

D1 Heere lies Hobbinoll our Shepheard while ere

Notes. This widely circulated poem on the death of Robert Cecil is often attributed to Walter Raleigh (e.g. Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26 and Folger MS V.a.345). Croft ("Reputation" 49, 52, 62) discusses the poem and the question of authorship, and McRae discusses its style (Literature 35). The verse makes many of the standard charges against Cecil (e.g. fiscal and sexual corruption), but uniquely presents them in the guise of a sustained Spenserian pastoral conceit.

Heere lies Hobbinoll¹ our Shepheard while ere
Who once a yeere duely our fleeces did sheere,
To please us his curre he chaynde to a clogg
And was himselfe after both Shepheard and dogg
For oblation to Pan² his order was thus 5
Himselfe gave a trifle and sacrificzde us
And so with his wysedome this provident swayne
Kept himselfe on the mountayne and us on the playne
Where many a fine Hornepipe he tund'e to his Phillis
And swetely sunge walsingham to Amarillis³ 10
Till Atropos⁴ payde him, a pox on the drabbe⁵
In spite of the tarbox,⁶ he died of the scabbe.⁷

Source. BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 34r

Other known sources. Raleigh, *Poems* 120; Osborne 89; "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript" 40; Bodleian MS Aubrey 6, fol. 78v; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 79v; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. f.10, fol. 97v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 78r; Bodleian MS Tanner 299, fol. 12v; BL Add. MS 5832, fol. 169r; BL MS Harley 1221, fol. 74r; BL MS Harley 6038, fol. 18r; BL MS Harley 6947, fol. 11r; NCRO MS IL 4304; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 71r; Folger MS V.a.339, fol. 258r; Folger MS V.a.345, p. 110

- ¹ *Hobbinoll*: shepherd and friend of Colin Clout in Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. The name was increasingly used by this period as a generic name for a shepherd or rustic.
- ² *Pan*: again a Spenserian reference, but here referring to King James.
- ³ *Phyllis...walsingham...Amarillis*: Phyllis and Amarillis are two sisters in Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, and here they stand for Cecil's two alleged lovers, Audrey, Lady Walsingham, wife of Sir Thomas Walsingham and Mistress of the Robes to Queen Anne (Croft, "Reputation" 58), and Catherine Howard, Countess of Suffolk, wife of Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk. Walsingham here is a pun, referring both to a popular Elizabethan tune and to Cecil's supposed lover Lady Walsingham.
- ⁴ *Atropos*: the one of the three Fates responsible for cutting the thread that ended men's lives.
- ⁵ *drabbe*: a slut, dirty woman, or whore.
- ⁶ *tarbox*: a container of salve shepherds carried to treat their sheep; here it alludes to the treatments Cecil was receiving from his doctors.
- ⁷ *scabbe*: a skin disease that commonly afflicts sheep, and here, in Cecil's case, syphilis.
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