

A15 This day is made Knight of the Garter

Notes. The precise date and inspiration of this libel is uncertain. The reference to Cecil as a knight and his pairing with Raleigh suggests that it was written before Elizabeth's death—the accession of James I soon saw Cecil elevated to the peerage as Lord Cecil, while Raleigh's fortunes took a sharply contrasting path. Raleigh was treated roughly by the new King (much to the glee of former Essexians) and was condemned for treason in November 1603, spending most of the next fifteen years in the Tower before being executed in 1618. However, the reference to election as a Knight of the Garter is hard to reconcile with an Elizabethan provenance. Cecil had to wait until 1606 before he was elected to this august status, while Raleigh never received this supreme accolade. It is possible that the heading connecting this verse to Cecil and Raleigh is an erroneous later addition to the rhyme.

“On Sir Robert Sicill, & Sir Walter Raleigh”

This day is made Knight of the Garter

An honourable Tomblor,¹ and a notable Farter

Source. BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 15r

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¹ *Tomblor*: an acrobat, swindler; hence an unprincipled political opportunist.
