Windsor-Forest

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE LORD LANSDOWN

Non injussa cano: Te nostræ, Vare, Myricæ
Te Nemus omne canet; nec Phoebo gratior ulla est
Quam sibi quæ Vari præscripsit pagina nomen.

VIRGIL

1 Thy forests, Windsor! and thy green retreats,

Based on text in The Works of Alexander Pope (1736). Pope’s own notes are enclosed in quotation marks and have his name appended to them in square brackets. Other notes are supplied (or adapted) from various modern editions and studies, with attributions as follows, but without surrounding quotation marks:


Headnote “This Poem was written at two different times: the first part of it which relates to the country, in the year 1704, at the same time with the Pastorals: the latter part was not added till the year 1713, in which it was publish’d” [Pope].

First published in 1713, when Pope received £32. 5s. from Bernard Lintot for the poem. The full composition history is extremely involved, and Pope’s note [above] obscures as much as it clarifies. The work certainly existed in one shape or form by 1707, and most of the second section (beginning at line 288) probably dates from 1712. But revision had started earlier and seemingly went on up to the time of publication. Even after this there were significant alterations introduced in the Works of 1717, the Works of 1736, and in the posthumous Works of 1751 (edited by William Warburton). A holograph version of the poem, which has been written out with great care, survives from 1712. It has a number of important divergences from the printed text: see R. M. Schmitz, Windsor Forest, 1712, a Study of the Washington University Holograph. Washington University Studies, no.21. St. Louis, 1952. [Rogers]

Pope (1688-1744) was 16 years old in 1704; he had grown up at Binfield, in Windsor Forest, about ten miles from the town of Windsor [Rogers]. The poem takes the royal preserve (continued...)
of Windsor Forest as its subject and was published on 7 March 1713, just before the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht on 11 April [Williams], which formally concluded British involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), begun in 1701 under William III (William of Orange). Engineered by the Tory ministry after ten years of war—the peace preliminaries had been signed in 1711, after which Britain had withdrawn from the fighting—the peace was nonetheless resented by many Whig supporters of the “permanent war” ethos and its terms were criticized as not achieving enough for Britain, despite the gain of Gibraltar, Minorca, and the Asiento (the contract to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies in America). After the accession of George I (in 1714) and the formation of a Whig ministry, leading members of the current Tory ministry—Robert Harley, earl of Oxford, Henry St John, viscount Bolingbroke, and the Duke of Ormonde—were impeached (in 1715).

George Granville, baron Lansdowne, (1667-1735) was a statesman and poet, as well as an early patron of Pope. He was one of the twelve men elevated to the peerage at the end of 1711 to create a Tory majority in the House of Lords. He was Secretary for War under Queen Anne from 1710 and, in 1713, he was appointed Treasurer to the Household—but with the accession of George I, he fell from favor. He was confined to the Tower of London from 1715 to 1717 under suspicion of Jacobite sympathies, and spent most of his life abroad after his release [I. R. F. Gordon. A Preface to Pope. 2nd edn. London: Longman, 1993. 258]. Pope may have originally intended to dedicate the poem to his mentor Sir William Trumbull [see line 256], but transferred the honor to Lord Lansdowne [Rogers].

The Latin epigraph, underlining Pope’s dedication of the poem to Granville, is from Virgil’s Eclogues, VI, 9-12: “I do not sing unbidden; of thee, Varus, our tamarisks and our groves all shall sing: no page is more pleasing to Phoebus than that which is prefixed with the name of Varus” [Williams]; another translation, “My song is no self-appointed task; all the grove of our tamarisk shrubs shall sing of you, Varus, nor is any page more agreeable to Apollo than that which is heralded by the name of Varus”; a third, “I do not sing without purpose: our tamarisks, Varus, every grove will sing of you; nor is any page more pleasing to Apollo than one that begins with the name of Varus”; Varus was a prominent military figure [Sherman]; “Varus” is probably P. Alfenus Varus, a notable jurist and patron of letters [Fairer & Gerrard].

Line 2  monarch’s] Windsor Castle, located about 20 miles west of London, was constructed on the site where King Arthur supposedly sat with his Knights of the Round Table and where William the Conqueror had built his castle. It has served as a royal residence, a burial place for many of England’s monarchs, and as the meeting place of the Knights of the Garter. [Williams]

Lines 3-4  “Originally thus,
—Chaste Goddess of the woods,
 Nymphs of the vales, and Naiads of the floods,
 Lead me thro' arching bow'rs, and glimm'ring glades

(continued...)
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands: your aid O Muses bring!
What Muse for Granville can refuse to sing?
The groves of Eden, vanish’d now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspir’d with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water, seem to strive again;
Not Chaos like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But as the world, harmoniously confus'd:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a checquer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspers'd in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend;
There wrapt in clouds the blueish hills ascend.
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,

(...continued)
Unlock your springs—.” [Pope]

Line 3  *sylvan maids*] Dryads and naiads, spirits of the trees and water. [Sherman]

Lines 7-10  Alluding to the “Eden” re-created in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, book IV. [Butt; Price]

Line 14  *harmoniously confused*] An echo of Ovid’s *discors concordia* (*Metamorphoses*, I, 433). [Price]

Line 20  *Nor . . . nor*] Neither . . . nor. [Sherman]

Line 21  *lawns*] An open space between woods; a glade. [Butt]

Line 23  *russet*] Of a reddish-brown color. [Butt]

Line 25  *purple dyes*] Heather’s purple blooms cover open moorland in late summer. [Sherman]

Lines 25-28  [Originally thus.]

“Why should I sing our better suns or air,
Whose vital draughts prevent the leach's care,
While thro' fresh fields th'enliv'ning odours breathe,

(continued...)
26        And 'midst the desart fruitful fields arise,
27        That crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,
28        Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
29        Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
30        The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
31        While by our oaks the precious loads are born,
32        And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
33        Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
34        Tho’ Gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
35        Than what more humble mountains offer here,
36        Where, in their blessings, all those Gods appear.
37        See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crown'd,
38        Here blushing Flora paints th’enamel’d ground,

(...continued)

Or spread with vernal blooms the purple heath.” [Pope]

*Line 26 desart*] ‘Formerly applied . . . to any wild or uninhabited region, including forest’ (OED). [Rogers]; cf. “waste” (line 28). [Price]

*Line 27 tufted trees*] A “small group of trees or bushes; clump” (OED) [Butt]. Pope borrows the phrase from Milton’s *L’Allegro* (1632) [Sherman].

*Line 27 corn*] Wheat. [Williams]


*Line 31 oaks*] Alluding to the (mercantile and navy) ships built of English oak which “bore” valuable spices to England [Butt]–and which allowed Britain, so Pope imagines, to “command” the realms “adorned” by the trees supplying amber and balm.

*Line 33 Olympus*] The Greek mountain where the gods dwelled. [Price]

*Line 38 enamel’d ground*] A technical phrase, referring to the process “of entirely covering metals with enamel, to form a ground for painting in vitrifiable colours . . .” The *ground* is in painting the “main surface or first coating of colour, serving as a support for other colours or a background for designs . . .” [Butt]. The phrase opens up a strand of imagery connected with heraldic and emblematic art [Rogers].
Here Ceres’ gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper’s hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.
Not thus the land appear’d in ages past,
A dreary desert and a gloomy waste,
To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
And kings more furious and severe than they;

Lines 37-39  Pan . . . Pomona . . . / . . . Flora . . . / . . . Ceres] Pan was the Greek god of shepherds, flocks and pastures; Pomona was the Roman goddess of fruit trees; Flora was the Roman goddess of flowers; Ceres was the Roman goddess of grains and vegetation. [Williams; Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 39  Ceres’ gifts] Grain crops. [Sherman]

Line 42  Stuart] Queen Anne (r. 1702-14), last of the Stuart rulers of England: the 1701 Act of Settlement stipulated that, after Anne, the succession to the throne would go to Electress Sophia of Hanover and her heirs (the future George I of England).

Line 43ff. This portion of the poem re-creates the traditional view of the tyrannies exercised by the Norman kings, especially as they were illustrated in the formation of the New Forest as a royal hunting ground by William I. The fact that so many members of the Conqueror’s family met their death in the New Forest led commentators into the mythical view that these deaths were examples of divine vengeance, taken because of the wickedness [and oppression of the “native” English population] involved in the creation of the royal preserve. This is an essential element in Pope’s vision [Butt]. In lines 47-52, the metaphor of hunting expands to all predatory use of power; tyranny and the hunt are equated with social disorder, in contrast to the “peace and plenty” of a just reign [which, for Pope, is identified with the Stuarts] [Price]. By association, the critique of the invading Norman kings (especially William I and William II, called William Rufus) is extended to the recent Dutch “invader” William of Orange (William III, r. 1688-1702) [Rogers].

Line 45  savage laws] “The Forest Laws” [Pope]. With the Norman Conquest, the forest laws and the forest courts of Normandy were introduced into England, and they resulted in a rapid and violent extension of “forest” land—that is, land outside (foris) the common law and subject to a special law, whose object was the preservation of the king’s hunting. The word “forest” was thus a legal and not a geographical term [Butt]. These laws prescribed harsh punishments, such as blinding, for poachers. They were among the list of grievances which led to Magna Carta [Fairer & Gerrard].

Line 46  kings] The Norman kings. [Williams]
47 Who claim'd the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
48 The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:
49 Cities laid waste, they storm'd the dens and caves,
50 (For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves.)
51 What could be free, when lawless beasts obey'd,
52 And ev'n the elements a Tyrant sway'd?
53 In vain kind seasons swell'd the teeming grain,
54 Soft show'rs distill'd, and suns grew warm in vain;
55 The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,
56 And famish'd dies amidst his ripen'd fields.
57 What wonder then, a beast or subject slain
58 Were equal crimes in a despotick reign?
59 Both doom'd alike, for sportive Tyrants bled,
60 But that the subject starv'd, the beast was fed.
61 Proud Nimrod first the bloody chace began,
62 A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:
63 Our haughty Norman boasts that barbarous name,
64 And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.

Line 47  *dispeopled*] Depopulated. [Sherman]

Line 50  *backward*] Unwilling. [Sherman]

Line 52  *elements*] The places inhabited by the wild creatures [Williams]. Through controlling the animals, they effectively controlled their “elements” [Sherman].

Line 55  *yields*] His crops are ravaged by the protected royal game. [Fairer & Gerrard] [Cf. the next note]

Line 56  *famish'd dies*] Because the produce is being cultivated for the game animals, not for humans. [Sherman] [Cf. the previous note]

Lines 57-58  “No wonder savages or subjects slain—
But subjects starv'd while savages were fed.
It was originally thus, but the word Savages is not so properly apply'd to beasts as to men; which occasion'd the alteration” [Pope].

Line 61  *Nimrod*] Described in Genesis 10:8-9 as “a mighty one in the earth” and a “mighty hunter before the Lord,” Nimrod was the legendary founder of the kingdoms of Babylon and Assyria. Biblical commentary characterized him as a despot and Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, XII, 24-47, likewise characterizes him as the first tyrant and hunter of men. [Price; Sherman; Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 63  *Norman*] William the Conqueror. [Price]
65 The fields are ravish'd from th'industrious swains,  
66 From men their cities, and from Gods their fanes:  
67 The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er;  
68 The hollow winds thro' naked temples roar;  
69 Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd;  
70 O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind;  
71 The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,  
72 And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.  
73 Aw'd by his Nobles, by his Commons curst,  
74 Th'Oppressor rul'd tyrannic where he durst,

Line 65 “Alluding to the destruction made in the New Forest, and the tyrannies exercis'd there by William I” [Pope]. The New Forest, in the very south of England (in Hampshire), was created by destroying the existing towns, farms, and churches. [Price; Williams]

Line 66 fanes] Temples, or churches [Williams]. William I destroyed many villages and churches in creating the New Forest. He was sharply criticized for demolishing God’s houses to make dens for wild beasts [Sherman]. Pat Rogers suggests, however, that: Pope’s imagination has leapt forward from the Norman yoke to the destruction of abbeys during the Reformation [Rogers]. [See also note to line 72, below]

Lines 65-66 “Translated from
Templa adimit divis, fora civibus, arva colonis.
by an old monkish writer, I forget who.” [Pope] The ‘monkish writer’ is quoted in William Camden’s Britannia, which had been translated and re-edited in 1695: it was one of the key books of the age and served as Pope’s source for much of his information about the forest laws of the Normans. [Rogers]

Lines 67-72 Recalls God’s curse on Babylon, Isaiah, 13:19-22 (see, esp., verses 21-22: “But wilde beastes of the desert shall lye there, and their houses shalbe full of dolefull creatures, and owles shall dwell there, and Satyres shall daunce there. / And the wilde beastes of the llands shal cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces”). [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 70 hind] Female deer. [Sherman]

Line 71 obscene] Loathsome [Williams]; filthy, foul, disgusting [Rogers].

Line 72 quires] The chancel or choirs stalls, often screened off from the rest of the church [Fairer & Gerrard]; Pope deliberately uses archaic spelling. His description of “quires,” “broken columns,” and “temples” also suggests grander buildings than the parish churches of this time, calling to mind the destruction of the abbeys during the Reformation [Sherman].

Line 72 “[Originally,] And wolves with howling fill, &c. The Author thought this an error, wolves not being common in England at the time of the Conqueror.” [Pope]

Line 73 Commons] Commoners. [Sherman]
75  Stretch'd o'er the Poor and Church his iron rod,
76  And serv'd alike his Vassals and his God.
77  Whom ev'n the Saxon spar'd, and bloody Dane,
78  The wanton victims of his sport remain.
79  But see, the man who spacious regions gave
80  A waste for beasts, himself deny'd a grave!
81  Stretch'd on the lawn, his second hope survey,
82  At once the chaser, and at once the prey:
83  Lo Rufus, tugging at the deadly dart,
84  Bleeds in the forest, like a wounded hart.
85  Succeeding Monarchs heard the subjects cries,
86  Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful cottage rise.
87  Then gath'ring flocks on unknown mountains fed,
88  O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread,
89  The forests wonder'd at th'unusual grain,

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Line 76  *Vassals*] Feudal subjects. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 77  *Saxon . . . Dane*] Earlier invaders of Britain. [Williams]

Line 78  *his sport*] (1) Hunting (2) Scornful whim. [Price]

Lines 79-80  William I’s burial was delayed for a time, because the site selected at Caen was claimed by another and had to be bought anew by William’s son. [Price; Williams]

Line 81  *second hope*] “Richard, second son of William the Conqueror.” [Pope] He was killed by a stag while hunting in the New Forest. [Williams; Rogers]

Line 83  *Rufus*] William Rufus, third son and successor to William I, accidentally killed by an arrow while hunting in the New Forest [Williams]. Pope recalls in this passage the death of William III in 1702, hastened if not caused by a hunting accident. The resonance creates a parallel between the oppressive “Dutch” influence in the era of William III (i.e., people ascendant during William’s reign, notably Dutch courtiers, City magnates, and Whig war-lords) and the depredations of the Norman invaders [Rogers].

Line 84  *hart*] Male deer. [Sherman]

Line 85  *Succeeding Monarchs*] An unspecific allusion to the monarchs—the houses of Plantagenet, Lancaster, York, Tudor, Stuart—between the present era of Queen Anne referenced at the start of the poem (lines 1-42) and the Norman era decried in the second section of the poem (lines 43-84).

Line 87  *on unknown mountains*] Mountains hitherto unknown to the flocks, now for the first time permitted to feed there. [Butt]
And secret transport touch'd the conscious swain.

Fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess, rears

Her cheerful head, and leads the golden years.

Ye vig'rous swains! while youth ferments your blood,

And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,

Now range the hills, the thickest woods beset,

Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.

When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,

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Line 90 conscious I.e., knowing, well-aware [Williams]; responsive [Price]. Joy moves the peasant, well aware of what he has gained; this is a fairly new use of this sense of “conscious” [Sherman]. It may mean rather ‘observing, witnessing,’ or possibly ‘embarrassed by his joy’ [Rogers].

Lines 91-92 [Originally, thus]

“Oh may no more a foreign master's rage
With wrongs yet legal, curse a future age!
Still spread, fair Liberty! thy heav'nly wings,
Breath plenty on the fields, and fragrance on the springs.” [Pope]

Pope’s revision here responds to the changing historical context of the poem: in 1704-13 (when the poem was originally composed), “a foreign master’s rage” glances at the Normans and at William of Orange, but with the Hanoverian Succession in 1714, the phrase would acquire a different currency in relation to the new “foreign” kings of Britain: Pope’s revision heads off or softens applications of the poem to the Hanoverian context.

Line 94 purer spirits] The allusion is to the animal spirits which were supposed to move in the blood and animate the body. [Butt; Williams]

Line 96 Wind] Blow. [Williams]

Lines 97-158 Adapting the seasonal movement of pastoral, Pope rehearses the outdoor life of hunting and fishing carried on by British “swains” through the autumn (lines 97-124), winter (lines 125-134), spring (lines 135-146), and summer (lines 147-158).

The life of the forest expresses Pope’s vision of a complex postlapsarian world order, in which mankind’s violent and warlike energies may be harnessed and redirected [e.g., into the relatively benign activities of hunting and fishing], though never eradicated. . . . Thus the hunting scenes, unlike those of many conventional eighteenth-century georgics, are memorable less for the robust joys of the chase than for the poignant brevity of hunted lives. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Lines 97-100 [Originally, thus]

“When yellow autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And into wine the purple harvest bleeds,
The partridge feeding in the new-shorn fields
Both morning sports and ev'n'ing pleasures yields.

(continued...)
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds;
Panting with hope, he tries the furrow'd grounds;
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Couch'd close he lies, and meditates the prey:
Secure they trust th'unfaithful field, beset,
Till hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling net.
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)
When Albin sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless Town, with ease and plenty blest,
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest;
Sudden they seize th'amaz'd, defenceless prize,
And high in air Britannia's standard flies.
See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.

Perhaps the author thought it not allowable to describe the season by a circumstance not proper to our climate, the vintage.” [Pope]

Line 101  tainted gales] Breezes imbued with the scent of an animal [Butt; Fairer & Gerrard]. ‘Tainted gales’ is one of several phrases Pope borrowed, perhaps with malicious enjoyment, from Joseph Addison’s *The Campaign* (1705), a celebration of the duke of Marlborough, the leader of the English forces and hero of the Whig war party [Rogers]—though Pope’s poem, too, celebrates English military successes (as in lines 106-10).

Line 102  Couch’d close] Crouching close to the ground. [Sherman]

Line 102  meditates] Fixes his attention upon, observes with interest or intentness. [Butt]

Line 103  they] The partridges. [Price]

Line 104  net] Once the partridges had been “set” or “pointed” by the dog, a net was spread or cast over them. [Williams]


Lines 106-10  Perhaps inspired by the capture of Gibraltar in 1704. [Butt]

Line 108  lines] Of siege. [Price]

Line 108  invest] Surround. [Sherman]

Line 111 brake] Thicket. [Price]
Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny.
To plains with well-breath'd beagles we repair,
And trace the mazes of the circling hare:
(Beasts, urg'd by us, their fellow-beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo.)
With slaught'ring guns th'unweary'd fowler roves,
When frosts have whiten'd all the naked groves;
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade.
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye;
Strait a short thunder breaks the frozen sky:
Oft', as in airy rings they skim the heath,
The clam'rous plovers feel the leaden death:
Oft', as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little lives in air.
In genial spring, beneath the quiv'ring shade,
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand;

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Line 119 moist Arcturus] According to the ancients, the weather was stormy for a few days when Arcturus (one of the stars in the Great Bear constellation) rose with the sun, which took place in September. [Butt; Sherman]

Lines 119-20 [Originally, thus]

“When hoary winter cloaths the year in white,
The woods and fields to pleasing toils invite.” [Pope]

Line 129 [Originally] “The fowler lifts his level'd tube on high.” [Pope]

Line 130 strait] Immediately. [Sherman]

Line 132 plovers] Short-billed wading birds who swoop and dive over hearthland. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 135 genial] Pleasantly warm (OED, sense 3), but also including sense 1, ‘generative.’ [Rogers]
With looks unmov'd, he hopes the scaly breed,  
And eyes the dancing cork, and bending reed.  
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,  
The bright-ey'd perch with fins of *Tyrian* dye,  
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd,  
The yellow carp, in scales bedropp'd with gold,  
Swift trouts, diversify'd with crimson stains,  
And pykes, the tyrants of the watry plains.  
Now *Cancer* glows with *Phoebus*’ fiery car;  
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,  
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,  
Th' impatient coursers pant in ev'ry vein,  
And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;  
Hills, vales, and floods appear already cross'd,  
And e'er he starts, a thousand steps are lost.  
See! the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep,  
Rush thro' the thickets, down the valleys sweep,  
Hang o'er their coursers heads with eager speed,  
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed.

*Line 139* hopes] Anticipates. [Fairer & Gerrard]

*Line 142* *Tyrian dye*] Crimson or purple [Price], as in the dye anciently made in Tyre (capital of Phoenicia) [Rogers].

*Line 143* *volumes*] Coils, folds, convolutions, especially of a serpent. [Butt]

*Line 147* *Cancer . . . Phoebus’ fiery car*] The zodiacal sign for the season that begins with the summer solstice, around June 22nd, when the sun (“Phoebus’ fiery car”) is at its height. [Price]

*Lines 147-149* [Originally, thus]

> "But when bright from the twins invites  
> Our active genius to more free delights,  
> *With springing day we range the lawns around.*"  

[Butt]

The sun (Phoebus’s car) is in the constellation of the Twins (Gemini) from about May 21 to June 22. It enters the constellation of the Crab (Cancer) at the summer solstice, June 22. [Butt]

*Line 150* Rouze] A technical hunting term: “to rouse a hart, is to raise him from his harbour.” [Butt]

*Line 150* opening] Giving tongue; baying, when in pursuit of a scent. [Butt; Price; Rogers]

*Line 151* courser] A swift horse. [Fairer & Gerrard]
Let old Arcadia boast her ample plain,
Th’immortal huntress, and her virgin-train;
Nor envy, Windsor! since thy shades have seen
As bright a Goddess, and as chaste a Queen;
Whose care, like hers, protects the sylvan reign,
The Earth's fair light, and Empress of the main.
Here, as old bards have sung, Diana stray'd,
Bath'd in the springs, or sought the cooling shade;
Here arm'd with silver bows, in early dawn.

**Line 159 Arcadia**] The area of Greece mythologized and celebrated in pastoral poetry as an ideal landscape. [Price; Fairer & Gerrard]

**Line 160 immortal huntress**] Allusion to Diana (Artemis), goddess of the hunt and the moon, and celebrated for her chastity. [Williams; Price]

**Line 162 a Queen**] An allusion to Queen Anne, who was a keen hunter, following the chase in a chariot she drove herself [Fairer & Gerrard]; perhaps Queen Elizabeth I also [Williams]. Queen Anne is compared both to the “immortal Huntress” Diana, goddess of chastity, and to Anne’s illustrious forebear, the “virgin queen” Elizabeth I [Sherman].

**Line 164 Empress of the main**] Like Diana, the moon goddess, who governed the tides, Britannia (or Anne) ruled the seas. [Sherman]

**Lines 165-66** [Originally, thus]

“Yet here, 'tis sung, of old Diana stray'd:
And Cynthus’ top forsook for Windsor shade.
Here was she seen o'er sunny heaths to rove,
Seek the clear spring, or haunt the pathless grove.” [Pope]

Cynthius is the mountain on the island of Delos where Diana was born. [Price]

Most modern editions of Windsor-Forest, based on the text of 1751, include the following four lines in place of lines 165-66 here (thus the line numbering differs by two through the rest of the poem):

Here too, 'tis sung, of old Diana strayed,
And Cynthius’ top forsook for Windsor shade;
Here was she seen o’er airy wastes to rove,
Seek the clear spring, or haunt the pathless grove.

**Lines 165-216** A mythopoeic account of the origin of the Loddon River, a tributary of the Thames, cast as an Ovidian metamorphosis: Pope imagines a scenario in which Lodona, daughter of the Thames and one of Diana’s huntress nymphs, happens to stray beyond the limits of Windsor Forest and becomes herself the object of Pan’s desires. She flees from the god and escapes his amorous clutches only by her body dissolving and being transformed into the stream that now bears her name.
Her buskin'd Virgins trac'd the dewy lawn.

Above the rest a rural nymph was fam'd,

Thy offspring, Thames! the fair Lodona nam'd;

(Lodona's fate, in long oblivion cast,
The Muse shall sing, and what she sings shall last.)

Scarcely could the Goddess from her nymph be known,

But by the crescent and the golden zone.

She scorn'd the praise of beauty, and the care,

A belt her waist, a fillet binds her hair,

A painted quiver on her shoulder sounds,

And with her dart the flying deer she wounds.

It chanc'd, as eager of the chase, the maid

Beyond the forest's verdant limits stray'd,

Pan saw and lov'd, and burning with desire

Pursu'd her flight, her flight increas'd his fire.

Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly,

When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky;

Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,

When thro' the clouds he drives the trembling doves;

As from the God she flew with furious pace,

Or as the God, more furious, urg'd the chase.

Now fainting, sinking, pale, the nymph appears;

Now close behind, his sounding steps she hears;

And now his shadow reach'd her as she run,

His shadow lengthen'd by the setting sun;

And now his shorter breath, with sultry air,

Pants on her neck, and fans her parting hair.

In vain on father Thames she call'd for aid,

Nor could Diana help her injur'd maid.

Faint, breathless, thus she pray'd, nor pray'd in vain;

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**Line 168** buskin'd Virgins] The nymphs who joined Diana in the hunt, wearing high-laced sandals. [Price]

**Line 168** trac'd] I.e., trod or traversed. [Butt]

**Line 174** crescent . . . golden zone] The crescent moon, emblem of Diana, and a “golden” girdle or belt. [Butt]

**Line 176** fillet] A headband or ribbon. [Rogers]

**Line 181** Pan] As god of shepherds, often imagined as a goat-like satyr. [Price]

**Line 184** liquid sky] Latin liquidus, i.e. clear, transparent. [Butt]
"Ah Cynthia! ah--tho' banish'd from thy train,
"Let me, O let me, to the shades repair,
"My native shades---there weep, and murmur there.
She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft, silver stream dissolv'd away.
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps;
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,
And bathes the forest where she rang'd before.
In her chaste current off' the Goddess laves,
And with celestial tears augments the waves.
Oft' in her glass the musing shepherd spies
The headlong mountains and the downward skies,
The watry landskip of the pendant woods,
And absent trees that tremble in the floods;
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen,
And floating forests paint the waves with green.
Thro' the fair scene rowl slow the ling'ring streams,
Then foaming pour along, and rush into the Thames.
Thou too, great father of the British floods!
With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods;
Where tow'ring oaks their spreading honours rear,
And future navies on thy shores appear.
221 Not Neptune's self from all his streams receives
222 A wealthier tribute, than to thine he gives.
223 No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,
224 No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.
225 Not fabled Po more swells the poet's lays,
226 While thro' the skies his shining current strays,
227 Than thine, which visits Windsor's fam'd abodes,
228 To grace the mansion of our earthly Gods:
229 Nor all his stars a brighter lustre show,
230 Than the fair nymphs that grace thy side below:
231 Here Jove himself, subdu'd by beauty still,
232 Might change Olympus for a nobler hill.
233 Happy the man whom this bright Court approves,
234 His Sov'reign favours, and his Country loves:
235 Happy next him, who to these shades retires,
236 Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires;
237 Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
238 Successive study, exercise, and ease.
239 He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,

---

**Line 221 Neptune**] Roman god of the sea, here characterized as receiving the tribute of the rivers and, in turn, facilitating long-distance trade.

**Line 225 fabled Po**] Virgil (*Georgics* I 482, IV 372), Ovid (*Metamorphoses* II 372), and Claudian (*Panegyricus* to the sixth consulship of Honorius, in 404 A.D., line 146) gave to the Italian river Po the name of Eridanus, a constellation of the southern hemisphere which has the form of a winding river (and was named after a river in Greek mythology) [Butt; Sherman; Rogers 2004: 186]; hence, here, the Po is pictured meandering “thro’ the skies” (line 226) and lustrous with “all his stars” (line 229).

**Line 227 thine**] The current of the Thames, as it flows by the royal castle. [Price]

**Line 231 Jove**] Jupiter, king of the gods. [Fairer & Gerrard]

**Line 233 Happy the man whom**] I.e., Granville.

**Lines 233-38** [Originally, thus]

“Happy the man who to the shades retires,
But doubly happy, if the Muse inspires!
Blest whom the sweets of home-felt quiet please;
But far more blest, who study joins with ease.” [Pope]

**Line 235 who**] I.e., Pope himself.
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:
With chymic art exalts the min'ral pow'rs,
And draws the aromatic souls of flow'rs:
Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;
O'er figur'd worlds now travels with his eye:
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:
Or wand'r ing thoughtful in the silent wood,
Attends the duties of the wise and good,
T'observe a mean, be to himself a friend,
To follow nature, and regard his end;
Or looks on heav'n with more than mortal eyes,
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home!
Such was the life great Scipio once admir'd,

Line 240 physic] Medicines. [Sherman]
Line 240 spoils] Despoils. [Sherman]
Line 241 chymic art] The skills of the chemist. [Sherman]
Line 241 exalts] In alchemy and early chemistry: raises (a substance or its qualities) to a higher “degree,” intensifies, renders more powerful. [Butt]
Line 242 draws] Inhales, or perhaps extracts by suction or distillation. [Butt]
Line 244 figur'd worlds] Perhaps the Zodiac, or a globe of the world. To figure is to portray or represent [Butt]. The Zodiac (rather than a globe) is more in keeping with the hermetic cast of the passage [Rogers].
Line 245 writ] Writings. [Price]
Line 249 mean] The golden mean, or temperate life. [Price]
Line 252 expatiate] Wander at will. [Price]
Line 253 kindred stars] The soul was anciently believed to be of the same substance as the stars. [Williams]
Line 255 Scipio] After his victory in 202 BCE over Hannibal in the second Punic War, Scipio Africanus the elder (ca. 265? or 236?-ca. 183 BCE) declined political distinctions offered him. When, many years later, his enemies brought him to trial on charges of misconduct, he reminded the Romans of his past services, set the laws at defiance, and retired to his country seat at

(continued...)
256 Thus Atticus, and Trumbal thus retir'd.
257 Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,
258 Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions bless,
259 Bear me, oh bear me to sequester'd scenes,
260 The bow'ry mazes, and surrounding greens;
261 To Thames's banks which fragrant breezes fill,
262 Or where ye Muses sport on Cooper's hill.
263 (On Cooper's hill eternal wreaths shall grow,
264 While lasts the mountain, or while Thames shall flow)
265 I seem thro' consecrated walks to rove,
266 I hear soft music die along the grove;
267 Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,
268 By god-like Poets venerable made:

(...continued)

Liternum in Campania. He never returned to Rome, but passed his life cultivating his estate. [Butt; Rogers]

Line 256 Atticus] Titus Pomponius (109-32 BCE), the friend and correspondent of Cicero, refused to sue for public honor or to become engaged in political controversy. Instead he withdrew from Rome to Athens in 85 BCE and devoted himself to a life of study. He was called Atticus because of his long residence in Athens (in the region of Attica) [Butt]. During the Civil Wars he maintained strict neutrality [Fairer & Gerrard].

Line 256 Trumbal] “Sir William Trumball [or Trumbull (1639-1716)], was born in Windsor Forest, to which he retreated after he had resign’d [in 1698] the post of Secretary of State to King William III.” [Pope’s note to Spring, lines 7-10]. Sir William befriended the young Pope and served as a kind of tutor to him [Williams]. Trumbull supported Dryden’s translation of Virgil and instigated Pope’s translation of Homer [Rogers]. Pope may originally have intended to dedicate this poem, as he did one of his Pastorals, to Trumbull [see headnote, on Lansdowne].

Line 257 sacred Nine] The Nine Muses, daughters of Mnemosyne (goddess of memory) and Zeus, each of whom presided over a different art or science. [Sherman]

Line 263 On Cooper’s hill eternal wreaths shall grow] Cooper’s Hill, a mount alongside the Thames near Egham, about five miles from Windsor, was celebrated in Sir John Denham’s Cooper’s Hill (1642), a famous mid-seventeenth-century poem of the same general kind as Windsor-Forest [Williams; Rogers]—i.e., a “topographical” or “locodescriptive” poem, combining historical, political, and moral reflection with description of a local landscape. Pope’s comment on “the distinguishing excellence” of Denham’s poem best explains Pope’s own imaginative procedure in Windsor-Forest: “the descriptions of places, and images raised by the poet, are still [i.e., continually] tending to some hint, or leading to some reflection, upon moral life or political institution” (Iliad 16.466n.) [Sherman].

Line 264 mountain] Cooper’s Hill. [Butt]
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung;
There the last numbers flow'd from Cowley's tongue.
O early lost! what tears the river shed,
When the sad pomp along his banks was led?
His drooping swans on ev'ry note expire,
And on his willows hung each Muse's lyre.
Since fate relentless stop'd their heav'nly voice,
No more the forests ring, or groves rejoice;
Who now shall charm the shades, where Cowley strung
His living harp, and lofty Denham sung?
But hark! the groves rejoice, the forest rings!
Are these reviv'd? or is it Granville sings?
'Tis yours, my Lord, to bless our soft retreats,
And call the Muses to their ancient seats;
To paint anew the flow'ry sylvan scenes,
To crown the forests with immortal greens,
Make Windsor-hills in lofty numbers rise,
And lift her turrets nearer to the skies;
To sing those honours you deserve to wear,

Line 269 first lays . . . majestic Denham] Before the opening of the Civil War in 1642, Sir John Denham (1615-69) had written The Destruction of Troy (a translation of Aeneid II), the first draft of Cooper's Hill, and The Sophy. His house in Egham, near Windsor, was confiscated by the Parliamentary forces in 1643 [Butt]. Denham is praised as "majestic" for his success in writing in the style of "heroic verse" (iambic pentameter couplets).

Line 270 last numbers . . . Cowley] "Mr. Cowley died at Chertsey, on the borders of the Forest, and was from thence convey'd to Westminster." [Pope]

Line 271 O early lost] Abraham Cowley died in 1667, at the age of 49. His body was floated down the river from Chertsey to London, before his funeral at Westminster Abbey. [Butt; Rogers]

Line 273-74 [Originally, thus]
"What sighs, what murmurs fill'd the vocal shore!
His tuneful swans were heard to sing no more.” [Pope]

Line 273 drooping swans . . . expire] Swans were fabled to sing at their own death. [Williams]


Line 274 each Muse's lyre] Cowley attempted many poetical genres. In his epitaph in Westminster Abbey, he is called Anglorum Pindarus, Flaccus, Maro. [Butt]

Line 285 lofty numbers] Exalted or heroic verse. [Price]
And add new lustre to her silver star.

Here noble Surrey felt the sacred rage,

Surrey, the Granville of a former age:

Matchless his pen, victorious was his lance,

Bold in the lists, and graceful in the dance:

In the same shades the Cupids tun’d his lyre,

To the same notes, of love, and soft desire:

Fair Geraldine, bright object of his vow,

Then fill’d the groves, as heav’nly Myra now.

Oh would’st thou sing what Heroes Windsor bore,

---

**Lines 287-88 those honours . . . / . . . silver star**] The “honours” and the “star” are those of the prestigious Order of the Garter, instituted at Windsor Castle by Edward III in 1349. It was to provide a meeting-place for the Order that Edward reconstructed Windsor Castle. [Butt] Granville was never admitted to the Order. [Williams]

**Line 288** “All the lines that follow, till within eight of the conclusion, were not added to the poem till the year 1710. What immediately followed this, and made the Conclusion, were these,

> My humble Muse in unambitious strains  
> Paints the green forests and the flow’ry plains;  
> Where I obscurely pass my careless days,  
> Pleas’d in the silent shade with emply praise,  
> Enough for me that to the list’ning swains  
> First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.” [Pope]

The composition history of the poem was actually more complex than this note suggests: see headnote.

**Line 289 Surrey**] “Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, one of the first refiners of the English poetry; who flouris’d in the time of Henry the VIIIth.” [Pope] Surrey (ca. 1517-47) is mentioned specifically because of love poems supposed to have been written while he was imprisoned in Windsor Castle in 1537 [Rogers].

**Line 292 lists**] The spaces where jousting tournaments were held. [Fairer & Gerrard]

**Line 295 Geraldine**] Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald (1528?-89), youngest daughter of the Earl of Kildare. Surrey’s love poems were long supposed to have been addressed to her. [Butt]

**Line 296 Myra**] The name Granville bestowed in his poetic songs on his female addressee (taken to be, first, Mary of Modena and, later, Frances Brudenal, Countess of Newburgh, when the latter became his mistress). [Butt; Sherman]

**Lines 297-300** Edward III (1312) and Henry VI (1421) were born at Windsor. Edward IV, Henry VIII, and Charles I were buried there. [Butt]
Line 298  winding shore] Perhaps Pope knew the etymological meaning of the word *Windsor* as given in Camden’s *Britannia* (1695), p. 151: “Next, the Thames goes to *Windsor*, call’d in Saxon *Windesoure*, *Windlesora*, and also *Windlesofra*, from the *winding banks*, ofre in that language signifying a *bank* or *shore*.” [Butt]

Line 300  weeping vaults] Because of the seepage of water through the walls; similar natural phenomena explain the conceits in lines 305 and 311. [Sherman]


Line 303  Monarchs chain’d] An allusion to David II, King of Scotland, taken prisoner at the battle of Neville’s Cross in 1346 and released in 1357; and to Jean le Bon, King of France, whom the Black Prince defeated and captured at Poitiers in 1356. [Butt]

Line 303  Cressi’s glorious field] The battle of Crécy in 1346 in which Edward III defeated the French, one of the major English victories in the Hundred Years War. [Rogers]

Line 304  The lilies blazing on the regal shield] On January 26, 1340, Edward III assumed the title of king of France, and quartered the lilies of France with the leopards of England [Butt]. Another link in the chain of heraldic imagery and allusion [Rogers].

Line 305  Verrio’s colours] The Italian artist Antonio Verrio (1639-1707) was employed by Charles II [Rogers] and had represented in St. George’s Hall at Windsor the triumphal procession in which King John of France, after his surrender in 1356, was led captive by Edward the Black Prince, son of Edward III. The ceilings he painted had begun to deteriorate [Butt; Sherman]. For Defoe’s comment on some of his work, see his *Tour through Great Britain* (1724-26), letter iv [Rogers].


Lines 309-16  Allusion to events during the Wars of the Roses: Edward, duke of York, (continued...)
proclaimed himself king under the title of Edward IV in 1461. Henry VI was a fugitive in the North until he was taken prisoner in 1465. From October, 1470, to April, 1471, Henry was restored to the throne, and Edward took flight. Henry’s allies were defeated at Barnet, April 14, 1471, and Henry was probably murdered on May 21. His body was transferred from its grave in Chertsey Abbey to Windsor in 1484. He was buried in St. George’s Chapel, not far from Edward IV, who had been buried there in 1483. The palms eternal (line 310) are not those of victory, but of martyrdom. [Butt]


Line 314 old Belerium] Belerium (or Bolerium) promontorium was the Latin name for Land’s End in Cornwall, the south-westernmost point in England [Butt; Sherman]. There seems to be a distant echo of Milton, Lycidas, lines 159-60 (“Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied, / Sleep’st by the fable of Bellerus old”) [Rogers].

Line 317 sacred Charles’s tomb] Charles I, executed by the Puritans in 1649—and consequently considered by many to be a Christian and political martyr—was buried in St. George’s Chapel at Windsor, in the same tomb as Henry VIII, without any service [Butt; Rogers; Sherman]. His tomb remained unidentified until 1813 [Sherman].

Line 319 fact] Crime [Rogers]. Deed [Sherman].

Lines 321-24 Pope alludes to the Great Plague (1665) (“purple deaths”), the Great Fire (1666) (“rolling fire”), and the civil strife (“intestine wars”) of James II’s reign (beginning with the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and ending with the Revolution of 1688) as evil effects of Charles I’s execution [Butt; Fairer & Gerrard]. These disasters are imputed to the martyrdom of Charles I (more clearly so in the manuscript version) and point to a possible Jacobite interpretation of seventeenth-century history [Rogers].
Her sacred domes involv'd in rolling fire,
A dreadful series of intestine wars,
Inglorious triumphs, and dishonest scars.
At length great **ANNA** said---"Let Discord cease!"
She said, the World obey'd, and all was **Peace**!
In that blest moment, from his ooz'y bed
Old father **Thames** advanc'd his rev'rend head.
His tresses drop'd with dews, and o'er the stream
His shining horns diffus'd a golden gleam:
Grav'd on his urn, appear'd the Moon that guides
His swelling waters, and alternate tydes;

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**Line 322 domes**] Stately buildings, mansions. [Butt]

**Line 323 intestine wars**] Civil wars--i.e., the civil wars during the reigns of Charles I, Cromwell (in Ireland), James II, and William III (in Ireland). [Sherman]

**Line 324 dishonest**] Shameful [Butt]; dishonorable [Rogers].

**Line 325 ANNA**] Queen Anne. [Sherman]

**Line 325 cease**] An allusion to the forthcoming Treaty of Utrecht (see headnote), couched in the form of an imitation of Genesis 1:3. [Rogers]

**Lines 327-52** There are many literary antecedents for this masque-like scene but the closest in many ways is an anonymous Latin poem, *De connubio*, which had been translated in Camden’s *Britannia* (1695 edn.). **Oozy bed** is one of Pope’s sly borrowings from Addison’s *Campaign* (1705). [Rogers]

**Line 328 Old father Thames**] Pope’s personification of the River Thames is modelled on Virgil’s description of Father Tiber (*Aeneid*, 8:33-34) and Spenser’s account of the Thames and its tributaries in *Faerie Queene*, IV.xi.25-29. [Fairer & Gerrard]

**Lines 328-29** “Between Verse 328 and 329 originally stood these lines,
From shore to shore exulting shouts he heard,
O'er all his banks a lambent light appear'd,
With sparkling flames heav'n's glowing concave shone,
Fictitious stars, and glories not her own.
He saw, and gently rose above the stream;
His shining horns diffus'd a golden gleam:
With pearl and gold his tow'ry front was drest,
The tributes of the distant East and West.” [Pope]

**Line 330 shining horns**] The River-gods were often given the head or horns of a bull, indicative of their roaring or winding, of their strength or of their influence on agriculture. [Butt]
333 The figur'd streams in waves of silver roll'd,
334 And on their banks Augusta rose in gold.
335 Around his throne the sea-born brothers stood,
336 Who swell with tributary urns his flood:
337 First the fam'd authors of his ancient name,
338 The winding Isis and the fruitful Tame:
339 The Kennet swift, for silver eels renown'd;
340 The Loddon slow, with verdant alders crown'd;
341 Cole, whose clear streams his flow'ry islands lave;
342 And chalky Wey, that rolls a milky wave:
343 The blue, transparent Vandalis appears;
344 The gulphye Lee his sedgy tresses rears;
345 And sullen Mole, that hides his diving flood;

Line 333 figur'd] Shaped into a figure, represented by figures. [Butt]

Line 334 Augusta] The name given to London by the Romans in the fourth century; it was recently used by Dryden and other poets to evoke imperial power. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 334 in gold] A reference to Dryden’s description of London’s rebuilding after the Great Fire (in brick and white Portland stone) in *Anns Mirabilis* (1667), to which work the rest of this poem is indebted. [Sherman]

Line 335 sea-born brothers] The legend was that all rivers were born of Oceanus and Tethys. [Butt]

Line 337 his ancient name] “Tamesis” (so called by Julius Caesar). [Fairer & Gerrard]

Lines 337-46 Pope’s catalogue of rivers resembles closely that found in Ausonius, *Mosella*, 349-74. The lines are also indebted to Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, IV xi; to Milton, *At a Vacation Exercise*; and to Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, Song XVII. [Butt]

Line 338 Isis . . . Thame] The marriage of the Thame and Isis to produce the infant Thames was a common poetic topos; see the poem in *Britannia* (mentioned in note to lines 327-52) [Rogers]. Camden’s theory that the Latin name “Tamesis” derived from its parent rivers (Thame and Isis) is wrong [Fairer & Gerrard].

Line 341 Cole] The Colne, which flows south through the district west of London. [Rogers]

Line 343 Vandalis] The Wandle, which flows northward through what is now south London. [Rogers]

Line 344 gulphye] Eddying. [Rogers]

Line 345 diving flood] For the apparent disappearance of the River Mole underground, near (continued...)
And silent Darent, stain'd with Danish blood.
High in the midst, upon his urn reclin'd,
(His sea-green mantle waving with the wind)
The God appear'd: he turn'd his azure eyes
Where Windsor-domes and pompous turrets rise;
Then bow'd and spoke; the winds forget to roar,
And the hush'd waves glide softly to the shore.
Hail, sacred Peace! hail long-expected days,
That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise!
Tho' Tyber's streams immortal Rome behold,
Tho' foaming Hermus swells with tydes of gold,
From heav'n itself tho' sev'n-fold Nilus flows,
And harvests on a hundred realms bestows;
These now no more shall be the Muse's themes,
Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.
Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine,
Let barb'rous Ganges arm a servile train;

(...continued)

Dorking in Surrey, and its resurfacing at Leatherhead in Surrey, see Defoe’s Tour through Great Britain (1724-26), letter ii. [Rogers; Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 346 Danish blood] Probably alluding to Edward Ironside’s defeat of the Danes at the battle of Otford (1016), which is mentioned by Camden in connection with the Darent. [Rogers; Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 353 long-expected days] The preliminaries to the Treaty of Utrecht had been signed in London in October, 1711. [Butt]

Line 356 Hermus] A river in Lydia (Asia Minor) with sands, according to legend, covered in gold. [Rogers]

Line 357 sev’n-fold Nilus] The Nile with its seven mouths (for which reason, Ovid called it septemflus) [Sherman]; its source was still unknown. [Rogers]

Line 361 Volga’s banks with iron squadrons shine] Referring to the course of the war between Charles XII of Sweden against Peter the Great of Russia; Charles had invaded Muscovy but had suffered defeat at Poltava (Pultowa) in 1709 [Rogers]–the battle did not take place near the Volga [Sherman]. “Iron squadrons” are cavalry [Sherman].

Line 363 Ganges arm a servile train] An allusion to the wars waged by the Mogul Emperor Aurengzeb (d. 1707) against the rising Maratha powers [Butt; followed by Rogers; Sherman; Fairer & Gerrard]. The reference might also be to the succession conflicts after the death, in
Be mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.
No more my sons shall dye with British blood
Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood;
Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
The shady empire shall retain no trace
Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chace;
The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,
And arms employ'd on birds and beasts alone.
Behold! th'ascending Villa's on my side,
Project long shadows o'er the crystal tyde.
Behold! Augusta's glitt'ring spires increase,
And temples rise, the beauteous works of Peace.
I see, I see where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow, a new White-hall ascend!
There mighty nations shall enquire their doom,
The world's great Oracle in times to come;

(...continued)
1712, of Bahadur Shah, son and heir of Aurengzeb.

Lines 365-66 Pope refers to various campaigns fought during the War of the Spanish Succession, on the Ebro (Iber) in Spain (where the British were successful at Saragossa in 1710) and along the Danube (Ister) (scene of Britain’s greatest recent victory, at Blenheim in 1704) [Rogers; Fairer & Gerrard]. Pope’s backhanded reference to these victories (“No more my Sons shall dye with British blood”) reflects his hostility to Marlborough and an uneasiness at the glory of his victories [Butt].

Line 373 ascending Villa’s] Many new private country homes were being built along the Thames up from London at this time. [Sherman]

Line 376 temples rise] “The fifty new churches.” [Pope] Queen Anne had promoted the building of fifty new churches in London, to meet the requirements of a growing London, but in the end no more than twelve were built. [Rogers; Sherman]

Line 377 two fair cities] London and Westminster, still distinct cities at this time, situated on a sweeping bend in the Thames. [Rogers; Sherman]

Line 378 new White-hall] Most of the historic Whitehall Palace, except for the Banqueting Hall designed by Inigo Jones, had been burnt down in the fires of 1691 and 1697/98 [Butt; Sherman; Rogers]. There were several plans for restoration, never implemented. [Rogers]

Line 379 doom] Fate or destiny. [Sherman]

Lines 379-420 Pervasively drawing on Isaiah 60, which forecasts Zion’s future glory: see Maynard Mack, Collected in Himself (1983), 21-23. [Butt; Rogers; Sherman]
381 There Kings shall sue, and suppliant States be seen
382 Once more to bend before a British Queen.
383 Thy trees, fair Windsor! now shall leave their Woods,
384 And half thy forests rush into my floods,
385 Bear Britain's thunder, and her Cross display,
386 To the bright regions of the rising day;
387 Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
388 Where clearer flames glow round the frozen Pole;
389 Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
390 Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales!
391 For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
392 The coral redder, and the ruby glow,
393 The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
394 And Phoebus warm the ripening ore to gold.
395 The time shall come, when free as seas or wind
396 Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,

Line 382 once more] The allusion is to those occasions, in 1575 and 1585, when the sovereignty of the United Provinces was offered to Queen Elizabeth and her aid was solicited in the struggles of the Dutch against Philip of Spain [Butt]. Pope’s phrasing indulges, however, a patriotic fantasy of English might during the reign of Elizabeth.

Lines 383-87 “Ver. 383, &c. were originally thus;
Now shall our fleets the bloody Cross display
To the rich regions of the rising day,
Or those green isles, where headlong Titan steeps
His hissing axe in th' Atlantic deeps.
Tempt icy seas, &c.” [Pope]

Lines 383-84 The trees of Windsor Forest, turned into ships, will carry British power and commerce all over the world. [Butt]

Line 385 her Cross] The red cross of St. George, which, with the cross of St. Andrew, made the new Union flag of Great Britain; Pope may also allude to recent British missionary work overseas [Sherman]. A possible Rosicrucian strand of allusion surfaces here. [Rogers]

Line 387 Tempt] Risk or attempt. [Rogers]

Line 389 exalt] Raise. [Sherman]

Line 391 balm] Tree sap, often having soothing or healing properties. [Sherman]

Line 394 gold] The sun (“Phoebus”) was thought to ripen precious metals in the earth. [Rogers]

Line 396 “A wish that London may be made a free port.” [Pope] Many merchants proposed that (continued...)
Whole nations enter with each swelling tyde,
And seas but join the regions they divide;
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tyde,
And feather'd people crowd my wealthy side,
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire!
Oh stretch thy reign, fair Peace! from shore to shore,
'Till Conquest cease, and slav'ry be no more;
'Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of Kings behold,
And other Mexico's be roof'd with gold.
Exil'd by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barbarous Discord dwell:
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition, shall attend her there:
There purple Vengeance bath'd in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires:
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain.
Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallow'd lays

(continued)
customs duties be abolished to make Britain more open to international trade [Sherman]. Cf. the name given by Addison to the representative of moneyed interests, “Sir Andrew Freeport” (Spectator, 2 March 1711) [Butt].

Lines 402-3 feather’d people . . . / . . . painted chiefs] Recalling a famous recent event, when four Iroquois chiefs visited London in 1710. [Rogers]

Line 407 freed Indians] South American natives, liberated from the dominion of Spain. [Rogers]

Line 409 race of Kings] The Incas. [Rogers]

Lines 411-20 Modelled on two descriptions in Virgil which allude to Augustus’s recent victories: Georgics, 3:37-39, and Aeneid, 1:293-96. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 418 wheel] The wheel of torture [Butt; Rogers; Sherman]. The wheel of fortune [Fairer & Gerrard].

Line 420 Furies] In Greek myth, the pitiless female spirits of vengeance. [Fairer & Gerrard]
Touch the fair fame of Albion's golden days:
The thoughts of Gods let Granville's verse recite,
And bring the scenes of opening fate to light.
My humble Muse, in unambitious strains,
Paints the green forests and the flow'ry plains,
Where Peace descending bids her olives spring,
And scatters blessings from her dove-like wing.
Ev'n I more sweetly pass my careless days,
Pleas'd in the silent shade with empty praise;
Enough for me, that to the list'ning swains
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.

Line 423  Gods] Granville’s poems celebrated the god-like qualities of James II. [Fairer & Gerrard]

Line 432  sylvan strains] Just as Virgil had concluded his Georgics with a recollection of the opening of the Eclogues, so Pope echoes the first line of his own Pastorals (“First in these fields I try the sylvan strain”). [Rogers]