

JOHN WILMOT,  
EARL OF ROCHESTER

THE POEMS  
AND  
*LUCINA'S RAPE*

EDITED BY  
KEITH WALKER and NICHOLAS FISHER



**WILEY-BLACKWELL**

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IN MEMORY OF  
KEITH WALKER & HAROLD LOVE

(1936–2004)

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Figure 1. Engraved portrait of Rochester, 1681 (collection of Howard Erskine-Hill)



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# Note on This Edition

Keith Walker died in 2004. This is a revised and updated version of his acclaimed 1984 edition of Rochester's poems, to which has been added the play *Lucina's Rape Or The Tragedy of Vallentinian* (first published as *Valentinian: A Tragedy* (London, 1685)). Where possible, privately-produced texts from sources close to Rochester – in his holograph or from within his wider family or from a highly placed Court official – have been selected. Until Harold Love's comprehensive edition for Oxford University Press in 1999, Walker's had been the only full, critical, old-spelling edition of Rochester's verse and the preferred edition for many Rochester scholars. Love's detailed records of manuscript variations have superseded the comparatively limited textual comparisons Walker included, and these have therefore now been omitted, not least in order to prevent this revision becoming too unwieldy. It remains true to the spirit of Walker's edition, however, not least in the arrangement of the poems by genre (and where possible chronologically), in the notes and above all in following Walker's original principle of making Rochester available to students and scholars 'in versions that were read in his lifetime'.

# Acknowledgments

My chief debts are, firstly, to Ken Robinson, who introduced me to the Earl of Rochester while I was an undergraduate at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and then supervised my master's dissertation on satiric and verse epistles in the Restoration Period; and, secondly, to Paul Hammond at the University of Leeds who was the supervisor of my doctoral dissertation on the early publishing history of Rochester's work, and has generously continued to allow me to draw on his detailed knowledge of Restoration literature. I cannot adequately express my debt to them both, and particularly to Paul Hammond, for their stimulation, patience and advice over a lengthy period. I am also most grateful for the individual kindnesses and encouragement I have received from Philip Aherne, Peter Beal, John Carey, Larry Carver, Warren Chernaik, Robert Hume, David Gareth Jones, Thomas MacFaul, Brian Oatley, James Grantham Turner and Henry Woudhuysen. Philippa Martin, Curator of the Government Art Collection, provided invaluable advice and help, and Howard Erskine-Hill generously allowed me to include an illustration of Rochester from his extensive collection of prints from the long eighteenth century. This edition has also profited greatly from the enthusiasm and expertise of the publishing team at Blackwell – Emma Bennett, Caroline Clamp, Isobel Bainton and Sarah Pearsall – and I must also record the tolerance of my wife Pam, and children Francis, Rachel and Harriet, which has been nothing short of heroic.

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permission of Magdalene College, University of Cambridge. To the librarians and staff of all these institutions I express my warmest thanks for their assistance.

The work for this edition was undertaken while I was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, and I thank Warwick Gould for his generosity in extending my fellowship to allow me to undertake the necessary study. Latterly a Visiting Research Fellowship at Merton College, Oxford, allowed the project to be completed and I am most grateful to the Warden, Chaplain and Fellows for the generosity of their welcome and hospitality.

My obligation to Keith Walker will be apparent on almost every page (and coincidentally he supplied me with his transcript of the Harbin MS when I was completing my doctorate). But as Keith did a quarter of a century ago, so I end by acknowledging my debt to Harold Love. It was he who suggested that I should undertake this revision, and he then took an active interest in my progress; one of his last communications was to bring his discovery of another text of 'My dear Mistress' to my attention. This volume is dedicated to the memory of these two outstanding Rochester scholars.

Nicholas Fisher

# Chronology

## Rochester's Life

1 April: born at Ditchley House, Oxfordshire, son of Henry, Lord Wilmot and Anne, widow of Sir Henry Lee

13 December: father created Earl of Rochester

Rochester in Paris with mother

Still in Paris

19 February: succeeds to earldom on death of father at Ghent

## Historic and Literary Events

1647

1649 30 January: execution of Charles I; future Charles II in exile at The Hague  
19 May: England declared a Commonwealth or Free State

1651 2 August: Charles II invades England  
3 September: royalist army defeated at Battle of Worcester and Charles escapes to France with Lord Wilmot  
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

1652 Christopher Bowman opens first coffee-house in London in St Michael's Alley, Cornhill  
10 July: start of First Dutch War (1652–54)

1653 16 December: Cromwell becomes Lord Protector

1654

1658 3 September: Cromwell dies; son Richard succeeds as Lord Protector

1659 25 May: Richard Cromwell resigns, Rump Parliament re-establishes Commonwealth

13 October: army-controlled Committee of Safety replaces Rump Parliament

26 December: Rump Parliament re-instated

**Rochester's Life**

18 January: matriculates at Wadham College, Oxford

c. May: 'Vertues triumphant Shrine'

c. December: 'Impia blasphemi'

c. January: 'Respite great Queen'

February: awarded pension of £500 p.a.

9 September: receives degree of MA from Chancellor, Earl of Clarendon

21 November: embarks on Grand Tour with Sir Andrew Balfour

1 October: in Venice

26 October: signs Visitors' Book at University of Padua

Visits Charles II's sister Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans

25 December: delivers letter from Henrietta to Charles II at Whitehall

26 May: attempts to abduct heiress Elizabeth Malet; imprisoned in Tower

19 June: freed from Tower

6 July: joins Fleet

2 August: under fire in Bergen harbour

9 September: still with Fleet

16 September: back at Court

31 October: gift of £750 from King

**Historic and Literary Events**

**1660** 2 January: Monck's forces enter England

3 February: Monck enters London

4 April: Charles's Declaration of Breda issued

8 May: Charles proclaimed King in London

29 May: Charles enters London

21 August: patents granted for re-opening of theatres

**1661** 20 December: Corporation Act

**1662** 19 May: Act of Uniformity with revised *Book of Common Prayer* attached receives royal assent

10 June: Licensing Act takes effect

21 May: Charles II marries Catholic Catherine of Braganza

**1663** Butler, *Hudibras Part I*

7 May: Theatre Royal, Drury Lane opens

**1664** Butler, *Hudibras Part II*

**1665** 4 March: Second Dutch War (1665–67) begins

3 June: Dutch fleet defeated at Battle of Lowestoft

5 June: theatres in London closed by Plague

September: Great Plague recedes

October: Five Mile Act

## Rochester's Life

- 21 March: appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles II with pension of £1,000 p.a. and lodgings in Whitehall  
 June: commissioned in Prince Rupert's Troop of Horse  
 June–July: naval service under Sir Edward Spragge, displaying conspicuous bravery
- 29 January: marries Elizabeth Malet  
 14 March: assumes post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber  
 29 July: summoned to Parliament by royal writ  
 2 October: pension of £1,000 authorised  
 10 October: takes seat in House of Lords  
 28 February: appointed Gamekeeper for Oxfordshire  
 16 February: strikes Thomas Killigrew in King's presence; pardoned  
 12 March: sent to Paris by Charles II with letter for his sister  
 19 April: robbed of valuables in Paris  
 21 June: set upon at the Paris opera  
 July: returns to England  
 30 April: daughter Anne baptised at Adderbury  
 22 November: forced by illness to decline duel with Mulgrave
- 2 January: son Charles baptised  
 Autumn: 'All things submit themselves', 'Cælia, that faithful Servant'

## Historic and Literary Events

- 1666** 25 July: Dutch defeated in Battle of North Foreland  
 2–5 September: Great Fire of London  
 16 November: first issue of *London Gazette*  
 Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, *Satires*
- 1667** 13 June: Dutch destroy English fleet on Medway, capture flagship *Royal Charles*  
 29 November: Chancellor Hyde flees to France; replaced by 'Cabal' ministry under Arlington  
 Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis*  
 Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- 1668** Dryden appointed Poet Laureate  
 Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie*
- 1669** 21 August: Death of Queen Mother, Henrietta Maria
- 1670** 22 May: Charles signs secret Treaty of Dover  
 October: Arrival of Louise de Kerouaille (future mistress to King; created Duchess of Portsmouth)  
 Dryden, *Conquest of Granada, Pt. 1*  
 Thomas D'Urfey, *Wit and Mirth*
- 1671** 9 November: Dorset Garden Theatre opens  
 Milton, *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes*  
 Dryden, *Conquest of Granada, Pt. II*  
 Buckingham, *The Rehearsal*  
 Wycherley, *Love in a Wood*  
 31 March: Death of Duke of York's wife Anne Hyde



## Rochester's Life

31 October: appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Somerset  
 'What vaine unnecessary things'

'Att five this Morn'  
 'As some brave Admiral'

21 March: duel with Viscount Dunbar prevented  
 Spring: dedicatee of Dryden's *Marriage-a-la-Mode*  
 'The Gods, by right of Nature'  
 'Wit has of late'  
 'In the Isle of Brittain'

January: leaves Court after delivering 'In the Isle of Brittain' in error to King  
 27 February: appointed Ranger of Woodstock Park  
 'What Timon, does old Age, begin'  
 2 May: appointed Keeper of Woodstock Park  
 'Strephon, there sighs not'  
*Satire against Man*  
 13 July: daughter Elizabeth baptised

4 January: Charles approves building of small building at Whitehall Palace for Rochester  
 24 January: appointed Master, Surveyor and Keeper of King's hawks  
 Late Spring: dedicatee of Lee's *Nero*  
 May: occupies High Lodge, Woodstock  
 25 June: smashes King's chronometer in Privy Garden  
 'Well Sir 'tis granted'

6 January: daughter Malet baptised  
 February: ill, reported dead  
 March: *Satire against Man* circulating  
 17 June: brawl with Watch at Epsom resulting in death of Billy Downs  
 Summer: Alexander Bendo disguise

## Historic and Literary Events

**1672** 25 January: Theatre Royal burns down  
 15 March: Charles issues Declaration of Indulgence  
 17 March: Third Dutch War begins (1672–74)  
 28 May: indecisive naval battle off Southwold

**1673** 29 March: imposition of the Test Act  
 20 September: Duke of York marries by proxy Catholic Mary of Modena  
 Autumn: a 'country party', opposed to anti-Tolerantist policies of King's chief minister, Danby, starts during parliamentary session to form around Halifax and Shaftesbury; Buckingham joins early 1674, and within a decade group formalised as 'Whig' party

**1674** 9 February: peace concluded with Dutch  
 26 March: opening of new Drury Lane Theatre  
 September: collapse of 'Cabal' ministry

**1675** Spring: Crowne's *Calisto* produced at Court  
 17 August: Charles signs agreement with Louis XIV to dissolve Parliament if supplies not provided

**1676** 16 February: Charles concludes second secret treaty with Louis XIV, receiving £100,000 p.a.  
 Etherege, *The Man of Mode*  
 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*  
 Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*

**Rochester's Life**

Spring: begins liaison with Elizabeth Barry  
 13 April: petitions King for estates in Ireland  
 'Some few from Wit'  
 4 June: Cook stabbed at tavern in Mall where Rochester dining  
 August: entertains Buckingham in lodgings at Whitehall  
 October: receives visit from Buckingham at Woodstock  
 November: elected Alderman at Taunton, Somerset  
 December: daughter Elizabeth Clerke born to Elizabeth Barry  
 Early in year: very ill  
*Upon Nothing*

'Dear Friend. I hear this Town'  
 October: begins weekly conversations in London with Burnet (until April)

March: accepts challenge from Edward Seymour, but duel averted  
 End April: leaves London for last time; travels to Somerset; health collapses  
 End May: brought by coach to Woodstock  
 June: repents his life, and is reconciled with Church of England; visited by many clergymen  
 20–24 July: visited by Burnet  
 26 July: dies at High Lodge, Woodstock  
 Autumn: unauthorised publication of *Poems on Several Occasions*  
 November: publication of Burnet's *Some Passages of the Life and Death of . . . Rochester*

**Historic and Literary Events**

**1677** Dryden, *All for Love*  
 February: Shaftesbury, Buckingham and others imprisoned by House of Lords  
 4 November: William of Orange marries Princess Mary

**1678** Butler, *Hudibras Part III*  
 17 May: secret treaty between Charles and Louis XIV promising neutrality in return for subsidy  
 13 August: first allegations of Popish Plot  
 20 November: Additional Test Act passed

**1679** 26 May: Parliament prorogued and dissolved (12 July) to prevent passage of Exclusion Bill (reconvenes 21 October 1680)  
 Summer: Jane Roberts, former mistress of King, dies, attended by Gilbert Burnet  
 May/June: Parliament fails to renew Licensing Act  
 4 December: death of Thomas Hobbes

**1680** Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 1  
 April: Penny post system established in London by William Dockwra

# Introduction

## The Man

John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, was born on All Fools' Day, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire on the estate that had belonged to his mother's first husband, Sir Henry Lee. Rochester's father, Lord Wilmot, was a royalist general; witty, restless and hard-drinking, he was with the exiled court in Paris, and hardly saw his son. In consequence Rochester was brought up by his mother, who was tough-minded and a not uncommon example of well-born female piety. Although his exposure to the Bible and Prayer Book would continue through the daily routine of biblical study and prayers at his school, it was probably she who so impressed those texts on his memory that he would remember their cadences on his deathbed.

Rochester spent part of his childhood in Paris, but most of it in Oxfordshire. He was tutored by his mother's chaplain, attended Burford Grammar School, and went up to Wadham College at the age of 12. He was at Oxford when King Charles came back to England, and he grew debauched there with the active encouragement of Robert Whitehall, a fellow of Merton college. (His more formal education would in any case have ended when he left Burford Grammar School: post-Restoration Oxford was not a place where young gentlemen were expected to study.) He took his degree of Master of Arts in 1661, and for the next three years he travelled in France and Italy with a Scottish physician as his tutor. He arrived back at the court which was to be the centre of his life on Christmas Day 1664, with a letter for Charles from his sister in Paris.

Described by his biographer Gilbert Burnet as 'tall and well made, if not a little too slender',<sup>1</sup> Rochester quickly gained a reputation for easy grace and wit. He was the youngest member of his set apart from Sir Carr Scroope and John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave. He was later to quarrel with both men, facts recorded substantially in his poetry.

---

1 *Some Passages of the Life and Death Of the . . . Earl of Rochester* (London, 1680), pp. 6–7.

What is known of Rochester's life as a courtier is mostly in this early period, before myth takes over the record. A suitor for an heiress, Elizabeth Malet, Rochester kid-napped her prematurely, and was punished by Charles with imprisonment in the Tower, from which he was soon freed, to make good his disgrace by fighting bravely in a sea battle against the Dutch (and subsequently marrying Elizabeth with the King's blessing). His earliest extant letter is a full account of his experiences, which make the ironic reference to 'Dutch prowess' in *Upon Nothing* (l. 46) puzzling.<sup>2</sup>

Certain patterns of life can be discerned: recurrent bad behaviour, for which Rochester was first in disgrace, then quickly forgiven by the indulgent Charles; drunkenness, quarrels, duels, and (the details are more doubtful here) love affairs. He had four legitimate children and a bastard daughter by the actress Elizabeth Barry. When in disgrace, Rochester would disappear to France, or go into hiding and disguise. Gilbert Burnet records:

He took pleasure to disguise himself, as a *Porter*, or as a *Beggar*; sometimes to follow some mean Amours, which, for the variety of them, he affected; At other times, meerly for diversion, he would go about in odd shapes, in which he acted his part so naturally, that even those who were on the secret, and saw him in these shapes, could perceive nothing by which he might be discovered. (*Some Passages*, pp. 27–8)

The ability to assume another's role is a striking feature of Rochester's poetry, as of his life.<sup>3</sup>

Rochester was deeply involved with the Restoration stage, and this involvement is probably the most fully documented series of facts about his life. He seems to have acted as patron to most of the playwrights – Dryden, Shadwell, Crowne, Lee, Otway, Settle and Fane – and the majority of these have left us testimonies of their relations with him, unfortunately usually only in the form of a dedication. Rochester's only full-length play, *Lucina's Rape Or The Tragedy of Vallentinian*, adapted and improved Fletcher's *The Tragedie of Valentinian*, but he also contributed a scene to a play by Robert Howard, began a prose comedy, and contributed the prologue or epilogue to four plays.<sup>4</sup> Theatrical motives and imagery dominate much of his verse.

In the later 1670s there is evidence of greater seriousness and greater involvement in affairs of state. During the middle of the decade, four events of importance are

2 It might, however, be a topical reference to the defeat of William of Orange by the French at Mont Cassell on 11 April 1677, and the subsequent Dutch focus on seeking peace, which was not achieved until the Treaty of Nijmegen was signed with the French on 10 August 1678.

3 Role-playing and disguise in Rochester is the theme of Anne Righter's British Academy lecture (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, 53, 1967, 1968).

4 The case for Rochester's authorship of the obscene farce *Sodom* is unconvincing (see Harold Love, 'But Did Rochester Really Write *Sodom*?', *PBSA*, 87 (1993), 319–36).

recorded: Rochester's accidental handing of his satire 'In the Isle of Brittain' to the King during the festivities at Court at Christmas 1673; his destruction of the sundial in the Privy Garden at Whitehall on 25 June 1675; his part in the affray at Epsom on 17 June 1676 that led to the death of a Mr Downs (see the description given in the notes to 'To the Post Boy'); and later that summer his setting up in disguise as the medical practitioner 'Alexander Bendo' on Tower Hill, London. Between February and May, 1677, he regularly attended the House of Lords, and in the preface to the printed edition of Rochester's play (*Valentinian* (London, 1685)), Robert Wolseley confirms his interest in politics during his last years. His self-styled 'death bed repentance'<sup>5</sup> followed from a series of regular conversations he had between October 1679 and April 1680 with a former chaplain to the King, Gilbert Burnet, and is recorded in *Some Passages*. This conversion, whether real or fantasy, figured largely in his reputation but has little to do with the quality of his poetry. Rochester died on 26 July 1680.

\* \* \*

One Man reads *Milton*, forty *Rochester*,  
 This lost his Taste, *they say*, when h'lost his Sight;  
*Milton* has Thought, but *Rochester* had Wit.  
 The Case is plain, the Temper of the Time,  
 One wrote *the Lewd*, and t'other *the Sublime*.

('Reformation of Manners', *Poems on Affairs of State* (London, 1703), p. 371)

Who read Rochester? In his *An Allusion to Horace* Rochester himself suggested a fit audience:

'tis enough for me  
 If Sydley, Shadwell, Shepheard, Wicherley,  
 Godolphin, Butler, Buckhurst, Buckinghame  
 And some few more, whome I omitt to name  
 Approve my sence, I count their Censure Fame. }

(ll. 120–4)

The negligent 'whome I omitt to name' has a direct origin in the Latin of Horace that Rochester is imitating, but he would have agreed that to worry about the effect one was making was not quite proper. Apart from his fellow 'wits' (some of whom, to be sure, were writers) Rochester mentions two professional writers, Shadwell and Butler (if the author of *Hudibras* is meant). We may be sure that his fellow writers read him. Marvell considered him 'the best English satyrist' and thought that he 'had

5 A Letter to Dr. Burnet from the Earl of Rochester [London, 1680], sig. A1<sup>v</sup>.

the right veine'; in *Mr Smirke; or the divine in mode* (1676), Marvell quotes from the as yet unpublished *A Satyre against Reason and Mankind*. Dryden, Aphra Behn, Thomas Otway, John Oldham, Edmund Waller, Samuel Pepys, and John Evelyn all read him.<sup>6</sup> The first record of close reading by a contemporary is the Court sermon preached on 24 February 1675 against Rochester's satire (among other things) by Edward Stillingfleet (1635–99), who clearly found the tenor of the poem subversive.

Stillingfleet, a future Dean of St Paul's and Bishop of Worcester, was one of the King's chaplains, so it is unsurprising that he should have seen the poem before it was printed. The poem attracted four verse replies: *An Answer to the Satyr against Man*, by the Oxford orientalist Edward Pockocke (1648–1727) appeared as a broadside in July 1679; *A Satyr, In Answer to the Satyr against Man*, by a member of Rochester's Oxford college, Thomas Lessey, was first published in the miscellany collection *Poetical Recreations* in 1688; the anonymous *Corinna, or, Humane Frailty. A Poem. With an Answer to the E. of R—'s Satyr against Man* in 1699; and the anonymous manuscript poem *An answer to a Sat[?yr against R]eason & Mankind* (Cambridge University Add. MS 42).<sup>7</sup>

Very soon after Rochester's death a pirated edition of his poems appeared which quickly went into 11 or more editions. It was published 'meerly for lucre sake', as the antiquary Anthony à Wood put it, so presumably there were buyers. The complex proliferation of editions (there are four series of Rochester's poems) continued throughout the eighteenth century.

## Text

The complexity of the situation of Rochester's texts is paralleled only by that of Donne's, for in each case, only a few poems were published in the poet's lifetime, and a single body of texts on which to base an edition is simply unavailable to an editor. The first printed edition of Donne, in 1633, was derived from non-authoritative manuscript copies, and his editor, as with Rochester, is faced with the task of having to evaluate many manuscript copies. Only nine poems by Rochester, some showing signs of revision, have survived in his own hand, and, so far as is known, he authorised the publication of just three works written when he was 13, together with, implicitly, the prologues or epilogues he contributed to four staged plays. The five

6 For a useful summary, see *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Farley-Hills (London, 1972), pp. 5–12. This compilation usefully charts Rochester's reputation as a poet during his lifetime and up to the early part of the twentieth century. Current appreciation of Rochester as a writer of significant ability is traceable to the publication of the ground-breaking editions of Pinto (1953) and Vieth (1968).

7 For transcriptions of the Cambridge MS, together with the fuller version of Lessey's poem that appears in BL Harleian MS 6207, see Nicholas Fisher, 'The Contemporary Reception of Rochester's *A Satyr Against Mankind*', *Review of English Studies*, 57 (2006), 185–220.

most important collections are in the two printed texts *Poems on Several Occasions By the Right Honourable, the E. of R*— ([London], 1680) and Jacob Tonson's *Poems, &c. on Several Occasions: with Valentinian, A Tragedy* (London, 1691), and in three manuscripts: Yale University MSS Osborn b 105 and b 334 (the latter known as the 'Hartwell' MS) and Thynne Papers, vol. XXVII at Longleat House, Wiltshire (the 'Harbin' MS).

1680 contains 61 poems, only 33 of which are now thought to be by Rochester. The collection is badly printed, bears no publisher's name, and has the false imprint 'Printed at ANTWERP'. Eleven closely similar but separate editions, spanning some 10 years, have been identified.<sup>8</sup> 1691 was published, and probably edited, by Jacob Tonson, with a preface by Thomas Rymer; it contains 39 poems, 37 of which are now considered to be by Rochester, and attributes eight to him for the first time. For long, 1691 was thought to be the best early edition of Rochester's work, but whereas 1680 has all the marks of an unauthorised edition, 1691 has all the deficiencies of an authorised one: it omits violently personal poems like *On Poet Ninny*, *Epigram upon my Lord All-pride*, *On the supposed Author of a late Poem in defence of Satyr*, *A very Heroicall Epistle In answer to Ephelia*; it also omits temperately personal poems like *An Allusion to Horace* (out of deference to Dryden, whose publisher Tonson was?), and obscene poems like 'I Fuck no more than others doe', *On Mrs. W—llis*, *Mistress Knights Advice to the Dutchess of Cleavland*, *in Distress For A Prick*, and *A Ramble in Saint James's Parke*. It is an avowedly castrated text,<sup>9</sup> omitting stanzas from *The Disabled Debauchee*, 'How happy Chloris, were they free', *Love to a Woman*, and 'Fair Cloris in a Piggsty lay'. Worse, from the point of view of an editor who wishes to base a text on 1691, its versions of some 19 of the poems it has in common with 1680 are derived wholly or in part from the earlier collection.

Yale MS Osborn b 105 is closely related to the ancestor of 1680, and is an anthology of Restoration poetry, with attributions that are in general reliable, and on the whole good texts for 30 of the poems. Unfortunately there are seven gaps of 45 leaves which have been cut away (pp. 35–44, 63–6, 77–86, 115–32, 153–8, 161–84, 195–212). David M. Vieth has painstakingly investigated the probable contents of these missing leaves,<sup>10</sup> and concludes that the whole or part of eight or possibly more poems probably by Rochester are missing from the Osborn manuscript. Among these are,

8 See *Rochester's Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. James Thorpe (Princeton, NJ, 1950), pp. xi–xxii; Nicholas Fisher and Ken Robinson, 'The Postulated Mixed "1680" Edition of Rochester's Poetry', *PBSA*, 75 (1981), 313–15.

9 'For this matter the *Publisher* assures us, he has been diligent out of Measure, and has taken exceeding Care that every Block of Offence shou'd be removed.

So that this Book is a Collection of such Pieces only, as may be received in a vertuous Court, and not unbecome the Cabinet of the Severest Matron'. (1691, sig. A6<sup>v</sup> (italics reversed))

10 His conclusions are set out in *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's Poems of 1680* (New Haven, 1963), pp. 93–100.



beyond doubt, such substantial poems as *A Ramble in Saint James's Park*, and *The Imperfect Enjoyment*.

The Hartwell and Harbin MSS are two 'vitaly important' documents that draw on a source that was available to Tonson for 1691, and (on the basis that none of the indecent poems are included) which was possibly prepared for, or even by, one or other female members of Rochester's extended family, such as his niece Anne Wharton.<sup>11</sup> They contain, respectively, texts for 26 and 24 of the poems, and an additional significance of the Hartwell MS is that not only is it the only major manuscript that purports to consist of Rochester's work, but it also contains one of just three surviving copies of his play *Lucina's Rape*.

A further 31 poems—half of which are *jeux d'esprit* of a few lines, but which also include longer works such as 'In the Isle of Brittain', *Seigneur Dildo* and the unfinished 'What vaine unnecessary things are men'—are not to be found in any of the collections cited above but are scattered in individual manuscript miscellanies and printed collections from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The most important manuscripts in this group are Nottingham University MS Portland Pw V 31,<sup>12</sup> which include the poems in Rochester's hand, and two manuscripts which contain corrections in the hand of Rochester's mother: BL Add. MS 28692 (which contains *Lucina's Rape*) and a copy of *Upon Nothing* in National Archives, Box C 104/110.

Lacking a single basic reliable text, the editor of Rochester has to make his or her own rules. It is hardly possible to present a printed transcription of a manuscript which represents that manuscript faithfully in every respect. Choices have continually to be made. If superscript letters are printed above the line, where should those letters that seem only half-way above it be printed? Again, some scribes will write S and C for initial s and c almost (but never completely) throughout a poem, their Ss and Cs varying in size from full capitals to small letters. Yet again, in an attempted diplomatic transcription a few poems would come out, in an extreme case, with lines like this:

I' th Isle of Britaine Long since famous growne  
 ffor Breeding<sup>e</sup>. Best C<sup>ts</sup>. In Xtendome  
 Their Reigns (& oh Long May hee Reigne & there  
 The easiest king & Best Bred Man alive  
 him no Ambition Mooves, To Gett Renowne  
 Like The french foole To wand<sup>r</sup> up & Downe  
(Bod. MS Rawl. D. 924)

11 See Harold Love, ed., *The Works of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester* (Oxford, 1999), p. xxxvii; 'Rochester: A Tale of Two Manuscripts', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 72 (1997), 41–53, p. 49.

12 A full description is given in Vieth, *Attribution in Restoration Poetry*, pp. 204–30.



This would be intolerable. And so, while a few contractions have been retained which are still in use today, such as '2d' for second, instances of scribal contractions, ampersands, and the like have been silently expanded; 'j' (long s) has been silently ordered to 's', 'ß' to 'ss', and 'VV' to 'W', and in accordance with modern usage, the letters 'v' and 'u', and 'i' and 'j' have been interchanged. All dates are given in Old Style, except that the year is presumed to begin on 1 January, and not 25 March. These apart, all departures from the copy-text have been recorded in the textual notes; for reasons of space, the reader is referred to Love's edition for the source of the emendations.

There can be no certainty, except in a few cases, that Rochester's own spelling or punctuation has been reproduced. The poems in Rochester's holograph, and a few of the copy-texts, have almost no punctuation; here these have been punctuated lightly, relying on the reader's prompt appreciation that the convention was for a line to be end-stopped, regardless of the absence of punctuation, unless the sense made it inappropriate. Capitals and italics may also cause the modern reader difficulty, for although the seventeenth-century convention was for key words to be emphasised in this way, scribes and printers were often erratic both in their observance of what was on the sheet before them, and in their individual style. In fact, there is no entirely satisfactory way, or *via media*, for a modern editor to present the manuscript text: too much intrusion might well obscure the author's original intention, whereas too little can leave a passage incomprehensible. The editorial principle followed in the presentation of the texts has been for them to be presented with the minimum of interference, and essentially in order to aid comprehension, so that the reading experience is potentially as similar as possible to that of Rochester's contemporary readers. In reality, this will be impossible, because reading and declamatory habits have greatly changed during the intervening centuries, but it is hoped nonetheless that the vitality and directness of the texts as they were first encountered, will be transmitted and enjoyed. In the absence of a holograph or a printed text overseen by the author, there can be no certainty that what is here reproduced is what Rochester wrote or intended but, importantly, the poems here are presented in versions that were read in his lifetime.

Rochester apparently 'published' his poems either by giving copies to his friends or by leaving them anonymously in what was called the 'Wits' drawing room' (one of the public rooms) in the Palace of Whitehall. There is also the possibility proposed by Love that Rochester assembled collections of his songs in the form of a small manuscript *liber carminum* either for presentation to 'a patron, client or lover' or for use by musicians.<sup>13</sup> In turn these copies were reproduced, with some texts falling into the hands of collectors or suppliers of professional scriptoria,<sup>14</sup> and so

13 'The Scribal Transmission of Rochester's Songs', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand*, 20 (1996), 161–80, pp. 165–6, 177.

14 See the speculative 'A Late Seventeenth-century Scriptorium' by W. J. Cameron, *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 7, 1963, 25–52.

multiplying: BL Harl. 7316, to provide one example, seems to derive directly from Nottingham University MS Portland Pw V 31, and, interestingly, the manuscript texts of *Satire against Mankind* in Bodleian Library MS Eng. misc. e 536 and the Ottley papers in the National Library of Wales have been identified by Love as being copied from printed versions (the former from 1680 and the latter from either the broad-side or from 1691 (Love, p. 565). Doubtless only a small fraction of the once extant manuscript copies of any given poem have survived.

Only about 25 per cent of the texts that Walker selected are reprinted here. He based his choice, as David Vieth had for his groundbreaking edition of 1968, on versions in the professionally produced Yale MS Osborn b 105 and its derivative *Poems on Several Occasions By the Right Honourable, the E. of R—*, printed in 1680. Love, for his edition, drew on a much wider range of manuscripts than either Vieth or Walker had accessed, and tended to prefer texts that had been prepared for, or obtained by, private collectors. He was able to make use of two previously unknown, but important and extensive, manuscript collections of the 'politer' poems: the 'Hartwell' MS (now Yale MS Osborn b 334) and the 'Harbin' MS (owned by the Marquess of Bath). Both of these derive from a common source, now lost, which lies behind Tonson's respectable edition of 1691, and conceivably had been prepared by or for Rochester's niece, Anne Wharton; whereas Love drew extensively on the texts of the 'Hartwell' MS, the present edition has chosen to use the 'Harbin' MS in order to bring an equally significant manuscript into the wider domain. Love's favouring of 'private' texts rather than scriptorium texts has been continued, and further developed, here, by the selection of the text of *Upon Nothing* that Rochester's mother altered, and by drawing more extensively on the collection assembled by the highly placed courtier Sir William Haward (Bodleian MS Don. b 8).

For the text of *Lucina's Rape*, both Love and this edition use the British Library manuscript with its two corrections by Rochester's mother. Hitherto virtually ignored by scholars, the text is here presented in a format that for the first time makes Rochester's alterations to John Fletcher's *The Tragedie of Valentinian* (1613 or 1614) immediately recognisable to the reader.

## Canon

The first modern edition of Rochester's poetry that could legitimately claim a high level of accuracy was that by David Vieth in 1968, and with a degree of justifiable self-congratulation, he wrote, 'Probably the Rochester canon, which seemed an insoluble puzzle as recently as 1950, has now been established about as securely as that of most authors ever are' (Vieth, p. xliii). While that has held true for the core of poems currently accepted as being by Rochester, different editors have continued to reach different conclusions: Hammond has pointed out that although the variation is partly accounted for by different ways of treating fragments and variant versions,

Pinto prints 67 firm attributions together with 21 'Doubtful' poems in his edition of 1953, whereas Vieth includes 75 poems in his main section and an additional eight possibles. Subsequently, Walker included in his edition 83 pieces plus five possibles, Paddy Lyons 105 attributions in his, Frank Ellis 92, and most recently Love selected 75 poems as being 'probably' by Rochester, together with five 'Disputed' pieces.<sup>15</sup> Consensus, therefore, is not to be expected.

In this edition, Love (who agrees with Walker in the majority of his attributions) is followed both in his consignment of *Satyr. [Timon]*, 'Seigneur Dildo' and 'Fling this useless Book away' to the section of poems less certainly attributable to Rochester, and also in the inclusion among the firm attributions of the poem 'Out of Stark love and arrant devotion'. However, the six impromptus 'God bless our good and gracious King', 'Here's Monmouth the wittiest', 'I John Roberts', 'Lorraine you stole', 'Poet who e're thou art' and 'Sternhold and Hopkins' continue to be listed as authentic, rather than among Love's disputed items. One further impromptu ('Your husband tight') has been added to the firm attributions. Computational analyses by John Burrows, which Love includes in his edition, raise plausible concerns about the authenticity of *Tunbridge Wells*, but whereas Love includes it amongst the firm attributions, the case for including it among the 'less certain' attributions is more compelling, and so it is now treated. *An Allusion to Tacitus* ('The freeborn English Generous and wise'), omitted by Walker but whose authenticity is strongly advanced by its presence in the 'Hartwell' and 'Harbin' MSS, would have been treated as genuine but for another computational analysis, and therefore is only included with the weaker attributions. For this edition, the section of poems that evidences Rochester's antipathy towards Mulgrave and Scroope has been slightly expanded and, finally, with the exception of 'Out of Stark Love, and arrant Devotion', the poems that Walker previously listed as being 'possibly' by Rochester have been omitted altogether.

### Annotation

The notes to this edition seek to explain historical references, to explain words that have moved in meaning since the seventeenth century, and to begin to plot the dense network of allusion in Rochester's poems. The notes to each poem are divided as follows: where it is appropriate, notes on individual words or lines are followed by a general comment about the context or tradition of a particular poem; a summary version of the evidence for attributing the poem to Rochester; a possible date in those few cases where there is evidence; and details of first publication.

Rochester invented the formal 'allusion' much practised later by Pope, but throughout his poetry, of whatever kind, there is local allusion at work. A minor

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<sup>15</sup> 'Rochester and his Editors', in *The Making of Restoration Poetry* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 190–211, p. 207.

adjustment, involving very few words, might be said to be Rochester's characteristic mode:

Her Hand, her Foot, her look's a *Cunt*

This vigorous line (in Rochester's poetry, private parts are always assuming a life of their own, detached from the body) becomes something more when read against the words from Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* which it parodies:

Her tears, her smiles, her every look's a Net

Parodying Waller on Saint James's Park,

Bold sons of earth that thrust their arms so high  
As if once more they would invade the sky . . .

Rochester creates something memorably fantastical:

. . . Rows of Mandrakes tall did rise  
Whose lewd Topps Fuckt the very Skies . . .

Rochester adjusts the tradition of the cavalier love-lyric, whose conventions were becoming tired, and not always by the addition of a consciously brutal obscenity, as the reader will discover if he turns to 'Phyllis, be gentler I advise' and Treglown's article to which reference is made in the notes.

### Arrangement of this Edition

Vieth's gallant, but doomed, attempt to arrange the poems in a chronological sequence imposed an autobiographical straitjacket on the *corpus*, and even had it succeeded, might not have been the best way to arrange Rochester's output. His lyrics (very few of which can be even approximately dated) especially deserve to be read in a context provided by other lyrics. There is no perfect way of presenting the poems. Lyons made minimal use of manuscript versions, and generally reproduced printed texts in accordance with their first known appearance in print; Ellis adopted a broadly chronological arrangement of texts taken mainly from 1680 and 1691; and Love, separating the poems into 'Poems probably by Rochester', 'Disputed works' and 'Appendix Roffensis' (this last incorporating a number of weakly attributed poems), ordered his main section in line with what he had observed in the publisher Tonson's arrangement of 1691. Roughly speaking, the poems have here continued to be arranged by genres – if 'juvenile poems' can be thought of as a genre. The

gathering is instructive, revealing the *range* within types of Rochester's poems, especially the satirical, and it obviously makes more sense to gather in one section the flytings between Rochester and Scroope and Rochester and Mulgrave. Where possible, the poems within each section have been ordered chronologically.<sup>16</sup>

Keith Walker, revised Nicholas Fisher

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16 See Nicholas Fisher, 'Manuscript Miscellanies and the Rochester Canon', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, 13 (2007), 270-95[0].

# Further Reading

## Editions

- Poems on Several Occasions By the Right Honourable, the E. of R—* ([London], 1680)
- Poems, &c. on Several Occasions: with Valentinian, A Tragedy. Written by the Right Honourable John Late Earl of Rochester* (London, 1691)
- Collected Works of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. John Hayward (London, 1926)
- Rochester's Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. James Thorpe (Princeton, 1950)
- The Gyldenstolpe Manuscript Miscellany of Poems by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and other Restoration Authors*, ed. Bror Danielsson and David M. Vieth (Stockholm, 1967)
- The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. David M. Vieth (New Haven and London, 1968)
- The Letters of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Jeremy Treglown (Oxford, 1980)
- Lyrics & Satires of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. David Brooks (Sydney, 1980)
- John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: Selected Poems*, ed. Paul Hammond (Bristol, 1982)
- Rochester: Complete Poems and Plays*, ed. Paddy Lyons (London, 1993)
- John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: The Complete Works*, ed. Frank H. Ellis (Harmondsworth, 1994)
- The Works of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford, 1999)
- Singing to Phillis: Settings of Poems by the Earl of Rochester (1647–80)*, ed. Steven Devine and Nicholas Fisher (Huntingdon, 2009)

## Biography

- Burnet, Gilbert, *Some Passages of the Life and Death Of the Right Honourable John Earl of Rochester, who Died the 26th of July, 1680* (London, 1680)
- Parsons, Robert, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Rt Honorable John Earl of Rochester, who Died at Woodstock-Park, July 26, 1680, and was Buried at Spilsbury in Oxford-shire, Aug. 9* (Oxford, 1680)
- Pinto, Vivian de Sola, *Enthusiast in Wit: A Portrait of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester 1647–1680* (London, 1962)