

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Writing the English Republic

POETRY, RHETORIC AND POLITICS, 1627–1660



The English republic of the mid-seventeenth century is traditionally viewed as an aberration in political and literary history. In this magisterial history of republican political culture, David Norbrook argues that the English republican imagination had deep roots in humanist literary culture, and that the 'triumph of Augustanism' after 1660 marked a sharp reaction against powerful anti-Augustan trends. Key texts by Marvell and Milton, including *Paradise Lost*, are set in the context of previously neglected writings by Edmund Waller, George Wither, Thomas May and many others, showing how writers re-imagined English political and literary culture without kingship. The book draws on extensive archival research, bringing to light exciting and neglected manuscript and printed sources. Offering a bold new narrative of the whole period, and a timely reminder that England has a republican as well as royalist heritage, *Writing the English Republic* will be of compelling interest to historians as well as literary scholars.

David Norbrook's publications include *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (1984) and *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse* (1992), as well as numerous articles and reviews in literary and historical journals. He has held a British Academy Research Readership and visiting fellowships in the United States, and has made a lecture tour of Australia supported by the British Council. Fellow and Tutor in English at Magdalen College, Oxford since 1978, he was appointed in 1998 to a Professorship at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Writing the English Republic

POETRY, RHETORIC AND POLITICS,
1627–1660



DAVID NORBROOK



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660
 David Norbrook
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© David Norbrook 1999, 2000

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1999
 First paperback edition 2000

Typeface Adobe Minion 10/12.5pt *System* QuarkXPress® [SE]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Norbrook, David, 1950-

Writing the English Republic: poetry, rhetoric, and politics, 1627-1660 / David Norbrook.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 63275 7 (hardback)

1. English poetry – Early modern, 1500–1700 – History and criticism.
2. Great Britain – History – Civil War, 1642–1649 – Literature and the war.
3. Rhetoric – Political aspects – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
4. Politics and literature – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
5. Milton, John, 1608–1674 – Political and social views.
6. Republicanism – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
7. Political poetry, English – History and criticism. 8. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1649–1660. 9. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1649–1660. 10. English poetry – Roman influences. 11. Republicans in literature.

I. Title.

PR545.H5N67 1998

821'.409358 – dc21 98-3856 CIP

ISBN 0 521 63275 7 hardback

ISBN 0 521 78569 3 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2004

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

FOR BERNARD AND HEATHER O'DONOGHUE

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents**List of illustrations [viii]**Acknowledgements [ix]**Note on references and abbreviations [xii]*Introduction: acts of oblivion
and republican speech-acts [1]

1. Lucan and the poetry of civil war [23]
 2. The king's peace and the people's war, 1630–1643 [63]
 3. Rhetoric, republicanism and the public sphere:
Marten, Waller and Milton, 1641–1644 [93]
 4. Uncivil peace: politics and literary culture, 1645–1649 [140]
 5. Defending the Commonwealth, 1649–1653 [192]
 6. Double names: Marvell and the Commonwealth [243]
 7. King Oliver? Protectoral Augustanism
and its critics, 1653–1658 [299]
 8. Republicanizing Cromwell [326]
 9. Culture and anarchy? The revival and eclipse
of republicanism, 1658–1660 [379]
 10. *Paradise Lost* and English republicanism [433]
- Appendix: Henry Marten's poem to Cromwell [496]

Index [497]

Illustrations

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. <i>Lucan's Pharsalia</i> , trans. Thomas May, 1627, sig. Q2r. By permission of the British Library (1068.i.6) | page 46 |
| 2. Title-page to Thomas May (trans.), <i>Lucan's Pharsalia</i> . By permission of the British Library (1068.i.6.) | 47 |
| 3. Title-page to Thucydides, <i>Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre</i> , trans. Thomas Hobbes, 1629. By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford (D2.7 Art. Seld.) | 61 |
| 4. Engraving of Inigo Jones's additions to St Paul's Cathedral, from William Dugdale, <i>The History of Saint Pauls Cathedral</i> , 1658, p. 164. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library | 75 |
| 5. Title-page to John Milton, <i>Areopagitica</i> , 1644. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library | 126 |
| 6. <i>Euripidis tragoediae</i> , ed. Gulielmus Xylandrus, Basel, 1558, pp. 424–5. By permission of the British Library (999.a.12) | 128 |
| 7. Henry and William Lawes, <i>Choice Psalmes</i> , 1648, sig. a1v: poems by Milton and Harrington. By permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford | 161 |
| 8. Great Seal of the Commonwealth, 1651, reverse. By permission of the British Library (Seal xxxiv.17) | 195 |
| 9. Title-page to Anthony Weldon [?], <i>A Cat May Look upon a King</i> , 1652. By permission of the British Library (E1408.2) | 198 |
| 10. Title-page of Thomas May, <i>A Continuation of Lucans Historicall Poem</i> , 1650. By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford (2978f.5(2)) | 227 |
| 11. Henry Marten, by Sir Peter Lely. By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London | 258 |
| 12. Engraving prefatory to Samuel Chidley, <i>The Dissembling Scot</i> , 1652. By permission of the British Library (E652.13) | 259 |
| 13. Title-page of Marchamont Nedham's translation of Selden, <i>Of the Dominion, or Ownership of the Sea</i> , 1652. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library | 295 |
| 14. Henry Marten, manuscript poem to Oliver Cromwell. By permission of the British Library (Additional MS 71, 532, fol. 16r) | 318 |
| 15. Title-page of [Henry Dawbeny?], <i>The Pourtraiture of His Royal Highness, Oliver</i> , 1659. By permission of the British Library (1093.c.51) | 381 |
| 16. <i>The Woefull Mirrour of Monarchy</i> . By permission of the British Library (669f6.29) | 460 |

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

As this book goes to press, it becomes a valediction, and an opportunity to express my gratitude, to Magdalen College and to the Oxford University English Faculty. They greatly facilitated this project in many general ways and in particular by granting terms of leave and by financial assistance. I have been very fortunate to be able to call on the services of Joad Raymond and Frank Romany for teaching in my absence. Teaching is, of course, an essential stimulus to thinking about what really matters in research and several generations of undergraduate and graduate students have helped me here. Early parts of the book were rehearsed in classes on 'Literature and the English Revolution' with my colleague Nigel Smith, to whose book on the 1640s and 1650s the present study is in so many ways complementary, and who has generously shared much work in progress. Involvement in the Oxford BA in Modern History and English has been invaluable in exploring the problems and possibilities of interdisciplinary work. I have benefited greatly from teaching for the Classics and English BA with my colleague Oliver Taplin and from discussions with Matthew Leigh, Andrew Laird, Ingrid de Smet, and Ben Tipping, who have generously helped out in difficulties with Latin texts. My Magdalen colleague John Fuller has always been a pleasure to work with. Magdalen College Library has been an invaluable resource over the years and I am grateful to Christine Ferdinand and Sally Speirs for much help. The bulk of the research was done in the Bodleian Library, which has made it particularly pleasant to be able to write of the Bodleian's honourable dealings with that notorious republican Milton; the Library's staff have been unfailingly helpful. I have also benefited (on this side of the Atlantic) from the co-operation of the staff of the Cambridge, Leeds and Newcastle University Libraries, the Oxford University English and History Faculty Libraries, the Hartlib Papers Project, the University of Sheffield, the Public Record Office, the Nottinghamshire Archives, the National Library of Scotland, and above all of the British Library. The book was finished while I was the fortunate recipient of a British Academy Research Readership for a complementary project on Lucy Hutchinson.

I began work on this book at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC. I am very grateful to the English-Speaking Union for the award of a

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Fellowship, and to the Library for providing a British scholar with such a welcoming introduction to a wider republic of letters. Some of the material for the book was tried out in a graduate seminar at the City University of New York, which provided another stimulating environment. At a concluding stage, material from the book was presented in a series of seminars at the Newberry Library, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am very grateful to Mary Beth Rose, then Director of The Center for Renaissance Studies, for her help in making this possible, and to all the participants for such challenging debate. On various visits to the United States, I have also benefited from using the libraries of the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Princeton University, and the New York Public Library. The length of the book's gestation makes it impossible to thank all those who have provided thoughtful responses to the presentation of early versions in Britain, Italy, the USA and Australia.

Material has been incorporated from the following articles, in some of which fuller documentation of some points may be found, and to whose publishers I am grateful for permissions:

Chapter 1: 'Lucan, Thomas May, and the Creation of a Republican Literary Culture', in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Macmillan, 1994), pp. 45–66.

Chapter 3: 'Milton's *Areopagitica*, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere', in Richard Burt (ed.), *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism and the Public Sphere* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 3–33; copyright 1994 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota.

Chapters 2 and 4: 'Levelling Poetry: George Wither and the English Revolution, 1642–1649', *English Literary Renaissance* 21 (1991), 217–56; reprinted with permission of the editors.

Chapter 6: 'Marvell's "Horatian Ode" and the Politics of Genre', in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (eds.), *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 147–69, and 'Is Marvell's "Horatian Ode" a Horatian Ode?', in William Lamont (ed.), *Religion, Renaissance and Civil War, Proceedings of the Folger Institute Center for the History of British Political Thought*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC, 1990), pp. 221–58.

Chapter 7: David Norbrook, 'Lucy Hutchinson versus Edmund Waller: An Unpublished Reply to Waller's *A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector*', *The Seventeenth Century* 11 (1996), 61–86.

Chapters 8 and 9: "'Safest in Storms": George Wither in the 1650s', in David Margolies and Maroula Joannou (eds.), *Heart of the Heartless World: Essays in Cultural Resistance in Memory of Margot Heinemann* (Pluto Press, 1995), pp. 19–32.

This book attempts to show the importance of setting individual writers in

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

xi

a larger process of agency, and can claim no exception for itself. When it was begun, republicanism was wholly outside the mainstream of British politics. Writing the book has been stimulated by a process of change which has seen the re-emergence of constitutional reform as a significant agenda, and Henry Marten's being honoured not only by a plaque in Oxford but by giving his name to a musical group. This book could not have been undertaken without the magnificent contributions of J. G. A. Pocock, Quentin Skinner and Blair Worden to the history of republicanism, and without Christopher Hill's reminders of a world larger than that of republicanism. I am of course much indebted to a large quantity of literary criticism, full acknowledgement of which would have swollen the book to monstrous proportions. I have tried to point readers towards a good selection of the most significant recent work, while also paying tribute to earlier work in a field which has not always seen linear progress.

Some more specific thanks remain. Sandra Sherman stimulated a rethinking of a lot more than Milton. Margaret Williamson helped me to think about the wider aims of academic writing and to keep on course in some difficult times. I warmly thank the following, who commented on some or all of the typescript or whose ideas have contributed particularly to its shaping: Sarah Barber, Peter Davidson, Jim Holstun (whose correspondence over the years has been an inspiration), Lorna Hutson, Nicholas von Maltzahn, Annabel Patterson, whose intellectual example and personal support have done much to make this book possible, Tom Paulin, Joad Raymond, John Safford and Erica Sheen. To my wife, Sharon Achinstein, I am grateful, amongst very many things, for struggling with an unconscionable number of 'final' drafts. The three readers for Cambridge University Press made enormously helpful reports, and David Loewenstein and Jonathan Scott, in yielding up their anonymity, have enabled me to thank them personally. Margaret Hanbury gave valuable advice over publication. Josie Dixon has brought the book over the pre-publication hurdles with impressive speed and efficiency. I also thank my copy-editor, Clare Richards. Katherine Lambert saved the book from many infelicities at a late stage. Whatever the multiplicity of agencies, I am happy to take sole responsibility for remaining errors.

Writing the English Republic is dedicated to two friends and colleagues whom it has been one of the great good fortunes of my life to know. They have been spared any direct involvement in the book, but their sustaining friendship over many years helped to make it possible.

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Note on references and abbreviations*

The aim of the references is to make it as easy as possible to understand texts in their historical moment. Where practicable, citations follow the original spelling, though the forms of transliteration vary slightly in drawing on such a range of texts and editions. Except in some cases where there is a modern edition providing contextual material, I have given identifying numbers: British Library pressmarks (those beginning with E or 669) for books included in George Thomason's collection from the years 1641–61 (though I have not always used the Thomason copy), and *STC* (numerical) and Wing (alphanumeric) numbers for non-Thomason books up to 1640 and 1641 respectively. All three collections are available on microfilm.

Place of publication is London where not otherwise indicated. Dates are given Old Style, save that the year is taken to begin on 1 January. Quotations in Greek have been transliterated.

- ABL* John Aubrey, *'Brief Lives', Chiefly of his Contemporaries*, ed. Andrew Clark, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1898)
- Beal* Peter Beal, *Index of Literary Manuscripts, Volume II: 1625–1700, Part 2: Lee-Wycherley* (1993)
- BL* British Library
- CJ* *The Journals of the House of Commons*
- CL* *The Letters of Sir Cheney Culpeper, 1641–1657*, ed. M. J. Braddick and Mark Greengrass, in *Seventeenth-Century Political and Financial Papers*, Camden 5th Series VII (1996)
- Corns, UV* Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640–1660* (Oxford, 1992)
- CSPD* Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series
- Hill, WR* *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, vol. 1: Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Brighton, 1985)
- HMC* Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports
- HP* Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers. With the exception of *CL*, above, I have used the reproductions prepared by the Hartlib Papers Project, *The Hartlib Papers on CD-ROM* (Ann Arbor and Godstone, 1995), with occasional silent omissions of repeated words.
- HPW* *The Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977)
- Hutchinson* Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland (Oxford, 1973)

Cambridge University Press

0521785693 - Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660

David Norbrook

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Notes on references and abbreviations*

xiii

- JMLR *The Life Records of John Milton*, ed. J. Milton French, 5 vols. (New Brunswick, 1949–58)
- May *Lucan's Pharsalia*, second edition, trans. Thomas May (1631; STC16888)
- ML Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, Marten-Loder Papers
- MPL *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, third edition, revised by Pierre Legouis with the collaboration of E. E. Duncan-Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971)
- MPW *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. in 10 (New Haven and London, 1953–82)
- MQ *Milton Quarterly*
- MR David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1995)
- Norbrook, PP David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (1984)
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*
- PRO SP Public Record Office, State Papers
- RLCS David Wootton (ed.), *Republicanism, Liberty and Commercial Society, 1649–1776* (Stanford, 1994)
- Smith, LR Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England 1640–1660* (New Haven and London, 1994)
- SR *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers; from 1640–1708 A.D.*, ed. G. E. Briscoe Eyre, 3 vols. (1913–14)
- STC A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland: And of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, second edition, 3 vols. (1976–91)
- TSP *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. Thomas Birch, 7 vols. (1742)
- Tuck Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993)
- Williams, 'Marten' C. M. Williams, 'The Political Career of Henry Marten with special reference to the origins of republicanism in the Long Parliament', unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1954
- Wing Donald Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books printed in Other Countries 1641–1700*, second edition, 3 vols. (New York, 1972–94).
- WMW *Miscellaneous Works of George Wither*, 6 vols. (Manchester, 1872–78; rptd New York, 1967). Page references are to individual works within each volume.
- WP *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London and New York, 1893; references are to the two-volume reprint, 1905)