

## B11 The prelates Pope, the Canonists trope, the Courtyers oracle, virginites spectacle

*Notes.* A copy of this libellous epitaph was pinned to the ceremonial hearse at the funeral of John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury. Whitgift died in late February 1604 and, although he was buried shortly thereafter in Croydon, the full funeral ceremonies were delayed for several weeks. The poem is clearly a work of Puritan polemic, combining a derogatory, carnivalesque assault on Whitgift with pointed allusions to many of the grievances the Puritans—presented here as “Reformers” and “trew pastors”—had expressed during the decades in which Whitgift had led the polemical, political and legal fights against their campaign for further reform of the Church. A fortuitous set of circumstances allowed the authorities to identify Lewis Pickering, a Northamptonshire Puritan and minor Jacobean courtier, as the author of the poem, and as a result Pickering was tried and convicted in Star Chamber for seditious libel early in 1605. Bellany has explored the ecclesiastical and legal politics of the case (“Poem”), and has analyzed the inversionary power of the poem within its original ritual contexts (“Libels in Action” 102-06). The sole complete copy of the poem survives among the papers of Sir Peter Manwood of Kent.

The prelates Pope, the Canonists trope,<sup>1</sup> the Courtyers oracle, virginites spectacle,<sup>2</sup>  
Reformers hinderer, trew pastors slanderer, the papists broker, the Atheists Cloker  
The Ceremonyes Procter,<sup>3</sup> the latyn docter, the dumb doggs<sup>4</sup> patron, non residns<sup>5</sup> champion  
A well a daye<sup>6</sup> is dead & gone, and Jockey<sup>7</sup> hath left dumb Dickye<sup>8</sup> alone.

Prelats relent, Courtyers lament, Papists bee sadd, Athiests runn madd. 5  
Grone formalists,<sup>9</sup> mone pluralists<sup>10</sup> frowne yee doctors, mourne yee Proctors<sup>11</sup>  
Begge Registers,<sup>12</sup> starve parators,<sup>13</sup> scowle ye Summoners,<sup>14</sup> howle yee songsters  
Your great Patron is dead & gone, & Jockey hath left dumb Dickye alone.

Popishe Ambition vaine superstition, coulored conformity canckared envye  
Cunninge hipocrisie faigned simplicity, masked ympiety, servile flatterye, 10  
Goe all daunce about his hearse, & for his dierge chaunt this verse,  
Our greate Patron is dead and gone, & Jhockey hath left dumb duckye alon

Yf store of mourners yet there lacke lett Croyden coullers<sup>15</sup> bee more blacke  
And for a Cophin take a sacke bearing the corpes upon their backe

Dickye more blacke then any one as chief mourner may marche alone 15  
Singinge this requiem Jhocky is gone, & Dickye hopes to play Jhocky alone

Holla Dickye bee not so bould, to woulve that in Christ Jhesus fould  
as yf to hell thy Soule weare sould, lest as Jhocky was oft foretould  
If thou a persecutor stand, God likewise strike thee with his hand:  
Arankinge thee in the bloody band of ravening Cleargie woolves in the land 20

**Source.** BL Add. MS 38139, fol. 58r

**Other known sources.** *Les Reportes Del Cases in Camera Stellata* 223; BL MS Harley 6383, fol. 71r

#### B11

<sup>1</sup> *Canonists trope*: an abbreviated variant has “Canonists hope”, which perhaps makes better sense (BL MS Harley 6383). The canonists here are ecclesiastical lawyers.

<sup>2</sup> *virginitie spectacle*: the spectacles (i.e. a counsellor) for Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen.

<sup>3</sup> *Ceremonyes Procter*: Whitgift had defended the legitimacy of ecclesiastical ceremonies authorized by the *Book of Common Prayer* against Puritan attacks.

<sup>4</sup> *dumb doggs*: derogative Puritan term for non-preaching clergy.

<sup>5</sup> *non residns*: i.e. non-resident clergy; clergy who held more than one parochial living (pluralists) and thus were not resident in one (or more) of their parishes. Puritans had urged an end to pluralism and non-residence.

<sup>6</sup> *A well a daye*: “Welladay” was a ballad tune often used for songs about death (see Simpson 747-48).

<sup>7</sup> *Jockey*: diminutive nickname for John; i.e. John Whitgift.

<sup>8</sup> *Dickye*: diminutive nickname for Richard; here Whitgift’s successor as Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft.

<sup>9</sup> *formalists*: those committed to an overly ceremonial form of religious practice.

<sup>10</sup> *pluralists*: clergy who held more than one parochial living.

<sup>11</sup> *Proctors*: several ecclesiastical officials could have this title, including tithes collectors, ecclesiastical court attorneys and representatives of cathedral clergy at convocation.

<sup>12</sup> *Registers*: presumably ecclesiastical record keepers.

<sup>13</sup> *parators*: i.e. apparitors; officials of the ecclesiastical courts. Church courts were a common focus of Puritan critique.

<sup>14</sup> *Summoners*: ecclesiastical court officials.

<sup>15</sup> *Croyden coullers*: i.e. Croydon colliers. Croydon was well known for its population of charcoal burners.

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