. 24–25). This is the interchangeability of the coterie poetry taken to its logical extreme, one that threatens to undo Royalist hierarchy altogether. In the poems that revise Donne, Philips rewrites the intimate sphere as a space that mimics not so much the Royalist logic of her commendatory poetry, but the reshuffling of titles that accompanied the rise of a new political elite and class of landowners like James Philips during the sequestrations and parliamentary

65. Swaim, p. 95.
reconstitutions of the 1640s and 1650s. Certainly, this particular image was acceptable to another writer indebted to her poetry, the Republican Robert Overton. While Overton revised other of Philips’ conceits to fit his politics, he left these lines intact.68

Philips’ revision of these two central images of Donne indicates that Royalist solidarity, taken to its limit, enables a proto-feminist defense of women’s equality that allows them to join the coterie: “If souls no sexes have, for men t’ exclude / Women from friendship’s vast capacity, / Is a design injurious and rude / Only maintained by partial tyranny” (“A Friend,” ll. 19–22). Here, Philips appropriates the anti-tyrannical rhetoric increasingly used by Royalists against Cromwell and puts it to use in a war of the sexes.69 This sense of women’s equality may stem from Royalist emphasis on class rather than gender as the primary marker of power, articulated in the idealizing discourse of love prevalent at the Caroline court. Philips’ familiarity with this discourse can be shown by her choice of a coterie name for Anne Owen, Lucasia, which comes from William Cartwright’s tragicomedy The Lady Errant, probably written between 1633–1635 but first published in the Comedies of 1651. Cartwright presents his heroines as philosophers and paragons of virtue: with all the men at war, the Princess Lucasia and her lady Eumelia discuss love, friendship, duty, and honor in high rhetorical mode, while simultaneously saving the court from a female plot and solving the off-stage international conflict through marriage (a favorite trope of Caroline drama, ever since Charles’s marriage to the French Henrietta Maria). However, the very context for this female empowerment limits it. Both Lucasia and Eumelia evoke a democracy of love that licenses Eumelia to contradict her mistress, their mutual participation in an elevated discourse of ethics and sentiment temporarily erasing privilege and power. Lucasia, for example, claims: “Love’s kingdom is / Founded upon a parity; Lord and subject, / Master

68. After the Restoration, as David Norbrook demonstrates, Overton substantially rewrites many of Philips’ poems, in order to reverse their religio-political significance. He thus changes the beginning of Philips’ poem to Dering, for example, getting rid of the addressee and rewriting her line, “Sir, to be noble, when ’twas voted down” to become, “To live religious, when ’twas voted down.” Norbrook, “This blushing tribute,” p. 244.

69. For example, The Famous Tragedy of Charles I (1649), likens Cromwell’s ambitions to those of Richard III, while Quarles’s Regale Lectum Miseriae glosses Charles’s execution thus: “the worst of Tyrants killed the best of Kings.” Nancy Klein Maguire discusses Quarles and other Royalist depictions of Cromwell the tyrant in her Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660–1671 (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), p. 6. For the Famous Tragedy, see Potter, p. 118.
and Servant, are names banished thence.” Yet this courtly leveling does nothing to alter the material and political differences between the two women and is set in contradiction to the comic subplot in which a group of women attempt to steal real political power from the absent men, a female rebellion that culminates in the kind of Parliament of ladies later used by Royalist writers to satirize the Commonwealth parliaments.

Cartwright’s elevation of women to positions of erudition and moral heroism may have been part of what attracted Philips to Royalism in the first place, but in The Lady Errant gender parity is sanctioned only insofar as it works to support state power and royal hierarchy. The circulation of the rarefied discourse of Platonic love becomes itself a marker of membership in court culture in the play, as it did in the Caroline court under Henrietta Maria. In Philips’ poetry the democracy of love functions in a similar way, as a coterie game, the idealized prerogative of a like-minded cultural and political elite. The mutual support of the compass image suggests that female erotic parity enables women’s forays into the coterie and even into the wider public sphere, as champions of Royalist cultural ideals, “To teach the world heroic things” (“Friendship in Emblem” l. 40). But in Philips’ verse it also operates as a trope of mutual regulation, the inscription of a closed circuit. Philips insures that the parity of poetry and friendship—both heterosocial and homoerotic—is ostentatiously cut off from the “multitude” where their utopian equality might have more radical implications: “For vulgar souls no part of friendship share: / Poets and friends are born to what they are” (“A Friend” ll. 65–66). If Philips’ poetry mimics some of the rhetoric of political mobility imagined by republicans like Milton, it does so in order to resituate this mobility within the charmed circle of poetic production, where men and women’s equality of virtue and affect become signs of a decidedly elitist ideological affinity.

71. For example, see Hey Hoe for a Husband, or the Parliament of Maids (1647) and New News from the Old Exchange, or the Commonwealth of Virtuous Ladies (1649). Susan Wiseman analyzes this kind of scandalous polemic and its relation to the spectrum of Royalist political writings in “‘Adam the Father of all Flesh,’ Porno-Political Rhetoric and Political Theory in and After the Civil War,” Prose Studies: History, Theory and Criticism, 14 (1991), 135–57.
72. This is not to suggest that homoerotic friendship is necessarily conservative: Quaker women traveled in intimate pairs of friends while preaching a radical and more widespread leveling of class and gender distinctions. See Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers, Short Relation of Some of the Cruel Sufferings (1662), for an example of seventeenth-century women “yoke-fellows” whose homoerotic commitment also enabled radical political activism.
Philips’ discourse of female friendship repeats on a smaller scale the homogenizing impulse of the panegyric to her male friends, inscribing an elitist public sphere within the wider arena of debate. Her own vexed relation to this arena is dramatized by her poem “To (the truly competent judge of Honour) Lucasia, upon a scandalous libel made by J. Jones,” which responds to Jones’s threatened publication of a poem she wrote to Vavasor Powell about Charles I’s execution. Like Powell, Jones was a radical approver on the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales who went North to fight Charles II in 1650,73 and he was also responsible for threatening Thomas Vaughan (Henry Vaughan’s brother) and his friends, refusing to let them preach.74 The possibility that he might publish her politically sensitive verse leads Philips to assert defensively that “honour is its own reward and end” (l. 37). She goes on to mock those who seek public approval, “beg[ging] the suffrage of a Vulgar tongue” (l. 39), and then to link this elitist attitude to monarchical arguments for divine right: “from a Clown / Would any Conqueror receive his Crown?” (ll. 43–44). However, she also notes that the scandal surrounding her poem has “advantage in’t: for gold uncoined / Had been unusefull, nor with glory shined” (ll. 55–56). This contradictory relation to a wider public sphere presented as both a demeaning, democratic devolution of poetic power and as a minting of texts that are otherwise devoid of use value, is partially resolved by Philips’ final appeal to a Royalist readership, embodied by Lucasia, that will vindicate her political poem: “Yet I’ll appeal unto the knowing few, / Who dare be Just, and rip my heart to you” (ll. 65–66). Philips’ other poetry constructs this loose group of ideal writers and readers.

Re-situating Philips in the post-courtly coterie offers us at least two insights. First, her dissemination of the public power of the royal father to a group of publishing poets marks the shift from royal to Royalist, from monarchy as a matter of fact, to monarchy as matter of public debate—a political ideology that must be defended in print, even when the very terms of divine right deny the importance of that debate in its claim to power. Philips’ poetry helps to create a paradoxical Royalist counterpublic, in which royalty becomes the prerogative of a politicized

74. Hutchinson, pp. 111–19.
coterie rather than the King, a coterie that represents Caroline values poetically without engaging in the direct polemic that might compromise their elitist socio-political status. Second, by exploring the way in which even a Royalist woman writer benefits from the vicissitudes of the Revolutionary period, we can begin to appreciate the complexity and diversity of women’s writing during this period. In Philips’ case, in particular, this exploration allows us to chart the contradictory relation of an all-female sphere of erotic parity to the public politics of a new kind of loyalist resolve.

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