

## B12 A Romane right, then rotten at the Kore

*Notes.* The incident behind this libel remains obscure. The poem was directed at William Cecil, 3rd Lord Burghley (since 1605), and the nephew of James I's chief minister Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. During the 1580s, Catholic agents had reported that the young William Cecil, travelling in France and Italy, had been "reconciled" to the Church of Rome (Read 350, 573 n.43), and while Cecil appears to have conformed to the English Church, this libel's charge of crypto-popery—and thus of disloyalty to the Crown—was particularly explosive in the immediate aftermath of the Catholic Gunpowder Plot to murder the King in November 1605.

"Verses sett up over the Lo: Burgleys pew in newark church<sup>1</sup>, for which Mr Batts the preacher there was cited up before the ArchB: of Cant.<sup>2</sup> 1606"

A Romane right, then rotten at the Kore

no loyall love within his brest resides

unto his king faine warning given before

that painted hoodes foule cancred mallice hides,

Their volumes vaunt, but leaden are their reasons

they proffer faire yet would supplant by treasons.

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**Source.** BL MS Egerton 2877, fol. 88v

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<sup>1</sup> *newark church*: probably in Newark, Nottinghamshire. William Cecil married Elizabeth Manners in the chapel at Newark Castle in 1589, and their son William was baptised there in 1590.

<sup>2</sup> *ArchB: of Cant.*: the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft.