

University of Tennessee Research Guides
John Dryden Materials at Special Collections



Compiled
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Brief Biographical Note

John Dryden (1631-1700) was born at the vicarage of Aldwinkle All Saints in Northamptonshire. Though the family's connections were to the puritans, his education at Westminster School was High Church Anglican under the royalist educator Dr. Richard Busby. On the other hand the master of his college – Trinity College – at Cambridge was the puritan preacher Thomas Hill. And it was his puritan connections – principally his cousin Sir Gilbert Pickering being Cromwell's Lord Chamberlain – that secured him employment in London in the Secretary of States Office.

Dryden's literary career began before his arrival in London, while he was still in school. His first published work was in 1649, an elegy on the death of his royalist friend and school fellow Lord Hastings. The next year some of his verses were included in the volume *Epigrams*. Perhaps his most notable work during the Civil War and Commonwealth period was his *Heroic Stanzas* (1659) written to the memory of Oliver Cromwell and modeled on the poems of John Donne. Though a tribute to Cromwell, the poems contained, as one critic noted, "an under-current of strong contumacious protest against the irregularities tolerated by the authorities." Within a year Dryden was to be enthusiastically welcoming the restoration of the monarchy and the return of Charles II with his work *Astraea Redux*.

With restoration of the monarchy British theater began to revive and Dryden participated in the revival. His first play (*The Wild Gallant*) was presented in 1663 and his last (*Love Triumphant*) in 1694. His plays run from tragedy through comedy and were a staple of Restoration theater.

In addition to plays, Dryden was also a notable poet. His best known works are his religious works *Religio Laici*, setting forth the faith of a layman, and *The Hind and the Panther*, dealing with his conversion to Catholicism. Dryden is also noted for his satires, poetic attacks on various subjects that have earned his scorn: Lord Shaftesbury's failed attempt to substitute the King's bastard son, the Duke of Monmouth for the Duke of York in the royal succession (*Absalom and Achitophel*); the people who had a medal struck to memorialize Shaftesbury's acquittal for treason (*The Medal; a Satyre against Seditious*); his former friend Thomas Shadwell, who had poetically attacked Dryden for not supporting the Whigs (*MacFlecknoe, or a Satyr Upon the True-Blew Protestant Poet T. S.*). Sometimes these literary quarrels took more concrete form. The Earl of Rochester, a skilled poet himself, once hired a gang to beat Dryden for some stanzas attacking the earl that Dryden had been rumored to have contributed to Mulgrave's *Essay on Satire*.

His reputation for poetry was such that Charles II made him Poet Laureate. When James II had been driven from the throne, Dryden refused to renounce Catholicism and so was stripped of this position and others by the new monarchs William and Mary.

In the last years of his life Dryden's literary effort concentrated on translations of classical literature. His translation of *Plutarch's Lives*, done in conjunction with others, is still the standard translation of that work. His translation of the complete works of Virgil was something of literary event at the time and gained him, according to his disciple Alexander Pope, twelve hundred pounds.

On 1 May 1700 John Dryden died in his home on Gerrard Street, London. He was buried on the 13th in Westminster Abbey, considered by his peers as the greatest poet of the time.

Chronology

Year	Events	Events in Dryden's Life
1631	John Donne dies.	Dryden born 9 August 1631 to Erasmus and Mary Dryden.
1632	Gustavas Adolphus dies at battle of Luetzen. Christopher Wren born.	
1633	Galileo recants.	
1635	Royal Postal Service opened to public.	
1636	Louis XIV born.	
1641	Sir Anthony Van Dyck dies.	
1642	English Civil War starts. Puritan's in parliament succeed banning theaters.	
1644	Last Ming Emperor commits suicide.	Dryden enters Westminster School as King's scholar.
1647	Puritans pass law allowing magistrates to tear down stages and galleries. Actors caught acting were to be whipped and the members of the audience fined.	
1649	Execution of Charles I.	Publishes first poem in <i>Lacrymae Musarum</i> .
1650		Enters Trinity College, Cambridge.
1651	Charles II flees to France.	
1653	Oliver Cromwell declared Lord Protector.	
1654		Graduates at top of class at Trinity. Dryden's father dies.
1657		Moves from Cambridge to London.
1658	Oliver Cromwell dies. Richard Cromwell Lord Protector.	
1659	Cromwell quits.	<i>Heroic Stanzas</i> .
1660	Charles II restored. Royal Society of London formed.	<i>Astraea Redux</i> .
1661		<i>A Panegyric on the Coronation</i> .
1662	First Punch and Judy show.	Dryden elected fellow of Royal Society.
1663		Dryden marries Lady Elizabeth Howard. <i>The Wild Gallant</i> .
1664		<i>Rival Ladies</i> .

1665	Great Plague.	<i>The Indian Queen.</i>
1666	Great Fire of London.	<i>The Indian Emperour.</i> Dryden expelled from Royal Society for nonpayment of dues.
1667	Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> is published.	<i>Annus Mirabilis.</i> <i>Secret Love.</i> <i>The State of Innocence and Fall of Man.</i> <i>The Tempest.</i> <i>Sir Martin Mar-all.</i>
1668		Appointed Poet Laureate. <i>Ladies-al-a-Mode.</i> <i>Of Dramatick Poesie.</i> <i>An Evening's Love or the Mock Astrologer.</i> <i>Tyrannick Love.</i>
1669		Appointed Historiographer Royal.
1670	William Congreve born.	<i>The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards.</i>
1671	<i>Paradise Regained.</i>	
1672		<i>Marriage-a-la-Mode.</i>
1673		<i>The Assination, or Love in a Nunnery.</i> <i>Amboyna: a Tragedy.</i>
1674	Death of Milton.	
1676		<i>Aureng-Zebe: a Tragedy.</i>
1678	Catholics barred from parliament.	<i>All for Love: or the World Well Lost.</i>
1680		<i>The Kind Keeper.</i> <i>Ovid's Epistles Translated.</i>
1681		<i>Absalom and Achitophel.</i> <i>The Spanish Friar.</i>
1682		<i>Religio Laici.</i> <i>Macflecknoe.</i> <i>A Medall: a Satyre against Sedition.</i>
1683	Muslim invasion defeated at Vienna. Rye House plot.	<i>The Duke of Guise.</i>
1685	Death of Charles II. James II king. Monmouth's Rebellion.	<i>Albion and Albanus</i> <i>Threnodia Augustalis.</i>
1686		Converts to Catholicism. <i>Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew.</i>
1687	Newton's <i>Principia.</i>	<i>Hind and Panther.</i> <i>Song for St. Cecilia's Day.</i>
1688	James II overthrown. William & Mary assume throne.	Dryden refuses to renounce Catholicism and is stripped of being Poet Laureate. <i>Britannia Rediviva.</i>

	Peter the Great becomes tsar.	
	Thomas Shadwell made Poet Laureate.	
1689	Locke's <i>Two Treatises</i> .	
1690	Battle of the Boyne.	<i>Amphytrion.</i> <i>Don Sebastian.</i>
1691		<i>King Arthur, or the British Worthy.</i>
1692	Nahum Tate made Poet Laureate. Salem Witch Trials.	<i>Cleomenes the Spartan Heroe.</i>
1693	White's Club founded.	<i>Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire.</i>
1694	Bank of England founded.	<i>Love Triumphant.</i>
1697		<i>Works of Virgil</i> <i>Alexander's Feast or the Power of Musique.</i>
1700		<i>Fables Ancient and Modern</i> <i>The Secular Masque.</i> Dryden dies 1 May 1700 and is buried in Westminster Abbey on the 13 th .

Collected Works

The Comedies, Tragedies, and Operas Written by John Dryden,
London, J. Tonson, 1701.

PR3410.D01 (Oversized)

*The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden, Now First Collected;
With Notes and Illustrations; an Account of the Life and Writings of the Author,
Grounded on Original and Authentick Documents; and a Collection of his Letters, the
Greater Part of Which has Never Before Been Published, by Edward Malone, London, T.
Cadell, Jun. & W. Davies, 1800.*

PR3411.M25

The Dramatick Works of John Dryden. Esq.,
London, J. Tonson, 1717.

PR3412.C6 1717

The Dramatick Works of John Dryden, Esq.,
London, J. Tonson, 1718.

PR3412.C6 1718

The Dramatick Works of John Dryden, Esq.,

London, Jacob Tonson, 1725.
PR3412.C6 1725

The Dramatick Works of John Dryden, Esq.,
London, J. & R. Tonson, 1762-1763.
PR3412.C6 1762

The Miscellaneous Works of John Dryden, Esq.; Containing all his Original Poems, Tales, and Translations, London, J. & R. Tonson, 1767.
PR3412.T64

The Poetical Works of John Dryden: With the Life of the Author,
Edinburg, the Apollo Press, 1777-1778.
PR3412.T64

Miscellaneous Writings

Boileau, Despreaux, *The Art of Poetry, Written in French by the Sieur de Boileau. In Four Cantos. Made English by Sir William Soames.* Since revised by John Dryden,
London, H. Hills, 1710.
PN1043.B62 1710

Chaucer, Geoffrey, *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, Modernis'd by Mr. Betterton ... [et al.]; Published by Mr. Ogle, to Which is Prefixed the life of Chaucer, Written by Mr. Urry,* Dublin, George Faulkner, 1742.

Includes: Characters of the pilgrims, by Betterton, Ogle, and Dryden, and prologues and **tales** by Betterton, Boyse, Brooke, Cobb, Dryden, Grosvenor, Markland, Pope, and Ogle.
PR1872.B4

Dryden, John, *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay.,*
London, Henry Herringman, 1684.
PN1631.D7 1684

Of Dramatick Poesie,
London, Henry Herringman, 1693.
PN1631.D7 1693

Familiar Letters of Love, Gallantry, and Several Occasions,
London, S. Briscoe, 1718.
PN6140.L7F3

The Vindication: or, The Parallel of the French Holy-League, and the English League and Covenant, Turn'd into a Seditious Libell Against the King and His Royal Highness,

by Thomas Hunt and the Authors of the Reflections Upon the Pretended Parallel in the Play Called *The Duke of Guise*, London, Jacob Tonson, 1683.

DA448.D7

The Duel of the Stags: a Poem Written by the Honourable Sir Robert Howard; Together with an Epistle to the author by John Dryden, London, H. Hills, 1709.

PR3517.H3D8

The Pilgrim, a Comedy: As it is Acted at the Threatre-Royal, in Drury-Lane. Written Originally by Mr. Fletcher, and Now Very Much Alter'd with Several Additions. Likewise a Prologue, Epilogue, Dialogue, and Masque, Written by the Late Great Poet Mr. Dryden, Just before his Death, being the Last of his Works, London, Benjamin Tooke, 1700.

PR2507.P5V3 1700

Poems on Affairs of State: from the Times of Oliver Cromwell, to the Abdication of K. James the Second. Written by the Greatest Wits of the Age... With Some Miscellany Poems by the Same: Most Whereof Never Before Printed. Now Carefully Examined with the Originals, and Published Without any Castration, London 1702.

PR1195.H5P6 1702

Shakespeare, William, *The Tempest*, introduction by John Driden, H. Herrington, 1690.

PR2833.A2D8 1690

Plays

All for Love; or, The World Well Lost. A Tragedy, as it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal, and Written in Imitation of Shakespeare's Stile, London, Henry Herringman, 1678.

PR3415.A4 1678

Amboyna: a Tragedy, London, Henry Herringman, 1691.

PR1266.P553

Amphitryon: of the Two Sosia's. A Comedy, London, Printed at the Judge's Head, 1694.

PR3415.A6 1694

Aureng-zebe: a Tragedy Acted at the Royal Threatre, London, Henry Herringman, 1685.

PR3415.A9 1685

The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards in Two Parts; Acted at the Theatre-Royal, London, Henry Herringman, 1678.

PR3415.C6 1678

An Evening's Love, or, The Mock-Astrologer: Acted at the Theatre Royal, by His Majesties Servants, London, Henry Herringman, 1671

PR3415.E8 1671

The Kind Keeper,
London, R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1680.

PR3415.K5 1680

The Kind Keeper; or Mr. Limberham, a Comedy: as It was Acted at Duke's Theatre by His Royal Highnesses Servants, London, Bentley and Magnes, 1690.

PR3415.K5 1690

King Arthur: of, The British Worthy. A Dramatick Opera. Perform'd at the Queens Theatre by Their Majesties Servants, London, J. Tonson, 1691.

ML50.A2D83

Love Triumphant; or, Nature will Prevail. A Tragi-comedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal, by Their Majesties Servants, London, Jacob Tonson, 1694.

PR3415.L6 1694

Marriage A-La-Mode: a Comedy, As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal,
London. Henry Herringman, 1684.

Oedipus: a Tragedy as it is Acted at His Royal Highness the Duke's Theatre. The Authors Mr. Dryden and Mr. Lee, London, Tho. Chapman, 1692.

PR3415.O4 1692

Oedipus: a Tragedy as it is Acted at His Royal Highness the Duke's Theatre. The Authors Mr. Dryden and Mr. Lee, London, Tho. Chapman, 1696.

PR3415.o4 1696

Secret-Love; or The Maiden-Queen: as is Acted by his Majesties Servants at the Theatre-Royal, London, Henry Herringman, 1669.

PR3415.S4 1669

The Spanish Fryar; or, the Double Discovery. Acted by Their Majesties Servants at the Theatre Royal, London, R. Tonson, 1690.

PR3415.S7 1690

Tyrannick Love; or the Royal Martyr. A Tragedy. As is Acted by His Majesty's Servants at the Theatre-Royal. By John Dryden, Servant to His Majesty, London, H/ Herringman, 1694.

PR3415.T8 1694

The Wild Gallant; a Comedy. As it is Acted by His Majesties Servants,

London, H. Herringman, 1684.
PR3415.W5 1684

Poems

Dryden, John, *Absalom and Achitophel*,
London, J. Tonson, 1681.
PR3416.A2 1681

Annus Mirabilis. The Year of Wonders, M, DC LXVI. An Historical Poem. Also a Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of His late Sacred Majesty Charles the Second. Likewise a Panegyrick on New-Years-Day, London, Henry Herringman, 1688.
PR3415.A7 1688

Eleonora: a Panegyric Poem: Dedicated to the Memory of the Late Countess of Abington, London, J. Tonson, 1692.
PR3418.E4 1692

MacFlecknoe: a Poem. By John Dryden. With Spencer's Ghost; being a Satyr concerning Poetry. By J. Oldman, London, H. Hills, 1709.
PR1215.C8 1709

The Poetical Works of John Dryden: With the Life of the Author,
Edinburgh, Apollo Press, 1777-1778.
PR3412.T64

Religio Laici; or, a Layman's Faith. A poem.,
London, J. Tonson, 1683.
PR3420.R44 1683

Threnodia Augustalis: a Funeral-Pindarique Poem Sacred to the Happy Memory of King Charles II, London, Jacob Tonson, 1685.
PR3420.T37

Translations

Dryden, John, trans., *Fables Ancient and Modern*,
London, Jacob Tonson, 1700.
PR3418.F3 1700 (Oversized)

Juvenal, The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis, Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands. Together with the Satires of Aulus Persius Flaccus. Made English by Mr. Dryden. To Which is Prefix'd a Discourse

Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire. Dedicated to the Right Hounourable Charles, Earl of Dorset, &c, London, Jacob Tonson, 1693.

PA6447.E5D7 1693 (Oversized)

The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis. Translated into English Verse. by Mr. Dryden and Several Other Eminent Hands. Together with the Satires of Aulus Persius Flaccus. Made English by Mr. Dryden. To Which is Prefix'd a Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire. Dedicated to the Right Hounourable Charles, Earl of Dorset, &c, London, Jacob Tonson, 1697.

PA6447.E5D7 1697

The Satyrs of Decimus Junius Juvenalis; and of Aulus Persius Flaccus, London, J. Tonson, 1726.

PA6447.E5D7

Ovid, Ovid's Art of Love. Together with his Remedy of Love. Translated into English Verse by Several Eminent Hands. To Which are added, The Court of Love, a Tale of Chaucer. And The History of Love. Adorn'd with Cuts, London, J. Tonson, 1709.

PA6522.A3 1709

Ovid's Metamorphoses, in Fifteen Books. Translated by the Most Eminent Hands. Adorn'd with Sculptures, London, J. Tonson, 1727.

PA6519.M2 1727

Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives, the Dryden Plutarch, Revised by Arthur Hugh Clough, London & Toronto, J. M Dent & Sons Ltd.; New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1929.

DE7.P521 1929

Plutarch's Lives: the Translation Called Dryden's; Collected from the Greek and Revised by A. H. Clough, Philadelphia, John D. Morris, 1860.

DE7.P5 1860

Virgil, The Works of Virgil/ Translated by John Dryden, London, Thomas Allman, 1831.

PA6807.A1D7 1831

Related Manuscript Collection

Tonson, Jacob, *Letters of Jacob Tonson*, edited by Lawrence Edwards.

Dr. Edwards started but did not complete an edition of Dryden's long-time publisher Jacob Tonson's letters. He left the material he gathered -- principally xeroxes of 161 Tonson letters -- to the University of Tennessee in hopes that another scholar would one day bring the project to completion.

Secondary Sources

Bredvold, Louis I., *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden: Studies in Some Aspects of Seventeenth Century Thought*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1966.

Eliot, T. S., *John Dryden, the Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic. Three Essays*, New York, T. & Elsa Holliday, 1932.

(This book has the added interest in being autographed by Eliot.)

Lowell, James Russell, *Among My Books*, Boston, Fields, Osgood & Company, 1870.

Wilson, Charles, ed., *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours of William Congreve, Esq.,: Interspersed with Miscellaneous Essays, Letters and Characters, Written by Him; Also Some Curious Memoirs of Mr. Dryden and his Family, with a Character of Him and His Writings, by Mr. Congreve. Compiled from their Respective Originals by Charles Wilson*, London, [s. n.], 1730.