Richard Lovelace:
Royalist Poetry in Context,
1639–1649

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

July 2010
I, Susan Alice Clarke, hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated in the customary manner and to the best of my knowledge and belief, this work is my own and it has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

.....................................................    July 2010

S.A Clarke
For

Allen and Mary Pickering

_In memoriam_
Acknowledgments

Many people have helped me to bring this study to completion. First, my supervisor, Dr Ian Higgins, has overseen the project from its inception. He has been patient and generous with his valuable advice. He has also encouraged further effort. I thank him for all aspects of his assistance. I could not have hoped for a better supervisor.

The Australian National University has supported my work through the provision of travel grants which facilitated visits to British research institutions, primarily the Bodleian Library, Oxford; The National Archives; and the Centre for Kentish Studies. I also profited from time spent at the British Library; the London Metropolitan Archives; and the University of Cambridge Library. Dr Johanna Parker, Librarian at Worcester College, Oxford, provided access to the College’s resources on Lovelace and his editor, C.H. Wilkinson. The travel grants allowed me to attend conferences at the Centre for Seventeenth-Century Studies, Durham (2003), the ‘Royalists and Royalism’ conference at Clare College, Cambridge (2004), and ‘Exile in the English Revolution’ at the University of London (2006). I delivered papers which have been partially incorporated into the thesis at the first and last of these. The collegial atmosphere and discussion at the conferences were inspiring, for which I thank the organisers and participants.

Various academics in the United Kingdom and the United States have helpfully responded to my requests for assistance. Of particular note (and without diminishing the contribution of those not named specifically), Tim Raylor has been generous with ongoing support, including reading an early version of Chapter Six, part of which was also delivered as a paper at the Australian Universities Language and Literature Association Conference in Cairns (2005). Diana Dethloff was liberal with information relating to Peter Lely. Jason Peacey, then at the History of Parliament Trust, provided a pre-publication copy of the Trust’s revealing biography of Sir William Lovelace the Elder, while David Scott provided a pre-publication copy of his paper ‘Rethinking Royalist Politics, 1642–49’. Kate Bennett provided information on the text of Aubrey’s observations on Lovelace. Jacqueline Eales was welcoming in Kent and read an early version of parts of Chapter Two. Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler provided a copy of her unpublished paper on Lovelace’s Beast.
poems. David Norbrook, Nigel Smith and Blair Worden all helped with information. Daniel Lovelace and Anthony Adolph provided copies of their biographies of Francis Lovelace and Henry Jermyn.

Most of my research was undertaken using the facilities of the Australian National University Library (Document Delivery was notably helpful) and the National Library of Australia. Staff at the British Library, the British Museum, The National Archives, Duke Humphrey’s, the Centre for Kentish Studies, the Heritage Centre at Greenwich, the National Trust, the London Metropolitan Archive and the West Sussex Records Office, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre and the Dutch Archives have all provided research assistance at various times. Staff at the Guildhall Library gave generously of their time in the search for any record of Richard Lovelace’s death. Julia McLaren of CPEDERF carried out research on my behalf at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Oxford University Press allowed the inclusion of copies of articles from Notes and Queries and the Review of English Studies in the Appendices. Worcester College, Oxford, the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Archive of the House of Lords, The National Archives and the London Metropolitan Archive gave permission for the reproduction of images of items in their collections. Janet Salisbury, Meg Heaslop and Carrie DeHaan of Biotext, Canberra, helped cheerfully and efficiently with final proof reading and layout.

At a more personal level, Dosia Reichardt, who also studied Lovelace, has provided encouragement. David Game, Debbie Argue and I have shared the PhD experience in a way that made it much richer for me. Emily has barracked her mother along from the sidelines. Most importantly, without Peter’s moral and actual support, this project could not have been undertaken, let alone completed. I thank him. In particular, I will always remember with unexpected pleasure the summer month we spent together checking footnotes and quotations.
Plate I  John de Critz (attrib.), *Richard Lovelace [?]*, c. 1636. Worcester College, University of Oxford (reproduced with permission).
Abstract

This is a literary-critical, contextual study of important poems by Richard Lovelace (1617–1657) printed in *Lucasta* (1649). It is based on an examination of all Lovelace’s poems and manuscript remains, and of contemporary poems, pamphlets and newsbooks. Those of Lovelace’s poems selected for detailed examination emerge as activist interventions in royalist political debates of the 1630s and 1640s. Their place in the vibrant literary and polemical culture on which Lovelace drew, and to which he contributed, is as central to the study as the interpretations of the poems themselves.

Scholars have long interpreted Lovelace’s densely allusive poems as being disengaged from the royalist cause, or ‘neutralist’. I offer the first major reassessment of Lovelace’s biography since 1925. Significant new information on Lovelace’s life has come to light in manuscripts, contemporary literary and polemical texts and other printed sources, confirming Lovelace’s ongoing commitment to the royalist cause.

The poems chosen for the case studies reveal the complexities of Lovelace’s engagement with royalism. While his loyalty to the cause is constant, he is not blind to its perceived failings. Lovelace often emerges in the classical role of the poet as a source of independent counsel to his king. He invites his readers to discern meaning by constructing and juxtaposing allusions to classical, continental European and English language texts. Lovelace’s contemporaries would have been very familiar both with these texts and with the meaning(s) they had accreted over time. Lovelace’s intertextuality and fields of allusion are discussed in detail. Lovelace’s early love lyrics, ‘TO LUCASTA, Going beyond the Seas’, ‘TO LUCASTA, Going to the Warres’, ‘TO AMARANTHA, That she would dishevell her haire’ and ‘TO ALTHEA, From Prison’ emerge as engaging with the royal discourses of honnête platonic love and chivalric honour to which they demonstrably belong. In doing so, these poems contest the courtly lyrics of William Habington. ‘TO ALTHEA’ also reveals Lovelace’s early interest in an activist construction of the discourse of retirement or *otium* of the kind developed by the Dutch philosopher Justus Lipsius and appropriated by George Withers and others in prison poetry of 1617.
‘TO LUCASTA. From Prison’ shows Lovelace entertaining Lipsian expressions of the concepts of ‘love’ and ‘force’ as instruments of state policy, as he engages with the debates which dominated the months leading to the outbreak of war, including that on the Nineteen Propositions. In ‘AMYNTOR from beyond the Sea to ALEXIS’ and ‘AMYNTOR’S GROVE’, Lovelace appropriates the allegorical identities of Chloris and Amyntor awarded to Charles I and Henrietta Maria in court literature, including in the songs of Henry Hughes. In doing so, he expresses his concern at the manner in which the king has allowed himself to be represented by parliamentarian propagandists as emasculated by his foreign, popish wife. I conclude with a new reading of ‘The Grasse-hopper’ in the context of royalist polemic of 1647–1648. The poem emerges as a strong statement of support for the king and the royalist cause, one which is shown to cultivate the activist, Lipsian construction of retirement shown to be prevalent in royalist polemic leading up to the recurrence of civil war in 1648.

**Note on typography and texts**

The irregular typography of the seventeenth century tracts referred to in this study helps convey their energy and spontaneity. In an effort to communicate something of this aspect of the print culture of the time, in the text, I have replicated as far as possible the spelling and typography of the original printed sources, although I have silently corrected the archaic long s, j/i and u/v.

I have used modern, standard editions of other major literary works, again replicating spelling and typography.
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Abbreviations


**CJ** *Journals of the House of Commons*

**CSPD** *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*


**LJ** *Journals of the House of Lords*


**TSP** Thomas Birch, ed., *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.*, 7 vols (London, 1742)


* Full publication details are given in the Bibliography.