Recovering a Restoration Scribal Poet: The Life and Work of Robert Wolseley, with Notes on His Association with Rochester

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Recovering a Restoration Scribal Poet: The Life and Work of Robert Wolseley, with Notes on His Association with Rochester

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ABSTRACT The present essay aims to retrieve the "minor poet and wit" Robert Wolseley from obscurity, uncovering new information about his court career and shifting political allegiance, his output as a poet, and his association with the Earl of Rochester. In particular, Paul Davis argues that Wolseley makes a credible candidate for authorship of part or all of the "Allusion to Tacitus" (1679–80). The essay concludes by reconstructing Wolseley's poetic canon, identifying some eighteen items for which he was almost certainly responsible, either as sole author or in collaboration. These include a number of poetically creditable and historically significant pieces; Robert Wolseley emerges as a Restoration poet overdue scholarly attention not only because of his prestigious literary connections but also in his own right. KEYWORDS: John Dryden; William Wharton; Aphra Behn; Jacob Tonson; manuscript circulation of verse

WHAT LITTLE FAME the "minor poet and wit" Robert Wolseley enjoys in literary history rests on his being the "friend" of Rochester who wrote the preface to the Earl's adaptation of Fletcher's tragedy *Valentinian* (1685).[1] Long recognized as a valuable source of biographical information about Rochester, second only among contemporary witnesses to Gilbert Burnet's *Some Passages of the Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester* (1680), this preface has been described as a landmark in criticism for its use of an "erotics of literary genius" to repel accusations of obscenity against Rochester.[2] The preface formed part of a campaign to manage Rochester's cultural

1. The description of Wolseley is taken from the headnote to the reprint of the *Valentinian* preface in *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Farley-Hills (London, 1972), 137.

2. James Grantham Turner, *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England, 1534–1685* (Oxford, 2003), 361.

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memory in the years after his death, in which Wolseley collaborated with Rochester's half-niece and poetic protegée Anne Wharton as well as with Aphra Behn. At an earlier stage of his life, Wolseley may possibly have collaborated with Dryden, too: scholars and editors have generally accepted Hugh Macdonald's identification of Wolseley as the "Friend of the Author's" who penned the virulently anti-Catholic epilogue to Dryden's tragicomedy *The Spanish Fryar* (1681).[3] Yet, despite his involvements with Rochester, Behn, and Dryden, the three most celebrated writers of the Restoration, Robert Wolseley has received minimal attention from specialists in the period. Beyond the *Valentinian* preface—and even this, as we shall see, has been somewhat misinterpreted—little is known about his life and next to nothing about his work.

Rectifying this situation is no easy task. Like Rochester himself, Wolseley mostly eschewed print, circulating his verse in manuscript, and even by the murky standards of Restoration scribal culture, he was a particularly elusive figure. His very name is difficult to pin down: Harold Love once used it to epitomize the protean instability of "scribal publication," noting that in the fourteen surviving copies of the Earl of Dorset's satire "A Faithful Catalogue of Our Most Eminent Ninnies," Wolseley is variously named as "Wolesley," "Woosely," "Worsley," "Woosly," "Wosly," "Oosly," and even "Oosy"![4] But our need to know more about Wolseley is now urgent, following the emergence of startling new evidence about his association with Rochester—inscriptions of his name on a copy of Rochester's great satire "A Letter from Artemiza in the Towne to Chloe in the Country" as well as on several texts, both in manuscript and print, of another more marginal item in the Rochesterian canon, "An Allusion to Tacitus."[5] In his authoritative edition of Rochester, Love rejected the idea that Wolseley had any authorial involvement in "Artemiza to Chloe," suggesting that the inscription reflects his role in circulating the poem,[6] and this argument has been extended by Nicholas Fisher to cover the case of the "Allusion to Tacitus."[7] However, to date, all the discussion has been from Rochester's side of the question; we have lacked the evidence to properly consider Wolseley's claims. In support of his judgment that Wolseley "had no contemporary reputation for writing verse of the quality of 'An Allusion to Tacitus,'" Fisher invoked just one printed poem, Wolseley's answer to Anne Wharton's verses in praise of the *Valentinian* preface.[8]

The present essay offers the first sustained account of Wolseley's life and work, based on a comprehensive study of the surviving sources in print and manuscript. It begins by correcting and supplementing the brief entry on Wolseley in the *Oxford Dic-*

3. Hugh Macdonald, *John Dryden: A Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana* (Oxford, 1939), 123.

4. Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993), 313.

5. All references to Rochester's poems are to the texts given in *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford, 1999), hereafter cited as *Works of Rochester*.

6. Ibid., 574.

7. Nicholas Fisher, "Rochester's *An Allusion to Tacitus*," *Notes and Queries* 57, no. 4 (2010): 503–6 at 504.

8. Ibid., 504, 504n8.

tionary of National Biography, a single paragraph tacked on at the end of the entry for his more famous father, Sir Charles Wolseley, sometime member of Cromwell's Council of State and author, during the Restoration, of a series of influential treatises in favor of religious toleration. In particular, I gather new information about Wolseley's court career and literary contacts from a group of scribal lampoons by and about him that circulated in 1687–88. The middle section of the essay concentrates on Wolseley's social and textual associations with Rochester; I establish further links between Wolseley and "Artemiza to Chloe" and present a variety of evidence, both external and internal, that makes him a credible candidate for authorship of some or all of the "Allusion to Tacitus." The final part of the essay reconstructs Wolseley's poetic canon. I provide details of all the poems ascribed to Wolseley in manuscript and print, and assess the relative plausibility of these attributions, identifying eighteen items for which Wolseley was almost certainly responsible, either alone or in collaboration. The list ranges across the dominant modes of the age—songs and love lyrics, theater orations, satires and lampoons, classical translations—and includes some historically significant pieces: in particular a translated extract from Lucan that challenges ideas of the Restoration as a hiatus in the English reception of the *De bello civili* and a panegyric on William of Orange set on the occasion of his departure from The Hague to invade England. A "minor poet" Wolseley undoubtedly was, by comparison with his famous friends Behn and Rochester, but he emerges as a writer of some substance, one worthy of scholarly notice not merely because of his literary associations but also in his own right.

Wolseley's Life

As reported in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the main events in the life of Robert Wolseley are these: he was born in 1648/9, matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford, on July 26, 1666, and enrolled at Gray's Inn in 1667; he killed William Wharton, son of the Whig magnate Philip Lord Wharton, in a duel in 1689 following a "poetical quarrel"; in 1692, he was appointed envoy to the elector of Bavaria, governor of the Netherlands, serving until October 1696; and he died, unmarried, sometime after April 6, 1697.[9] Corrections and additions to this account can be supplied from state papers and scholarship on the Wharton family. Wolseley's duel with William Wharton actually took place on December 6, 1687; Wharton was wounded in the thigh and died from the resulting infection on December 14.[10] Indicted for murder on January 13, 1688, Wolseley fled to the Continent,[11] returning to England sometime after June 18, 1689, when a royal warrant pardoning him was finally executed after a series of delays probably engineered by Lord Wharton.[12] In the spring of 1697, ill-health put an end to

9. "Wolseley, Robert," by Timothy Venning, in *ODNB*, s.v. "Wolseley [Ouseley], Sir Charles, second baronet, appointed Lord Wolseley under the protectorate (1629/30–1714)," last modified 2004, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/29851.

10. J. Kent Clark, *Whig's Progress: Tom Wharton between Revolutions* (Madison, Wisc., 2004), 218.

11. Ibid., 278n47.

12. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* [hereafter *CSPD*], *William and Mary*, April 8 and 30, 1689 (delays), June 18, 1689 (issue of the pardon).

Wolseley's diplomatic service abroad, and his death was reported at court on March 22, 1698/9.[13]

If we want to put more flesh on those meager bones, we must descend into the underworld of scribal satire. Passing references to Wolseley can be found in half a dozen town lampoons of the 1680s,[14] but the most important sources are the six satirical epistles that made up his poetical quarrel with William Wharton—four by Wolseley, two by Wharton—together with the Earl of Dorset's mock-epic account of the quarrel in "The Duel" and his attack on Wolseley in "A Faithful Catalogue of Our Most Eminent Ninnies" (1688). These scribal materials provide valuable information about Wolseley's life from the early 1680s until his flight into exile in Europe at the turn of 1688. This was Wolseley's most active period as a writer, when he rose to prominence as one of the architects of Rochester's afterlife, but it was also a time of personal crisis. The crisis began with Wolseley's banishment from the court of Charles II. Both Wharton and Dorset refer to this event. Wharton, in the first of his two contributions to the quarrel, speaks of Wolseley having been "turn'd out," adding that his attempt to regain Charles's favor with a "fulsom Ode" failed when the king refused to hear it performed, "Tho 'twas with all the Charms of Musick Set."[15] Dorset gives more detail about why Wolseley "lost his place," describing him as "Great Virgil's true reverse in sense and fate" and alleging that "what another writ procur'd his hate."[16] The reference is to an anecdote that had become a commonplace in early modern discussions of authorship and plagiarism: Virgil once wrote an anonymous distich in praise of Augustus and fixed a copy to the gates of the imperial palace, so the story went, only for a "saucy courtier" to pass the verses off as his own, earning a handsome reward from the emperor.[17] So it would appear that Wolseley was expelled from court after claiming authorship of a poem that criticized the king, or at least somehow displeased him, but which was in fact the work of a more potent satirist.

The next phase of Wolseley's crisis was occasioned by a shift in his political orientation, which entailed a break with his former associates and possibly also his father. Wolseley is generally thought of as a Whig, on the evidence of his observation in the preface to *Valentinian* that Rochester's pen was "usually imploy'd . . . to stop the progress of arbitrary Oppression."[18] That remark refers to the era of the Popish Plot, when

13. *CSPD, William III,* April 6, 1697 (return), March 22, 1698 (death).

14. For the category of the "town lampoon," see Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660–1702* (Oxford, 2004), 66–99.

15. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (London, 1698), 7.

16. "A Faithful Catalogue of Our Most Eminent Ninnies," lines 309, 307–8; in *The Works of Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset*, ed. Brice Harris (New York, 1979). All future references to Dorset's poems are to the texts given in Harris's edition.

17. For discussion of the currency of this anecdote in the early modern period, see Douglas Bruster, "The Structural Transformation of Print in Late Elizabethan England," in *Print, Manuscript and Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, ed. Michael D. Bristol and Arthur Marotti (Columbus, Ohio, 2000), 69–70; the description of the plagiarist as a "saucy courtier" is from George Puttenham's version of the story, in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), cited by Bruster at 69.

18. Wolseley, preface to *Valentinian* (1685); in *Rochester: The Critical Heritage,* ed. David Farley-Hills (London, 1972), 140; for the Whig reading, see, for example, Christopher Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (Oxford, 2007), 371.

Wolseley does indeed seem to have held Whig views; after the Glorious Revolution, of course, he served as a diplomat in the Williamite regime. However, in his exchanges with William Wharton, Wolseley used "Whig" as an insult, connoting Protestant extremism. Attacking Wharton's style as fluently empty-headed, he claimed:

> From thy Whig Syre thou didst this Gift inherit,
> It is a kind of writing by the Spirit,
> Which the flow of Humane learning sleights,
> And against Reason, Truth and Grammer fights:
> Thy Inspirations are like his new Lights.[19]

For Wolseley, that is, "Whig" was interchangeable with "Fanatick," another term of sectarian abuse he applied to Wharton.[20] Wolseley was out to tar the Whartons with the brush of Monmouthite radicalism, by this time widely regarded as an extension of the regicidal violence of the 1640s: at one point he explicitly compared Thomas, Lord Wharton to "Monmouth," and William to Monmouth's main supporter, "Lord G[re]y."[21] In response, William accused Wolseley of betrayal and hypocrisy, denouncing his "base Apostate Muse" and dubbing him a "true Son o'th'Church" for his newfound persecutory zeal.[22] That zeal was in effect directed against Wolseley's own father, Wharton further alleged, goading him on to, "Thro' Fanaticks, call thy Father Knave."[23] The logical conclusion to draw from all this is that Wolseley, like many others who held Whig views at the time of the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, had reverted to Anglican loyalism during the so-called Tory Reaction, which began with Charles's dissolution of the Oxford parliament in March 1681 and escalated sharply in the summer of 1683 following the revelation of the Rye House Plot. Assuming that Wolseley made this move toward the political center ground after losing his place at court, it may have formed part of his strategy to win back Charles's favor. But this strategy would have set Wolseley at odds with his father, whose position as a leading spokesman of the dissenters saw him imprisoned in 1685 as a potential sympathizer with the Monmouth rebellion. Whether an actual break ensued is not clear, although it is perhaps significant that Wharton's charge of filial disloyalty was one Wolseley never attempted to rebut.

19. Robert Wolseley, "A Second Familiar Epistle . . . in Answer to My Much Respected Friend Sieur *Whiffle*," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 11.

20. In "A Familiar Epistle, By Way of Nosce Teipsum. Directed to His Worthy Friend, Sir Frivolous Insipid," Wolseley tells Wharton to "drein of Knavery the Fanatick Store," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 3.

21. Ibid., 2; in the early 1680s, Lord Wharton was closely associated with Monmouth (see, for instance, the manuscript satire "Whigland" [ca. 1682], in British Library [henceforth BL], Add. MS 6913, fol. 196), but he was "too wise to be lured into the . . . disaster" of the rebellion itself: Clark, *Whig's Progress*, 184–85.

22. William Wharton, "A Final Answer to All That Laborious Trifle Has, or May Write," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 21; "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 8.

23. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in BL, Add. MS 21094 (fol. 17r); here I quote from manuscript because the text printed in *Poems on Affairs of State* garbles the insult ("And the Fanaticks call thy Father Knave").

The third and final phase of Wolseley's crisis in the mid-1680s was his "poetical quarrel" with William Wharton. The six lampoons that make up the quarrel all date from the summer of 1687, but the seeds of the feud were sown some years earlier, in the aftermath of Rochester's death, when Wolseley was working closely with Anne Wharton to superintend Rochester's cultural memory. Anne was unhappily married to Thomas, Lord Wharton, William's half-brother. Initially, Wolseley was on good terms with the Wharton brothers; in fact, Dorset reports in "The Duel" that Wolseley acted as William's poetic tutor, guiding his early forays into scribal satire.[24] But Wolseley's friendship with Anne may have caused tensions with Thomas (in 1682, Anne apparently had a brief affair with John Grubham Howe, another former associate of Rochester).[25] After her death in 1685, the Whartons turned on Wolseley. At first, William was a mere "accessary" in the "plot," according to Wolseley; it was Thomas who instigated hostilities by rubbishing one of Wolseley's poems in Peters's coffeehouse in Covent Garden, a fashionable meeting place for the Whig literati.[26] William describes this episode in detail in his first contribution to the quarrel, in terms that reveal that the poem in question was Wolseley's "To Mrs Wharton: On a Paper of Verses She Did Me the Honour to Write, in Praise of the Preface to *Valentinian*." William writes of "the Burlesquing of Bob's Sacred Meter,"[27] an apparent reference to the high-flown baroque conceits with which Wolseley had all but deified Anne; his later mention of "Wit's Ragoos"[28] recalls one of the most ham-fisted of those conceits, Wolseley's description of Anne's poem as a "rich ragout, wit's too profuse expense, / A flavour that conquers human sense."[29] Finally, William accuses Wolseley of having addressed "Verses to fair Ladies, when they're Dead,"[30] which presumably means that "To Mrs Wharton" went into circulation around the time of Anne's sudden death on October 29, 1685—unfortunate, indeed, given Wolseley's claims in the poem that the "better part" of Rochester "survives" in Anne's verse, that "he dyes not all, while soft Urania lives."[31]

In "The Duel," written before the poetical quarrel between Wolseley and Wharton had come to its bloody conclusion on Banstead Downs, the Earl of Dorset told the history of that quarrel as a mock-epic storm in a teacup, a Hudibrastic dustup between two nobodies. But in fact Wolseley's conflict with the powerful Wharton family grew out of a sequence of escalating personal, literary, and political reverses he had suffered going back to the early 1680s. In the seven and a half years since Rochester's death, he

24. "The Duel," in Harris, *Poems of Dorset*, 23, lines 25–26.

25. *ODNB,* s.v. "Wharton, Thomas, first marquess of Wharton, first marquess of Malmesbury, and first marquess of Catherlough (1648–1715)," by J. Kent Clark, last modified May 2009, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/29175.

26. Wharton is shown holding court in literary affairs at Peters's in the town lampoon "Utile Dulce" (1686), in a passage quoted in Love, *Clandestine Satire*, 264.

27. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 6.

28. Ibid., 8.

29. "To Mrs Wharton: On a Paper of Verses She Did Me the Honour to Write, in Praise of the Preface to *Valentinian*," lines 74–75.

30. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 8.

31. *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Farley-Hills, 109.

had fallen from reflected glory as one of Rochester's intimates into ignominy as a social outcast, a political renegade, and a literary laughingstock. Finally, Wharton's death from his wounds made Wolseley a legal outlaw. Nothing is known about his movements during his eighteen months of exile in mainland Europe, although as we shall see later, the panegyric on William III that can now be solidly attributed to him may suggest he was present in The Hague to witness William's departure for England on November 4, 1688. By the time he returned to England in 1689, Wolseley was a reformed figure. He was never again mentioned in scribal dispatches, whether as assailant or victim; indeed, he appears to have largely forsworn writing verse. No original poems dating from after 1688 have ever been associated with him; even the translation of "Aeneas His Meeting with Dido in the Elyzian Fields" from book 6 of the *Aeneid,* which was printed under his name in the third Dryden–Tonson miscellany *Examen Poeticum* (1693), may well have been completed some years earlier. At any rate, by the time it was printed, Wolseley had taken up his post as William III's envoy in Brussels, passing from the margins of literary history into the annals of diplomatic service.

Wolseley and Rochester

It is not known when Wolseley and Rochester first met. Both went to Oxford, and Wadham, Rochester's alma mater, is just across the road from Trinity, Wolseley's college. But Rochester left in 1661, and he was in Paris on the final leg of his Grand Tour when Wolseley matriculated in 1666. The natural assumption is that they became acquainted sometime after Wolseley's arrival in London as a student at Gray's Inn (he was enrolled in 1667 but may not have been resident full time in the capital until a year or two later, after completing his studies in Oxford). As he was the elder son of a baronet and had literary aspirations, Wolseley was doubtless quick to forsake his law books for the more immediate gratifications of the court. His father's impeccable credentials, as the author of the influential tolerationist tract *Liberty of Conscience the Magistrates Interest* (1668), would have provided Wolseley with an entrée to the Rochester–Buckingham faction, which had recently come into the ascendancy at Whitehall and was set on decriminalizing religious nonconformity. However, there is no proof that Wolseley and Rochester were friends in the late 1660s or early 1670s. Those pieces of biographical information given in the preface to *Valentinian* that can be dated refer to the latter part of Rochester's life, most notably Wolseley's important claim that "a considerable time before his last Sickness, his Wit began to take a more serious Bent, and to frame and fashion it self to publick Business."[32] In fact, the earliest documentary mark of Wolseley's association with Rochester is the coupling of their names on the copy of "A Letter from Artemiza in the Towne to Chloe in the Country" in Sir William Haward's personal miscellany.[33] Haward, who had good access to Rochester's work, since he served alongside him as one of the gentlemen of the king's

32. *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Farley-Hills, 141.
33. Bodleian Library (henceforth Bodl.), MS Don. b. 8, 490–94.

bedchamber, almost certainly copied the poem between the autumn of 1674 and the spring of 1675,[34] adding at the end of the text his now notorious note: "This poem is supposed, to bee made by ye Earle of Rochester, or Mr Wolseley."[35]

Love's contention that "Haward's uncertainty about authorship . . . suggests that he did not receive [the copy] directly from Rochester, and that Wolseley . . . may have been involved in its distribution" is highly plausible.[36] "A Letter from Artemiza to Chloe" ranks among the most secure items in Rochester's canon, explicitly assigned to him in eleven of the surviving manuscript copies.[37] None of the poems that can be attributed with any degree of confidence to Wolseley date from the 1670s, and even the best of his mature work gives no indication that he would have been capable of writing the "Letter," an avant-garde experiment in satiric ventriloquism increasingly recognized as one of Rochester's principal claims to poetic greatness. Some minor collaborative involvement on Wolseley's part is perhaps feasible, given what Marianne Thormahlen has termed the poem's "rambling and informal construction."[38] But there is an intriguing footnote to the story of Wolseley's connection with "Artemiza to Chloe." When the lampoons that make up his "poetical quarrel" with William Wharton were printed in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), they were followed by Dorset's "The Duel" and then by a piece billed as a "Satyr by the Lord Rochester." This was actually an extract from "Artemiza to Chloe": the second half of the speech of the "fine Lady" arguing that "fools" make better lovers than "men of wit" and including the story of Corinna and the rustic booby (lines 171–255). The same extract, albeit with the inclusion of the poem's nine-line envoi, survives in five manuscript copies, suggesting that it may have circulated independently.[39] Whether or not it was put together with the Wolseley–Wharton lampoons deliberately, readers would have had no trouble making sense of the juxtaposition: it casts Wolseley and Wharton as "fools" of the sort described by the fine Lady, consolidating Dorset's presentation of them as "blockheads" and "dunces" in "The Duel."[40]

The same extract from "Artemiza to Chloe" is echoed by Wharton in his first reply to Wolseley, in a passage explicitly concerned with Wolseley's relationship with Rochester. Remarkably, the passage has never featured in any scholarly discussion of that relationship,[41] so it is quoted here in full in the manuscript text, which is preferable at a number of points to the printed version in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698):

34. Paul Hammond, "The Dating of Three Poems by Rochester from the Evidence of Bodleian MS Don. b. 8," *Bodleian Library Record* 11 (1982): 58–59; if Haward was entering a group of poems retrospectively, the copy may date from later in 1675.

35. *Works of Rochester*, 585.

36. Ibid., 574.

37. The copies with attributions are listed in the tailnote to the poem in *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: The Poems and Lucina's Rape,* ed. Keith Walker and Nicholas Fisher (Oxford, 2010), 76.

38. Marianne Thormahlen, *Rochester: The Poems in Context* (Cambridge, 1993), 105.

39. *Works of Rochester*, 582–85.

40. *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 22, 23.

41. A few lines from it are quoted by Germaine Greer in the chapter on Anne Wharton in *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet* (London, 1995), 239–40.

Remember, the Great Rochester is Dead;
Thy witt was but repeating what he said.
Of Thee a Necessary Fool he found,
Still prowd to Father all he disown'd:
For which he let thee of his Jests Dispose,
As Servants flutter in Theire Lords Old Cloaths;
But now his Wardrobe is quite Thred bare growne,
Thy Nakedness appears thro' all thy Owne:
Since with him thy inlivening Spark went out,
Thou'rt now but Mater into Motion Put:
He Taught thee not the Arts to think but Rhime,
Tho' like a Clock he sometimes made the Chime,
Now he Can't Wind thee up, thou Still Stik'st out of Time.[42]

Wharton pitilessly drives home Wolseley's isolation following the loss of his protector Rochester, and phrases from "Artemiza to Chloe" add bite to his invective. Calling Wolseley "a Necessary Fool" for Rochester, "prowd to Father all he disown'd," Wharton makes him sound like the fine lady's submissive husband, that "necessary thing" who "bows and is gone" (line 92), an obsequious blind for her adulterous liaisons. But the clearest allusion is to the last couplet of the passage excerpted in *Poems on Affairs of State*: Wharton's image of Wolseley flaunting the "Jests" he borrowed from Rochester "As Servants Flutter in Theire Lords Old Cloaths" recalls the fine lady's observation that nature "Wisely provides kind-keeping Fooles, noe doubt, / To patch up Vices, Men of Witt wear out" (lines 254–55). Hearing himself condemned out of Rochester's own mouth would have been galling enough for Wolseley, but the selection of "Artemiza to Chloe" in particular may have been designed to rub salt in his wounds if he had—or had claimed—some involvement in the composition of the poem.

Now we come to the second poem disputed between Rochester and Wolseley: "An Allusion to Tacitus." This is a much more complicated case, which cannot simply be brought under the umbrella of Love's arguments about the Haward note. An attack on the Earl of Danby, originally drafted at some point during the impeachment proceedings against him in 1679–80, the "Allusion" survives in three distinct versions in manuscript and print, apparently reflecting successive phases of revision and appropriation lasting at least until November 1680.[43] Fisher reports two attributions of the poem to Wolseley in manuscript—to which can now be added a third in a printed edition. Even without knowledge of these ascriptions Love classed the "Allusion" among the dubia in his edition of Rochester, following stylometric tests conducted by his colleague John Burrows that rated it as "uncharacteristic" of Rochester's work.[44] No known text of the "Allusion" explicitly identifies Rochester as its author; the case for his authorship rests on inference from the poem's inclusion in the "Harbin" and "Hartwell"

42. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in BL, Add. MS 21094, fol. 15.
43. Fisher, "Rochester's *An Allusion to Tacitus*," 503–5.
44. *Works of Rochester*, 481.

manuscripts, two collections of work by Rochester that Love argued were transmitted through the poet's "extended family."[45] However, despite their seemingly exclusive provenance, much remains unclear about "Harbin" and "Hartwell," notably the dates they were compiled and the identity of their compilers. Moreover, Wolseley might almost be considered a member of Rochester's Oxfordshire household, given his friendships with the poet himself and his favorite niece, Anne Wharton. Love only became aware of Wolseley's possible involvement with the "Allusion to Tacitus" shortly before his death in 2007, but he immediately saw the implications. Was the "Allusion" a work "by a Rochester disciple which had infiltrated an apparently authoritative collection," he asked, "or could Wolseley have been the compiler of that collection and merely assisted in putting the 'Allusion' into circulation from it?"[46]

The new information about Wolseley's life and work presented here brings us closer to answering these questions, putting in serious doubt the attribution of the "Allusion" to Rochester. At first glance, William Wharton's claims that Wolseley was "prowd to Father all" Rochester "disown'd," and that Rochester "let" him "Dispose" of his "Jests," appear to show that Wolseley was in the habit of passing off Rochester's poetic cast-offs as his own work and that Rochester connived in this deception. A "jest" in Restoration critical parlance could be anything from a conversational bon mot through a witty epigram or impromptu to a formal satire, so the "Allusion" could potentially qualify.[47] However, "dispose of" could mean not only "put or get off one's hands; . . . deal with . . . get rid of" (*OED*, *v*, 8b) but also "make a disposition, ordering, or arrangement of" (*OED*, *v*, 8a), leaving it unclear whether Wolseley simply helped himself to Rochester's "disown'd" effusions, circulating them under his own name, or alternatively worked up outline ideas discarded by Rochester, supplementing them with material of his own. That second possibility tallies with the survival of the "Allusion" in variant states in "Hartwell" and "Harbin." The unique version in "Hartwell" has twenty-one lines, the widely circulated one represented in "Harbin" thirty; Love speculated that Rochester "wrote the shorter version first and then expanded it for scribal publication as a political separate."[48] But it must now be considered equally possible that the longer "Harbin" text of the "Allusion" (see appendix below, item 14) reflects a later "disposition" of the poem by Wolseley.

Certainly Fisher's claim that Wolseley had "no contemporary reputation for writing verse of the quality of 'An Allusion to Tacitus'" is misleading, whether one takes "quality" to refer to the level of the poem's achievement or to its generic characteristics. As to the former, opinions will no doubt differ about Wolseley's capabilities on the evidence of the canon presented in the final section of this essay, but the major items reprinted there are sufficient to show he was not the contemptible hack "Bob Bavius" Dorset influentially depicted him as in "The Duel." Moreover, it should be said

45. Ibid., xxxvii.

46. Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2002), 65.

47. In "An Answer to the Satyr on the Court Ladies" (ca. 1680), for instance, "Jest" is used of Dryden's satire (BL, MS Harley 7319, fol. 93r).

48. *Works of Rochester*, 481.

that the "Allusion" itself is not an especially striking achievement. It has some strong individual couplets, notably the first—"The free-born English, generous and wise, / Hate Chains; but do not Government despise"—with its powerful spondaic substitution, and the last—"The mighty Genius of this Isle disdains / Ambitious Slavery and Golden Chains"—with its memorable, if somewhat commonplace, paradoxes. But overall it ranks as a middling example of Restoration "state satire" circulated in manuscript, giving (unlike "Artemiza to Chloe") little sign of Rochester's singular genius. The versification is frequently poor, including thin rhymes ("they" / "pay"; "got" / "cannot") and metrically indeterminate phrases ("with them was never held"; "here have still"); and the expression is occasionally awkward, with confusions of narrative aspect ("they," "their," and "them" refer to the English at lines 5–7, but England is "here" at lines 8 and 10) and bungled rhetorical effects ("Kings are less safe in their unbounded Will, / Joyn'd with the wretched Pow'r of *doing ill*"! [my emphasis]). These failings do not tell against Rochester's authorship—similar marks of insouciance can be found in several undisputed items in his canon—but they do support a hypothesis of collaboration. They are especially noticeable in the longer "Harbin" text, the expansion having introduced some repetitions that damage the unity of the piece, particularly around lines 15–16, which several scribes appear to have felt required rephrasing.[49]

Taking "quality" in the sense of genre further strengthens the case for Wolseley's involvement. He was primarily known to his contemporaries for his work in the two poetic modes that intersect in the "Allusion": satire and classical imitation. Both Wharton and Dorset emphasize Wolseley's vanity about his classical erudition, and he is paired with Dryden as a translator of Latin verse in the well-informed manuscript lampoon "The Town Life" (1686).[50] His probable canon includes substantial translations and adaptations from Ovid, Lucan, and Virgil. Of these the Lucan translation (see appendix below, item 9) at least matches the "Allusion" for poetic accomplishment. But it is one of Wolseley's two Virgil-inspired productions that makes for the most suggestive comparison with the "Allusion." This is the poem about William of Orange mentioned earlier in connection with Wolseley's exile on the Continent: "On the Prince's Going to England, with an Army to Restore the Government" (see appendix below, item 12). Like the "Allusion," "On the Prince's Going to England" is a political poem chiefly concerned with the subjects of "liberty" and "tyranny," and like the "Allusion" it takes its cue from a short Latin extract—in this case, a line and a half of Virgil's paean to Augustus in book 1 of the *Georgics*. Wolseley transfers that paean from Augustus to William of Orange and elaborates parallels between the Roman civil war and the conflict between James II and the future William III, so the poem can fairly be termed an "Allusion"—certainly in the loose sense of the term applicable to the "Allusion to Tacitus," where the presence of the

49. At lines 15–16, "guard" is repeated, and in line 16 "joyn" recurs from line 13, while the line as a whole—"To force that guard, with the worst foe to joyn"—is somewhat obscure: are the two phrases in apposition, or does "joyn" depend on "force"? The line became a particular focus for scribal uncertainty and emendation (*Works of Rochester*, 663).

50. Reprinted in *Poems on Affairs of State*, vol. 4, *1685–88*, ed. Galbraith M. Crump (New Haven, Conn., 1968), 61–67 at 65.

Latin source is only felt for the opening nine lines. The two pieces even share a number of parallel wordings: in the "Harbin" text of the "Allusion," kings are described as "less safe in their unbounded Will," while in "On the Prince's Going to England," it is James II's exercise of "unbounded might" that has caused his subjects to revolt; and the author of the "Allusion" boasts of the English that "Force they abhor, and Wrongs they scorn to bear, / More guided by their Judgment than their Fear," while in "On the Prince's Going to England," Wolseley contrasts the future William III, who "strives for all that e'er to men was dear" with James II, who stands for "what they most abhor and fear."[51]

Those verbal overlaps might be no more than coincidences within an established Whig lexis: Christopher Tilmouth has shown that "bounds" and "boundless"—although not "unbounded" itself—were deployed by Rochester, too, for example in the "Satyr against Reason and Mankind" and the *Valentinian* adaptation.[52] But given the stylometric analysis of the "Allusion" conducted for Love's edition, which rated the "Allusion" "uncharacteristic" of Rochester's linguistic habits, it may be worth noting in conclusion an intriguing link between the poem and Wolseley's verbal preferences. In his contributions to their quarrel, William Wharton several times objected to what he took to be eccentric phrases in Wolseley's verse. One of these was the epithet "question'd Wit," which Wolseley used in the "Answer" to Anne Wharton, in connection with the attacks on his preface to *Valentinian*.[53] "Questioned," as an adjective, is rare in verse at this period—Rochester, for one, never used it—but Wolseley was particularly fond of it. Wharton could have pointed to another occurrence, this time in the negative, in Wolseley's third contribution to their quarrel, "A Postscript," where he wrote of his opponent that "To all that ever did in Satyr bite, / *Whiffle* by Birth has an unquestion'd Right."[54] That negative form of the adjective is also found in one of the most striking passages in the "Allusion to Tacitus," where the poet indignantly bursts out: "What King wou'd change to be a Catiline, / Break his own laws, stake an unquestion'd throne, / Conspire with vassals to Usurp his own?" (lines 18–20).

In light of the evidence assembled in the preceding paragraphs, it seems as likely as not that Wolseley had some role in the composition of the "Allusion to Tacitus," at least the thirty-line version preserved in "Harbin" and all the other surviving manuscripts apart from "Hartwell." An interim hypothesis might run as follows. At some point during the Danby impeachment proceedings, probably in the spring or summer of 1679, when Rochester had become personally involved as a member of the Lords committee overseeing the case,[55] he had the idea for a topical application of Tacitus's

51. Quotations from "On the Prince's Going to England, with an Army to Restore the Government" are from the text of the anonymous broadside printed by Jacob Tonson in 1689; the poem is unlineated but the phrases cited are from line 18 and lines 23–24.

52. Christopher Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (Oxford, 2007), 348–51, 362–63.

53. "A Final Answer to all that Laborious Trifle Has, or may WRITE," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 19; "Mr Wolsely's Answer to the Foregoing Copy," in Aphra Behn, *Lycidus, or, The Lover in Fashion* (1688).

54. "A Postscript," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 15.

55. J. W. Johnson, *A Profane Wit: The Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Rochester, N.Y., 2004), 302–3.

remarks about the liberty-loving British in the *Agricola*. He proceeded to write the twenty-one-line "Hartwell" version, perhaps with the aid of his classically minded friend Wolseley. But whether simply because it was unfinished or perhaps for reasons of political prudence while Danby's fate hung in the balance, the satire had not been put into public circulation when Rochester's final illness took hold in the early months of 1680. Thereafter, the "Allusion" became Wolseley's to "dispose of," with or without explicit authorization from Rochester, and it was he who put together the extended "Harbin" version of the poem "for scribal publication as a political separate," making what sense he could of the drafts, reconciling competing versions of individual lines or passages and supplementing the text with new material where he felt it necessary.

This hypothesis accords with a final piece of evidence that cannot easily be reconciled with the presumption of Rochester's sole authorship. Only one of the thirteen known manuscripts of the "Harbin" text of the "Allusion" gives any indication of date: the copy in Beinecke, MS Osborn b. 54, which bears the endorsement "October. 1680." By then Rochester had been dead for three months; that this was indeed when the poem went into circulation is suggested by the appearance of an adapted version of it in Henry Care's periodical *The Anti-Roman Pacquet* on November 26.[56] The date makes political sense, too: October 1680 marked the start of the first Exclusion parliament, in the run up to which Danby strenuously canvased the members of the Lords for his release from the Tower.[57] Prominent among the peers working with Shaftesbury to block Danby's release was Lord Wharton,[58] with whom at this point Wolseley was still on good terms. In fact, Wolseley might have been looking to Wharton to replace Rochester as his patron. Perhaps he saw a chance to consolidate his standing among the Shaftesburian Whigs by circulating the "Allusion"; perhaps it was Wharton himself who suggested the idea. However, in circulating the poem, Wolseley would have been taking a considerable risk; not only was Charles still ambivalent about Danby,[59] but the king himself does not escape criticism in the "Allusion" (the line about "staking" an unquestioned throne, for instance, might be taken to refer to Charles's gambling excesses). According to Dorset, as we saw earlier, Wolseley was banished from court as a result of his association with a satire that somehow displeased the king. Other than the "Allusion," no poem that can be linked with Wolseley on contemporary evidence remotely fits that description. It may be that Wolseley lost the place at court he enjoyed as a friend of Rochester because of his involvement with the "Allusion to Tacitus."

The final act in Wolseley's association with Rochester was his authorship of the preface to *Valentinian*. No more disinterested than Burnet's biography,[60] Wolseley's

56. This extreme anti-Catholic version of the poem is discussed, and a text of it reprinted, in Fisher, "Rochester's *An Allusion to Tacitus*," 505–6.

57. *ODNB*, s.v. "Osborne, Thomas, first duke of Leeds (1632–1712)," by Mark Knights, last modified October 2008, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/20884.

58. Johnson, *A Profane Wit*, 303.

59. *ODNB*, s.v. "Osborne, Thomas, first duke of Leeds (1632–1712)."

60. On the Whig agenda of Burnet's biography, see Germaine Greer, *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Horndon, U.K., 2000), 4–6.

preface needs to be read in the context of its author's fraught circumstances in the mid-1680s. Composed between the spring and winter of 1684, it reflects Wolseley's conversion to "church-and-state" loyalism and therefore came to play a role in his feud with the Whartons. Apparently, Wolseley was still serving as William Wharton's poetic mentor when *Valentinian* was revived at court in February 1684: they are listed together among the authors of the prologue for the second night in a contemporary lampoon (see appendix below, item 15). But when the quarrel broke out, Wharton included the preface in his first attack, sarcastically urging Wolseley on to write "*Prefaces*, which tire Men to Read" in the same passage where he mockingly dubbed him "a true Son o'th'Church" and accused him of calling his own father "Knave."[61] The conjunction was not random: Wolseley's preface is indeed a conservative document. This is true even at the level of its explicit political commentary. Wolseley's famous observation that Rochester's "pen" was "usually imploy'd . . . to stop the progress of arbitrary Oppression" has been invoked as evidence that Rochester sided with the Whigs in his later years.[62] But dislike of "arbitrary Oppression" was hardly unique to Whigs, and the later, less-often-quoted parts of the same sentence show that Wolseley was in fact positioning Rochester as a moderate. The arbitrary oppressors Rochester drew his pen against, according to Wolseley, were "such publick State-Thieves, as would beggar a Kingdom to enrich themselves, and will not be asham'd to maintain the cheating of their Master, by the robbing of their fellow-Servants, and under the best Form of Government in the World blush not to live upon the spoyl of others."[63] That points at Danby, who had originally been charged with embezzlement but was now free again, having been released from prison in February 1684 (hence, the pointed use of the future tense: "will not be"). However, in keeping with his newfound loyalism, Wolseley is careful to present Rochester's opposition to Danby as entirely compatible with constitutional moderation. Indeed, Wolseley's cringing reference to the English as "Servants . . . under the best Government in the World" brings to mind William Wharton's description of the "fulsom Ode" by which Wolseley sought to recover his place at court.

The image of Rochester as a writer that Wolseley creates in the preface could also fairly be described as conservative. In the series of interrelated elegies to Rochester that they issued in the early 1680s, the members of Anne Wharton's circle had sought to defuse his infamy by foregrounding aspects of his poetic practice that contradicted his popular image as the arch-libertine—in particular, the civility and elegance of his lyrics, his classical erudition, and the corrective power of his satire.[64] Wolseley's preface caps that coordinated rebranding effort, notably where he reports that Rochester's "Wit began to take a more serious bent" toward the end of his life and that he became "inquisitive after all kind of Histories, that concern'd England, both ancient and modern."[65] Again, Wolseley was probably thinking of the "Allusion to Tacitus," but again

61. "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1698), 8.

62. Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason*, 371.

63. *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, 140–41.

64. Nicholas Fisher, "Rochester's Contemporary Reception: The Evidence of the Memorial Verses," *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660–1700* 30 (2006): 1–14 at 4–8.

65. *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, 141.

the surrounding context adds a conservative twist: Rochester, Wolseley goes on to say, "seem'd to study nothing more, than which way to make that great Understanding God had given him, most useful to his Countrey, and I am confident, had he liv'd, his riper Age wou'd have serv'd it, as much as his Youth had diverted it."[66] This makes Rochester sound like what Wharton spurned Wolseley as—a one-time radical chastened into respectability by Whig overreaching in the early 1680s. The same emphasis on Rochester's erudition and seriousness recurs throughout the preface, even in its ostensibly audacious defense of the obscenity of Rochester's verse. One strand of that defense is traditionalist, resting on classical authority: Rochester, Wolseley contended, transmuted base bodily functions into poetic gold, elevating low subject matter as Virgil had done in the *Georgics* and Horace in his satires. As authority for this view, Wolseley invoked Dryden, effectively redrawing the map of Restoration poetic culture by bringing Rochester into posthumous alignment with his former client turned enemy, the architect of Tory Augustanism.

By virtue of its cultural conservatism, Wolseley's preface represents a watershed in Rochester's reception history. The crucial step in Rochester's rehabilitation as a canonical author came with Jacob Tonson's edition of the *Poems &c. On Several Occasions* (1691). But Wolseley's preface was a precursor for Tonson's edition. Tonson ushered Rochester into the pantheon of English poets by means of various paratextual and bibliographical strategies,[67] in particular the provision of a critical preface, initially unsigned but attributed to Thomas Rymer in eighteenth-century reissues of the volume. Rymer's task was to present Rochester as a poet fit for print in the reformed age of William and Mary, and in performing that task, he took his lead from Wolseley. Like Wolseley, he stressed Rochester's classicism, foregrounding his translations and imitations from Ovid, Seneca, "Anacreon," and Lucretius; and like Wolseley, he used Augustan precedent to neutralize the allegations of Rochester's enemies, excusing the lack of a major public work in Rochester's canon by pointing out that at the age Rochester died, Horace "had done no wonders," while Virgil had written only pastorals.[68] Wolseley may also have been more directly involved in Tonson's edition. The edition was put together in the short interim between his return from Continental exile in 1689 and his departure for Brussels in 1692, when Tonson was Wolseley's regular publisher. Included for the first time in the edition were several of Rochester's politer lyrics and songs, and Harold Love has shown that in preparing the texts of these poems Tonson drew on the source that lies behind the family manuscripts "Harbin" and "Hartwell."[69] Perhaps Tonson was given access to that source by Rochester's mother, the Dowager Countess; the only other plausible candidate is Rochester's longtime confidant and collaborator Robert Wolseley.

66. Ibid.

67. For an excellent account of these strategies of canonization, see Nicholas Fisher, "Jacob Tonson and the Earl of Rochester," *The Library*, 7th ser., 6 (2005): 133–60.

68. *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*, 166–67.

69. *Works of Rochester*, xxxvii.

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Appendix: Wolseley's Poetic Canon

The listing below includes every item that (to my knowledge) has ever been attributed to Wolseley in manuscript or print. The data was collected from the following: *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts*; *Folger Union First Line Index of English Verse*, *Digital Miscellanies Index*; *Early English Books Online*; and Wing. Every attribution has been checked in the relevant printed or manuscript source (either the physical copy or on microfilm). For ease of reference, full texts are provided of the most significant items, including all those discussed in the body of the essay.

Poems by Wolseley

A. Items related to Rochester's *Valentinian*

1. "Where Would Coy Aminta Run"

   Date: ca. 1684

   Attribution: This short song concludes act 2, scene 2 of *Valentinian, A Tragedy as 'Tis Alter'd by the Earl of Rochester* (1685), where it is attributed to "Mr W." The attribution is confirmed by William Wharton's derisive reference to the song in "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," where he suggests that Aminta was running "for fear of being Overlaid" by the notoriously corpulent Wolseley. Wharton was certainly in a position to know, having been involved with Wolseley in the *Valentinian* project, apparently collaborating with him on the second night's prologue (see item 15).

2. "To Mrs Wharton: On a Paper of Verses She Did Me the Honor to Write in Praise of the Preface to *Valentinian*"

   ["While soaring high above Orinda's flights"]

   Date: 1685

   Attribution: Established as Wolseley's by its subject, and printed after Anne Wharton's poem as "Mr. Wolsely's Answer to the Foregoing Copy" in the miscellany attached to Aphra Behn's prose romance *Lycidus, or The Lover in Fashion* (1688). For Behn's connections with Wolseley, see items 7 and 16.

B. The Quarrel with William Wharton

3. "A Familiar Epistle, by Way of *Nosce Teipsum*. Directed to his Worthy Friend, Sir Frivolous Insipid, Alias Sir —"

   ["Right Heir to Flutter Fop o'th'last edition"]

   Date: spring–summer 1687

Attribution: "Mr. Wolseley's Familiar Epistle to Sir Frivolous Insipid" in Beinecke Library, Yale University (hereafter Beinecke), MS Osborn fb 108, 23, and "A Familiar Epistle . . . by Mr. Wolseley" in Bodl., MS Firth c. 16, 228, a miscellany associated with Aphra Behn.

4. "A Second Familiar Epistle . . . In Answer to My Much Respected Friend Sieur Whiffle"

   ["Daily disgracer of our English Satyr"]

   Date: spring–summer 1687

   Attribution: "Mr. Wolseley to Mr. Wharton . . . A Second Familiar Epistle" in Bodl., MS Firth c. 16, 234.

5. "For Sir Frivolous Insipid, To His Late Short Answer, a Short Return"

   ["To thy first Stanza, poetry laid by"]

   Date: summer–autumn 1687

   Attribution: not explicitly given to Wolseley in any manuscript but confirmed as his by its connections with the other pieces in the poetical quarrel with William Wharton.

6. "A Postscript"

   ["Finish me one Task more for Whiffle's Muse"]

   Date: autumn 1687

   Attribution: Not explicitly given to Wolseley in any manuscript but confirmed as his by its connections with the other pieces in the poetical quarrel with William Wharton.

Poems Probably by Wolseley

7. "Oh, Love, That Stronger Art than Wine"

   Date: 1686

   Attribution: Anonymous when first published in Aphra Behn's *The Lucky Chance* (1687), act 3, scene 4, but almost immediately attributed to "Mr. Ousley" when the setting by John Blow was collected in John Playford's *The Theatre of Music* (1687). The attribution is likely, given Wolseley's close association with Behn in 1687.

8. "Freedom Is a Real Treasure"

Freedom is a real treasure,
  Love a dream, all false and vain,
Short, uncertain is the pleasure,
  Sure and lasting is the pain.

A sincere and tender passion
  Some ill planet over-rules;
Ah, how blind is inclination!
  Fate and women dote on fools.

Date: before 1687

Attribution: Billed as "Song. By Mr. Ooseley" when it was first printed in the "Collection of Songs & Love-Verses by Several Hands" appended to *The History of Adolphus, Prince of Russia* (1691), a high-caliber anthology mostly made up of work by George Granville and Behn and culminating with the exchange of verse letters between Dryden and George Etherege. The lyric is also attributed to Wolseley in Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.94, 107, the only surviving scribal copy apparently dating from the early eighteenth century, and finally in Jacob Tonson's *The Fifth Part of Miscellany Poems* (1716), vol. 2, 248, where it is followed by an answer poem attributed to "Mr. Wharton" ("When Wits from Sighing Turn to Railing"). The attributions of both the original lyric and the reply are confirmed by William Wharton's mocking recall of the last line of "Freedom Is a Real Treasure" in "A Final Answer to All That Laborious Trifle Has, or May WRITE," where he tells Wolseley, "you are sure to speed by your own Rules, / That Fate and Women always Doat on Fools." "Freedom Is a Real Treasure" may be one of the songs Wharton had in mind (see also item 16) when he told Wolseley in "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle" not to "Prophane good Tunes of Robin King's," because a setting of it by Robert King, a violinist in Charles II's private music since 1680, appears as the seventh of King's *Songs for One, Two, and Three Voices* (1692). The fact that Wharton's answer was followed by two more, "Freedom's an Insipid Treasure" and "Wit is the Most Charming Treasure," in Folger, MS V.b.94 suggests that "Freedom Is a Real Treasure" became a particular focus for the coordinated attack on Wolseley by the Whartons and their Whig allies.

9. "Cato's Answer to Labienus, When He Advis'd Him to Consult the Oracle of Jupiter Ammon. Being a Paraphrastical Translation of Part of the 9th Book of Lucan, Beginning at—*Quid quaeri, Labiene, Iubes, &c.*"

What shou'd I ask my friend, which best wou'd be
To live inslav'd, or thus in Armes die free?

If any force can Honour's price abate?
Or virtue bow beneath the blows of fate?
If fortunes threats a steady Soul disdains,
Or if the Joys of Life be worth the pains?
If it our happiness at all import
Whether the foolish scene be long, or short.
If when we do but aim at noble ends
The attempt alone Immortal fame attends?
If for bad accidents, which thickest press
On merit, we shou'd like a good cause less?
Or be the fonder of it for success?
All this is clear, wove in our minds it sticks,
Nor *Ammon*, nor his Priest's can deeper fix;
Without the Clergy's venal cant and pains
Gods never-frustrate Will holds ours in chains,
Nor can we Act but what th' All-wise ordains.
Who needs no voyce, nor perishing words to aw
Our wild desires, and give his creatures Law:
What e're to know, or needful was or fit,
In the wise frame of human souls 'tis writ,
Both what we ought to do, and what forbear,
He once for all, did at our births declare.
But never did he seek out Desert Lands
To bury truth in unfrequented Sands;
Or to a corner of the World withdrew,
Head of a sect and partial to a few.
Nature's vast fabrick is his house alone,
This Globe his foot-stool, and high Heav'n his throne.
In Earth, Air, Sea, and in who e're excells
In knowing heads and honest hearts he dwells;
Why seek we then among these barren sands,
In narrow shrines and temples built with hands,
Him whose dread presence does all places fill?
Or look but in our reason for his will?
All we e're saw is God! in all we find
Apparent Prints of the eternal mind;
Let floating fools their course by Prophets steer
And always of the future live in fear;
No Oracle, or Dream the crowd is told
Can make me more or less resolv'd and bold.
But surer death, which equally on all
Both on the coward and the brave must fall.

This said, and turning with disdain about,
He left scorn'd *Ammon* to the vulgar Rout.

Date: June–September 1687

Attribution: One of three competing versions of Cato's speech that appeared in 1687–88, this ambitious and in places strikingly accomplished translation from Lucan was variously attributed to John Ayloffe in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1697, 1699), Wolseley in Tonson's *Miscellany Poems* (1702), and Aphra Behn in *Poems by Eminent Ladies* (1755). But Wolseley is the only plausible claimant. The translation was composed as a riposte to the version by Thomas Shadwell in his *The Tenth Satire of Juvenal, English and Latin,* which was published in June 1687. By then Ayloffe was dead, having been executed in 1685 for his part in the Rye House Plot. Behn's claims are countermanded by her own word: she included the poem in the miscellany attached to her prose romance *Lycidus, or The Lover in Fashion* (1688), adding a note in which she referred to the anonymous translator as a man and a "friend" of hers. Wolseley was indeed closely associated with Behn at this time: both were members of the circle of admirers of Rochester gathered around Anne Wharton, and Wolseley had apparently contributed a song to Behn's comedy *The Lucky Chance* in 1686 (see above, item 7). The case for Wolseley's authorship is laid out more fully in Paul Davis, "A Lucan Translation Controversy on the Eve of the Glorious Revolution," *Review of English Studies* 65 (2014): 673–93 at 679–81.

10. "On an Ungrateful and Undeserving Mistress, Whom He Cou'd Not Help Loving. Being a Paraphrastical Translation of Ovid's 10th Elegie Lib. 3. Amorum."

["I have too long endur'd her guilty scorn"]

Date: possibly ca. 1683, the terminal date for vol. 1 of the two-part miscellany now preserved in the National Library of Scotland as Advocate's MS 19.1.12, but certainly before February 1688, when it was published in Behn's *Lycidus, or The Lover in Fashion*

Attribution: Anonymous in the two surviving MS copies—Yale, Poetry Box VI/67, and National Library of Scotland, Advocate's MS 19.1.12, vol. 1, fol. 68—and also in Behn's miscellany but billed as "done by Mr. Wolsely" in *A New Miscellany of Original Poems, on Several Occasions* (1701), 127, and never attributed to anyone else. *A New Miscellany*, which also contains a shortened version of Wolseley's *Valentinian* preface, was compiled by the well-connected poet and critic Charles Gildon, and its attributions are generally secure (although see item 11). The parallel with the title of item 9, featuring the adjective "Paraphrastical," may also be significant. The two translations appear in sequence in Advocate's MS 19.1.12, and "Cato's Answer to Labienus," which dates from 1687, was moved forward in the chronological running order of the miscellany to enable

this juxtaposition. "On an Ungrateful and Undeserving Mistress" may also be the poem William Wharton had in mind when, in "A Familiar Answer to a Late Familiar Epistle," he urged Wolseley to be "more Civil" in his love poetry and not to "call thy Mistress vile *Gilt*, *Coquet*, *Devil*"; the first two of those insults are leveled at the mistress here, and the last is implied in the line "That Angel-Form ill suits a Soul all sin."

11. "A! Blame Me Not, If No Despair"

Date: before February 1688, when it was published in Behn's *Lycidus, or The Lover in Fashion*

Attribution: No manuscript copies are known to survive, but the lyric was included in Behn's miscellany under the title "A Song by Robert Wolseley Esq." (p. 80). For the plausibility of Behn's attributions to Wolseley, see item 9. Also attributed to Wolseley in *The Fifth Part of Miscellany Poems* (1716), significantly a Tonson publication (see items 8 and 12), but given to "the Honourable W. Wh—n, Esq." (i.e., William Wharton) in Gildon's *A New Miscellany* (1701). This was probably a mistake deriving from their association in the period of their poetical quarrel; alternatively, the lyric may have been a collaborative effort by Wolseley and Wharton if it dates from before their break in 1685.

12. "On the Prince's Going to England, with an Army to Restore the Government"

Hunc saltem everso Iuvenem succurrere Sæclo
Ne prohibete——Virg. Georg. Lib. I.

Once more a FATHER and a SON falls out,
The world involving in their high Dispute:
Remotest *India's Fate* on *theirs* depends,
And *Europe*, trembling, the Event attends.
Their Motions ruling every other State,
As on the Sun's the lesser Planets wait.
Power warms the Father, *Liberty* the Son,
A Prize, well worth th'uncommon Venture run:
Him a false Pride to Govern unrestrain'd,
And by bad Means, bad Ends to be attain'd;
All Bars of Property drives headlong through,
Millions oppressing to Inrich a few.
Him Justice urges, and a Noble Aim
To equal his Progenitors in Fame,
And make his Life as Glorious as his Name.
For Law and Reason's Power he does engage,
Against the Reign of Appetite and Rage.

There all the License of unbounded Might:
Here conscious Honour, and deep sence of Right,
Immortal Enmity to Arms incite.
Greatness the one, Glory the other Fires,
This only can deserve what that desires.
This strives for all that e're to men was dear,
And he for what they most abhor and fear.
Cæsar and *Pompey*'s Cause by *Cato* thought
So ill adjudg'd, to a new Tryal's brought,
Again at last *Pharsalia* must be fought.
Ye fatal Sisters! now to *Right* be Friends,
And make Mankind for *Pompey*'s Fate amends.
In *Orange*'s Great Line, 'tis no new thing,
To Free a Nation, and Uncrown a King.

Date: November 1688–1689

Attribution: The poem was anonymous when first published as a broadside by Jacob Tonson in 1689 (the text given above) but subsequently attributed to Wolseley in *The First Part of Miscellany Poems,* vol. 1 (1716), 312–13. The attribution is convincing not only because Tonson had previously issued the broadside but also because the title of the poem refers to William "Going" to England (as opposed to "Coming") and Wolseley was indeed in Europe when William set sail from The Hague on November 4, 1688, having fled to the Continent after killing Wharton in their duel. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that Wolseley met the future William III around this time: a letter from Wolseley's friend Charles Gerard, Viscount Brandon, to William's closest adviser, Hans Willem von Bentinck, dated 1688, survives among the Portland papers at Nottingham University (PwA468); in it, Brandon asks Bentinck to introduce Wolseley to the Prince.[70] The highly polished state of the poem suggests Wolseley took particular care over it, and it may have helped persuade William to pardon him in June 1689.

13. "Aeneas His Meeting with Dido in the Elyzian Fields. Being a Translation of Part of the Sixth Book of Virgils Aeneids, Beginning at *Hic quoque durus Amor, & c.*"

Date: 1688–92

Attribution: Published under Wolseley's name in the third Dryden–Tonson miscellany, *Examen Poeticum* (1693), 138–42, the only poem explicitly associated with him in print during his lifetime. No manuscript copies survive, and it has never been attributed to anyone else. The attribution is convincing since

70. I am grateful to Ms. Jayne Amat of the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections for answering my inquiries about this letter.

Tonson was Wolseley's publisher of choice in the years between his return from the Continent in 1688 and the beginning of his diplomatic service abroad in 1692.

Poems Probably Co-authored by Wolseley

14. "An Allusion to Tacitus"

Date: 1679–80. See above, pp. 685–89.

Tacit: De Vit: Agro:
Ipsi Brittanni dilectum at Tributa et Impigre abeunt, si injuriae absint, has aegre tolerant, iam domiti ut pareant nondum ut serviant.

An Allusion:

The freeborn English Generous and wise,
Hate chains, but do not government despise:
Rights of the Crown, Tributes and taxes they,
When lawfully exacted freely pay.
Force they abhor, and wrongs they scorn to beare.
More guided by their judgement than their fear,
Justice with them is never held severe.
Here pow'r by Tyranny was never got,
Laws may perhaps enslave 'em, force cannot.
Rash councells here have still the worst effect,
The surest way to Reigne, is to protect.
Kings are least safe in their unbounded will
Joyn'd with the wretched pow'r of doing ill.
Forsaken most when they'r most absolute
Laws guard the Man, and only bind the Brute.
To force that guard, with the worst foe to joyn
Can never be a prudent Kings designe.
What King wou'd change to be a Catiline,
Break his own laws, stake an unquestion'd throne,
Conspire with vassals to Usurp his own?
Tis rather some base favourites vile pretence
To Tyrannize at the wrong'd kings expence.
Let France grow proud beneath their Tyrants Lust
While the rack'd people crawl and lick the dust:
The mighty Genius of this Isle disdaines
Ambitious Slavery and Golden chaines.
England to servile yoakes did never bow:
What Conquerours n'ere presum'd, who dare do now?

Roman nor Norman ever Could pretend
To have enslav'd, but made this Isle their friend.

Attribution: Entitled "The Charrecter of the English by Mr Wolseley" in Beinecke, MS Osborn c. 244, 290–91, and "A Charater of the English. By Robt. Wolseley, Esq." in Beinecke, MS Osborn c. 94, fols. 124v–25r, two copies that appear to date from the eighteenth century. Unattributed in the other eleven manuscripts presently known to survive, although its presence in the "Hartwell" and "Harbin" manuscripts of work by Rochester raises a presumption of his involvement. With one exception, all the various printed editions are also anonymous, from the broadside "The Genius of True Englishmen" issued in 1680 by the Whig bookseller Francis Smith, through the texts entitled "The Character of a True English-Man" in *Rome Rhym'd to Death* (1683), "A Character of *Old England*, in Allusion to a Piece of Tacitus *de Vita Agricolae*" in *The Muses Farewel to Popery & Slavery* (1689, 1690), and "A Character of the English" in installments of *Poems on Affairs of State* in 1697, 1702, and 1703. The exception is the text printed, again as "A Character of the English," in John Nichols's *A Select Collection of Poems, with Notes Biographical and Historical*, 8 vols. (1780–82), 1:138. That text was set up from a copy of *Poems on Affairs of State* (1703), and the attribution to Wolseley appears to be independent of Beinecke, MS Osborn c. 244, since the text in the latter contains a unique variant at line 28. But the ultimate source of these various eighteenth-century ascriptions of the poem to Wolseley remains untraced—one of a number of questions arising from the tortuous textual tradition of the "Allusion" that await elucidation. For the internal and external evidence indicating that Wolseley had a part in the creation of at least the thirty-line "Harbin" version of the poem (the text given above), which seems to have been put into circulation in the early autumn of 1680; see above pp. 685–89.

15. "Prologue to *Valentinian*, Spoken by Mrs Cook the Second Day"

["Tis not your easiness to give Applause"]

Date: 1683–84. *Valentinian* was first performed at the Hall Theatre in Whitehall on February 11, 1684.

Attribution: The complicated genesis of this prologue is described in the anonymous lampoon "A Letter to Julian" (preserved, for instance, in BL, MSS Harley 7317 and 7319), where Wolseley is said to have taken the leading role in its composition, assisted by "Wharton" (probably William), George Etherege, Sir William Soame, and John Grubham Howe.

Poems Possibly by Wolseley

16. "No More Will I My Passion Hide"

    Date: before February 1688

    Attribution: anonymous in Behn's *Lycidus* (p. 83), but entitled "Song. By Mr. Wolsly" in Gildon's *A New Miscellany* (1701). See items 9 and 10. Another of the songs Wharton may have been thinking of when he complained about Wolseley "prophaning" music by Robert King: a setting appears in King's *Songs for One, Two, and Three Voices* (1692).

17. "Let Humble Souls Their Flames Conceal"

    Undatable

    Attribution: Entitled "Song. By Mr. Wolsley" in *Examen Miscellaneum Consisting of Verse and Prose* (1702), 3, apparently the unique text. Nothing is known about the compiler of this miscellany, but some of its attributions, notably those to Rochester, are unreliable.

18. "Say Nymph Divine for Whom I Burn"

    Undatable

    Attribution: First published in *Comes Amoris. The Fourth Book* (1693) in a setting by Mr. Courteval with "Words by Mr. Ousley" (p. 11) and subsequently collected as "Song. By Mr. Wolsely" in *Examen Miscellaneum Consisting of Verse and Prose* (1702), 86.

Poems Doubtfully Associated with Wolseley

19. Epilogue to *The Spanish Fryar*

    ["There's none I'am sure, who is a Friend to Love"]

    Date: before November 1, 1680, when Dryden's tragicomedy *The Spanish Fryar or, The Double Discovery* was first performed by the Duke's Company at Dorset Garden

    Attribution: In the printed text of Dryden's play, the epilogue is billed as "By a Friend of the Author's." Wolseley was identified as the "friend" in question by Hugh Macdonald in *John Dryden: A Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana* (Oxford, 1939), 123. Although Macdonald offered no evidence for this claim, it has been accepted by all Dryden's modern editors. Dryden was certainly friends with Wolseley's father Sir Charles Wolseley and indeed stayed at his estate in the late summer of 1681 around the time *The Spanish Fryar* was probably completed. James Winn speculated, in *John Dryden and his World*

(New Haven, Conn., 1997), that Wolseley may have been present during this visit (p. 332). In later years, Wolseley was influenced by Dryden's famous tripartite model of translation in the preface to *Ovid's Epistles* (1684) and reused his ideas about satire in the preface to *Valentinian* (1685), but there is no proof they were ever friends. A slightly shortened version of the epilogue, lacking the first four lines, was subsequently published in *Poems on Affairs of State* (1704), where it was attributed to Dryden himself under the title "Satyr upon the Romish Confessors"; this version also survives in one scribal copy now preserved as MS f. 553 at the University of Chicago (p. 194). The attribution may have been a simple mistake deriving from Dryden's authorship of the play; alternatively, if the satirical version circulated after Dryden's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1686, it may have been designed to embarrass the former laureate over his change of religious allegiance. The original epilogue is a lethally effective performance, more adept in its couplet rhetoric than any other piece that can be securely attributed to Wolseley. Even were contemporary evidence to emerge linking Wolseley with the poem, the likelihood would remain that Dryden himself took the lead in composing it and used Wolseley as a blind to disguise his involvement in so luridly sectarian a production.

20. "Die, Wretched Damon, Die Quickly to Ease Her"

Date: Before August 1684, when the "answer" poem, probably by Dorset, beginning "Damon, if thou wilt believe me" was sung in a performance of Nahum Tate's *A Duke and No Duke*

Attribution: Given to Wolseley in Beinecke, MS Osborn b. 204, 81, but more probably by his fellow Rochester disciple and collaborator on the *Valentinian* prologue (see item 15) John Grubham Howe, to whom the lyric is attributed in four manuscripts. See *The Poems of Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset*, ed. Brice Harris (New York, 1979), 83–84.

21. "A New Address to Mr. Bayes on His Late Conversion to the Church of Rome"

["Hast thou at last that mother church too quitted"]

Date: 1685–86. The exact date of Dryden's conversion is unknown, but John Evelyn reports in his *Diary* that the poet was attending Mass in January 1686. See *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins, vol. 3, *1686–1693* (London, 2000), 32–33.

Attribution: Anonymous in both the printed texts—in *The Muses Farewel to Popery and Slavery* (1690) and *Poems on Affairs of State . . . the Second Part* (1697)—and also three of the four surviving manuscript copies, but ascribed to "M^{r} Worseley" in Beinecke, MS Osborn fb 70, 241. This copy is an ornate scriptorium "separate," in a calligraphic professional hand, folded lengthwise as if for

sale by a street vendor; the attribution itself is in a second hand, seemingly not that of the copyist, and appears on the title panel. However, it is put in some doubt by the content of the poem. While it is entirely probable that Wolseley took a dim view of Dryden's conversion, whether or not the two of them had previously been friends, it seems unlikely he would have chosen the particular line of attack adopted in this violent lampoon. Its anonymous author was apparently a Protestant radical who exploits Dryden's conversion as a pretext to tar all loyalists with the brush of popery: "Thou tell'st us (now at last) what *Loyal* means, / See here, ye sons, who serv'd the same vile cause / The end of Faith, that hangs on Human Laws." But in 1686–87, having recanted his Whig principles during the "Tory Reaction," Wolseley was himself one of those who served the "vile cause" of loyalism.